

ST540 – Christian Encounter with Islam

Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte

Spring 2015

I. Details

- A. Times: Thursdays, 10:00–12:00
- B. Instructor: Dr. James N. Anderson
- C. Contact: janderson@rts.edu
- D. Availability: If you wish to discuss some aspect of the course, please either arrange (via email) an appointment or knock on the door of my office (in E building) if it's open.

II. Goals

- A. To introduce the student to Islamic history, culture, traditions, beliefs, and practices.
- B. To raise the student's awareness of the considerable diversity found within Islam, both historically and in its contemporary expressions.
- C. To encourage the student to think biblically and critically about Christian engagement with Islam, both in the past and in the present.
- D. 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.

III. Course Overview

- A. Introduction: Why Study Islam?
- B. Christian Principles for Comparative Religion
- C. Overview of Islam
- D. History of Islam (6thC to 21stC)
- E. Islamic Sources: Qur'an, Sunna, Hadith
- F. Islamic Law
- G. Diversity in Islam
- H. Islamic Culture
- I. Christian Encounters with Islam: Historical Examples
- J. Christian Encounters with Islam: Evangelism, Apologetics, Missions
- K. Controversial Issues
- L. Summary and Conclusion

IV. Course Requirements

- A. *Class attendance and thoughtful participation.*
 - 1. As per seminary policy, you are required to attend all the lectures. If you know that you will be unable to attend class on a particular date, please inform me in advance, otherwise you may be penalized for your absence.
 - 2. There will be opportunity for class participation and questions during the lectures.
 - 3. You will be expected to use the Internet in the classroom *only for appropriate class-related activities*, and you will be asked to sign an honor pledge to that effect.

4. A proportion of your final grade (see below) will depend on your attendance record and your participation in the classes (thoughtful interaction with the professor and other students).
- B. *Report on mosque visit.*
1. A group visit to a local mosque will be arranged during the semester. (There may be more than one visit, depending on class size.) The visit will take place on a Friday afternoon and will center on observing (but not participating in) a Muslim worship service.
 2. The date(s) of the visit(s) will be announced early in the semester. If for good reason you are unable to attend the visit, please inform me as soon as possible so that an alternative assignment can be arranged.
 3. You should write a short report (500-1000 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:
 - i. What were your preconceptions before the visit?
 - ii. How were your preconceptions confirmed or challenged?
 - iii. Were you surprised by anything you observed or heard?
 - iv. How does Muslim worship compare to Christian worship?
 - v. How did the visit affect your attitude towards Islam and Muslims?
- C. *Reading assignments.*
1. A proportion of your final exam mark (and thus your final grade) will depend on your acknowledgment that you have completed the required reading (see below).
 2. You will be penalized for each *uncompleted* reading assignment.
 3. A reading schedule will be provided at the start of class.
- D. *Writing assignment.*
1. You should write a critical research paper (3500–4500 words, excluding footnotes) on any topic covered in the lectures or reading. If you're in any doubt about whether your topic is a suitable one, please run it by me first. Some suggestions:
 - i. Comparing the Bible and the Qur'an (teachings, origins, interpretation, etc.)
 - ii. Comparing Islamic and Reformed views on free will and predestination
 - iii. Evaluating "Insider Movements"
 - iv. Islamic views on sin and salvation
 - v. Challenges in evangelizing Muslims (theological, cultural, political, etc.)
 - vi. Christian responses to Muslim polemics
 - vii. Lessons from the writings and ministry of Samuel Zwemer
 - viii. Cooperation with Muslims on social issues (abortion, religious freedom, etc.)
 2. Whatever topic you choose, make sure that your paper has a clear, focused thesis.
 3. Your 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 (inc. grammar, spelling, and punctuation).
 4. The paper should cite *at least 8 scholarly sources*.

- i. 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.
 - ii. Wikipedia is clearly *not* a scholarly source.
 - iii. That said, with sufficient discernment, Wikipedia can be a *useful pointer* to scholarly sources and is generally reliable for fact-checking on uncontroversial issues.
 - iv. Please consult me if you have any doubts about whether a source is scholarly.
 - v. You should not rely heavily on Internet sources. Use the library!
5. The paper should be word-processed, not hand-written.
 - i. Use a 12-point font and double line-spacing for the main text.
 - ii. Use section headings where applicable to improve readability.
 - iii. Use footnotes (10-point font) rather than endnotes.
 - iv. Use a recognized scholarly style for citations (e.g., Chicago, Turabian, SBL).
 6. 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).
 7. You will be penalized if you do not observe the requirements and guidelines above.
 8. Your paper is due on **May 12**. It should be submitted on or prior to this date. Ensure that the paper is stamped with the date of submission. Late submissions will be penalized.
 9. Your paper will be returned to you after grading with limited feedback. Consult the document “Guide to Annotations on Graded Papers” to crack the code. If you wish to receive more detailed feedback, please email me to arrange an appointment.
- E. *Midterm exam.*
1. The midterm exam will be taken during the week **March 23–27**. Please note that you will need to make prior arrangements with Kim Macurda (kmacurda@rts.edu) to obtain the exam paper.
 2. The exam will consist of multiple-choice questions based on the class material covered to date. You will have one hour to complete it (in the library) and you will not be allowed to refer to any class notes or other study resources.
- F. *Final exam.*
1. The final exam will be taken in exam week: **May 14–19**.
 2. The exam will consist of three short-essay questions based on all of the class material and all of the required readings. You will have three hours to complete it.
 3. You may refer to an English translation of the Bible (but not one with study notes, etc.). You may not refer to any class notes or other study resources.
 4. You will be asked to sign a declaration that you have not discussed the content of the exam with anyone who has previously taken the exam.
 5. You will also be asked to indicate which of the required reading assignments you have *completed* and to sign a declaration to that effect.

V. Course Documents

- A. *Instructions for accessing course documents.*
1. RTS is currently transitioning to a new LMS platform for course home pages.

2. Therefore, instructions for accessing the course documents will be emailed to all registered students the week before class.
- B. *Course outline.*
1. Other than the syllabus, the course outline is the most important document. You will need a copy (either electronic or printed) in front of you throughout the class.
 2. You are strongly encouraged to supplement the outline with your own notes.
 3. The outline will be uploaded to the course home page the week before class.
- C. *Supplementary documents.*
1. The reading schedule and some of the required reading items (see below) will be available on the course home page.
 2. You should also consult the documents “Research Paper Checklist” and “Guide to Annotations on Graded Papers”.

VI. Grading

- A. Class attendance and participation — 10%
- B. Midterm exam — 15%
- C. Final exam (including credit for reading assignments) — 20%
- D. Report on mosque visit — 15%
- E. Writing assignment — 40%

VII. Required Reading

You should obtain copies of all the items below. A reading schedule will be provided at the start of class.

- A. Selections from *The Qur'an*, translated by M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford University Press, 2008).
- B. Colin Chapman, *Cross and Crescent: Responding to the Challenge of Islam* (InterVarsity Press, 2008).
- C. Peter G. Riddell and Peter Cotterell, *Islam in Context: Past, Present, and Future* (Baker, 2003).
- D. James R. White, *What Every Christian Needs to Know About the Qur'an* (Bethany House, 2013).
- E. Gary R. Corwin, “Ten Things Worth Knowing about Islam” and “Muslim Ministry in the Days Ahead: Two Fault Lines, Two Favorable Winds,” in *Envisioning Effective Ministry: Evangelism in a Muslim Context*, ed. Laurie Fortunak Nichols and Gary R. Corwin (EMIS, 2010). [Copies of these will be made available on the Course Home Page.]
- F. Timothy C. Tennent, “Followers of Jesus (Isa) in Islamic Mosques: A Closer Examination of C-5 ‘High Spectrum’ Contextualization,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 23 (Fall 2006). [A copy of this will be made available on the Course Home Page.]
- G. John Travis, Phil Parshall, Herbert Hoefler, and Rebecca Lewis, “Four Responses to Tennent,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 23 (Fall 2006). [A copy of this will be made available on the Course Home Page.]

VIII. Recommended Supplementary Reading

You are not *required* to read any of the items below, but you may find them useful to consolidate the course material and for further study as your interests dictate. 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.

A. General Introductions

1. Daniel W. Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2nd ed., 2009).
[An undergraduate-level textbook by a well-regarded scholar of Islam.]
2. Bassam M. Chedid, *Islam: What Every Christian Should Know* (Evangelical Press, 2004).
[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.]
3. John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path* (Oxford University Press, 4th ed., 2010).
[A widely-used textbook by one of the leading Western scholars of Islam.]
4. John L. Esposito, *What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam* (Oxford University Press, 2nd ed., 2011).
[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.]
5. C. T. R. Hower, *Understanding Islam: An Introduction* (Fortress Press, 2006).
[A particularly readable introductory textbook; covers all the major bases.]
6. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (University of Chicago Press, 2nd ed., 2002).
[A significant and influential survey by a “liberal and modernist” Muslim scholar.]

B. Reference Works

1. *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (E. J. Brill, new ed., 1989).
[The standard reference work; available in the RTS/C library.]
2. John L. Esposito, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* (Oxford University Press, rev. ed., 2009).
[Not as extensive as the Brill set, but more accessible and up-to-date.]

C. Muhammad and the Qur’an

1. Alfred Guillaume, trans., *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ibn Ishaq’s Sirat Rasul Allah* (Oxford University Press, 1967).
[Ibn Ishaq’s (d. 768) historical account is one of the earliest and most respected.]
2. John Kaltner, *Introducing the Qur’an for Today’s Reader* (Fortress Press, 2011).
[A helpful topical survey of quranic teachings.]
3. Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources* (Inner Traditions, rev. ed., 2006).
[A sympathetic scholarly biography based on 8th/9th-century sources.]
4. Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur’an* (University of Chicago Press, 2009).
[A summary of quranic teachings by a modernist Muslim scholar.]
5. Gabriel Said Reynolds, *The Emergence of Islam: Classical Traditions in Contemporary Perspective* (Fortress Press, 2012).

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

6. Keith E. Small, *Textual Criticism and Qur'an Manuscripts* (Lexington Books, 2011).

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

7. Keith E. Small, *Holy Books have a History* (Avant Ministries, n.d.).

[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.]

8. Robert Spencer, *Did Muhammad Exist? An Inquiry into Islam's Obscure Origins* (ISI Books, 2012).

[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.]

D. Christian Engagement with Islam

1. Thabiti Anyabwile, *The Gospel for Muslims: An Encouragement to Share Christ with Confidence* (Moody, 2010).

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

2. Laurie Fortunak Nichols and Gary R. Corwin, eds., *Envisioning Effective Ministry: Evangelism in a Muslim Context* (EMIS, 2010).

[A very helpful collection of short articles from the *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* addressing current challenges and debates in Muslim evangelism, church planting, and contextualization.]

3. Norman L. Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross* (Baker, 2nd ed., 2002).

[A introduction to the basic teachings of Islam followed by a critical evaluation from an evangelical Christian perspective.]

4. Timothy George, *Is the Father of Jesus the God of Muhammad* (Zondervan, 2002).

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

5. J.D. Greear, *Breaking the Islam Code: Understanding the Soul Questions of Every Muslim* (Harvest House Publishers, 2010).

[A very insightful and practical book on evangelizing Muslims.]

6. Nabeel T. Jabbour, *The Crescent Through the Eyes of the Cross: Insights from an Arab Christian* (NavPress, 2008).

[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.]

7. Joshua Lingel, Jeff Morton, and Bill Nikides, eds., *Chrislam: How Missionaries are Promoting an Islamized Gospel* (i2 Ministries Publications, rev. ed., 2012).

[A collection of essays countering so-called "Insider Movements".]

8. Bruce A. McDowell and Anees Zaka, *Muslims and Christians at the Table: Promoting Biblical Understanding Among North American Muslims* (P&R, 1999).

[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.]

9. Chawkat Moucarry, *The Prophet and the Messiah: An Arab Christian's Perspective on Islam & Christianity* (InterVarsity Press, 2001).
[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.]
10. Phil Parshall, *The Cross and the Crescent: Understanding the Muslim Heart and Mind* (InterVarsity Press, 2002).
[Useful mainly for understanding how Muslims view the world and cope with the challenges of life; very conversational and anecdotal in style.]
11. Miroslav Volf, Ghazi bin Muhammad, and Melissa Yarrington, *A Common Word: Muslims and Christians on Loving God and Neighbor* (Eerdmans, 2010).
[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").]
12. Miroslav Volf, *Allah: A Christian Response* (HarperCollins, 2011).
[Volf, an influential theologian at Yale Divinity School, argues that Christians and Muslims worship the same God. Aims to promote inter-religious tolerance.]
13. J. Christy Wilson, Samuel M. Zwemer, *Apostle to Islam: A Biography of Samuel M. Zwemer* (Baker Book House, 1952).
14. Samuel M. Zwemer, ed. Roger S. Greenway, *Islam and the Cross: Selections from "The Apostle to Islam"* (P&R, 2002).
[Zwemer (1867-1952) was a pioneering Reformed missionary in the Middle East, later appointed professor of missions at Princeton Theological Seminary.]

E. Other Resources

1. John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think* (Gallup Press, 2007).
[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.]
2. Tom Holland, *In the Shadow of the Sword: The Birth of Islam and the Rise of the Global Arab Empire* (Doubleday, 2012).
[A provocative account of the rise of Islam that challenges the 'received' view.]
3. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Class of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (Simon & Schuster, 1996).
[An influential and controversial work on international affairs. Huntington 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).]
4. Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? The Class Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East* (Oxford University Press, 2002).
[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.]

5. Nuh Ha Mim Keller, trans., *Al-Maqasid: Nawawi's Manual of Islam* (Amana Publications, rev. ed., 2002).
[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.]
6. Robert R. Reilly, *The Closing of the Muslim Mind: How Intellectual Suicide Created the Modern Islamist Crisis* (ISI Books, 2011).
[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.]
7. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Vintage Books, 1994).
[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.]
8. Patrick Sookhdeo, *Global Jihad: The Future in the Face of Militant Islam* (Isaac Publishing, 2007).
[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.]

F. Internet Resources

1. Qur'an
 - i. Quran.com (<http://quran.com/>)
 - ii. Qur'an Browser (<http://qb.gomen.org/QuranBrowser/>)
 - iii. StudyQuran (<http://www.studyquran.org/>)
 - iv. Tanzil Quran Navigator (<http://tanzil.net/>)
 - v. Quranic Arabic Corpus (<http://corpus.quran.com/>)
2. Hadith
 - i. Sunnah.com (<http://sunnah.com/>)
 - ii. Sahih Bukhari (<http://www.sahih-bukhari.com/>)
 - iii. Sahih Muslim (<http://www.sahihmuslim.com/>)
3. Tafsir
 - i. AlTafsir.com (<http://www.altafsir.com/>)
 - ii. Quran Tafsir Ibn Kathir (<http://www.qtafsir.com/>)
4. Promoting Islam
 - i. Al-Islam.org (<http://www.al-islam.org/>)
 - ii. Islamic Awareness (<http://www.islamic-awareness.org/>)
5. Christian Engagement with Islam
 - i. Alpha and Omega Ministries (<http://www.aomin.org/>)
 - ii. Answering Islam (<http://www.answering-islam.org/>)
 - iii. Crescent Project (<https://www.crescentproject.org/>)
 - iv. Frontiers (<http://www.frontiers.org/>)

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Christian Encounter with Islam
 Professor: James N. Anderson
 Campus: Charlotte
 Date: 11/30/12

| <u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u> | | <u>Rubric</u> | <u>Mini-Justification</u> |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p><i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p> | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None | |
| Articulation (oral & written) | Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. | Strong | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research paper tests student's ability to clearly and accurately articulate understanding of Islamic history, culture, and theology 2. Class discussion questions test understanding and application |
| Scripture | 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.) | Moderate | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discusses biblical texts relevant to Christian engagement with Islam 2. Compares Bible with Qur'an 3. Discusses issues for Bible translation in Muslim contexts |
| Reformed Theology | Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards. | Moderate | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discusses engagement with Islam by Reformed theologians and missionaries 2. Compares and contrasts Reformed doctrines and Islamic doctrines |
| Sanctification | Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification. | Moderate | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cultivates passion for outreach to Muslims as application of the "two great commandments" (Matt. 22) |
| Desire for Worldview | Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. | Moderate | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustained reflection on the Islamic worldview in light of (and contrasted with) the Christian worldview |
| Winsomely Reformed | 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.) | Strong | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourages a critical but charitable approach to engaging with Islam from a distinctively Reformed perspective |
| Preach | Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm. | None | |
| Worship | Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service. | None | |
| Shepherd | 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. | Minimal | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourages concern for Muslims both in North America and worldwide |
| Church/World | Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues. | Strong | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promotes a responsible Christian engagement with Islam as a challenge both in North America and worldwide |