

# Islam: Course Overview & Syllabus

The religion of Islam was founded roughly 1400 years ago in Arabia. Since that time, Islam has grown into the world's second largest religion with adherents found around the globe. This course aims to investigate the historical development of Islam in terms of its beliefs and practices as well as the society and culture that has arisen with it. Ultimately, students should come to understand both the faith itself and the relationship of believers to the world in which they live today. In addition to classroom discussions and activities, students will acquire this knowledge through a series of readings, primarily from the course's main text (*An Introduction to Islam* by Frederick Mathewson Denny). They will have the opportunity to develop their thinking and show what they have learned by way of writing assignments, debates, and presentations.

## Monday, Day 1

- a. Introduction of Participants & Discussion of Expectations
- b. Pre-assessment
- c. Introduction of Course Topics & Materials
- d. Discussion: Judeo-Christian Roots of Islam
- e. Reading & Analysis: Editorial - "One Last Thing"
- f. Read Chapter Five in Denny

## Tuesday, Day 2

- a. Discussion: Five Doctrines of Islam
- b. Discussion: Concept of the Five Pillars
- c. Student Presentations: Five Pillars & Connection to the Islamic Community
- d. Read Chapter Six in Denny

## Wednesday, Day 3

- a. Discussion: Purity in Islam
- b. Reading & Analysis of Qur'an - Suras One & Twenty-four
- c. Discussion: Nature & Function of the Qur'an
- d. Reading & Analysis: Article – "The Qur'an: Created or Uncreated?"
- e. Read Chapter Three in Denny

## Thursday, Day 4

- a. Discussion: Pre-Islamic Life & Values in Arabia
- b. Lecture & Discussion: Muhammad's Life & the Beginning of Islam
- c. Writing: Reflection on Qur'an Recitation
- d. Read Chapter Four in Denny

### **Friday, Day 5**

- a. Lecture & Discussion: Islam's Early History to the Sunni-Shi'a Split
- b. Read Chapter Ten in Denny.
- c. Writing: Marking Time in Islam
- d. Read Chapter Ten in Denny

### **Monday, Day 6**

- a. Discussion: The Development of Sufism
- b. Debate: Antinomian Sufis – True Muslims?
- c. Read Chapter Eleven in Denny

### **Tuesday, Day 7**

- a. Student Presentations: Institutions of Sufism
- b. Reading & Discussion: excerpts from “Essential Sufism”
- c. Writing: Analysis of Sufi Poetry
- d. Research: Islam in Selected Countries

### **Wednesday, Day 8**

- a. Discussion: Cultural & Intellectual Achievements in Early Islamic Civilization
- b. Reading & Discussion: Poetry of Al-Andalus
- c. Discussion: Astronomy in Islam
- d. Reading & Discussion: Islam & the Sciences
- e. Discussion: Medical Advances in Muslim Spain
- f. Reading & Discussion: Ibn-Khaldun & the Philosophy of History
- g. Discussion: Math & “Arabic” Numerals
- h. Slideshow & Discussion: Art in the Islamic World
- i. Read Chapter Seven in Denny

### **Thursday, Day 9**

- a. Discussion: Shari'a – Definition & Sources
- b. Discussion: The Prophet's Sunna – Definition & Authenticity
- c. Read Chapter Nine in Denny
- d. Student Presentations: Sunni & Shi'ite Schools of Law
- e. Discussion: Examples of Islamic Law
- f. Research: Islam in Selected Countries

## **Friday, Day 10**

- a. Discussion: Later Islamic History - Empires of the Turks
- b. Reading & Discussion: “Problems of Government”
- c. Discussion: Later Islamic History - Empire of the Safavids
- d. Reading & Discussion: “The Role of the Shah”
- e. Discussion: Later Islamic History – Mughal Empire
- f. Slideshow & Discussion: Mughal Art
- g. Research: Prepare Presentations

## **Monday, Day 11**

- a. Discussion: Islam in the Modern World
- b. Discussion: Egypt & Iqwan
- c. Discussion: Persia in the Age of Imperialism
- d. Discussion: India & Partition
- e. Read Chapter Fourteen in Denny

## **Tuesday, Day 12**

- a. Film & Discussion: Frontline – Muslims in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- b. Student Presentations: Islam in Selected Countries
- c. Discussion: Islam vs. Islamism
- d. Writing: Compatibility of Islam & Democracy
- e. Read Chapter Fifteen in Denny

## **Wednesday, Day 13**

- a. Discussion: Arab Islam & Asian Islam
- b. Discussion: Islam in Europe
- c. Discussion: Islam in North America
- d. Discussion: Women & Islam
- e. Reading & Discussion: “Saudi Women Rise in Defense of the Veil”
- f. Debate: Are Islam & Democracy Compatible?
- g. Read Chapter Sixteen in Denny

## **Thursday, Day 14**

- a. Discussion: Islamic Revolution in Iran
- b. Discussion: Islam in the Media
- c. Review for Post-test
- d. Post-test & SPEs

## **Friday, Day 15**

- a. Film: Osama
- b. Closing & Goodbyes