

Messiah College
RELI 229: ISLAM
Summer 2011

Contact Information:

Professor: Sharon L. Baker, Ph.D.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

A survey of Islam as a religion, way of life, and civilization. This course will examine foundational beliefs and practices within their historical and current contexts and will also discuss the rich diversity within Islam. It will highlight the role of Islam in both local and global affairs, including perspectives on Muslim-Christian relations. Meets General Education Philosophy/Religion requirement.

COURSE PREFACE

You may expect the following from this course:

1. A deepening and broadening of your interests in Islam.
2. A basic understanding of Islam, its history, its beliefs, and its practices.
3. Islam in the contemporary world is incredibly diverse, and this point will be made repeatedly during the semester. In order to properly understand Islam I will focus on the mainstream, majority, or orthodox form of the tradition.
4. A deep respect for Islam as a religion and as a way of life. While there is much in Islam that we may be unable to accept, there is also much to appreciate, respect, and find helpful in the practice of our own faith as Christians. We will discuss differences with Christianity and challenges within the Islamic world but a primary intention is to dispel misinformation, moderate negative emotions, and approach objectivity that will foster balanced understanding and appreciation.
5. Safe discussion forums which will be a refuge, a safe place where we can discuss, think, reflect, question, and process without fear or intimidation of any kind. We will all do our best to create and maintain an environment of trust and affirmation where our faithfulness can be enriched, and where an embracing spirit can be cultivated.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Students will understand the basic beliefs and practices of Islam.
2. Students will review historical and current expressions of Islam.
3. Students will appreciate Islam as a religion, way of life, and civilization.
4. Students will enrich their own faith through interaction with devoted followers of Islam.
5. Students will learn basic skills in Christian-Muslim relations.

REQUIRED TEXTS

No God But God by Reza Aslan ISBN: 978-1400062133

The Koran: A Very Short Introduction by Michael Cook ISBN: 978-0192853448

REQUIRED FILMS (Films not available online may be found at Blockbuster or through Netflix)

The Message

Traitor

Islam: Empire of Faith

Inside Islam

Inside Mecca

Malcolm X

***Note:** You will need to have a Netflix membership in order to rent their films.

ASSIGNMENTS

Exams: Students will take one exam based upon the reading. Question format will be multiple choice, matching, and fill in the blank. The exam is worth 100 points.

Reading Reflections: Students will write one reflection each week on the reading and two responses to classmates' reflections. All reflection postings are due on Saturday evening--the Saturday ending the week's readings. Reflections and responses are worth 50 points total each week.

Film Reflections: Students will watch the films required in the week's assignment and post a 300 word reflection essay describing your thoughts on the film. Answer questions such as: How does this film resonate with your own spirituality? How has its perspective on Islam surprise you--what did you learn? What do you disagree or agree with and why? What connections does the film have with what you have learned about Islam so far? Reflections are worth 100 points each.

Final Process Paper: Students will write one 3-5 page (double-spaced) paper processing what they have learned through the course. Address the following questions: How has this course been beneficial to you? What is your response toward Islam now that you have more information about the tradition? What is there in common between Islam and your own faith tradition? What specific beliefs, practices, stories resonate with you and why? What do you believe happens to the devout Muslim in the afterlife? The paper must be emailed to me by Saturday noon, July 23 at sbaker@messiah.edu. The paper is worth 100 points.

The schedule and assignments are subject to at the discretion of the professor.

Grading Chart

Exam	100 pts.
Reading Reflections	350 pts.
Film Reflections	600 pts.
<u>Process Paper</u>	<u>100 pts.</u>

Total points

1150 pts.

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Points</u>
A	1150-1069
A-	1168-1035
B+	1034-1000
B	999-943
B-	942-920
C+	919-885
C	884-839
C-	838-805
D+	804-770
D	769-690
F	689-0