Introduction to Islam

WM/AP 647

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary               Paul T. Martindale,
D.Min.
Spring 2012                    Mondays 6 to
9 PM

Course Description:
The purpose of this course is to provide a comprehensive introduction to the history,
culture, traditions, beliefs and practices of Islam. The various historical manifestations of
contemporary Islam will be explored including the rise of modern Islamic Fundamentalism.
The text of the Qur’an will be studied in chronological order and we will observe and discuss
together the development of various doctrines that formed within the changing context of the
early Islamic community in Mecca and Medina. The theology and culture of Islamic thought
will be compared to that of Evangelical Christianity as a means of more effectively
understanding both. This course will also integrate the professor’s practical experience of
working with Muslims in the hope of exploring ways the gospel can be most effectively
communicated to members of the Islamic faith, the second largest and fastest growing
religion in the world today.

Course Objectives: As a result of this course students will:
1. Have a good working knowledge of the traditions, ideology, theology, beliefs, and
   practices of Muslims today.
2. Understand the religious, political, social, cultural, and theological development of Islam
   and its institutions.
3. Appreciate the historical context of the development of Jihad, shariah law, and the early
   believer community in Islam.
4. Understand the role of Mohammed in the development of Islam as a religion, political
   state, and community.
5. Understand the Islamic worldview and theological frame of reference and how this tends
   to distort the Muslim’s understand of Christianity.
6. Begin to formulate appropriate responses to Muslim objections against the Trinity, Deity
   of Christ, Crucifixion, and Atonement.
7. Develop a biblical understanding and response to Islam.
8. Grow in your understanding and appreciation of the Bible, Christian doctrine, and the
   gospel message.

Required Textbooks:
Abdul-Haqq, Abdiyah Akbar. 1980. Sharing Your Faith with a Muslim, Bethany House

**Selected Journal Articles:**
_____. “Misunderstanding C-5: His Ways are not Our Orthodoxy.” Evangelical Missions Quarterly 40, no. 3 (July 2004): 296-304.

**Requirements of Course:**

1. **Research Paper**
   A research paper on a topic of your choosing according to the following requirements:
   1. It must be on a subject matter related to the course material.
   2. The topic selected and a thesis statement must be submitted by Monday March 19th at class time. This thesis statement should also note at least five sources and it must be received back with approval from the professor.
   3. The paper should be 10 to 12 typed pages (double space, 12 pt. type) long, following acceptable standards of form and style. A cover sheet will be provided by the professor that outlines the specific criteria by which the paper will be graded.
   4. Your paper must be prefaced with a synopsis of your entire paper which should not exceed 100 words as well as a detailed outline of the entire paper.
   5. It must be turned in by Friday May 4th.
   6. The professor reserves the right to deduct 5% from the grade if the paper is submitted late.
2. Apologetic Response

Each student must choose ONE of the following three choices:
1. Interview a Muslim and discuss your faith in Jesus Christ. What are the major objections that the Muslim has to Christianity or the Christian faith? What confusions about the Christian gospel did you detect in the conversation. Submit a report of your interview that answers these two questions.

2. Spend at least five hours witnessing to Muslims and write a report of your experience.

Note: The above two projects can easily be fulfilled through a single trip to Harvard Square, an area mosque, a dialogue meeting, or the Turkish Cultural Center. There are thousands of Muslims who live, study and work within immediate driving distance of the Seminary.

3. Choose five key challenges that Islam poses against the Christian faith and write up a cogent, theologically informed, apologetic response to each of the five challenges. For example, a key challenge could be an issue like the so-called “corruptible Bible” or the challenge that Christians are not monotheists, etc…

The apologetic response is due on April 23rd.

3. Final Exam

There will be a FINAL EXAM covering the lectures and readings in this course. The Final Exam will occur on the last day of classes Monday, April 30th.

4. Reading of Textbooks

On the last day of the semester Friday, May 4th your list of reading assignments completed will be due.

5. Attendance

Perfect attendance is encouraged and will greatly enhance your ability to perform well on the exams and comprehend the daily readings. In consideration of the rest of the class, please TURN OFF ALL CELL PHONES during the instructional period.

Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading of textbooks</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apologetic Response</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</tbody>
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100%

The Grading Scale is as follows:
A+ : 100-97;  A: 96-94;  A-: 90-93;  B+: 89-87;  B: 86-84;  B-: 83-80;
C+ : 79-77;  C: 76-74;  C-: 73-70;  D+: 69-67;  D: 66-64;  D-: 63-60 F: 59-0

Review of Key Dates:
March 19th Thesis statements due
May 4th  Research Papers Due  
April 23rd  Apologetic Response Due  
May 4th  Reading Report due  
April 30th  Final Exam  

Schedule of Topics:  
2. Main beliefs of Islam and 10 commandments for witnessing with Muslims.  
3 & 4. Pre-Islamic Arabian context, Origins of Islam, Mohammed, the four rightly-guided Caliphs, and how Islam spread.  
5. Ritual worship and sacred space in Islam, view of purity.  
11. Fundamentalism in Egypt.  
12. The Hajj.  
13. Views of Islam, Muslims as people. What is Islam?  
17. The Divine Law in Islam. Schools of Jurisprudence.  
18. Sources of Islam and the Christian Background in Islam.  

Select Bibliography  
“The Qur’an as the Word of God”. See, Linzey, A. and Wexler, P.
Heaven and Earth: Essex Essays in Theology and Ethics, Worthing: Churchman,
1986 (pp. 38-54).

M. E. Sharpe.
E. Sharpe.
NY: The Edwin Mellen Press.
House.
Trimingham, J. S. 1979. Christianity Among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times,
London and New York, Longman.
Wolfson, H. A. “The Muslim Attributes and the Christian Trinity.” Harvard Theological
and Faber.

DON’T FORGET THE CD’S IN THE LIBRARY: For example the wonderful ten volume,
Encyclopedia of Islam is available on CD!