

Understanding Islam:
Scripture, Theology, Law and Ethics
July11-15, 2016

Instructor: Dr. Nasir Zaidi

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Course Description and Objectives

This course aims to introduce students the main features, structure and themes of the Qur'an, Theology, Law and Ethics in the light of traditional and modern Islamic perspectives. We will examine how the Qur'an, theology, Law and Ethics relate to each other along with the impact of all four areas on the lives of Muslims.

This course will also highlight the process of deducing particular Islamic ruling (*Ijtihad*) where direct guidance from the Qur'an and the life of Prophet Muhamamd is not available. We will also examine the obstacles in the path of progressive understanding of Islam.

In the end of the course, it is expected from the students that they will be able to develop analytic perspectives and required knowledge to continue studying Islam at deeper levels in the right direction.

Course Requirements:

Students are required to be prepared for the lectures and go through the assigned reading material before the class. No extra or recommended material is required for this course other than assigned material. Students are expected to participate in the class discussion through sharing of critiques and thoughts with each other and with the instructor. Students may be asked to form small group and discuss assigned question for 5 to 6 minute and share their conclusion with the instructor.

For Certificate Students:

A 5-7 page paper reflection on the any topic from the lectures is due August 31, 2016. Students may discuss their topic with the instructor.

For MA/MDiv/ThM Students Registered for Academic Credit

Our journey in this course will include two principle assignments: (1) A three to five page reflection paper on course topics and materials required for degree credit (2) 10 to 15 pages final paper on one of the issues discussed in the class with the approval of the instructor. You are also expected to participate in a small group presentation on any issue discussed in the class.

Course Schedule

Monday; July 11

Course Introduction;

The Qur'an; Revelation, Oral and Written Tradition, Interpretation, Miracle, Protection of the Qur'an from alteration,

Readings:

Raza Aslan: No God but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam, (81-101)

(Photocopy of the text will be provided by the instructor)

Saeed Abdullah: Interpreting the Qur'an: towards a contemporary approach (8-15). Accessible through UBC Library

Abu Al-Qasim Al-Khui: The Prolegomena of the Qur'an (39-55, 92-117, 135-147, 262-264)

<https://althaqalayn.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/al-bayan-ayatullah-khui.pdf>

Tuesday; July12

Course Introduction;

Theology; Historical development of Theological schools, Existence of God, Oneness of God, Attributes of God, Prophecy and its objectives, Spiritual guidance (*Al-Imamah*), The Day of Judgment,

Readings:

Montgomery Watt: Islamic Philosophy and Theology

<http://traditionalhikma.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Islamic-Philosophy-and-Theology-by-W.-Montgomery-Watt.pdf>

Taqi Misbah Yazdi: Theological Instructions; an Introduction to Contemporary Islamic Theology.

<http://www.islamic-laws.com/pdf/Theological-Instructions-Yazdi.pdf>

Wednesday; July 13

Course Introduction;

Islamic Law (Jurisprudence); Types of Law, Introduction to the Principles of Jurisprudence, types of obligations, the sections and chapters of the issues of Jurisprudence,

Readings:

Murtaza Motahari: Jurisprudence and its principles (27-29, 36-55)

http://www.iranchamber.com/personalities/mmotahari/works/jurisprudence_and_its_principles.pdf

Thursday; July 14

Course Introduction;

Islamic Law (Jurisprudence); Sources of Law, the Legal Schools, State, clergies and Islamists

Readings:

Wael B. Hallaq: An Introduction to Islamic Law (14-28, 31-37, 148-158)

<https://iuristebi.files.wordpress.com/2011/07/an-introduction-to-islamic-law.pdf>

Friday; July 15

Course Introduction

Ethics; The meaning and origin of ethics, Purification of soul, Moral virtues and vices, Diseases of soul and their Treatment

Readings:

Mahdi Al-Naraq: Jami' al-Sa'adat (The Collector of Felicities)

<http://www.al-islam.org/jami-al-saadat-the-collector-of-felicities-muhammad-mahdi-ibn-abi-dharr-al-naraq>