



THEO/PHIL6333 Word of God in Christianity and Islam
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Division of Theological and Historical Studies
Fall 2018—Tuesday and Thursday 9:30-10:50 AM

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Mission Statement

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.

Core Value Focus

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. These values shape both the context and manner in which all curricula are taught, with “doctrinal integrity” and “mission focus” especially highlighted in this course. The core value focus for the 2018-19 year is **Doctrinal Integrity**: “Knowing that the Bible is the Word of God, we believe it, teach it, proclaim it, and submit to it. Our confessional commitments are outlined in the Articles of Religious Belief and the Baptist Faith & Message 2000. “

Curriculum Competencies

All graduates of NOBTS are expected to have at least a minimum level of competency in each of the following areas: Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, Disciple Making, Interpersonal Skills, Servant Leadership, Spiritual and Character Formation, and Worship Leadership. The curriculum competencies addressed in this course are: *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.

Student Learning Outcomes

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 Textbooks

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.

Recommended Textbooks

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

Course Teaching 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.

Course Requirements

1. **Reflective Summaries (30 %):** [NOTE: This assignment is **not** required for your reading of the Qur'an itself, just the textbooks.] Each student is required to read the assigned reading for each unit from the required textbooks as listed in BlackBoard. You will then write a **2-3 page** (max) single-spaced, typed reflective summary over **each** of the assigned readings (e.g., one summary over Dashti, one over McAuliffe, etc.). No title page is necessary for these assignments, however, you should include your **name** at the top of each summary along with the title of the chapter(s)/article(s) you're summarizing and each of the following components clearly marked by headings: **(1) content summary, (2) positive/negative evaluations, and (3) applications to your understanding of Islamic views regarding the Word of God.** Please combine each unit's reading into one **PDF** document and submit that one document that contains all the reflective summaries for that particular unit by the time in the schedule below. For each day this assignment is late your grade will be reduced by 10%.
2. **Classroom Discussion (30%):** As a seminar type class each class will be marked by professor lecture and peer discussion of topics from current assigned readings.
Research Paper (40%): Each student shall select 2 numbered priority selections for a research paper. Students should submit their priority preferences by email to the grader by **midnight 9/10/18** informing him which topic he/she intends to write about. The paper will be double-spaced and in conformity with NOBTS guidelines of **12-15 pages** (max) on **one** of the following topics:
 - a. The Qur'an professes to be a continuation of the Bible in revealing God's will for humanity. How do the qur'anic and Islamic arguments in this regard measure up to the actual teachings of the Bible?
 - b. Abrogation, or superseding, in reference to Islamic revelation has several meanings, but common Muslims see the Qur'an as abrogating the Bible. Discuss this notion, provide examples, and discuss the difficulties it poses for Muslims and a Christian critique.
 - c. The Qur'an identifies Jesus, *Isā*, as a great prophet, faithful Muslim, who is not divine. Discuss the Qur'an notion of Jesus as the "Word" and compare and contrast this with the biblical view.
 - d. The Qur'an identifies the Gospel, *Injiil*, as a book confirming books that came before it, which was sent down to Jesus. Discuss the qur'anic and Islamic view of the "Gospel" and how that differs from the actual New Testament.
 - e. Allah, the god of Islam, is said to be the God of the Christians and Jews; however, his character varies. Discuss various overlapping and non-overlapping attributes between the character of God in the Qur'an/Islam and the Bible.
 - f. Historical facts are ignored or denied in the Qur'an, which is God-speech. (i.e., in the Qur'an, Mary, the mother of Jesus, is also Mariam—same name in Arabic-- the sister of Moses and Aaron). Discuss Islamic apologetic defenses of this topic and why they are unsatisfactory.
 - g. The Qur'an is a reproduction of a tablet said to be eternally 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 circumstance. Discuss Islamic apologetic defenses of this topic and why they are unsatisfactory.
 - h. 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?" Discuss Islamic apologetic defenses of this topic and why they are unsatisfactory.
 - i. 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*. Discuss Islamic apologetic defenses of this topic and why they are unsatisfactory.
 - j. Student initiated proposal (contact the professor directly)

Students should submit the paper by blackboard by **midnight 11/26/18**. **Late papers will be accepted with a 1% per day penalty.**

Evaluation of Grade

Grades will be determined on the basis of the NOBTS grading scale—an A for 93-100, B for 85-92, C for 77-84, D for 70-76, and F for 69 or below.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Reflective Summaries	30%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class Room Discussion	30%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Research Paper	40%

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

Technical Assistance

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Blackboard Learning Management System NOBTS.Blackboard.com.
3. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Blackboard

An important instrument in the implementation of this course is the Blackboard Learning System. *All assignments will be submitted using Blackboard SafeAssign technology.* The course operates with a **trust policy** in place that the student will not compromise his or her integrity by looking at notes or books during the test. And as the proverb notes, “Whoever walks in integrity will be delivered” (Prov. 28:18).

Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer.

Plagiarism on Written Assignments

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

Course Schedule

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

Readings: Quran: Surah 1-2; Dashi 1-73; Esack 100-165 Mattson 1-75; McAuliffe 1-20

Unit 2a.

Readings: Quran: Surah 3-5; Dashi 74-138; Esack 1-45 Mattson 76-136; McAuliffe 23-78

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.

Readings: Quran: Surah 6; Dashi 139-165; Mattson 137-174

- 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.

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

Readings: Quran: Surah 7; McAuliffe 79-133

- 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.

Readings: Quran: Surah 19; Mattson 175-219; McAuliffe 145-157

- 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.

Readings: Esack 78-85

- The nature and use of the Qur'an in Islamic worship differs from the use of the Bible in Christian or Jewish worship. 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 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.

Readings: Quran: Surah 100-114; Dashi 85-99; Esack 1-45 Mattson 220-234; McAuliffe 181-247

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

Readings: Quran: Esack 166-190; McAuliffe 255-306

- 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

Primary Sources

The Holy Bible

The Qur'an

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Secondary Sources

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Electronic resources

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