



New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Theological and Historical Studies Division
THEO6333/PHIL6333 Islam and the Doctrine of Revelation
Internet version

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The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

Purpose of the Course

This course compares a biblical and Christian understanding of the doctrine of revelation and the Bible with Islamic teaching. The course will explore Muslim views about the Bible and Qur'an and the role of prophets and messengers. The relationship between general and special revelation in the Islamic worldview as well as human ability to perceive and respond to God will be discussed. The theoretical aspects of these issues will be balanced with the challenge to communicate a witness of Jesus Christ as Lord with persons absorbed in Islamic worldviews.

Core Value Focus

Doctrinal Integrity – Knowing that the Bible is the Word of God, we believe it, teach it, proclaim it, and submit to it. The doctrinal statements used in our evaluations are our Articles of Religious Belief and the Baptist Faith and Message Statement.

Curriculum Competencies Addressed

This course will address *Biblical Exposition, Theological and Historical Perspective, Servant Leadership, Interpersonal Relationship, and Disciple Making.*

Course Description

This course is designed to expose the students to Islamic beliefs about prophecy and divine books. Special emphasis will be placed on understanding the complexity of beliefs surrounding the Qur'an. Students also will explore current theories for the origin of the present Qur'anic text. The desired outcome is that each student will be equipped to construct negative apologetic arguments in response to Islamic teachings about the Qur'an and the Bible.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course the student will

- Be prepared to compare cognitively and connotatively Islamic views of the Qur'an and Christian views of the Bible and Jesus Christ as Word of God.
- Be familiar with the Islamic views of revelation and the primary Qur'anic basis for these beliefs.
- Comprehend the relationships of Islamic culture which limit and shape Muslim views of the Bible.
- Appreciate the Islamic reverence for their book.
- Be familiar with the current arguments (both Muslim and non-Muslim) about the origin and codification of the Qur'an.
- Be equipped with skills to better engage in Christian apologetics with Muslims.

Required Text Books

The Holy Bible: your preferred English version.

The Generous Qur'an: an accurate, modern English translation of the Qur'an, Islam's holiest book. Venice, FL: Usama Dakdok Publishing, 2009.

Dashti, 'Ali. *23 Years: A Study of the Prophetic Career of Mohammad translated by F. R. C. Bagley.* Costa Mesa, Ca: Mazda Publishers, 1994.

Esack, Farid. *The Qur'an: A User's Guide.* Oxford: One World, 2005.

Mattson, Ingrid. *The Story of the Qur'an: Its History and Place in Muslim Life.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008.

McAuliffe, Jane Dammen, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to The Qur'an.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

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Recommended Text

Wansbrough, John. *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation.* Amherst: Prometheus, 2004.

Course Methodology

The course will involve the following methodologies:

- Students will conduct guided research on subjects within the general topic of Islamic teachings concerning special revelation, the contrast between the God of the Bible and Allah in respect to revelatory content, the role of a prophet, Jesus as a Muslim prophet, validity of other heavenly books, codification of the Qur'an, historical problems with content of the Qur'an and the general nature of the Qur'an.
- Students will assimilate large sections of readings both on-line and in print books and articles as well as view lectures and view on-line video content.
- Students will participate in discussions of lectures, readings, audio and video materials.
- Students will critique and engage in constructing negative apologetic arguments concerning the Islamic doctrine of revelation.

Assignments and Evaluation Criteria

1. Reading report of the three required texts. 25% of final grade.

The Grading Rubric:

- a. 14 points will be granted for a basic confirmation of completing all reading.
- b. An additional (to the basic 14 points from a.) range of 1-11 points will be granted for significant evidence of interaction with the author's intent and critic of utilitarian nature of the source.

The 3 elements on which the points will be assigned

1. 1-5 points will be assigned for communication of the purpose and thesis of the sources,
2. 1-5 points will be assigned for coherence of assessment of the sources
3. 1 point for grammar and general presentation.

Each element will be equally weighted. (Excellent (full credit), good (3/4) average (1/2) or needs much additional work (1/4))

i.e. If someone reports completing the reading and viewing of all sources and did an average job of assessing all five sources in all aspects, that student would earn:
 $14+2.5+2.5+1/2= 19.5$ of 25 points.

2. Participation in discussions 15% of final grade.
 - a. 5% will be granted for weekly participation in discussion boards.
 - i. Participation is evidenced by thoughtful and coherent additions to the discussion or answer to the question.
 - ii. Participation is understood to be more than 5 lines of text.
 - b. 1-10% will be granted based on the following standards.
 - i. 1-6% will be granted based upon gracious and Christian interaction in the discussion board with other class members and the doctoral fellow who is grading the class.
 - ii. 1-4% will be granted based on the quality and balance of questions and comments the student posts.
 3. Innovative additions to the class blog 10% of final grade.
 - a. Students who add relevant substance to the blog will be credited with 10 points for that week.
 4. Research and report of an issue in the Doctrine of Revelation in Islam 35% of final grade.
 - a. Each student will select one of the issues identified below and research the matter with regard to history and diversity of the issue in Islam, the impact of the issue on Muslim life and culture, impact of the issue on Muslim receptivity of the Gospel and proposals for individual and corporate Christian response to the issue.
 - b. The grade is composed of 5 equal elements:
 1. Evaluation of the Presentation as a whole
 2. Sources of material (width, depth, and variety of resources)
 3. Use of materials (understanding, analysis and synthesis of the original sources)
 4. Coherence and feasibility of the strategy and argument of the work
 5. Effective comprehension and synthesis of the issues and research sources
 - c. Issues:
 - i. The Qur'an professes to be a continuation of the Bible in revealing God's will for humanity.
 - ii. Abrogation, or superseding, in reference to Islamic revelation has several meanings but common Muslims see the Qur'an as abrogating the Bible
 - iii. The Qur'an identifies Jesus, *ISA*, as a great prophet, faithful Muslim, who is not divine.
 - iv. The Qur'an identifies the Gospel, *Injiil*, as a book confirming books which came before it, which was sent down to Jesus.
 - v. Allah, the god of Islam, is said to be the God of the Christians and Jews; however, his character varies.
 - vi. Historical facts are ignored or denied in the Qur'an which is God-speech. (ie in the Qur'an, Mary, the mother of Jesus, is also Mariam—same name in Arabic-- the sister of Moses and Aaron)
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- vii. The Qur'an is a reproduction of an eternal tablet with Allah which is a warning to all humanity in all cultures. Yet the content has large portions devoted to the management of Muhammad's unique family.
- viii. The Qur'an is only in Arabic yet the Arabic of the Qur'an is not pure. What does this say of Allah's "culture."
- ix. Each language group is said to have a prophet in their language. Yet the Aramaic speaking Jewish nation of Jesus' day is said to revive a Greek book name—*Injiil*.
- x. Student proposal

5. Three Exams 15% of final grade.

Course Policies

Appropriate Behavior

Each student is expected to demonstrate appropriate Christian behavior when working with and communicating with others. The student is expected to interact with other students in a fashion that will promote learning and respect for the opinions of others in the course. A spirit of Christian charity is expected at all times.

Academic Honesty Policy

All graduate and undergraduate NOBTS students, whether on-campus, internet, or extension center students, are expected to adhere to the highest Christian standard of honesty and integrity when completing academic assignments for all courses in every delivery system format. The Bible provides our standard for academic integrity and honesty. This standard applies whether a student is taking tests, quizzes, or exams, writing papers, completing Discussion Boards, or performing any other course requirement

Grading

The NOBTS grading pattern applies to this course.

Course Schedule

Unit 1. Review major points in the Christian doctrine of revelation.

Unit 2a.

1. Comparison and contrast the Christian and Muslim doctrines of revelation.

2. The nature of Islamic defense of the Qur'an in its claims to be divine revelation.

- The Qur'an claims all heavenly books were intended to establish Islamic religious practice and community in their day and were consistent with the Qur'anic content. In the blackboard assignment for this week, we will identify the marks of Islamic religious community and ask you to seek comparable Biblical material to text this assertion.
- Historic Islamic strategies to defend the Qur'an as divine revelation are examined.
 - How disputes were presented and resolved
 - Definitions which developed
- Current Islamic strategies to defend the Qur'an as divine revelation are examined.

Unit 3a. Comparison and contrast of the Christian and Islamic concepts of Word of God.

- The concept of revelation and Word of God differ between the two communities. This is true with regard to the Bible and the eternal second person of the Trinity born of Mary-Jesus Christ

- The nature and use of the Qur'an in Islam differs from the Bible in striking ways. Muslims believe that it is an exact copy of the Book with their god. It is not read for meaning but memorized to quote back to god in worship. Subtle combinations with the Sunni view of Revelation which has been presented to this point will be observed in the following religious expressions: Shi'a, Sufi, Alawite, Ahmadiyya, Druze and Baha'i

Unit 3b. The Islamic Concept of the Qur'an as Word of God and internal contradictions.

- Sections of the Qur'an appear to be in conflict with the Islamic concept of revelation which requires all content to be "word of God." The Islamic Concept of Continuity of heavenly books (Moses' Torah, David's Zabur, and Jesus' Injil) contrasted with the Islamic Doctrine of Abrogation.
- The Qur'an claims continuity with the Bible. What are the central concepts of Islam and can parallel content be found in the Bible?
- The Qur'an claims all heavenly books were intended to establish Islamic religion practice and community in their day. What are the marks of Islamic community and is there Biblical content pointing to such community?

Unit 4a. Islam's understanding of the Role of Revelation.

- How does the god of Islam relate to the action of revelation? What is his purpose in revealing and what is he revealing? What is the vehicle or means of revelation and is there human content in revelation?

Unit 4b. The nature of the Qur'an as revelation and divine source of worship material.

- The nature and use of the Qur'an in Islam differs from the Bible in striking ways. Muslims believe that it is an exact copy of the Book with their god. It is not read for meaning but memorized to quote back to god in worship. Subtle combinations with the Sunni view of Revelation which has been presented to this point will be observed in the following religious expressions: Shi'a, Sufi, Alawite, Ahmadiyya, Druze and Baha'i.

Unit 5a. The Role and Function of Prophet in Islamic Life.

- Islam recognizes all the prophets of Biblical revelation until Jesus, also identified as a
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prophet, and many Arabian prophets culminating with Muhammad. What is the prophetic role in Islam? Did Muslim prophets function in the same way as Biblical prophets? What is the evidence of a prophet's divine commission?

Unit 5b. The concept of abrogation.

Unit 6A. The uniqueness of the Qur'an in terms of revelation

- Who is Allah (what is his character in the Qur'an)?
- Identification of the problem in the created order.
- Allah's response to human sin
- Allah's capricious forgiveness or punishment of divinely selected persons.

Questions: How does the god of Islam relate to the action of revelation? What is his purpose in revealing and what is he revealing. If compared to the Bible and the special revelation presented there what is unique and different in the Qur'an?

Unit 6B. Desired outcomes of Islamic revelation

Proclamation of the proper submission to the One God
Identification of correct worship behavior for the believing community
Affirmation of the prophet hood of Muhammad
Redefinition of Biblical personages to give support to Muhammad.
Defense for Mohammad's marital behavior and management of this household

Unit 7. Apologetic response (negative and positive) to the Islamic doctrine of Revelation.

Selected Bibliography

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Electronic resources

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