Spring 2014  
Stony Brook University  
Department of Asian and Asian American Studies  
College of Arts and Sciences  
AAS/RLS 280 Islam

This course satisfies the DEC category J  
Course Instructor: William Chittick  
Section: 01  
Office Hours: MW 5:30-6:30  
William.Chittick@stonybrook.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

An introduction to the main features of the Islamic revelation as contained in the Koran and its impact on the major spiritual, intellectual, legal, and social teachings and institutions of the Islamic world. The course concludes with an examination of Islam in the modern world.

Topics are approached thematically, following the scheme set down in the table of contents of *The Vision of Islam*. Lectures are designed to provide background and clarify issues that come up in the reading. Students are expected to do the assigned reading, attend class regularly, and ask questions. There will be several quizzes focusing on the Hadith of Gabriel and its implications for understanding the religion.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

The course aims to help students gain the ability to think critically about human beliefs and practices while recognizing both the universality of religion across the globe and throughout history and the contextual specificity of Islam. Additional goals include sufficient familiarity with research methods to read secondary literature on Islamic topics and to locate the discussions in their general and specific contexts; the ability to write essays on themes in Religious Studies; the ability to speak with some familiarity about the teachings and practices of Islam; an awareness of the importance and legitimacy of the different perspectives present within the Islamic tradition; an appreciation of the commonalities and differences among religions generally.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

*Attendance and Make Up Policy*

Attendance is required, but no record will be kept. No excuses will be accepted for missed exams except those sanctioned by university policy. Quizzes will not be announced beforehand (with the exception of the first) and cannot be made up. Failure to take the quiz will result in a zero for the quiz; an F is not a zero.

*Description and schedule of Required Readings and/or Assignments*

The only required reading is Murata and Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*. Since you have no other reading assignment, you are expected to read the book carefully and to show what you have learned in the quizzes and exams.

With the exception of the first quiz, all questions will be essay format. A good essay will show mastery of the details as well as a grasp of the place of the discussion within the Islamic tradition as a whole. For the first quiz you must **memorize** the Hadith of Gabriel; this will give you the overall picture of the tradition.
Exams

Midterm: March 26
Final: May 13 (8:30-11:00 PM, in the classroom)

GRADING:

Grades will be calculated on this basis: Quizzes 40%. Midterm 30%. Final 30%
Quizzes will be graded with letters, exams with numbers. Conversion table as follows:
A+ = 96-100 (receiving a final A+ is impossible, both practically and theoretically)
A  = 90-95
B+ = 85-89, B  = 80-84, B- = 75-79
C+ = 70-74, C  = 65-69, C- = 60-64
D+ = 55-59, D  = 50-54

MEETING SCHEDULE

Jan. 27-29: The Hadith of Gabriel; the historical context
Reading: Vision, Preface & Introduction
Feb. 3: İslâm: the Five Pillars
Vision, Intro to Part I, Chapter One (pp. 3-27)
Feb. 5: İslâm in history: the Shariah, jurisprudence
Vision, Chapter Two
Quiz - Memorization of the Hadith of Gabriel
Feb. 10-12: Îmân: Tawhid
Vision, pp. 45-84
Feb. 17-19: Angels
Vision, pp. 84-104
Feb. 24-26: The measuring out
Vision, pp. 104-31
Mar. 3-5: Prophecy
Vision, Chapter Four, pp. 132-64
Mar. 10-12: Islamic views of other religions
Vision, Chapter Four, pp. 164-92
Mar. 17-21: Spring Break
Mar. 24: Review
Mar. 26: Midterm Examination
Mar. 31-Apr. 2: The Return, the soul’s posthumous trajectory
Vision, Chapter Five, pp. 193-235
April 7-9: Îmân in history: The intellectual schools
Vision, Chapter Six
Apr. 14-16: Ihsân: The Koranic roots
Vision, Chapter 7
Apr. 21-23: Ihsân in history
Vision, Chapter 8
Apr. 28-30: The Islamic view of history
Vision, Chapters 9-10
May 5-7 Review

May 13: Final Examination (8:30-11:00 PM, in the classroom)
CLASS PROTOCOL
All electronic devices off during classes.

SUGGESTED READING
Arberry, A. J. The Koran Interpreted http://books.google.com/books?id=6beh0aCEznkC
Lings, Martin. Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources (1983)
Denny, Frederick. An Introduction to Islam (2005)

BASIC REFERENCE BOOKS
The Encyclopedia of Religion
The Encyclopedia of the Qur'an

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES
http://tanzil.net. The text of the Koran plus several English translations (including Arberry’s).

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS) STATEMENT:
If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, room128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.
Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and Disability Support Services. For procedures and information go to the following website: http://www.stonybrook.edu/ehs/fire/disabilities

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT:
Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT:
Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures.