

The Quran

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Spring 2017 RLST 3040-001
TTh 3:30-4:45 HUMN 1B80

Office Hours: F 5:00-6:00 HUMN 288

Course Description

This course explores the Quran from multiple perspectives including translation, history, paleography, classical exegesis, philosophy, materiality, Islamic law, and spirituality. Nearly half of the course will be devoted analyzing the 30th section (*juz'*) of the Quran in detail.

Learning Goals

In terms of skills, students who take this course will improve their ability to analyze primary sources, and to glean important facts, main ideas, and central arguments from a large amount of material. Students will learn how to use important resources in the fields of Islamic and Religious Studies, and to cite different sources correctly. Finally, students will improve their ability to express themselves orally. In terms of content, students will gain a nuanced understanding of the ways in which Muslims draw upon the Quran.

Evaluation

“Translation”: 20% of your final grade will be determined on the basis of a “translation” of one of the short Meccan chapters of the Quran. I will provide you with guidelines for the assignment. Your grade will be based on the translation itself and how you present it to the class in the last two weeks of the semester.

Bibliography: 15% of your final grade will be determined on the basis of a bibliography.

Attendance and Participation: 15% of your final grade will be determined on the basis of attendance. In order to receive credit for attending class, you must submit a colored notecard with your name and the answer to two questions: what was the most important thing you learned today? and what question still remains in your mind?¹ *Print legibly.* You can miss one class without incurring a penalty. Thereafter, your attendance grade will drop one letter grade for each class you miss (A-, B+, B, B-, etc.). The success of this course depends on your participation. If you have a legitimate reason such as a personal or family emergency, contact me (preferably prior to missing class). I can be reached by email. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed, including any changes in the syllabus, and to schedule a meeting with me to review what you missed. *Please note that, in addition to attendance, you are required to be present.* Indications that you are present include: eye contact with your professor and classmates, sharing your ideas, asking questions, taking notes, and responsive facial expressions. Indications that you are not present include: lack of preparation, repeatedly glancing at the clock, sleeping, and distracting the class.

Midterm Exam: 25% of your final grade will be determined on the basis of a midterm exam.

Final Exam: 25% of your final grade will be determined on the basis of a final exam.

¹ In the field of pedagogy, this is a tried-and-true technique made famous by Thomas A. Angelo and K. Patricia Cross in their book *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993).

Final grades will be based on the university's standard grading system: 93% = A, 90% = A-, 87% = B+, 83% = B, 80% = B-, 77% = C+, 73% = C, 70% = C-, 67% = D+, 60% = D.

Readings

You are required to purchase the following books:

Gade, Anna M. *The Qur'an: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2010.

Sells, Michael. *Approaching the Qur'an: The Early Revelations*. Ashland, OR: White Cloud Press, 1999.

These books are available for purchase at the CU Bookstore.

Rules

Cell phones should be turned off before class begins and laptops are banned unless you have a compelling reason.²

I will not accept late work without prior arrangement. If you have an emergency that may jeopardize your ability to complete your work on time, please contact me ASAP so we can try to work something out.

For the purposes of this class, email should be treated as a formal means of communication. When replying to or sending emails, write in proper English and do not use phonetic language, such as abbreviated words and symbols that are commonly used in text messages. Check spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Address me in email and in person as "Professor Ali." Always include a greeting and sign your name. You are responsible for regularly checking your university email and D2L. Consistent inattention to email etiquette may affect your grade. Remember that email, like your other interactions with me, is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your competency. Lastly, the subject of your email must be "RLST 3060-001: the issue you wish to discuss." **I will not read unprofessional emails or emails the subject of which is not "RLST 3060-001: the issue you wish to discuss."**

FAQs

Q: I missed class. Did you cover anything important?

A: Yes. If I didn't have anything important to cover, I would have cancelled class.

Q: I tried really hard in this class; why didn't I get a good grade?

A: Trying hard doesn't always help. Earning a good grade results from any number of strategies, including efficient time management, adhering to instructions, and seeking help when you need it.

Q: I need to pass this class in order to graduate. It's *really* important to me. What can I do?

A: You should have this conversation with me at the beginning of the semester, not the end.

Q: I'd like to discuss a grade I received on my paper, but I haven't reviewed the instructions for the assignment or the paper itself since I submitted it; will we be able to have a productive conversation?

A: No. If you want to discuss your grade, you need to review your work, my feedback, and the assignment itself before we talk.

² A study published in *Psychological Science* indicates that laptop note taking is less effective than longhand note taking for learning. See Cindi May, "A Learning Secret: Don't Take Notes with a Laptop: Students who used longhand remembered more and had a deeper understanding of the material," *Scientific American*, accessed May 12, 2016, <<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>>.

Q: Can you tell when I'm on my phone in class?

A: Yes.

Q: Really?

A: Yes.

Tentative Schedule³

T Jan. 17: Introduction to the course.

Th Jan. 19: Gade, Foreword, Notes on the Text, Introduction, and 1-6.

T Jan. 24: Sells, 1-20.

Th Jan. 26: Sells, 21-40.

T Jan. 31: Gade, 7-29.

Th Feb. 2: Sells, 42-43, 145-157,

T Feb. 7: Gade, 29-55.

Th Feb. 9: Sells, 44-51.

T Feb. 14: Gade, 56-73.

Th Feb. 16: Sells, 52-55, 158-163.

T Feb. 21: Gade, 73-87.

Th Feb. 23: Sells, 56-77.

T Feb. 28: Gade, 87-108.

Th March 2: Sells, 78-99, 164-169.

T March 7: Gade, 109-129.

Th March 9: **Midterm Exam. Bibliography is due.**

T March 14: Gade, 129-159.

Th March 16: Sells, 100-119, 170-180.

T March 21: Gade, 160-182.

Th March 23: Sells, 120-141,

T March 28 and Th March 30: No Class

T April 4: Sells, 183-207.

Th April 6: *Koran by Heart*

³ I reserve the right to make changes to the schedule, including due dates.

T April 11: Gade, 182-202.

Th April 13: Translating the Quran: *The American Quran*.

T April 18: Gade, 203-229.

Th April 20: Guest Lecture.

T April 25: Gade, 229-253.

Th April 27: Presentations.

T May 2: Gade, 253-269.

Th May 4: Presentations. Conclusions.

Final Exam: Thursday May 11 1:30-4:00 pm

Accommodation for Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to your professor a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at least one week prior to the exam) so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or by e-mail at dsinfo@colorado.edu. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Injuries guidelines](#) under the Quick Links at the [Disability Services website](#) and discuss your needs with your professor.

Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Please submit requests for such exemptions in writing at least one week before the date in question. See [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the [policies on classroom behavior](#) and [the student code](#).

Discrimination and Harassment

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU-Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. CU-Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. CU's Sexual Misconduct Policy prohibits sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic violence), stalking or related retaliation. CU-Boulder's Discrimination and Harassment Policy prohibits discrimination, harassment or related retaliation based on race, color,

national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct under either policy should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127. Information about the OIEC, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation can be found at the [OIEC website](#).

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to [the academic integrity policy](#) of the institution. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access, clicker fraud, resubmission, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found responsible of violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code Council as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the academic integrity policy can be found at <http://honorcode.colorado.edu>.