

**BITH 377: The Qur'an and the Bible**  
Wheaton College  
Spring Semester 2018 B Quad  
M/W/F 9:20-10:30 Room: BGC 532

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Office Hours: M 2:00-3:15, T 10:00-12:00  
W 12:45-2:00, F 11:45-1:00

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### Course Description:

This course offers a general introduction to the Qur'an, with special emphasis on facets of understanding the Qur'an that place it into conversation with the Christian Bible. These facets include: the historical origins of the Qur'an in the context of Jewish and Christian biblical traditions of late antiquity; principles of interpretation that have been applied to the Qur'an within Islam, with attention to parallel hermeneutical issues in biblical interpretation within the Church; the roles of the Qur'an and the Bible in the history of Christian-Muslim relations; and comparative analysis of the Christian doctrine of Scripture and Islamic theology on the Qur'an.

### Course Objectives:

The mission of the Department of Biblical and Theological Studies at Wheaton College is to 'cultivate Christians who are biblically rooted and theologically formed through a focus on interpretation, application, and research tools and resources.' *BITH 377: The Qur'an and the Bible* contributes to this mission through historical investigation of the Bible's role in the creation of the Qur'an (i.e., the Qur'an as part of the reception history of the Bible, and the rise of Islam in the context of church history) and hermeneutical exploration of the Qur'an alongside the Bible (i.e., learning principles and consequences of interpretation by considering how each of these texts has been used). In this context, students will learn about the Qur'an's place within Islam and develop Christian theological insights to help bring the gospel to bear on Christian-Muslim relations.

By the end of the class, each student should be able to:

- (1) Describe the structure, general contents, main literary features (in translation), and traditional historical account of the Qur'an.
- (2) Explain how the Bible-related material that appears in the Qur'an might contribute to a critically-informed understanding of the Qur'an's original context
- (3) Demonstrate how issues and principles in Qur'anic interpretation compare and contrast with similar issues and principles in interpreting the Bible
- (4) Articulate Christian theological positions grounded in the Bible that respond with humility and confidence to the critique of Christianity presented in the Qur'an

### Course Texts:

A standard English translation of the Bible.

Droge, A. J. *The Qur'ān: A New Annotated Translation*. Sheffield/Bristol: Equinox, 2013.

Reynolds, G. S. *The Emergence of Islam*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012.

Saeed, A. *The Qur'an: An Introduction*. London/New York: Routledge, 2008.

## **Academic Honesty:**

The following is an official statement from Wheaton College regarding academic honesty:

Academic dishonesty occurs when a student or any member of an academic community fails to represent the sources of their work, whether on tests, in papers, presentations and projects, or in any academic assignment. Academic dishonesty involves both stealing and lying, in that we steal the ideas and expressions of another contrary to their intent and, in representing them as our own, we lie regarding their authorship. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, any misrepresentation or deception related to assigned or voluntary academic work, any deliberate attempt to gain unfair advantage in completing requirements, and colluding, aiding or abetting the academic dishonesty of another student. The College-wide policy on Academic Honesty is presented in the *Student Handbook*, and in accord with that policy, incidents of academic dishonesty will be dealt with decisively. All academic work involves engagement with and presentation of the ideas of others, and so your professor would be very willing to assist students in learning how properly to use and give credit for the work of others.

## **Academic and Disabilities Support:**

Wheaton College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments is requested to contact the Academic and Disability Services Office as early in the semester as possible. Please call 630.752.5941 or send an e-mail to [jennifer.nicodem@wheaton.edu](mailto:jennifer.nicodem@wheaton.edu) for further information.

## **Wheaton College policy on inclusive language:**

For academic discourse, spoken and written, the faculty expects students to use gender inclusive language for human beings.

## **Course Requirements:**

### 1. QUR'AN CONTENT QUIZZES 15%

At the beginning of class on most days when passages from the Qur'an are assigned (see Course Calendar) there will be a short, multiple-choice content quiz covering the Qur'an reading for that day. Quizzes will be given at the start of class, so it is important not to be late. Quizzes cannot be taken late unless permission is given ahead of time for an excused absence.

### 2. TEST ON (TRADITIONAL) HISTORICAL OVERVIEW 15%

On March 28, there will be an objective test (multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank) covering significant details from the Historical Overview sections of Reynolds, *The Emergence of Islam* (pp. 11-77), and also class handouts. The best way to prepare is to do the readings carefully, be present and attentive in class, take notes, and review the readings and handouts prior to the test. The test will focus on key dates, names, places, and events in the traditional historical framework associated with the production and compilation of the Qur'an.

### 3. READING RESPONSES (20% each) 40%

Two reading responses are required, the first due on April 11 and the second on April 25. Each reading response should be approximately 3-pages in length (double-spaced, 12-point font) and should be written according to the following instructions:

(1) ‘Rethinking the Traditional Biography’: Each student should write a 3-page response to Reynolds, *The Emergence of Islam*, 135-151: What is Reynold’s theory about how the traditional biography of Muhammad was composed? What evidence does he use to support this theory? Give an example of a passage in the Qur’an that can be explained through this theory. How does Reynold’s understanding of the historical background of the Qur’an differ from the traditional account? This first reading response is due on April 11.

(2) ‘Jesus, the Trinity, and Islam’: Each student should write a 3-page response to Lodahl, *Claiming Abraham*, 171-185; and Anderson, *The Qur’an in Context*, 207-222, 239-256: Based on these readings, explain the key differences between Muslim and Christian views on the Trinity and the person of Jesus. This second reading response is due on April 25.

#### 4. FINAL EXAM

30%

On the Final Exam, students will be expected to (a) demonstrate basic knowledge of the main literary features of the Qur’an, (b) recognize important themes in the Qur’an, and (c) accurately compare and contrast methods of interpretation applied by Muslims to the Qur’an with interpretive methods applied by Christians to the Bible. The Final Exam will consist of multiple choice questions and at least one essay. More information about the Final Exam, and how best to prepare for it, will be given in class. The Final Exam will take place on May 3.

#### Grading:

<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
100-94	A	79-77	C+
93-90	A-	76-73	C
89-87	B+	72-70	C-
86-83	B	69-60	D
82-80	B-	59-Below	F

#### Course Calendar (tentative):

M: Mar. 12. Introduction to the Course. Basics in Interreligious Understanding

→No reading due

W: Mar. 14. The Historical Setting of the Qur’an

→Read: Reynolds xvii-xxi, 3-5, 9, 11-17; C. Schirrmacher, “Islam,” in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., eds. D. J. Treier & W. A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017), 432-433 [on Schoology]

F: Mar. 16. Muhammad in Mecca

→Read: Reynolds 17-29; Q 96; 105-106; 97; 100-101; 103-104; 107; 109; 110; 112; 17 [QUIZ]

M: Mar. 19. Muhammad in Medina

→Read: Reynolds 31-57; Q 8; 2:1-141, 252-253 [QUIZ]

W: Mar. 21. The Birth of an Empire

→ Read: Reynolds 59-77; Q 3:1-145 [QUIZ]

F: Mar. 23. Review of Historical Overview

→ Read: Reynolds 79-82; Q 4:1-10, 123-176; 5:67-119 [QUIZ]

M: Mar. 26. Revelation and the Qur’an

→ Read: Saeed 21-36; Q 6:25-45, 74-91, 151-153; 7:59-157 [QUIZ]

W: Mar. 28. Test on (Traditional) Historical Overview

→No reading due. [TEST]

F: Mar. 30. Good Friday

→No reading due

M: April 2. History and Qur'anic Origins

→Read: Reynolds 85-92; Saeed 37-59

W: April 4. The Qur'an and the Bible

→Read: Reynolds 121-133; Saeed 143-159; Q 19; 11:69-83 [QUIZ]

F: April 6. Joseph in the Qur'an and the Bible

→Read: Saeed 97-117; Q 12; Gen 37-45 [QUIZ]

M: April 9. Major Themes of the Qur'an and Biblical Themes

→Read: Saeed 62-82; *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), articles on "Biblical-Theological Overview of the Bible," "Creation," "Sin," "Covenant," "The Kingdom of God," "Prophets and Prophecy," "Love and Grace" [on Schoology]

W: April 11. Qur'an in Daily Life

→Read: Saeed 83-95. Q 1; **Reading Response 'Rethinking the Traditional Biography' Due** (Reynolds 135-151)

F: April 13. Translating the Qur'an, Translating the Bible

→Read: Saeed 119-142; Q 20:113-127; 26:192-209 [QUIZ]

M: April 16. Adaptability of Ethical-Religious Teachings (abrogation, salvation history, etc.)

→Read: Saeed 161-175; Q 2:106; 13:39; 16:101; 22:52. Q 16:67; 2:219; 4:43; 5:90; 47:15; and Lev 11, Mark 7:14-23; Acts 10:9-16; Exod 12:1-20; Deut 16:1-8; Rom 14:17; Col 2:16-17; Gen 17:1-8; 1 Cor 7:19 (cf. Heb 8-10; Gal 3)

W: April 18. Tradition and Independent Reading of Scripture: Polygamy, Slavery

→Read: Saeed 177-191; Q 4:3, 129; Q 4:36, 92; 2:177; and Exod. 21:1-11, 20-21, 26-27; Lev. 25:39-55; Num. 31:7-12; Deut. 15:12-18; 20:10-14; Deut 23:15-16; Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:22; 1 Tim. 6:1; Tit. 2:9; 1 Pet. 2:18; Philemon; Gal. 3:23-29 (cf. Jacob & David; 1 Tim 3:2)

F: April 20. Historical Context/Occasion of Revelation: Gender Relations

→Read: Saeed 193-218; Q 2:222-223, 226-228, 282; 4:2-11, 34-35, 128-129; 24:30-33, 60; 30:20-21; 16:58-60; 81:8 (cf. 6:137, 140, 151; 17:31; 60:12); Gen 1:26-27; 2:4-25; 3:1-21; Exod 20:17; Lev 12:1-5; Num 5:11-31; 27:1-11 (cf. Judg 4-5; 2 Kings 22:14-20); Matt 15:21-28; 28:5-10; Rom 16:3-7; 1 Cor 7:1; 11:2-16; 14:26-35; Gal 3:23-29; Eph 5:21-33; 1 Tim 2:1-15; 5:3-16; Titus 2:1-8; 1 Pet 3:1-7; Rev 14:4 [QUIZ]

M: April 23. Prescribed Combat/Violence in the Qur'an and the Bible

→Read: Q 2:62; 2:256-257; 16:82-83; 5:98-99; 9:23-24; 16:125-126; 22:77-78; 22:39-41; 2:190-194; 216-218; 9:5-6, 13-15, 29, 36, 123; 8:39; and Gen 9:6; Exod 20:13; Jer 7:5-7; Matt 5:9, 38-42; Eph 6:10-18; Josh 6:21; 8:22-29; 10:28, 30, 33, 35, 37, 39, 40; 11:16-23; Exod 12:29-30; Num 21:34-35; 31:1, 7-12, 17-18; Deut 7:2; 13:6-15; 20:16-18; 1 Sam 15:3; Matt 10:34 [QUIZ]

W: April 25. Interfaith Engagement from a Christian Perspective

→Read: **Reading Response 'Jesus, the Trinity, and Islam' Due** (M. Lodahl, *Claiming Abraham: Reading the Bible and the Qur'an Side by Side* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2010), 171-185; M. R. Anderson, *The Qur'an in Context: A Christian Exploration* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2016), 207-222, 239-256)

F: April 27. The Qur'an, the Bible, and Modernism

→Read: Saeed 219-234; R. V. Pierard, "Liberalism, Theological," in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 488-490 [on Schoology]

R: May 3. **Final Exam.**

→No reading due