Christian Encounter with Islam
OST540, 2 Hours

Lectures by
James N. Anderson Ph.D.
This course notebook is for the coordination of your course materials, including reading assignments and lecture recordings. Each course notebook for RTS Distance Education is arranged by the GUIDE acronym. The five components of GUIDE are organized in each lesson by the following steps in the notebook:

**GUIDE**

**Getting Started** To do the lessons, reading and listening assignments are listed.

**Understanding** To maximize learning, the purposes are given.

**Investigating** To explore the content, outlines are provided for note taking.

**Developing** To expand content, readings are suggested.

**Evaluating** To help review, lesson questions are based on purposes.
Course Syllabus

Christian Encounter with Islam, 0ST540 2 hours
Lecturing and Professor of Record:
Dr. James N. Anderson
Reformed Theological Seminary, Distance Education

Professor

Dr. James N. Anderson comes to RTS from Edinburgh, Scotland, and specializes in philosophical theology, religious epistemology, and Christian apologetics. He has a long-standing concern to bring the Reformed theological tradition into greater dialogue with contemporary analytic philosophy. Dr. Anderson has a Ph.D. in philosophical theology from the University of Edinburgh. He is a member of the Society of Christian Philosophers, the British Society for Philosophy of Religion, and the Evangelical Philosophical Society. Prior to joining the faculty at RTS/Charlotte, Dr. Anderson served as an assistant pastor at Charlotte Chapel in Edinburgh where he engaged in regular preaching, teaching, and pastoral ministry.

Course Description

An introduction to the history, culture, traditions, beliefs, and practices of Islam. Students will reflect on the ways in which Islamic faith and life have been shaped by historical and cultural circumstances, study the diversity of Islam both in history and in contemporary expression, and develop a deeper understanding of Islam in order to love Muslims as their neighbors and witness more effectively to them.

Course Objectives

1. To introduce the student to Islamic history, culture, traditions, beliefs, and practices.
2. To raise the student’s awareness of the considerable diversity found within Islam, both historically and in its contemporary expressions.
3. To encourage the student to think biblically and critically about Christian engagement with Islam, both in the past and in the present.
4. To develop a deeper and more accurate understanding of Islam, so as to cultivate a greater love for our Muslim neighbors and a more effective witness toward them.

Required Textbooks


[Available as an e-book for: Kindle, Google Play (Android), Nook, iBooks]

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**Required Articles**

[A copy of these will be made available in the LMS]

[A copy of this will be made available in the LMS]

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS
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Online Student Handbook
The Online Student Handbook has been designed to assist you in successfully navigating the Distance Education experience, whether you are taking a single course or pursuing a certificate or degree program. In it you will find valuable information, step-by-step instructions, study helps, and essential forms to guide you through every aspect of your distance education opportunity from registration to graduation. Please use this resource as your first-stop reference manual. You will find it located at the RTS Distance Education website (www.rts.edu/distance) under the Student Services tab.

Summary of Course Requirements
• Listen to all Recorded Lectures
• Complete all Readings
• Participate in Forum Discussions
• Take the Midterm exam
• Take the Final Exam
• Write Research Paper
• Write Christian Encounter Report
• Complete Mentor Report / Course Application Paper

Forum Discussions (15%)
The student is required to interact in two (2) forums:
1. Student-Professor Posts (15 total posts)
   A. Personal Introduction Forum: The student is required to post a brief personal introduction to the professor/class. Suggested details include your vocation, where you live, your church background, why you chose RTS, and what you hope to gain through the course (1 required post).
   B. 5 Topical Discussion Q&A Forums: The student is required to answer each topical discussion question with one (1) response. The professor will acknowledge the student’s answer and will follow up with a subsequent question to which the student must also answer with one (1) response. Each topical discussion question therefore requires two (2) total posts/responses from the student (Total of 5 forums x 2 posts =10 total posts).
   C. Student-Professor Forum: The student is required to post four (4) times in this forum. Posts in this forum should focus on course-related content such as research paper topics, lectures and reading assignments, or other academic issues related to the course.
2. Student-Student Forum (5 total posts)
   • A post may be either a new topic or a response to an already existing topic.

Examinations (Midterm: 15%, Final: 20%)
The midterm exam will cover lessons 1-6. The format of the exam will be a series of multiple choice questions based on the material covering the first half of the course. Use the
Lesson Questions at the end of each lesson to assist you in studying. The student will have one and a half hours to complete this exam.

The final exam will be cumulative covering all lessons, 1-14. You should review all of the lecture material and course notebook in preparation for the exam. The final exam will consist of a series of short-essay questions based on all of the lecture material. The student will have three hours to complete this exam.

The midterm and final exams for this course are to be taken online in the Learning Management System (LMS). Please note that you will need to have a proctor for your exams. Your proctor can be anyone except a relative or current RTS Student. After clicking on the exam link you will be given detailed instructions about the exam. Please read these instructions carefully before entering the exam.

Research Paper (30%)

The student should write a critical research paper (3500-4500 words, excluding footnotes) on any topic covered in the lectures or reading. Further requirements, guidelines, and suggested topics for the research paper are located in the section titled “Course Paper Instructions” in this syllabus.

Christian Encounter Report (10%)

The student has two options for the Christian Encounter Report. Students are encouraged to select Option 1 unless there are no mosques in the student’s area or if the visit would be viewed and received as less than amicable.

Option 1: You are to visit a mosque on a Friday afternoon. The focus will center on observing--but not participating in--a Muslim worship service. You should then write a short report (around 1000 words) reflecting on what you learned from this experience. This report should not be merely a description of what you observed, but a critical reflection on how it affected your understanding of Islam in relation to your own Christian faith. For example, you could address some of these questions:

1. What were your preconceptions before the visit?
2. How were your preconceptions confirmed or challenged?
3. Were you surprised by anything you observed or heard?
4. How does Muslim worship compare to Christian worship?
5. How did the visit affect your attitude towards Islam and Muslims?

Option 2: You are to find a Muslim and spend at least one (1) hour in conversation with him or her, asking them about what it means to be a Muslim. You should then write a short report (around 1000 words) reflecting on what you learned from this experience. The purpose of this report is not to proselytize, but rather to get the Muslim to explain their own beliefs. Some of the questions you could ask include:

1. What do they believe about the Quran and Muhammad?
2. How do they practice their faith?
3. What are their views on Jesus, the Bible, and/or Christianity?
4. What are their views on sin, salvation, and/or the afterlife?
Reading Report (5%)
Students will be required to submit a reading report acknowledging how much of the required reading has been completed. No partial credit is given for readings that have not been completed.

Mentor Report / Course Application Paper (5%)
Each Global/Non-Residential student is required to have a mentor submit a report at the end of the course. This report will contribute to 5% of the student’s grade. For students who are not Global/Non-Residential, you are asked to write a 200 word summary of how you perceive what you have learned in this course will fit into the objectives you have for your ministry, your educational goals, or other objectives you wish to achieve in life.

Assignments
Best practice for your time management is for you to submit all assignments at the end of the week in which they fall, using the upload links provided in the LMS. All work must be submitted by midnight of the course end date, per your course start letter. You are responsible for turning in all assignments on time; no late submissions are permitted. Any student who needs an extension must get approval from the Registrar prior to that time.

Contact Information
Reformed Theological Seminary, Distance Education
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Charlotte, NC 28226
(704) 900-1257
1-855-854-6920
FAX: (704) 366-9295
E-mail: dess@rts.edu
Web site: www.rts.edu/distance
The student will write a critical research paper (3500–4500 words, excluding footnotes) on any topic covered in the lectures or reading. Make sure the paper has a clear and focused thesis. Some suggested topics are:

1. Comparing the Bible and the Qur’an (teachings, origins, interpretation, etc.)
2. Comparing Islamic and Reformed views on free will and predestination
3. Evaluating the “Insider Movements”
4. Islamic views on sin and salvation
5. Challenges in evangelizing Muslims (theological, cultural, political, etc.)
6. Christian responses to Muslim polemics
7. Lessons from the writings and ministry of Samuel Zwemer
8. Cooperation with Muslims on social issues (abortion, religious freedom, etc.)

The paper will be graded according to the following criteria, in no particular order:
- responsible use of Scripture, responsible use of sources, creativity, clarity, structure and coherence, cogency of argument, practical relevance, evidence of critical thinking, and good writing style (incl. grammar, spelling, and punctuation).

The paper should cite at least 8 scholarly sources. For the purposes of this paper, a scholarly source is a book or article by a recognized expert in the field (and not aimed at a popular level for a general audience)—ideally one that has been peer-reviewed. Wikipedia is clearly not a scholarly source. That said, with sufficient discernment, Wikipedia can be a useful pointer to scholarly sources and is generally reliable for fact-checking on uncontroversial issues. Please consult the professor if you have any doubts about whether a source is scholarly. You should not rely heavily on internet sources. Use the library!

The paper should be word-processed, not hand-written. Use a 12-point font and double line-spacing for the main text. Use section headings where applicable to improve readability. Use footnotes (10-point font) rather than endnotes. Use style for citations, footnoting, and bibliography. The paper should be submitted with a title page containing all of the following: the name and year of the course; your name; the professor’s name; the title of the paper; and the exact word count for the main text of the paper (obtained from your word processor’s word-count feature).
Lesson One
Preparation for Studying Islam

Lesson Two
Overview of Islam

Lesson Three
The Life of Muhammad

Lesson Four
The History of Islam After Muhammad

Lesson Five
Two Views of the Quran

Lesson Six
Major Themes and Christianity in the Quran

Lesson Seven
The Sunna and Hadith

Lesson Eight
Islamic Law

Lesson Nine
Diversity Within Islam

Lesson Ten
Islamic Culture

Lesson Eleven
Christian Encounters With Islam: Doctrine & History

Lesson Twelve
Christian Encounters With Islam: Evangelism & Apologetics

Lesson Thirteen
Christian Encounters With Islam: Missions

Lesson Fourteen
Controversial Issues & Concluding Thoughts
RECOMMENDED READING
Christian Encounter with Islam, 0ST540 2 hours
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Note: The student is not required to read any of the items below, but may find them useful to consolidate the course material and for further study. For many of these, the table of contents can be viewed on Amazon.com or Google Books. These sources reflect a wide range of Muslim, Christian, and secular perspectives on Islam—some sympathetic, some moderately critical, some highly critical—but all are informative and thought-provoking to some degree.

General Introductions
[An undergraduate-level textbook by a well-regarded scholar of Islam.]

[A reliable popular-level introduction to Islamic history, beliefs, and practices, concluding with some insights about evangelizing Muslims. Chedid is the founder and president of the Children of Abraham ministry and adjunct professor at RTS/J.]

[A widely-used textbook by one of the leading Western scholars of Islam.]

[A popular-level introduction to Islam beliefs, practices, and culture, arranged as a series of questions and answers, with a particular eye toward current socio-political issues. Esposito is one of the leading Western scholars of Islam.]

[A particularly readable introductory textbook; covers all the major bases.]

[A significant and influential survey by a “liberal and modernist” Muslim scholar.]

Reference Works
[The standard reference work; online access available through RTS library.]

[Not as extensive as the Brill set, but more accessible and up-to-date.]
Muhammad and the Qur’an
[Ibn Ishaq’s (d. 768) historical account is one of the earliest and most respected.]

[A helpful topical survey of quranic teachings.]

[A sympathetic scholarly biography based on 8th/9th-century sources.]

[A summary of quranic teachings by a modernist Muslim scholar.]

[A scholarly introduction to the history of Muhammad, his successors, and the Qur’an; raises critical questions about the traditional Muslim narratives.]

[A fascinating but technical study of the Qur’an applying standard textual critical methods; challenges popular Muslim beliefs and assumptions about the Qur’an.]

[A short comparison of the textual histories of the New Testament and the Qur’an; an accessible summary of the conclusions of Small’s doctoral research.]

[A “quest for the historical Muhammad” with very negative conclusions. Spencer is one of the most outspoken critics of Islam writing today. Many would consider him to be hyper-skeptical, but his book raises some serious questions for Muslims.]

Christian Engagement with Islam
[A practical, gospel-centered book by an evangelical pastor and former Muslim.]

[A very helpful collection of short articles from the Evangelical Missions Quarterly addressing current challenges and debates in Muslim evangelism, church planting, and contextualization.]
[A introduction to the basic teachings of Islam followed by a critical evaluation from an evangelical Christian perspective.]

[George gives an overview of Islam and a nuanced, well-informed answer to the title question, noting the irreconcilable differences between Christianity and Islam.]

[A mostly helpful resource for understanding the Muslim mindset with respect to Christianity and the West. Also provides invaluable insights on how to evangelize Muslims. Jabbour is sympathetic toward Insider Movements]

[A collection of essays countering so-called “Insider Movements”.

[A practical (but pre-9/11) guide to understanding North American Muslims and to building bridges for evangelism by promoting biblical understanding. The authors have several decades of experience ministering to Muslims in Philadelphia.]

[A reliable (but pre-9/11) introduction to Islam, its differences with Christianity, and Christian responses to Muslim objections. The author’s discussion of the Arab-Israeli conflict is badly skewed, in my judgment.]

[Useful mainly for understanding how Muslims view the world and cope with the challenges of life; very conversational and anecdotal in style.]

[Muslim and Christian scholars offer perspectives on the themes of love for God and for neighbor, emphasizing perceived commonalities between Islam and Christianity. Includes the full text of “A Common Word Between Us and You” and “Loving God and Neighbor Together: A Christian Response” (the so-called “Yale Response”).]

[Volf, an influential theologian at Yale Divinity School, argues that Christians and Muslims worship the same God. Aims to promote inter-religious tolerance.]


[Zwemer (1867-1952) was a pioneering Reformed missionary in the Middle East, later appointed professor of missions at Princeton Theological Seminary.]

**Other Resources**


[Intended as an empirically researched corrective to popular assumptions about what Muslims believe. From the blurb: “Gallup conducted tens of thousands of interviews with residents of more than 35 nations that are predominantly Muslim or have significant Muslim populations.” Illuminating at points, but the book contains more interpretation than actual hard data and the authors clearly have an agenda.]


[A provocative account of the rise of Islam that challenges the ‘received’ view.]


[An influential and controversial work on international affairs. Huntingdon argues that the post-Cold War world will be divided mainly according to cultural/religious identities, resulting in a major fault-line between the West and the Rest (esp. the Muslim world).]


[Lewis charts the rise and fall of Islam over the centuries, with a view to explaining present-day Muslim bewilderment and frustration at the decline of Islamic power.]


[Nawawi was a 13th-century Islamic legal scholar. This relatively short work gives fascinating insight into what it means to be a “good Muslim” and how exactly the “Five Pillars of Islam” should be practiced.]


[Reilly argues that the crisis in Islam today has its roots in a “battle for the Muslim mind” fought between two rival Islamic schools of theology in the medieval era.]


[An influential and controversial critique of post-colonial Western prejudices and misrepresentations of the Middle East. Said was a Palestinian-American professor of literature at Columbia University.]
[A very thorough (and sobering) survey of militant Islam and its roots. Sookhdeo is the director of the Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity and International Director of the Barnabas Fund.]

**Internet Resources**

**Qur’an**

- Tanzil Quran Navigator ([http://tanzil.net/](http://tanzil.net/))

**Hadith**

- Sahih Muslim ([http://www.sahihmuslim.com/](http://www.sahihmuslim.com/))

**Tafsir**


**Promoting Islam**

- Islamic Awareness ([http://www.islamic-awareness.org/](http://www.islamic-awareness.org/))

**Christian Engagement with Islam**

- Alpha and Omega Ministries ([http://www.aomin.org/](http://www.aomin.org/))
- Crescent Project ([https://www.crescentproject.org/](https://www.crescentproject.org/))
## Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

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<th>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</strong></td>
<td>Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scripture</strong></td>
<td>Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reformed Theology</strong></td>
<td>Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sanctification</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desire for Worldview</strong></td>
<td>Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Winsomely Reformed</strong></td>
<td>Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Preach</strong></td>
<td>Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Worship</strong></td>
<td>Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shepherd</strong></td>
<td>Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Church/World</strong></td>
<td>Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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