

RELIGION 230 – ISLAM IN AMERICA (RG, A)
FALL 2014

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Office Hours [Tues. 3:30-4:30, Wed. 1:00 – 3:00](#)

Section 01 TR 8:00 – 9:45
Admin 212

Section 02 TR 9:55 – 11:40
Admin 212

Course Description

This course traces a history of Islam in America, with emphases on (1) Muslim immigration prior to 1900, through slavery and voluntary immigration; (2) the rise of Islamic black nationalism; (3) the role of gender, sexuality, and feminism in contemporary Islam; and (4) the experiences of American Muslims in a post-9/11 world. Since this is a class on the history of Islam in the United States, we will proceed chronologically, beginning with the earliest Muslim immigrants (slaves) and finishing with the post-9/11 context. The course is loosely organized into three thematic sections, focusing on immigration, racial identity, and gender.

If you have never taken a religion course at PLU, I am excited to introduce you to the academic study of religion! The academic study of religion involves taking a critical approach to religious traditions. “Critical” doesn’t mean “negative” here; rather, taking a critical approach means we will pay attention to things like race, gender, and power as we study Islam in America. We will try to examine Islam from as many angles as possible, studying theology, scripture, historical development, and Islam’s relationship with other faiths. The goal is neither to extol nor to demonize this tradition, but to understand it in its complexity. Doing so well requires practicing empathy (attempting to see things through the perspective of others) and doing good historical thinking (paying attention to social context and to change over time). We’ll work on developing these skills all semester.

This course fulfills PLU’s General Education RG requirement. This course also fulfills PLU’s “alternative perspectives” (A) gen-ed requirement. Courses that fulfill the alternative perspectives requirement create “an awareness and understanding of diversity in the United States, directly addressing issues such as ethnicity, gender, disability, racism, or poverty.” This means the course includes:

- The study of minority/majority relations with a focus on how underrepresented or minority perspectives differ from mainstream or majority perspectives.
- Attention to the positive contributions of alternative groups, whose voices are heard through inclusion of materials generated by those groups.
- A unit relating course issues to the situation in the United States.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

1. Narrate the historical development of Islam in America
2. Read & analyze primary texts written by American Muslims
3. Write blog posts and essays connecting individual stories to broader themes about Islam in America
4. Articulate (in writing and oral presentation) an empathetic and critical understanding of a variety of Islamic beliefs and practices as they have appeared in American contexts

Assignments and Grade Distribution

15% - Essay

25% - Exams (take-home)

25% - Final Exam (short answer & essays)

10% - Blog Posts

5% - Presentation

10% - Reports on visiting mosque & Lutheran Studies lecture

10% - class involvement (including informed participation in class activities, preparedness, pop quizzes)

Assignment & Grading Policies

- At least one week prior to each assignment's due date, I will provide a detailed assignment prompt; please ask questions if you do not understand the assignment.
- I return all written work within 2 weeks of its submission.
- You must submit all written work (Essay, Exams) and give a presentation in order to pass the course.
- The penalty for late papers is 5 points for each day late, including weekend days (so if the paper is due Friday at 5pm and you turn it in Monday at 9am, it would be considered 3 days late and incur a 15pt penalty).
- I do grant extensions in certain circumstances, but extensions must be requested in person (in my office hours or after class), at least 24 hours in advance of the due date. If sudden emergency takes you away from campus, you may request extensions via email.
- Written work will not be accepted more than one week after the due date, barring exceptional, well-documented circumstances. (This means if you turn in the essay more than one week after the due date, you will not be able to pass the course.)

Expectations

I expect you to be considerate of others—other classmates, other historical figures, other political viewpoints, and other religious traditions—in both written work and class discussion. While I expect and encourage differences of opinion, intellectual disagreements should not provoke personal attacks. You should feel free engage in dialogue and express ideas in an environment that is free from harassment, discrimination, and exploitation. This freedom of expression does not, however, entail the freedom to threaten, stalk, intimidate, harass, or abuse. You are therefore expected to treat every individual with respect and civility. I expect you to take positions in this class, but I also expect you to respect—and to learn from—the positions of others.

I expect you to complete all reading assignments **before** class meets on the day the reading is assigned. Completing reading assignments requires that you not only read the assigned pages but also that you come prepared to discuss the material and ask questions about the texts under consideration. I expect that you will check your PLU email regularly (several times a week); I will communicate important course information via email.

I expect that you will turn in all written work by the due date specified in the course calendar. **Late essays will be penalized by one-half letter grade (5 points) for each day they are late.** I may grant extensions for requests made at least 24 hours before the due date. If you anticipate needing an extension and are concerned that I understand the particular circumstance necessitating the extension, please come speak to me in office hours.

Electronic Documents, Laptops, Tablets, & Phones

To save money and paper, I will be distributing most course materials via the Sakai website. You can find all Assignments under the “Assignments” tab, and you can find most handouts and readings under the “Resources” tab. You will use the “Forums” to complete your blog posts.

Since we will be doing much of our work electronically, it is appropriate for you to use laptops or tablets (e.g. iPads) during some portions of class time. When we are discussing a reading, handout, or student draft available electronically, you may use a laptop or tablet in class. If you own a tablet, I strongly encourage you to download an annotation app like iAnnotate, PDF Expert, or Adobe Reader. You can also annotate PDFs on a laptop with some of these apps. This course encourages active reading, in which you mark up documents with highlights, notes, and underlining. Reading on a screen encourages passive reading, so if you are reading on a screen, you need to take steps to ensure you’re an active reader. Get a good annotation app and use it (the best ones are around \$10; many are free).

I do not allow phones to be used in class. They do not promote active reading and often serve as a distraction. Repeated usage of a phone in class will result in reduction of your course involvement grade.

Absence/Lateness Policy

I expect you to attend all scheduled class meetings, but I understand that conflicts inevitably arise. I allow each student **three absences without penalty. Each absence after the third—regardless of the reason—will result in a *partial-step drop* in your *final course grade*** (e.g. an A- becomes a B+, a B becomes a B-, and so on). If severe illness or an emergency causes you to miss more than three class meetings, it is your responsibility to discuss the situation with me. Otherwise, you are wholly responsible for ensuring you miss no more than three class meetings (and preferably fewer!). Because of the stiff penalty for missing more than three classes, I suggest you reserve your absences for illness, nonnegotiable engagements away from campus, and true emergencies. Missing class does not excuse you from learning what happened that day, and all assignments must be submitted on time unless you have cleared an alternate due date with the instructor *in advance*.

If you arrive more than five minutes late for class, I will mark you as late. Two late arrivals = one absence. Why the stringent attendance policy? It is important for you to be in class. Each person’s contributions help us learn together. Your peers depend on you for analysis of the texts we read and development of an academic community.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. If you have questions concerning the services available for students with disabilities at PLU, please contact the Office of Disability Support Services at 535-7206 or visit <http://www.plu.edu/dss/home.php>. All information will be kept confidential.

Course Website

The website for this course is in the Sakai system (<http://sakai.plu.edu/portal>). You will submit all essays through the Sakai website; these essays will go through the turnitin database, which assists instructors in identifying plagiarism. You will also submit blog posts on our Sakai site.

Academic Honesty

I expect that you will not cheat or plagiarize, and that you will not condone these behaviors or assist others who cheat or plagiarize. Academic misconduct not only jeopardizes the career of the individual student involved, but also undermines the scholastic achievements of all PLU students and attacks the mission of this institution. Students are inherently responsible to do their own work. The most common forms of dishonesty are cheating and plagiarism.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- Submitting material that is not yours as part of your course performance, such as copying from another student's exam or allowing another student to copy from your exam
- Fabricating information
- Violating procedures prescribed to protect the integrity of an assignment, test, or other evaluation
- Cooperating with or helping another student to cheat
- Other forms of dishonest behavior, such as having another person take an exam for you, altering exam answers and requesting the exam be re-graded; or, communicating with anyone other than a proctor or instructor during an exam.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- Directly quoting the words of others without using quotation marks or indented format to identify them
- Using altered wording, materials or ideas of others without properly identifying their source
- Representing an idea or strategy as one's own when it comes from someone else

If you are unsure about the proper use of materials, then ask me for clarification. All significant instances of cheating and plagiarism will be referred to an Academic Dishonesty Hearing Panel (minor, first-time offenses may be settled by faculty-student resolution), and serious plagiarism will result in failure of the course. See <http://www.plu.edu/academics/integ.html> for more details.

Textbooks

There are four required textbooks; all of them are available at Garfield Books.

Curtis, Edward E., ed. *Columbia Sourcebook of Muslims in the U.S.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.

GhaneaBassiri, Kambiz. *A History of Islam in America.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Malcolm X. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X, as told to Alex Haley.* New York: Ballantine Books, 1964.

Waldman, Amy. *The Submission.* New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2011.

*** Additional readings will be posted on the course website. ***

A Final Note

Please don't hesitate to talk to me about *any* issues related to the course. If you have questions or concerns about readings, assignments, feedback, or class activities, I hope you'll ask me. That's what I'm here for! I prefer to meet during my regularly scheduled office hours (see p.1 of the syllabus), but if you cannot meet during those times, please email me to set up an appointment. You may sign up for an office hours appointment with me at: <http://tinyurl.com/ow2qsdd>. Please don't hesitate to set up an appointment during my office hours – they are there for you! I enjoy talking with students one-on-one; it allows us to get to know one another and helps me know how to help you learn. I look forward to getting to know each of you better over the course of this term, and I hope our conversations both in and out of class will facilitate our intellectual pursuits.

Course Schedule

Note: This schedule may change somewhat during the semester. All changes will be mentioned in class and announced via email. Readings preceded by a boldface **S:** can be found under “Resources” on Sakai. All other readings are identified by the last name of the author or editor of the book (e.g. GhaneaBassiri or Curtis). **Please bring copies of all reading materials to class on the day they are assigned.**

Section I: Muslim Immigrants

Tu, September 9 – Introduction to Islam in America

Th, September 11 – Islamic Belief, Early American Muslims, and Liminality

Read: GhaneaBassiri, 9-32

Tu, September 16 – Muslim & Christians in Early America

Read: GhaneaBassiri, 33-73

S: T.H. Gallaudet, “A Statement with Regard to the Moorish Prince”

Th, September 18 – Muslim Slaves in the United States

Read: Curtis, 5-9 (Autobiography of Omar ibn Sayid) **(BP1 – group A)**

Curtis, 29-39 (WPA Interviews) **(BP1 – group B)**

Friday, September 19 – Drop Deadline (no fee)

Tu, September 23 – Race, Religion, Progress, Justice

Read: GhaneaBassiri, 95-134

Th, September 25 – No regular class meeting; all students must attend ONE event at the Lutheran Studies conference; [for schedule click here](#)

Mon, September 29 – Report on Lutheran Studies conference due at noon; post on Sakai

Tu, September 30 – Middle Eastern and Asian Immigration & Exam Review

Read: GhaneaBassiri, 135-164

Th, October 2 – World’s Parliament of Religions

Read: Curtis, 9-17 (Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb) **(BP1 – group C)**

Curtis, 46-58 (Pir Inyat Khan and *Moslem Sunrise*) **(BP1 – group D)**

Mon, October 6 – Exam 1 (take-home) due at noon on Sakai

Section II: Islam & Black Identity

** Make plans to attend an Islamic service between 10/3 - 11/21. You will write about your visit to the service in a report. The closest mosque to PLU is the Islamic Center of Tacoma on Bridgeport Way. **

Tu, October 7 – Black Nationalism

Read: GhaneaBassiri, 193-227

Th, October 9 – The Nation of Islam

Read: Curtis, 59-72 (Noble Drew Ali and Shaikh Daoud Ahmed Faisal) **(BP1 – group E)**

Curtis, 92-104, 116-120 (Elijah & W.D. Muhammad, Malcolm X) **(BP1 – group F)**

Tu, October 14 – Garveyites & the New Deal **(BP2 – group A)**

Read: Malcolm X, 1-72 (chs. 1-4)

Th, October 16 – The Religions of the City

Read: Malcolm X, 73-110, 137-153 (chs. 5-6, 9)

Tu, October 21 – Prison Faith **(BP2 – group B)**

Read: Malcolm X, 154-239 (chs. 10-13)

Wed, October 22, 7:30pm – Knutson Lecture in Karen Hille Phillips – extra credit opportunity

Th, October 23 – Civil Rights Movement & Religion

Read: Malcolm X, 271-324 (chs. 15-16)

Tu, October 28 – Islamic “Orthodoxy” & Exam Review

Read: Malcolm X, 325-370 (chs. 17-18)

Th, October 30 – **No class**

Fr, October 31 – Exam 2 (take-home) due at noon on Sakai

Section III: Women, Gender, and post-9/11 Islam

Tu, November 4 – The Place of Women in American Islam **(BP2 – group C)**

Read: Curtis, 183-198, 207-215 (Leila Ahmed, Carol Amway, Asma Gull Hasan)

Th, November 6 – Feminism

Read: Curtis, 223-231, 239-246, 252-263 (Amina Wadud, Imam Zaid Shakir, Ingrid Mattson)

Tu, November 11 – Dating, Marriage, Families **(BP2 – group D)**

Read: Waldman, 1-77 (chs. 1-8)

Veterans’ Day (both sections will end 45 minutes early)

Th, November 13 – Arabs, Israelis, & Islamic Terrorism

Read: Waldman, 78-119 (chs. 9-11)

Tu, November 18 – Violence & the Qu’ran **(BP2 – group E)**

Read: Waldman, 123-204 (chs. 12-17)

Th, November 20 – Islamophobia

Read: Waldman, 207-258 (chs. 18-22)

Mon, November 24 – Report on mosque visit due at noon; post on Sakai

Tu, November 25 – *The Submission* **(BP2 – group F)**

Read: Waldman, 259-299 (chs. 23-end)

Th, November 27 – **NO CLASS** – Thanksgiving Break

Monday, December 1 – Withdrawal Deadline (fee & instructor signature)

Tu, December 2 – Screening of “The Mosque in Morgantown”

Essay on the Submission due at class time; post on Sakai

Th, December 4 – Being Muslim in post-9/11 America

Read: Curtis, 269-292

Tu, December 9 – Islam and Democracy

Read: Curtis, 306-322

Th, December 11 – Re-thinking Islam and American Religion

Mon, December 16, 8:00-9:50 – Final Exam for 8:00am section (Sect. 01)

Tu, December 17, 8:00-9:50 – Final Exam for 9:55am section (Sect. 02)