

RELS 5300: The Study of Islam, Second Term, 2023-2024

Professor: James D. Frankel

Lecture: Thursdays, 7:00-9:30 p.m., ELB 308

I. Course Description:

This course explores the development and evolution of Islamic faith and society from their pre-Islamic roots, to the life and career of the Prophet Muhammad (570-632), down to the present day. Toward the end of the semester, we will examine some contemporary issues. The approach of the class is multi-disciplinary: We will examine prominent aspects of Islamic culture from their different historical, social, and theological perspectives. The course is also designed to expose students to a balance of primary and secondary sources, thereby showing both “insider” (Muslim) and “outsider” (non-Muslim) perspectives on various themes. This course has no prerequisites and assumes no prior knowledge of the subject.

II. Learning Outcomes:

- 1) Understanding the history, scriptures, doctrines, and practices of the Islamic tradition;
- 2) Reading and analyzing primary source material from the Islamic tradition;
- 3) Reading and analyzing scholarly texts in the academic study of Islam;
- 4) Writing scholarly materials in genres appropriate to the field of the academic study of Islam, including research papers, exegetical essays, etc.;
- 5) Cultivation of cultural sensitivity in light of globalization and local multiculturalism.

III. Course Content:

Basic texts:

Ali, Ahmed. *Al-Qur'an: A Contemporary Translation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001 (or a comparable English translation of the *Qur'an*).*

Goldziher, Ignaz. *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law* (Modern Classics in Near Eastern Studies). (Paperback) Translated by Andras and Ruth Hamori. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981.

Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*. St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 1994.

Other selected readings will be available on Blackboard.

*Find Ahmed Ali version at: <https://quran.wvpa.com/>. <https://quran.com/> also has multiple translations (including Chinese) with the Arabic text and recitations.

Term Schedule:

1. 11/1 **Roots of Islam: Pre-Islamic Arabia (*Jāhiliyya*); Judeo-Christian connections; Neighboring civilizations.**
Readings:
Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick, "Preface" in *The Vision of Islam* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 1994), ix-xiii.
Peter J. Awn, "Faith and Practice" and Fazlur Rahman, "The Message and the Messenger," in *Islam: The Religious & Political Life of a World Community*, ed. Marjorie Kelly (New York: Praeger, 1984), 1-3, 28-32.
"Pre-Islamic Poetry," Trans. by Michael Sells.

2. 18/1 **Muḥammad and the Early Muslim Community**
Readings:
Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick, "Introduction," in *The Vision of Islam*, xix-xxiv.
"Traditional Muslim Chronology of Muhammad's Life"
Fazlur Rahman, "Muhammad, The Prophet of God," in *Islam: The Religious & Political Life of a World Community*, 32-42.
"Excerpt From Dante's *Inferno* and a 17th c. French Traveler's Account"

3. 25/1 **Qur'ān**
Readings:
Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick, "Introduction," in *The Vision of Islam*, xiv-xix.
Sūras 1, 2, 4, 7, 9, 12, 18, 26, 75-114.
"The Message," in *Islam: The Religious & Political Life of a World Community*, 42-54.

4. 1/2 **Ḥadīth and Sunna**
Readings:
Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick, "Introduction," and "The Koran and Sunna," in *The Vision of Islam*, xxv-xxxix, 28-30.
Roy P. Mottahedeh, "Qur'an and Sunna," in *Islam: The Religious & Political Life of a World Community*, 57-59.
"Selected *Ḥadīth*"

4. 8/2 **Islām: Submission as Orthopraxy; The Five Pillars**
Readings:
 Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick, “Part I: ISLAM,” in *The Vision of Islam*, 3-27.
 Peter J. Awn, “Philosophical Theology and the First Pillar of Islam” and
 “Islamic Praxis and the Four Remaining Pillars of Islam,” in *Islam: The Religious & Political Life of a World Community*, 3-13.
6. 15/2 **LUNAR NEW YEAR VACATION (NO LECTURE)**
7. 22/2 **Islamic Law: *Sharī‘a* and *Fiqh***
Readings:
 Ignaz Goldziher, “The Development of Law,” in *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, trans. Andras and Ruth Hamori (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 31-66.
- *GROUP PRESENTATIONS BEGIN**
8. 29/2 **Islamic Theology: *Kalām***
Readings:
 Ignaz Goldziher, “The Growth and Development of Dogmatic Theology,” in *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, 67-114.
9. 7/3 **Islamic Sectarianism: The Sunni-Shī‘a Schism**
Readings:
 Ignaz Goldziher, “The Sects,” in *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, 167-229.
 Peter J. Awn, “Diversity in the Umma: Shi’ism,” in *Islam: The Religious & Political Life of a World Community*, 14-17.
10. 14/3 **Islamic Mysticism: The Ṣūfī Tradition**
Readings:
 Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick, “Theoretical Sufism,”
 “Philosophy,” “The Two Poles of Understanding,” and
 “Sufism’s Vision,” in *The Vision of Islam*, 246-257, 262-264.
 Peter J. Awn, “Sufism,” in *Islam: The Religious & Political Life of a World Community*, 17-22.
 “Sufi Ascetical Texts”

11. 21/3 Islamic Modernism and Revivalism

Readings:

Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick, "Ch. 10 The Contemporary Situation," in *The Vision of Islam*, 329-335.

Voll, John O., Ch. 8: "Muslim Responses to Colonialism," in *Islam: The Religious & Political Life of a World Community*, 157-172.
"Modernist Islamic Texts"

12. 28/3 Women and Gender in Islam

Readings:

Ch. 4, "Rights and Roles of Women: Some Controversies," in Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 62-93.

13. 4/4 NO LECTURE

14. 11/4 Fundamentalism and Extremism in Islam

Readings:

Albertini, Tamara. "The Seductiveness of Certainty: The Destruction of Islam's Intellectual Legacy by the Fundamentalists," in *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (Oct. 2003), pp. 455-470.

Wood, Graeme. "What ISIS Really Wants," in *The Atlantic*, March, 2015 Issue.

15. 18/4 Islam in China and Hong Kong

Readings:

Frankel, James D. *Islam in China*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2021, pp. 123-162.

IV. Course Requirements:

15% Class participation

35% Group presentation

50% Term paper (3,000 words in English), **due 28/4/2024 by 5 p.m.**

Class Participation:

The success of this course depends on the collaboration of professor and students. Students are also expected to participate in class discussions, with thoughtful questions and responses. Students are required to attend lectures and tutorials, unless they have a justifiable reason (medical or some other emergency) for being absent. Absences will be counted against the

final grade (good attendance will likewise be rewarded); students who miss more than 25% of the total number of class meetings cannot pass the course.

Group Presentations:

Beginning in the seventh week of the semester (22/2), after the lecture two students together will make a 25-30-minute presentation each week on a subject to be assigned by the professor. The date, order and the subject of the presentations will be determined by random selection at the start of the semester. The presentation will include a summary and brief analysis of the topic and its context in the larger context of Islam. Presenters will ask leading questions to promote discussion of the subject among classmates. The presentation may include PowerPoint, other audio-visual aids, and/or a written handout. Presentations will be assessed based on their clarity, contents and analysis.

Possible Presentation Topics:

1. The Prophet and Umma
2. Qur'ān and Sunna
3. Sharī'a and Fiqh
4. Shi'a (and Sunni)
5. Jihād and Extremism
6. Gender Roles and Sexuality
7. Huihui and Qingzhen (回回與清真)

Paper Guidelines:

Each student must write a final paper at the end of the term, on a topic of his/her choosing, within Islamic studies. The topic may be historical or contemporary, and may focus on any aspect of Islam or Muslim society, such as theology, religious doctrine and practice, politics, society, etc.

Your essay should have a clear title, thesis (stated in the Introduction) and central argument. Papers may be based on the readings, lectures and discussions, and any appropriate outside research, with all sources cited appropriately (using either footnotes **or** MLA parenthetical citation). The paper is to be approximately 3,000 words in English, typed and double-spaced (Times New Roman, 12 pt. font). Grammar, punctuation, style, and content will be taken into account in the grading of the essay. Grammar, punctuation, style, and content will be factored in the grading of the essay, so be sure to proofread carefully before submitting the paper.

Papers should be sent by e-mail to Prof. Frankel (jamesfrankel@cuhk.edu.hk), attached as a MS Word Doc with your name on the file. **28 April 2024, 5:00 p.m.** Unless a deadline

extension is granted with prior permission from the professor, late submissions will be penalized.

Papers must be submitted to VeriGuide (<https://veriguide2.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/cuhk/>). The system will issue a receipt, which should be signed and submitted with the assignment.

Academic Honesty:

The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on honesty in academic work submitted by students and adopts a policy of zero tolerance on cheating and plagiarism. Any related offence will lead to disciplinary action including termination of studies at the University.

See the University's policy:

[https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_\(2013-14\)/index_page2.htm](https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/index_page2.htm)

Instructor's Contact Information:

Professor Frankel's office is located at KKB 228. Appointments are welcome and should be made via email at: jamesfrankel@cuhk.edu.hk