The Theology of Islam and its Implications for Ministry to Muslims

WM 725

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Fall 2010
Instructor: Paul T. Martindale, D.Min.

Course Description:
This course is a comprehensive introduction to the theology of Islam and the implications for ministry to Muslims. In order to communicate effectively with religious Muslims we must be able to understand from within their own theological worldview and tradition what Islam teaches. This enables us to understand how Muslims interpret the Christian faith and life and how we must creatively interpret the Biblical message into the Muslim’s theological frame of reference. The student will be able to evaluate the theological views of Islam in relation to Christianity and to develop a biblical view of Islam and ministry to Muslims.

Requirements of the Course:

1. Research Project
Visit a mosque, attend a dialogue meeting, visit the Turkish cultural center or find a Muslim somewhere to interact with. Have at least one conversation where you compare the theological understanding of Islam to that of Christianity. Report on what topics the Muslim raised and how this person understands Christianity. Rather than attempting to witness to this Muslim concentrate on asking questions, listening, and understanding as much as you can about the beliefs of this Muslim person. Report on your interaction in a short paper. The paper should have three sections: 1. Introduction, 2. Theological topics raised, and 3. Analysis of your interactions. The paper should be double spaced using 12 pt. type. It should be 5 to 7 pages in length. Include a cover sheet listing your name, mail box #, title of course, and title of the paper. The paper is due on November 3rd. The professor reserves the right to deduct 5% for all work submitted late.

2. Reflection Paper
Choose one of Islam’s scholars who interacted with Christianity and developed an approach to refuting its theology. Focus on no more than two or three of the topics (Trinity, Redemption, Sin, etc) that he wrote about and analyze his approach to Christianity. Did this Muslim scholar or teacher correctly understand Christianity? Was he able to describe it without distortion? If not, what theological filter from Islam colored or distorted his view? What was his view of Christians and the Christian community? Do any of his views resemble an earlier heresy of Christianity? What is the basis of authority for his views and what is his strategy for proving Islam correct or Christianity false? If you had lived at that time how would you have responded to his arguments? The paper should be double spaced using 12 pt. type. It should be 8 to 10 pages in length with a cover sheet listing your name, mail box #, title of course, and title of the paper. Use endnotes or footnotes to cite sources and include a Bibliography listing all sources cited in the paper. The reflection paper is due on November 17th. The professor reserves the right to deduct 5% from the grade of late work submitted.
3. **Final Exam**
   There will be a final exam covering the lectures and readings in this course. The final exam will occur between Dec. 10 and Dec. 14 as per the Registrar’s schedule.

4. **Reading of Textbooks and Articles**
   On the last day of classes, **December 10th**, you must submit your reading list documenting all reading you completed for the course.

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.

6. **Grading**
   - Reading of assigned texts and articles: 20%
   - Research Project: 20%
   - Reflection Paper: 30%
   - Final Exam: 30%

   **The Grading Scale used in this class is as follows:**
   - A+, 100-97;  A, 96-94;  A-, 93-90;  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, 0-69

   **Review of Key Dates:**
   - Nov. 3rd: Research project due
   - Nov. 17th: Reflection Paper Due
   - Dec. 10th: Reading Report due
   - TBA: Final Exam (see Registrar’s Office)

   **Lecture Topics:**
   1. Introduction to the course. Overview of Islam’s theology and course methods.
   2. Views of Islam, Islam as ideology, and the place of jihad
   3. Islamic doctrine of God
   4. Islamic doctrine of Man
   5. Islamic doctrine of Sin
   6. Islamic doctrine of Prophets and Scripture
   7. The Islamic view of Revelation
   8. The development of Shariah law in Islam
   9. The role of Hadith Traditions in Islamic theology and practice
   10. Jesus in the Qur’an
   11. The divinity of Christ
   12. Redemption in Islam and Christianity
   13. The role of the Ummah community in Islam
   14. Contemporary Islamist movements in Islam. Salafs, wahabis, and sects
16. Answering Muslim Objections: Son of God and Trinity
17. Answering Muslim Objections: Crucifixion, Atonement, and Prophecies of Muhammed
18. Understanding the Muslim mind
19. Bridges between Islam and Christianity
20. New reformers movement in Islam and reopening the process of Ijtihad

Principal Textbooks:
Qutb, Sayyid *Milestones*, The Mother Mosque Foundation, Cedar Rapids, IA

Recommended Books:
Musk, Bill. 1989 *The Unseen Face of Islam*. MARC & The Evangelical Missionary Alliance, London and Eastbourne, UK.


**Articles:**


Shahid, Samuel. *Rights of Non-Muslims in an Islamic State*. (booklet), pp.3-33


Toby, Lester. *“What is the Koran?”* The Atlantic Monthly (Jan 1999):43-56

