

Portland State University
SOC 399: ISLAM & SOCIETY (4 Credits)
Summer 2010
Masoud Kheirabadi, Ph.D.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this class is to provide you with an essential background to better understand the world of Islam and Muslim population. By analyzing Islam both in theory and in practice, we will examine Islam as a way of life in a socio-cultural context and study the ways by which this religion affects the individual, family, and social life in various Islamic societies.

Topics such as the emergence and development of Muslim community (*ummah*), variety of Muslim beliefs and practices (sufism, shi'ism, etc.), formation and development of Islamic law (*shari'ah*), tensions between tradition and modernity (changes in the status of women, punishment laws, etc.), contemporary Islamic resurgence, and other relevant topics will be discussed in class. We will also examine the current crisis in the Middle East from an Islamic point of view.

By the end of the term, you will have a better knowledge of Islam both as a spiritual faith and as a way of life for over a billion Muslims around the world, and you will have an informed understanding of the religio-social roots of contemporary developments in Islamic world.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Masoud Kheirabadi, Islam (Great World Religions), Chelsea House Publishing, 2004 (ISBN: 9780791078594)

Thomas Cleaey, et al, The Wisdom of the Prophet: The Sayings of Muhammad, Shambhala Publications, 2001 (ISBN: 1570628254)

Karen Armstrong, Islam: A Short History, Modern Library, 2002 (ISBN: 081296618X)

John Esposito and Dalia Mogahed, Who Speaks For Islam?: What a Billion Muslims Really Think, Gallup Press, 2008 (ISBN-13: 978-1595620170)

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

Andrew March, Islam and Liberal Citizenship: The Search for an Overlapping Consensus, Oxford University Press, USA (March 27, 2009), ISBN-10: 019533096X

Bassam Tibi, Islam's Predicament with Modernity: Politics, Religious Reform and Cultural Change, Routledge; 1 edition (April 20, 2009), ISBN-10: 0415484723

Alastair Crooke, Resistance: The Essence of the Islamist Revolution (Paperback), Pluto Press (February 17, 2009)(ISBN: 0745328857)

Marnia Azreg, Questioning the Veil: Open Letters to Muslim Women, Princeton University Press (August 16, 2009), ISBN-10: 0691138184

William Roff, Studies in Islam and Society in Southeast Asia (Paperback), University of Hawaii Press (October 31, 2009) (ISBN: 9971694069)

1. ACCESS TO COMPUTER WITH INTERNET CONNECTIONS

To take this course you will need to have access to a computer with Internet connections, which can allow you to connect to our class Blackboard site. This course is delivered totally online using Blackboard at <http://psuonline.pdx.edu/>. The best working browser for this course is Mozilla Firefox.

2. AVAILABILITY OF READING MATERIALS

Textbooks for this course are available through PSU Bookstore. You need your required textbooks to do the weekly assignments. It is your responsibility to purchase your textbooks on time. Lack of access to the textbooks cannot be used as an excuse for not doing the weekly assignments.

3. MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

You are expected to read the assigned weekly material and have a reasonable understanding of issues discussed by your textbooks. Your comprehension of reading material will be tested through weekly quizzes and critical thinking essays. To satisfy the course requirements, you need to complete 4 weekly quizzes and respond to 4 weekly critical thinking questions during the term. Due dates for assignments are given under Weekly Readings and Learning Activities below. LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

A. BI-WEEKLY CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS: To better understand Islam and Muslims you will write four critical-thinking essays throughout the term and respond to other students' essays. Your critical thinking essays will account for 100 points or one third of your total points for the course. Each essay will worth 25 points (15 for your own posted essay and the remaining 10 points for responding to at least two other essays posted by your fellow students.) Essays vary in length between 700 and 1500 words. The minimum length for first essay is 1500 words. For the remaining essays the minimum length is 700 words. Essays have to be submitted before the assigned deadlines. Your essays should display your comprehension of concepts covered by our textbooks and our assigned audio-visuales. In addition to the textbooks and assigned documentaries, you need to use at least two outside sources (articles from academic journals, book chapters, Internet sites, etc.) to conduct the preliminary research for your weekly essays. You need to cite the information for your

outside sources (i.e. author, article name, journal name, year of publication, Internet site, etc.) at bottom of your posted essay. Failing to properly cite your sources will result in point deductions from your assignments. It is preferable that you post your essays using Microsoft Word 2007.

Comments/Responses: As it was indicated above you also need to read the postings by other students and respond (i.e. make comments) to at least two other postings for each essay. Your responses/comments should be substantial and express your understanding of issues in hand (It should go beyond simply complementing the person for the essay.) your comments should be at least 100 words. Make sure to follow the Internet etiquette rules listed under my Orientation remarks.

B. WEEKLY QUIZZES: There will be a total of four quizzes testing your comprehension of the reading material. There will be one quiz per week for four weeks. Quizzes are mainly multiple choice and true-false questions. Usually each week's quiz will cover material from the readings assigned for that particular week, but sometime they require your accumulative knowledge. Occasionally you may find questions that are not taken directly from your textbooks and may require further research. Quizzes will worth 200 points (20 points for each quiz) or two third of your total 300 points for the course.

4. GRADING CRITERIA

There are a total of 300 possible points with 200 points belonging to weekly quizzes and 100 points belonging to biweekly critical thinking essays. If you have taken this course as pass/no pass, in order to pass the course you need to make the minimum points required for a C-grade. Grading is based on the following percentages:

Percent of Total Points	Points	Grade
100-93%	300-279	A
93-90%	278-270	A-
90-86%	269-258	B+
86-83%	257-249	B
83-80%	248-240	B-
80-76%	239-228	C+
76-73%	227-219	C
73-70%	218-210	C-
70-66%	209-198	D+
66-63%	197-189	D
63-60%	188-180	D-

5. ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

Each quiz will become available on Thursday of each week and will remain available until its due date which is the following Sunday before midnight. So each assignment will remain available for a total of 10 days and will give you plenty of time to complete the assignment. This will be the case until the end of the term. Critical Thinking essays are due every other week by Sunday before midnight.

Assignments	Dates Due by midnight
Quiz 1/Critical Thinking Essay 1	June 27
Quiz 2/ Critical Thinking Essay 2	July 5
Quiz 3/Critical Thinking Essay 3	July 11
Quiz 4/Critical Thinking Essay 4	July 18

6. WEEKLY READINGS AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

WEEK 1 (June 21-17)

- Read the following: Armstrong (chapter 1,2,3); Kheirabadi (chapters 1,2,3); Cleary (pages 1-70);
- Watch the movie The Messenger, and the documentary: Islam: Empire of Faith: part 1: The Messenger;
- Complete the quiz 1 questions;
- Post your Critical Thinking Essay 1

WEEK 2 (June 28-July 4)

- Read the following: Armstrong (chapter 4,5); Kheirabadi (chapters 4,6,7); Cleary (pages 71-131);
- Watch the documentary: Islam: Empire of Faith: parts 1,2, and 3
- Complete the quiz 2 questions;
- Post your Critical Thinking Essay 2.

WEEK 3 (July 5-11)

- Read the following: Kheirabadi (chapters 8,9,10); Esposito (Introduction and chapter 1,2);
- Watch the documentary: Inside Mecca;
- Complete the quiz 3 questions;
- Post your Critical Thinking Essay 3.

WEEK 4 (July 12-18)

- a. Read the following: Esposito (chapters 3,4,5);
- b. Complete the quiz 4 questions;
- c. Post your Critical Thinking Essay 4.

7. OPTIONAL EXTRA CREDIT REVIEWS

Article Reviews: You can earn up to 30 extra credits by selecting up to 10 articles of your choice from your selected academic journals or books. Each article review should be between 700 to 1000 words. Your reviews should overview and analyze the content of the reviewed articles and express your own views on issues discussed. Each article review when done properly would worth 3 points. You can do as many as 10 article reviews for a total of 30 points. You can also review book chapters from your recommended books in place of journal articles. You need to post your reviews under Article Reviews for Extra Credits in our Discussion Board. I will encourage you to read the reviews posted by your fellow students and comment on their contents. This way we can generate a healthy class discussion with regard to various posted topics.

Note: You need to reveal the exact name of the article, name of the author (s), date of publication, and the source (printed or web). You can have the citations either at the top or bottom of the page wherever you prefer. Article reviews without revealing sources will not be graded.

2. Book Reviews: Instead of article reviews you can choose up to two of your recommended books (listed above in your syllabus) and write reviews about them. For each book that you choose write a 3000 word review discussing the main arguments presented by the author (s) and compare and contrast them with your required books. Each review when done properly would worth 15 points. You can review two books for a total of 30 points. You have also a choice of reviewing one book and five articles for a total of 30 points.

Please post your reviews here. The last day to post your reviews is July 18 before midnight.

8. YOUR INSTRUCTOR

I would like to welcome you all to my class. I am an Iranian-American by ethnicity, and have lived in the US since 1976, three years in Texas and the rest of it in Eugene and Portland. My background is in both science and social science, and I teach both. I have an M.S. degree in Agricultural Mechanization from Texas A & I (now merged with Texas A & M) University, and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in geography from the University of Oregon. I have taught for over twenty years for various colleges and universities such as UO, Lewis & Clark, Marylhurst, PCC and PSU. I believe that critical thinking is an essential part of education and I will provide my students with plenty of chances to do just that. My classes are usually interactive and students have plenty of opportunities to discuss their ideas and reading assignments in a comfortable setting. For a more effective teaching, in addition to written material, I often utilize the audio-visual equipment to enhance my students' understanding of issues covered by the course. Among material that I use are some of the PBS educational documentaries. My

regional specialty and research area is the Middle East (Southwest Asia and North Africa). I am mainly interested in issues and problems of development in Third World countries. Sustainable development, ecology, and spirituality and religion are among my favorite topics.

9. COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Our communication is mainly through our class Blackboard site. I am available everyday and check my mail at least once a day. If you have any questions just send me a mail (click on Communication to the left of the screen and compose your message.) Usually you'll get a response from me within 24 hours.

10. CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

Any type of cheating and plagiarism will lead to zero point, and if repeated you may fail the course. Your essays and other writings have to be your own words and ideas. Whenever you use other people's ideas you need to give them the due credit and reveal your sources at the bottom of your essay. Any sentence which is borrowed from another writer should be in quotation marks. Please see the following source for ways to avoid accidental/intentional plagiarism:

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html . You can also review the library's TILT tutorial and learn about plagiarism and how to avoid it:

<http://www.clark.edu/Library/TILT/index.html>
