

ANSWERING GOD'S CALL

THEO/PHIL6333 Word of God in Christianity and Islam New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Theological and Historical Studies Spring 2021—Tuesday and Thursday 12:30-1:50 PM NOLA2U Flex

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Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

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.

Sfar, Mondher. (trans Emilia Lanier). *In Search of the Original Koran: The True History of the Revealed Text.* Amherst: Prometheus. 2008.

Recommended Textbooks

Ali Al-Imam, Ahmad. Variant Readings of the Qur'an: A Critical Study of Their Historical and Linguistic Origins. Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought. 2006.

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 material both on-line and in print books, articles and presentations as well as view lectures.
- 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 for your reading of the Qur'an itself and required textbooks.] Each student is required to read the assigned reading for each unit as listed in the class schedule. You will then write a 2-3 page (min) single-spaced, typed reflective summary highlighting the assigned reading of each unit (e.g., a singular summary of all readings for the unit: the Qur'an, Dashti, Seack, Mattson, and Sfar.). 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 required text reflecting upon and each of the following components clearly marked by headings for each section: (1) content summary, (2) positive/negative evaluations, and (3) applications to your understanding of Islamic views regarding the Word of God. Please combine the summaries of all 5 units into one document and submit that one document on Apr 22. 30% of the final grade
- 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. Participation in discussion (0r in the case of NOLA2UFlex students response to questions asked by the online instructor from the videoed twice weekly lectures).

Rubric for weekly grade:

- 75 % presence (in the case of the NOLA2UFlex students awareness of the discussion question indicates attendance in the lecture).
- 0-25% for perception and precision of responses within discussion 30% of the final grade.
- 3. **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** 1//22/21 informing him which topic he/she intends to write about.
 - a. The paper will be double-spaced and in conformity with NOBTS guidelines of **15-18** pages (max) on one of the following topics:
 - 1. 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?
 - 2. 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.
- 3. 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.
- 4. 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.
- 5. 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.
- 6. Historical facts are ignored or denied in the Qur'an, which is God-speech for Muslims. (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.
- 7. 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.
- 8. 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.
- 9. 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.
- 10. Student initiated proposal which align with the content and learning outcomes of this course. (contact the professor directly)

Students should submit the paper by blackboard by midnight 4/26/21. 40% of the final grade. Late papers will be accepted with a 1% per day penalty.

Evaluation of Grade

<u>Grades</u> 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.

Reflective Summaries 30% Class Room Discussion 30% Research Paper 40%

NOLA2U Flex Students

If you are taking this course as a NOLA2U Flex student, please note the following attendance policies:

1. You are required to be in class either through viewing the lectures live or viewing the recorded lectures on Blackboard. When you view the recorded lecture, you will be considered present for that class. Regardless of if you watch the class live or recorded, you are only allowed to miss the amount of class time specified in the NOBTS attendance policy as stated in the graduate catalog. (See page 184 in the graduate catalog: https://www.nobts.edu/ resources/pdf/academics/GraduateCatalog.pdf).

- 2. You will be asked to certify that you have been present for the live session or have viewed the recorded session. This certification will be done through [assignment by professor] after having watched the class live or viewing the recorded session.
- 3. All video lectures are available for 7 days after the video is posted. If you are unable to view the video within that time frame, you will be considered absent for that class session.
- 4. Technical issues will not be considered a valid reason for missing a lecture.

Technical Assistance

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

- 1. <u>Selfserve@nobts.edu</u> Email for technical questions/support requests with the <u>Selfserve.nobts.edu</u> site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
- 2. <u>BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu</u> 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. <u>www.NOBTS.edu/itc/</u> General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

[Other items may be included, such as: expectations for reading assignments, policy on late assignments, academic honesty, classroom demeanor, extra credit]

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 Jan 19-21.

Review major points in the Christian doctrine of revelation.

Readings: Quran: Surah 1; Dashi 1-73; Esack 100-165 Mattson 1-75; Sfar 1-13

Unit 2 Jan 26-28.

Readings: Quran: Surah 2: 185-251 (it may be necessary to read the broader context to grasp the intent of Qur'anic passages); Dashi 74-138; Esack 1-45 Mattson 76-136; Sfar 14-48

- 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 Feb 2-11.

Readings: Quran: Surah 6:155; 3:23; 14:1-5 (see note for Unit 2); Dashi 139-165; Mattson 137-174 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.

Unit 3bFeb 16-25.

Readings: Quran: Surah 7 (see note for Unit 2); Sfar 49-68

The Islamic Concept of the Our'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 Mar 2-11.

Readings: Ouran: Surah 26:2; 4:105 (see note for Unit 2); Mattson 175-219; Sfar 69-86 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 Mar 23-25.

Readings: Quran: Surah 16:64-89; 38:29 (see note for Unit 2); Esack 78-85

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

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.

Mar 28-Apr4 Easter week

Unit 5a Apr 6-Apr 13.

Quran: Surah 11:49; 17:9; 29:69 (see note for Unit 2)

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 Apr 15.

Readings: Quran: Surah 10:37; 100-114 (see note for Unit 2); Dashi 85-99; Esack 1-45 Mattson 220-234; Sfar 87-104.

The concept of abrogation.

Unit 6a Apr 19.

Readings: Quran: Surah 7:2; 39:41; 21:10; (see note for Unit 2); Esack 166-190

The uniqueness of the Qur'an in terms of revelation

- Who is Allah (what is his character in the Qur'an)?
- The revelational impact of the nature of total transcendence of Allah and his identification and interaction with the created order within Islam.
- 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

Unit 6b Apr 22-27.

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. Apr 29-May 6.

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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Sharing the Gospel with Muslims Materials by John Gilchrist Answering Islam

www.disciplethenations.org www.thesabiil Dr. Michael H. Edens August 2013