

RSOC 190R. Islam: Reformation and Modernity.
Winter 2010.

Prof. D. Pinault.
Tuesday-Thursday 9.55-11.40am.

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Course description and objectives.

This course focuses on the various ways in which Islamic societies and individual members of the Islamic tradition are responding to the challenges of modernity and globalization.

The course begins with study of the Qur'an and the life of the Prophet Muhammad, especially those aspects of the Prophet's life that are regarded as paradigmatic for the formation of Muslim society. After a brief review of theological and political developments in early Islamic history, we will examine the writings of reformers linked to revivalist movements dating from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first. I will give special attention to two concurrent developments in Muslim societies: the decline of the caliphate and the loss of Islamic political power as a coherent imperial entity, and the impact of westernization and the social dislocations associated with modernity. Our readings will examine a variety of Muslim responses to these developments, ranging from militant fundamentalist to liberal humanist. The topics to be addressed in these readings include:

- diversity, tolerance, and religious pluralism;
- the rights and duties of the individual in an Islamic state and in a Muslim-majority society;
- women's status in Islam;
- apostasy, conversion, and freedom of conscience;
- the various meanings of jihad (with consideration of Muslim reactions to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001).

It is the argument of this course that:

- Islam—like every religion—is an open-ended tradition that is shaped by, but not limited to, its historical manifestations in the past.
- A frank examination of problematic aspects of the Islamic tradition is needed, together with a willingness to reconsider traditional interpretations of scripture and teachings long taken for granted.
- Many Muslims (like members of other scriptural faiths) have tended to deal with their religion's problematic aspects via a process I call 'selective appropriation' (a concept to be explored this quarter); being conscious of this process and its moral implications facilitates the possibilities of reform within the tradition.
- Resources for constructive reform and engagement with the challenges of modernity exist within the Islamic tradition.

The outcome I hope for, in offering this course: that you acquire a familiarity with currents of thought in present-day Islamic societies, together with a grounding in Islamic scripture and theological movements, sufficient to be of use to you as you evaluate—and

perhaps participate in—ongoing discussions relating to the reformation of the Muslim tradition. It is my conviction that engagement with issues of reformation and modernity in Islam offers lessons about critical thinking with regard to one’s own faith—whether one is Muslim or non-Muslim. This course should help you ponder one of the greatest challenges presented by modernity: is it possible to be a critically thinking, educated adult and simultaneously a person of faith? The ideal place to tackle such a question, it seems to me, is a Catholic university, ie, a place where (to paraphrase theologian George Dennis O’Brien) scholars can be free of the dogmatic atheism of so much of academia while also investigating and critiquing (rather than simply defending) religious dogma. In short, a Catholic university is a place where scholars and students together can investigate the trace-elements of divinity around us (on the horizons, and within ourselves, as the Qur’an puts it), ie, the patterns of meaning linking the universe.

RSOC 190 and Santa Clara University’s Core Curriculum.

I am in the process of seeking authorization to have RSOC 190 approved as an RTC (Religion, Theology & Culture) level 3 course. Santa Clara University’s Core Curriculum guidelines list as follows the *goals* of RTC 3 courses:

“Critical thinking; ethical reasoning; religious reflection; perspective.”

The Core Curriculum guidelines list as follows the *Core Learning Objectives* for RTC 3 courses:

--“Students will be able to identify diverse perspectives and evaluate ethical positions on contemporary questions.”

--“Students will be able to evaluate and apply insights from the study of religion to open-ended questions facing contemporary society.”

Keeping in mind the above guidelines, I define as follows the **particular learning objectives for our course**:

--Knowledge of Islamic scripture, doctrine, and history, so as to enable us to understand how Qur’anic scripture, religious teachings, and historical events have shaped the contours of issues in the contemporary Muslim world.

--the ability to identify diverse perspectives that are particularly influential in today’s Islamic societies with regard to contemporary issues. The perspectives to be investigated this quarter range from shari’ah-minded Deobandi Islamism and Wahhabi-inflected Salafism to Qur’anically-oriented feminism and postpositivist philosophy.

--the ability to evaluate the ethical implications of the positions taken by present-day Muslim activists, intellectuals, and religious leaders, with an eye to addressing an overarching question: in what ways might one envision an Islamic Reformation that addresses 21st-century modernities?

--the application of insights from the study of Islamic doctrine and primary-source texts to several pressing and urgent issues confronting Muslim societies today, most notably: the possibilities for promoting religious pluralism and intellectual diversity in 21st-century Islam; the correlation of women’s status with Qur’anic prescriptions; the question of violence in the name of religion; and controversies over conversion, apostasy, and freedom of conscience.

--reflection on the larger ethical implications of each of these issues. Part of the argument of this course is that the study of such issues in Islam is an opportunity to reflect on the bearing they may have globally for non-Muslim as well as Muslim societies. Thus each of us in this course will be challenged to think critically about how the study of modernity and the possibilities for a reformation in Islam offer perspectives on: the dialectic between personal and communal identity; the tensions and challenges accompanying the notion of freedom of conscience; and the ways in which globalization affects prospects for religious pluralism and coexistence among diverse religious communities in the 21st century. This course is structured so as to encourage spiritual introspection in each of us: how does the study of contemporary Islam challenge us to reflect on what it means to be an educated person who is open to the possibility of encountering the sacred in today's world?

Assessment of learning.

The *final grade* will be assigned on the following basis:

There will be *four summary-response essays*, each worth 15% of the final grade. The *first essay* will involve analysis of key scriptural passages related to the doctrine of *'ismah* (the infallibility and perfection of Islam's prophets), followed by examination of Pakistan's Penal Ordinance 295 B-C (the so-called "blasphemy law") and the effects of this code on non-Muslim minority populations and Muslim religious dissidents. Students will then analyze the work of individuals who have challenged this doctrine and ordinance. The *second essay* entails an analysis of primary-source proclamations by al-Qaeda leaders in light of relevant passages from the Qur'an and calls by reconciliation-minded Muslims for "dialogue among civilizations." The *third essay* involves an analysis of the deployment of Qur'anic vocabulary in the "Covenant of Hamas," followed by an examination of divergent positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the writings of Tariq Ramadan, Irshad Manji, and Ismaili al-Faruqi. The *fourth essay* involves students in present-day controversies concerning freedom of conscience in Islam by focusing on the issue of apostasy. Students will analyze relevant Qur'an passages and then study the case-histories of individuals in Europe and Muslim Southeast Asia who have recently converted from Islam to other faiths. This essay will also require evaluation of divergent views on this topic among contemporary Muslim thinkers.

These four essays will afford us opportunities *to identify diverse perspectives and evaluate ethical positions on contemporary questions in today's Islamic societies.*

The *research project* is worth 20% of the final grade.

Students will choose a controversy to investigate that is related to contemporary Islamic society. This investigation will entail the analysis of a primary-source text in light of relevant Qur'an passages and other materials from our syllabus. There will be several group fieldtrips to Bay Area mosques as part of this course; students may use the interviews they conduct with members of these mosque congregations as data to provide local perspectives on global issues confronting Islamic communities in the 21st century.

This research paper will offer us opportunities *to evaluate and apply insights from the study of Islam to open-ended questions—such as women’s status, possibilities for religious pluralism, and reinterpretations of the concept of jihad—facing contemporary Islamic societies.*

Class participation is valued at 20% of the final grade.

This is meant to encourage your daily engagement with the assigned materials, so that you *develop the discipline of identifying perspectives on contemporary questions in Islam and evaluating these issues on an ongoing basis* throughout the academic quarter. Daily participation, like the writing assignments described above, is structured so as *to facilitate religious reflection*: analysis of how contemporary intellectuals respond to the challenge of modernity and Islamic reformation will encourage you to reflect on how you integrate your own personal and spiritual identity in today’s globalized and pluralistic world.

Please note: This course is a Religious Studies seminar. As such, it is particularly oriented to the *daily discussion and analysis* of the assigned materials. All students enrolled in this course are expected to accept the responsibility of making this the best possible seminar, by reading the assigned materials carefully, by bringing to class the requisite texts, by preparing questions for classroom analysis, and by making thoughtful and informed contributions to classroom discussion on a regular basis. See further notes on this topic below, under the heading of “class participation.”

Islamic Studies Pathway.

This course is associated with SCU’s Core Curriculum Pathway in Islamic Studies. If you declare a Pathway in this area, you may use a representative piece of work from this course in the Pathway portfolio you will complete during your senior year.

Course syllabus.

(Please note: readings are to be completed in time for the class under which they are listed. Be sure to bring to class the texts (including printed copies of e-res readings) assigned for the given day.)

1.) Tuesday, January 5.

Introduction to the course. Establishing a context for understanding Islam and the life of the prophet Muhammad: the religion of the Jahiliyah—culture, tradition, and values in the Arabian peninsula of the pre-Islamic era. General considerations: creedal and non-creedal religions. The Jahiliyah social and religious legacy: sunnah; jinns; Allah and the Daughters of Allah.

2.) Thursday, January 7.

The early life of the prophet Muhammad. The Qur'an and the da'wah (the summons to preach Islam): Meccan revelations. Tawhid (the assertion of divine oneness) and final judgment. Human nature as depicted in Islamic scripture. The natural world in relation to divinity; Qur'anic responses to the Jahiliyah. The Prophet's experiences in Mecca. The reflection of cultural context and professional worklife in Qur'anic verses.

Readings: Faruqi, *Islam*, 1-18; Qur'an, surahs (chapters) 1, 112, 96 (tawhid, judgment, and human nature); Qur'an, surahs 55, 45.21-35, 44.34-42 (judgment, the natural world, and the Jahiliyah); Qur'an 2.243-245 (cf. fn.274), 9.111, 35.29-30, 61.10 (cultural context/professional worklife); Qur'an 53.19-28 (the "Daughters of Allah"); Qur'an 22.52-53, 2.106, & 16.101 (the question of "abrogated" verses); Qur'an 80.1-10 (see also the "Summary & Introduction" to chapter 80, p.1599).

Questions for classroom discussion:

What do the above Qur'anic verses tell us about the afterlife? What kinds of imagery/metaphors recur in Q.2.243-5, 9.111, 35.29-30, & 61.10, and what do they tell us about the human environment in which Muhammad preached? What does the incident recorded in Q.80.1-10 tell us about him?

3.) Tuesday, January 12.

The Qur'anic "chain of the prophets." The patterns of human history according to the Qur'an. Qur'anic sources and the question of "Tales of the Ancients."

Readings: Faruqi, *Islam*, 19-44; Qur'an, surah 7 (prophethood and human history); Bible, *Genesis*, chapters 6-9; Qur'an 25.4-6 ("Tales of the Ancients").

Questions for classroom discussion:

Qur'an, chapter 7: Describe the recurrent patterns of human history and the events that tend to befall prophets as described in this chapter. How does Qur'an 7.182-185 clarify the themes of this chapter? Compare the story of Noah in this Qur'anic chapter with the story of Noah as presented in the Bible (*Genesis*, chapters 6-9).

4.) Thursday, January 14.

Islam as an Abrahamic faith. Qur'anic interpretations of Judaism and Christianity. The concept of *ahl al-kitab* ("People of the Book"). Religious faith in relation to personal identity vs. communal identity. The *dhimmi* and the question of tolerance: Qur'anic verses on the status of Jews, Christians, and other non-Muslims. Theory and practice: the status of non-Muslims in contemporary Pakistan and Yemen.

Readings: Faruqi, 53-68 (NB: a correction to Faruqi, p.67—the jizyah tax-rate typically has been much higher than the zakat); Qur'an 6.71-92 & 21.51-75 (Abraham & Azar); Q. 60.1-4 (Abraham as "an excellent example"); 2.125-29 (Abr., Isma'il, and the Kaaba); 3.64-68 (Abraham as a hanif); Q.2.87-88, 4.44-48, 5.51-60, 3.85, 9.28-31, 11.118-119, 5.48, 5.69, 2.62, 2.256, 18.29-31, 10.98-103, 5.82, 2.63-65, 7.159-166 (the status of Jews, Christians, and other non-Muslims); Pinault,

“Pakistan’s Christians Face Sectarian Violence”; Pinault, “Islam, Christianity, and the Challenge of Religious Freedom in Yemen” (Course reader).

Questions for classroom discussion:

What do the above Qur’an passages say about Abraham? Compare how the Qur’an presents the doctrines of Judaism and Christianity with how the Qur’an presents Jews and Christians. According to the Qur’an, what possibilities of salvation exist for non-Muslims in general and/or Jews and Christians in particular? From the viewpoint of Islamic theology, which is the world’s oldest religion, and what is the Islamic justification for this view? Compare Faruqi’s assertions about the status of non-Muslims in “the Islamic World Order” with the situations confronting Christians as described in the above essays on contemporary Pakistan and Yemen.

5.) Tuesday, January 19.

Muhammad in Medina. The question of jihad and qital (struggle and combat).

“Those who purchase idle tales”: irreverence, satire and defiance among the poets, storytellers, and singers of Muhammad’s time. The fate of Nadr ibn al-Harith: implications for questions of free speech and blasphemy today. Dhimmi/jizyah: the status of non-Muslims under Islamic rule. Diversity, tolerance, and pluralism in the 21st century. Muslims as a minority population in contemporary secular societies: the example of India.

Readings: Qur’an 31.6-7 and n.3584; Q.2.190-194, 2.217-218, 2.243-252, 3.169-171, 9.1-16, 25.52, 49.15, 60.1 (the question of jihad and warfare in defense of the faith; see also note 274 on p.99 of our Qur’an text); Pinault, “The Sunnah of the Prophet: A Sampling of Exemplary Behavior and Statements” (2 pp., Course Reader); Pinault, “The Prophet Muhammad and His Interactions With Certain Poets, Singers, and Storytellers” (3 pp., Course Reader); Liberal Islam, Humayun Kabir, “Minorities in a Democracy,” 145-154. (Note the term ‘avatar’: in Hinduism, an incarnation on earth, in human or animal form, of the god Vishnu; the avatar is motivated by compassionate concern for humankind.)

Questions for classroom discussion:

What do the above Qur’an passages say about warfare in defense of the faith? What portrait of the prophet Muhammad emerges from the sunnah/hadith and biographical data in “The Sunnah of the Prophet” and “The Prophet Muhammad and His Interactions...”? What are the moral implications and challenges associated with this material with regard to the prospects for an Islamic Reformation? Summarize and evaluate the arguments in Kabir’s essay. Take into account these questions: 1.) What does Kabir say about group identity, power, and minority status? 2.) What is his view of secular government? 3.) How does he account for the growth of Islam in India? 4.) What does he identify as the “flaws” in Hindu and Muslim attitudes to other faiths? 5.) Identify the terms kafirs/mlecchas and how they affect interfaith relations in India. 6.) How does he use the concepts of prophethood, ahl al-kitab and avatar? 7.) What group would you estimate to be Kabir’s primary audience, and what would you say is potentially the most shocking/innovative/provocative argument in this essay with regard to that target audience?

6.) Thursday, January 21. **FIRST SUMMARY/RESPONSE ESSAY DUE.**

The concept of prophetic 'ismah (sinlessness/infallibility/perfection). Perspectives on Qur'anic prophethood: a comparison of the Biblical King David and Qur'anic prophet David (Da'oud). The doctrine of Muhammad as ma'sum (sinless/infallible/perfect). Readings: Mawdudi, "The Prophethood," pp.29-35 (Course Reader); Bible, 2 Samuel chapter 11.1-27 & chapter 12.1-24 (David, Bathsheba, Uriah, and Nathan); Qur'an 38.17-26 (cf. esp. fn.4178); Q. 80.1-10 (see also the "Summary & Introduction" to this chapter, p.1599); Ayaan Hirsi Ali, "A Call for Clear Thinking" (from The Caged Virgin, 171-176[Course Reader]); Pinault, "Losers' Vengeance" [concerning Pakistan's blasphemy law/Ordinance 295 B-C] (Course Reader); Pinault, "Wronged and Wronged Again" [a review of Hirsi Ali's book The Caged Virgin] (Course Reader).

FIRST SUMMARY/RESPONSE ESSAY:

For this essay you should draw on the readings assigned for today's class, together with the previously assigned sunnah/hadith/biographical material "The Sunnah of the Prophet" and "The Prophet Muhammad and His Interactions..." Feel free to make use of additional Qur'anic and Biblical passages as you deem appropriate. (NB: Our Qur'an translation has a very useful subject index.)

Questions to address for this first essay assignment: 1.) Compare the Biblical and Qur'anic versions of this incident from David's life. What similarities, differences, and omissions do you notice? What do these passages suggest about Biblical and Qur'anic understandings of divine-human relations and the qualities of human leadership? 2.) Evaluate what Mawdudi says about the characteristics of a prophet in light of these scriptural portraits of David. What does the incident recorded in Q.80.1-10 tell us about the prophet Muhammad? 3.) The online article "Wronged and Wronged Again" offers an overview of Hirsi Ali's career. In her essay "A Call for Clear Thinking," why, in her opinion, is it necessary to question the doctrine of the infallibility of the prophet Muhammad? 4.) Such questioning of Muhammad's status is deemed insulting in traditional Islamic societies; such insults are punishable by law—Ordinance 295 B-C—in Pakistan (see the online "Losers' Vengeance" article). According to this article, what effect does 295 B-C have on Pakistan's Muslim and non-Muslim populations? 5.) Hirsi Ali defends the notion of blasphemy as an intellectual endeavor by quoting a civil rights leader: "In a democracy there is no right not to be offended." What is meant by this statement? Do you agree or disagree? 6.) In light of all the above readings, what, in your opinion, are the implications of these texts and controversies with regard to the possibilities for a 21st-century Reformed Islam? What might be the contours of such a reformed version of the Islamic faith?

7.) Tuesday, January 26.

The "four rightly-guided caliphs" and the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties: Islamic military conquests and the Islamic empire of the global ummah. The Ottoman Turkish dynasty and jihad against Europe. Islamic political decline, European colonial empires, and Islamic confrontations with Western modernity.

Readings: Faruqi, 69-80; Islam in Transition: Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, "An Islamic Response to Imperialism" and "Islamic Solidarity," 13-19; Muhammad 'Abduh, "Islam, Reason, and Civilization," 20-23; Hasan al-Banna, "The New Renaissance," 59-63.

Questions for classroom discussion:

Summarize and evaluate the arguments in the writings by Afghani, 'Abduh, and al-Banna. Take into account these questions: 1.) How does Afghani explain the decline of Islamic societies in the modern world, and how does he explain the rise of "the Europeans" and the West? 2.) What suggestions does he offer for the revival of Islam? 3.) In his discussion of "Islamic Solidarity," what concepts does he reject (and what period of Arab history are these concepts linked to), and what does he advocate? 4.) According to 'Abduh, what makes Islam different from the religions that preceded it? 5.) What 19th-century European scientific theory seems to influence his model of religious history? 6.) According to him, what intellectual and religious changes did the West undergo during the Crusades, and what caused these changes? 7.) What does he consider to be the source of the "fundamental principles of modern civilization"? 8.) According to al-Banna, what "three factors" led to the rise of Islamic movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood? 9.) Identify the "three regimes" and the values they share with Islamic prayer, according to al-Banna. 10.) In your opinion, what is al-Banna trying to accomplish by comparing the "three regimes" with Islamic prayer? 11.) Compare Afghani, 'Abduh, and al-Banna in how they respond to the challenge of European preeminence.

8.) Thursday, January 28. **RESEARCH PROJECT PROSPECTUS DUE.**

Modernity and Islamic revivalism in its militant form: the writings of Sayyid Qutb and Muhammad Abdel Salam al-Farag.

Readings: Islam in Transition, Sayyid Qutb, "Jihad in the Cause of God," 409-416; al-Farag, "The Forgotten Duty," 417-424. For background on Qutb, read Islam in Transition, 403-407.

Questions for classroom discussion:

Summarize and evaluate the arguments in the essays by Qutb and al-Farag. 1.) What is Qutb's view of jihad, and what views of jihad and Islam does he reject? 2.) How does he reconcile his vision of jihad with the Qur'anic verse "There is no compulsion in religion" (Q.2.256)? 3.) What distinction does he make between belief and religion so as to be able to say that Islam doesn't "force its beliefs on people"? 4.) What change or evolution in jihad took place during the prophet Muhammad's career, according to Qutb, and how should this evolution affect Muslims today in their behavior and view of jihad? 5.) What is the implication of his describing jihad as "an eternal state" ("state" here meaning condition or circumstance)? NB: The "orientalists" to whom Qutb continually refers are non-Muslim scholars of Islam, whom he regards as offering a tame and domesticated interpretation of Islam and jihad. 6.) Al-Farag: How does he make use of the interpretive principle of the "abrogating and the abrogated passages from the Qur'an" to deal with scriptural passages that encourage "peace with the infidels"? 7.) What views of jihad do Qutb

and al-Farag share in common? NB: Many of the “sword verses” referred to by al-Farag occur in chapter 9 of the Qur’an, considered by many Muslim commentators to be “late Medinan” and among the last Qur’an verses to be revealed.

9.) Tuesday, February 2. **SECOND SUMMARY/RESPONSE ESSAY DUE.**

Modernity and Islamic revivalism in its militant form (II): the writings of Osama bin Laden.

Readings: The Al Qaeda Reader, Bin Laden, “Moderate Islam is a Prostration to the West,” 17-62. NB: Bin Laden’s treatise is a response to two documents: a public statement in 2002 by 60 American intellectuals, entitled “What We’re Fighting For,” and a statement in response by 153 Saudi religious scholars/intellectuals, entitled “How We Can Coexist.” Cf. Al Qaeda Reader, p.285, n.4. NB: the doctrine of “loyalty and enmity” referred to by Bin Laden is the teaching mandating a Muslim’s loyalty to Islam and fellow Muslims and enmity towards unbelievers.

SECOND SUMMARY/RESPONSE ESSAY:

Questions to address for this second essay assignment: 1.) How would you characterize Osama Bin Laden’s overall style of scriptural exegesis in his use of verses from the Qur’an? 2.) According to Bin Laden, what are the limitations of the kind of Islam “preached by the advocates of interreligious dialogue”? 3.) What objection does he have to the notion of a “dialogue among civilizations” and the attempt to find “shared commonalities” between Islam and the West? 4.) What use does he make of the prophet Muhammad’s life to justify his stance towards jihad and infidels? 5.) Bin Laden notes (pp.33-35) that the Saudi intellectuals attempted to reach out in a conciliatory way to Americans by quoting Q.5.82. How does he refute their use of this verse? 6.) What is his view of the United Nations “principle of equality” and what use does he make of Q.2.221 to reply to this U.N. principle? 7.) How does he use the second half of Q.2.256 and the principle of “abrogation” to deal with the Saudi intellectuals’ use of this Qur’an verse? (cf. also p.44) 8.) Compare Bin Laden’s vision of the “three options” available to infidels (p.42) with Faruqi’s vision of the “Islamic World Order” (Islam, 64-68). 9.) In what way does the Qur’anic Abraham serve Bin Laden as a model of conduct? 10.) Bin Laden quotes the Saudi declaration (p.51): “We believe that Islam is the truth; however, it is not possible ... under our sharia to impose our particular beliefs.” How does Bin Laden use the ‘dhimmitude’ concept to reply to this assertion? 11.) Finally—and this is especially important—how would you make use of the Qur’an (citing specific passages where possible) and other resources for replying to Bin Laden’s assertions and helping in the argument for a 21st-century Reformed Islam?

10.) Thursday, February 4.

“Puritan” Islam, violence, and the question of religious tolerance: one Muslim’s reply to contemporary militant interpretations of Islam.

Readings: Islam in Transition, Khaled Abou El Fadl, “Islam and Violence,” 460-4; Abou El Fadl, “The Place of Tolerance in Islam,” (Course Reader), 3-23, 113; review Faruqi, Islam, 74-80; Liberal Islam, Abdul-Karim Soroush, “The Evolution and Devolution of Religious Knowledge,” 244-251.

Questions for classroom discussion:

Summarize and evaluate Abou El Fadl’s arguments. 1.) What aspects of Islam does he emphasize in the “Islam and Violence” essay, and what use does he make of the terms jihad and qital to clarify Islam’s relation to the question of religiously permissible violence? 2.) “The Place of Tolerance”: What explanation does he offer for the rise of Muslim Puritanism? 3.) What factors led to the rise and success of Wahhabism? 4.) What distinction does he make between Wahhabism and “militant Puritan groups”? 5.) What characterizes Muslim Puritans’ orientation to the Qur’an and Qur’an interpretation? 6.) What kind of religious toleration is espoused by Muslim Puritans, according to Abou El Fadl? 7.) On p.14, he quotes Q.4.135. What role does this verse play in his understanding of the Qur’an? 8.) On pp.15-23, Abou El Fadl presents what might be called an “interactive reader-response approach” to Qur’an interpretation. Clarify what is meant by such a form of Qur’an interpretation. Why does he consider humans’ ability to interpret scripture a “burden”? 9.) P.16: In the pre-modern period, what effect did Islamic civilization’s “political dominance and superiority” have on Qur’an interpretation? 10.) Soroush’s essay depends on a distinction between the philosophic schools of positivism and post-positivism. If you’re unclear about these terms, check a reference work (Wikipedia offers brief but serviceable definitions of each term.) How does Soroush make use of post-positivism with regard to Qur’an interpretation?

11.) Tuesday, February 9. **THIRD SUMMARY/RESPONSE ESSAY DUE.**

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict from the perspective of Qur’an interpretation and Islamic relations with the West.

Readings: Islam in Transition, “The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas,” 433-443; “Suicide Bombings and Martyrdom,” 469-72; Tariq Ramadan, “The Arab World and the Muslims Faced with Their Contradictions,” 474-79; Irshad Manji, The Trouble with Islam Today, 94-133; unabridged version of Mithaq Hamas (“the Covenant of Hamas,” in our Course Reader); Ismail al-Faruqi, “Islam and Zionism,” 261-267 (Course Reader).

THIRD SUMMARY/RESPONSE ESSAY:

Questions to address for this third essay assignment: Covenant/Hamas: 1.) Hamas defines itself as an “Islamic Resistance Movement.” According to the Hamas Covenant, what role is envisioned for Islam in Palestine, for example, in regulating relations between Muslims and non-Muslims? What is the implication of calling Palestine “an Islamic Waqf”? (NB: Waqf: a religious endowment, in which ownership of a property is surrendered permanently to Allah and income derived

from the property is reserved for a specific Islamic charitable purpose that conforms to the good of the ummah.) According to the Covenant, what effect does the presence or absence of Islam have on society, and what objection does Hamas have to the Palestine Liberation Organization? 2.) Evaluate the differences between the abridged version (in our Islam in Transition text) and the unabridged version (in our Course Reader) of the Hamas Covenant. What passages have been omitted from our Islam in Transition textbook? How might these omissions affect the viewpoint of English-language readers? 3.) "Suicide Bombings": Qaradhawi's fatwa refers to suicide bombings as "martyrdom operations." What is the implication of this term, and how does he justify such "operations"? 4.) On p.471 Qaradhawi quotes Q.9.111. What use does he make of this verse to distinguish between the act of suicide and "martyrdom operations"? 5.) What objection is voiced in the "contrary opinion"? 6.) Tariq Ramadan: What criticism does he make of fellow Muslim Arabs, especially with regard to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict? 7.) Evaluate Faruqi's solution to what he calls "the Jewish problem" and Zionism. 8.) Manji: Her book is directed primarily to a readership of fellow Muslims. What is her view of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and what aspect of Israeli society does she consider positive or worth emulating? 9.) In your opinion, how might a Reformed Islam in the 21st century most constructively engage the issue of Israeli-Palestinian relations?

12.) Thursday, February 11.

Shari'ah, society, and the ideal Islamic state.

Readings: Islam in Transition: Mawdudi, "Nationalism and Islam," 74-77, and "Political Theory of Islam," 262-270; Al-Muhajiroun, "Reviving the Muslim Ummah to Greatness." (1 page; Course Reader)

Questions for classroom discussion:

Summarize and evaluate these readings. 1.) Mawdudi: What is his view of nationalism, and how is this view related to the concept of the "Rasul" (Islamic prophet)? 2.) What is Mawdudi's view of the Islamic state, the role of individuals therein, and the concept of individual privacy in Muslim society? 3.) Check an encyclopedia such as the Britannica for definitions of the word 'totalitarianism.' To what extent do Mawdudi's views on the state conform to or differ from the totalitarian ideal? 4.) Muhajiroun: What view of Islamic history and the Khilafah (caliphate-system of Islamic government) is presented here? NB: Arabic terms: Deen (the Islamic religion); Sahaba (Companions of the prophet Muhammad); Khalifah (caliph, person who administers the khilafah); Kuffar (plural of Kafir: unbeliever/pagan); Al-Hamdulillah (Praise be to Allah/Thank God); Insha-Allah (God willing/If Allah wills it).

13.) Tuesday, February 16.

Women's status in contemporary Islam.

Readings: Qur'an 2.228, 4.1-3, 4.34, 4.129, 24.2, 24.30-31, 33.28-35, 33.59, 35.18; Faruqi, Islam, 45-52; Islam in Transition, "The Islamic Veil," 212-214; "Sisters in Islam," 197-202; Mawdudi, "Towards Understanding Islam," 144-150 (Course Reader).

Questions for classroom discussion:

Summarize and evaluate these readings, giving particular attention to Qur'anic pronouncements on the status of women. 1.) Compare Mawdudi and Faruqi's views of male-female relations, the family, and women's role in society. 2.) The fatwas in the "Islamic Veil" section were issued in response to a ruling by the French government that prohibited the wearing of the veil in public schools. How do the fatwas make use of both the Qur'an and the principles of secularism? 3.) "Sisters in Islam": What use is made of the Qur'an to modify Malaysia's polygamy laws?

14.) Thursday, February 18. **4TH SUMMARY-RESPONSE ESSAY DUE.**

Freedom of conscience and Islamic doctrines concerning apostasy.

Readings: Liberal Islam, Mohamed Talbi, "Religious Liberty," 161-168; Ibn Warraq, "Islam, Apostasy, and Human Rights" (Course Reader); review Faruqi, Islam, p.68; check online to read articles about the controversy surrounding two recent apostasy cases: Lina Joy (in Malaysia) and Magdi Allam (in Italy).

FOURTH SUMMARY/RESPONSE ESSAY:

Questions to address for this fourth essay: 1.) According to Ibn Warraq (who himself is an apostate from Islam), what do the prophetic hadith and thinkers such as Mawdudi have to say about apostasy from Islam and its attendant penalties? 2.) What use does Talbi make of Qur'an verses to argue for an alternative understanding of apostasy? 3.) Compare Talbi and Faruqi on apostasy. 4.) Evaluate the experience of Lina Joy and Magdi Allam, and the reactions they faced from the Muslim communities they left, in light of the views on apostasy voiced by Talbi and Faruqi. 5.) Discuss what resources are available (whether from the Qur'an or other sources) for the advocacy of a 21st-century Reformed Islam that prioritizes the principle of freedom of conscience.

15.) Tuesday, February 23.

Islamic law and the concept of universal human rights.

Readings: Liberal Islam, 'Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, "Shari'a and Basic Human Rights Concerns," 222-238; begin reading Irshad Manji, The Trouble With Islam Today, Prologue, ix-xi, 1-93, 134-216.

Questions for classroom discussion:

Summarize and evaluate this reading. 1.) What is An-Na'im's view of shari'a in relation to the United Nations Charter of human rights? 2.) What criteria does he adopt for identifying human rights, and how do these criteria conflict with the

shari'a? 3.) How does he apply these criteria to the status of women, slaves, and religious minorities? 4.) What is the "evolutionary approach" to shari'a proposed by Mahmoud Mohamed Taha (An-Na'im's former teacher), and how does it make use of the distinction between the Meccan and Medinan periods in the life of the prophet Muhammad and the early Islamic community?

16.) Thursday, February 25. **VIDEO DOCUMENTARY ON IRSHAD MANJI.** "Operation Ijtihad" and the call for reform in contemporary Islam. Film on Irshad Manji and ijtihad.

Readings: Conclude reading of Irshad Manji, The Trouble With Islam Today.

Questions for classroom discussion:

Summarize and evaluate this reading. 1.) On pp.22, 29, etc., Manji notes that some apologists excuse intolerant practices in Islamic countries by warning against confusing religion with culture. What is her response to this? 2.) What would be the characteristics of a "reformed" Islam, based on Manji's suggestions, and what role would ijtihad play therein? 3.) What is her view of the Qur'an/Koran? Compare her view of the Qur'an with El Fadl's reader-response/interactive approach to Qur'an interpretation. 4.) What does Manji respect about the West and its values? 5.) What does she see as the weakness of multiculturalism in Western societies?

17.) Tuesday, March 2.

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS: RESEARCH PROJECTS.

Discussion of Irshad Manji and contemporary Islam (continued).

Readings: Review Manji, The Trouble With Islam Today.

18.) Thursday, March 4. **RESEARCH PAPER DUE.**

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS: RESEARCH PROJECTS.

19.) Tues, March 9. **FILM: "THE ROCK STAR AND THE MULLAHS."** Music as a force for Islamic reformation: the case of Salman Ahmed and the band Junoon.

Readings: Kristina Nelson, "The Sama' Polemic," from The Art of Reciting the Qur'an, 32-45 (Course Reader).

Question for classroom discussion:

What objections to music, singing, and dancing are listed in the Islamic texts cited here?

Required texts:

Available for purchase in the campus bookstore:

'Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali. The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an.

J. Donohue & J. Esposito, eds. Islam in Transition. 2d edition.

Isma'il al-Faruqi. Islam.

Raymond Ibrahim, ed. The Al Qaeda Reader.

Charles Kurzman, ed. Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook.

Irshad Manji. The Trouble With Islam Today: A Muslim's Call for Reform in Her Faith.

RSOC 190R Course Reader. (see below for contents)

Table of contents for our Course Reader:

1--D. Pinault. "Pakistan's Christians Face Sectarian Violence." America: A Jesuit Magazine, August 12-19, 2002, pp.18-20.

2--D. Pinault. "Islam, Christianity, and the Challenge of Religious Freedom in Yemen." Forthcoming in America: A Jesuit Magazine.

3--D. Pinault, ed. & translator. "The Sunnah of the Prophet: A Sampling of Exemplary Behavior and Statements."

4--D. Pinault, ed. & translator. "The Prophet Muhammad and His Interactions With Certain Poets, Singers, and Storytellers."

5--Abul A'la Mawdudi. Towards Understanding Islam (Publisher: The Message Publications, 1986). Pages 29-35 ("The Prophethood") and 144-150 ("On the Family"). ISBN: 1-883591-01-5

6--Ayaan Hirsi Ali. The Caged Virgin: An Emancipation Proclamation for Women and Islam (NY: Free Press/Simon & Schuster, 2006), pp.171-176 ("A Call for Clear Thinking"). ISBN: 978-0-7432-8833-0

7--D. Pinault. "Losers' Vengeance: Muslim-Christian Relations and Pakistan's Blasphemy Law." America: A Jesuit Magazine, April 10, 2006, pp.8-10.

8--D. Pinault. "Wronged and Wronged Again" [a review of Ayaan Hirsi Ali's book The Caged Virgin]. America: A Jesuit Magazine, October 2, 2006, pp.28-30.

9--Khaled Abou El Fadl. The Place of Tolerance in Islam (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), pp.3-23, 113. ISBN: 0-8070-0229-1

10--Mideast Web. "Historical Documents: Hamas Charter." Online document, available at www.mideastweb.org/hamas.htm

11--Ismail al-Faruqi. "Islam and Zionism," in John L. Esposito, ed., Voices of Resurgent Islam (NY: Oxford U. Press, 1983), pp.261-267. ISBN: 019-503340-X

12--Al-Muhajiroun. "Reviving the Muslim Ummah to Greatness" (1-page article, posted on al-Muhajiroun's website in 2003; the website no longer exists).

13--Ibn Warraq. "Islam, Apostasy, and Human Rights." Online article, available at www.jihadwatch.org/woo4/04/islam-apostasy-and-human-rights.html

14--Kristina Nelson. "The Sama' Polemic," in her book The Art of Reciting the Qur'an (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), pp.32-45. ISBN: 0-292-70367-8.

Course requirements and grading.

The final grade will be assigned on the following basis:

Four summary/response essays: each:	15%	total: 60%
Research paper(including in-class presentation on research project):		20%
Class participation:		20%

Summary/response essays. These are to be submitted to me at the beginning of the class for which they are due. Please print out two copies, one to give to me, the other to have with you to refer to during our classroom discussions. Since to a large extent the purpose of these assignments is to ensure that you're ready to discuss the texts in class, to have the possibility of receiving full credit you must submit each essay at the beginning of class on the due date. The mark for late essays will be lowered at least two-thirds of a letter-grade (eg, from B to C+) if not delivered to my desk in class at the start of the period. A further penalty of one-third of a letter-grade will be exacted for every day thereafter that the paper is late (thus an essay worth a B will be marked down to a C if submitted the day after class).

Please answer all the questions indicated for each essay in the syllabus. NB: You are expected both to **summarize** the key points associated with each essay and **respond** to the assertions made by each author. Thus, each assignment is meant to be provocative, provoking from you the expression of your own personal viewpoint and informed opinion on the topics under discussion. Be sure to substantiate your opinion with brief paginated citations from the assigned materials and from other texts in the syllabus that we read this quarter.

An important note concerning the length and format of the summary/response essays: Clarity, thoughtfulness, and lapidary precision are key virtues here. Suggested length of each essay: 6-8 pages, typed, double-spaced. You may exceed this length if necessary, but bear in mind added length does not necessarily lead to an enhanced grade. You may use bullet points/outline format in answering the questions for each summary/response essay; as noted above, be sure to answer all the assigned questions. NB (to reiterate the point stated above): You are expected to include brief comments indicating your own evaluation and response to each set of assigned writings; these will (hopefully) be the starting point for our classroom discussions.

NB: Online/electronic submissions are NOT accepted. You are to submit paper copies of each assignment to me in person.

NB: Each page of every summary/response essay must have a header that includes your name, the title of the essay, and the page number.

The **research paper** should involve an analysis of a primary-source text involving some aspect of contemporary Islam. **Suggested length: 10-12 pages (typed, double-spaced), plus footnotes and bibliography.** Your analysis must include a comparison of your chosen text with relevant passages from the Qur'an and at least two other texts from our syllabus. If you wish, your research paper may focus on an unassigned reading from the anthologies Liberal Islam, Islam in Transition, or The Al Qaeda Reader.

Field research: You also have the option of supplementing your textual analysis with fieldwork involving interviews with individuals in the Bay Area on topics relevant to contemporary Islam. Thus, for example, you might choose a research project on "women's status and Islamic Reformation" and analyze Fatima Mernissi's essay from our Liberal Islam anthology ("A Feminist's Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam"). Evaluate Mernissi's work in light of passages from the Qur'an, Mawdudi, Faruqi, and Manji; and compare their assertions with insights derived from your conversations with Muslim women in local Bay Area mosques. I will lead several group trips to mosques this quarter, which will give you an opportunity to witness Muslim prayer services and chat with members of these congregations. Such contacts could prove invaluable as a way of providing supplementary insights for your textual analysis.

Another possible research topic: apostasy, conversion, and freedom of conscience in contemporary Islam. For this topic you might choose to analyze Ibn Warraq's book Leaving Islam, giving particular attention to the "testimonies" of apostates cited in this book. Compare this material with relevant passages from the Qur'an, Faruqi, Talbi, and Pinault. You may also wish to supplement this textual analysis with field research by initiating contact with ex-Muslim converts to Christianity at the Iranian Christian Church here in the Bay Area.

I encourage you to meet with me during the quarter for help in selecting a research topic, developing an outline and draft, etc. Please note the **due date for the prospectus for your research project: Thursday, January 28**. Length of prospectus: 1 page, typed, double-spaced. The prospectus should include a one-to-two-paragraph summary identifying your research topic, your primary-source text, your methodology, and a brief bibliography.

Research paper due date: Thursday, March 4. As with the summary/response papers, **online/electronic submissions are NOT accepted. You are to submit a paper copy of the research essay to me in person.**

NB: As with the summary-response essays, each page of your research paper must have a header that includes your name, the title of the research paper, and the appropriate page number.

Oral/in-class presentation: During the week of March 2, each of you will give a 10-minute in-class presentation on your research project. You are to present what you

regard as most important about your research findings. Additionally, you should link your research with assigned texts from the syllabus that all of us have read this quarter.

NB: TO HAVE THE POSSIBILITY OF RECEIVING A PASSING GRADE FOR THIS COURSE, YOU MUST COMPLETE ALL THE COURSE REQUIREMENTS (THIS INCLUDES SUBMITTING THE RESEARCH PAPER AND ALL THE SUMMARY/RESPONSE ESSAYS). ANYONE WHO NEGLECTS TO FULFILL ALL THE STIPULATED REQUIREMENTS WILL BE INELIGIBLE FOR A PASSING GRADE FOR THE COURSE.

Class **participation** is an important part of this course. Thus you should make your best effort to attend class regularly and participate actively in classroom discussions. The assigned readings are to be completed before the class for which they are due. Reading each assignment in advance is essential to your informed and thoughtful participation. This is an important point to emphasize: your presence in class will contribute to your participation grade only if you prepare in advance and then actively contribute to classroom discussions. Make a point of preparing the study questions listed under each day's readings in the syllabus; this is part of your preparation for classroom participation.

As a "citizen" of this course you will be encouraged to attend on-campus events related to Islam, especially those sponsored by AIMES (SCU's interdisciplinary minor program in Arabic, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies) and the Local Religion Project.

With regard to issues of participation and grading, please note the following: Frequent **absence** from class will hurt your grade for the quarter. "Frequent" here means more than one unexcused absence during the quarter. *Please ponder this reality: you have only one unexcused absence at your disposal; do not expend it frivolously.* I will lower your **final grade** for the course by one step (eg, B- becomes C+) for each unexcused absence after your first.

Of course illness or emergencies might arise that necessitate your absence; if this occurs, please contact me at once so that we can discuss your situation and I can decide whether to excuse your absence. Absence for the sake of family outings, attendance at a wedding, etc., will be considered an unexcused absence; this is the kind of occasion for which you should reserve your sole allotted unexcused absence.

(NB: Absence without explanation automatically becomes an unexcused absence.) And if you know in advance you must be away, please notify me of this. Such notification is an act of courtesy; and courtesy is something I value.

Attendance. Please note also that I take attendance at the beginning of each class. Frequent lateness will affect your grade adversely. If you arrive late for any class, please let me know at the end of the period that you are here so I can note your (tardy) presence.

Writing assignments and academic honesty. It is your responsibility to ensure that work you submit as your own is in fact your own, and that you acknowledge properly any sources from which you take ideas and phrasing. I comply with University policies regarding plagiarism and academic honesty (consult the discussion entitled “Academic Integrity” in the Undergraduate Bulletin). Should you need clarification concerning this issue, please consult me before submitting your essay.

This is my response when a student engages in plagiarism: the student receives an F for the plagiarized assignment. The student also receives an F for the course and is expelled from my course. Additionally, I send a report of the student’s plagiarism to Santa Clara University’s Office of Student Life and I consult with the Dean of Student Life concerning the possibility of further disciplinary action.

In **grading** your work this quarter I use the following criteria:

F: unacceptable. With regard to essay assignments, this is the only grade for which I permit a rewrite. The highest grade I will award a rewrite, however, is D.

D: acceptable, even if unsatisfactory.

C: adequate; satisfactory.

B: good; impressive work.

A: outstanding. Indicates work that excels in meeting the standards of thoroughness, creativity, and sustained and thoughtful engagement with the assigned subject matter.

Additionally, please note the following **grade scale:**

- A = 96-100%
- A- = 90-95%
- B+ = 86-89%
- B = 80-85%
- B- = 76-79%
- C+ = 70-75%
- C = 66-69%
- C- = 60-65%
- D+ = 56-59%
- D = 50-55%
- D- = 46-49%
- F = 45 or less

Disability accommodation policy. To request academic accommodation for a disability, students must contact Disabilities Resources, which is located in the Benson Center (phone number: 408 554 4111; TTY 408 554 5445). Students must register with Disabilities Resources and provide appropriate documentation to that office prior to receiving accommodation for a disability.

