EMT3101HS L0101

Biography and Thought: The Life of Muhammad

General Information
Instructor: Nevin Reda El-Tahry
E-mail: nevin.el.tahry@utoronto.ca
Office Hours: T 13:00 – 14:00
Class time: R 11:00 – 13:00
Room: TBA

Course Description
This seminar studies the life of the Prophet Muhammad as it is presented in the earliest biographical and historical Muslim accounts. It introduces the sira and hadith literatures, in addition to classical and modern critical methods used to determine their authenticity and historical reliability. Topics include the first revelations, emigration from Mecca, the Constitution of Medina, and succession to Muhammad’s leadership. Students will learn about Muslim concepts of prophethood, the significance of the prophet in the legal-ethical and mystical traditions, and women in hadith scholarship. They will study the life of Muhammad and relate it to his spiritual as well as temporal experience to explore modern-day concerns. Class participation: 15%, Minor Research Paper: 35%, Major research paper: 50%.

Learning Outcomes

Religious Faith and Heritage
• Demonstrate knowledge of religious heritage, and articulate clearly their own theological positions (as related to pastoral practices).
• Interpret scripture and religious texts using a variety of methods, sources, and norms.
• Identify and respect the diversity of theological viewpoints and practices within their religious tradition.

Culture and Context
• Demonstrate critical understanding for one’s area of specialization of the relationship between faith practices and cultural contexts.
• Give evidence of critical self-awareness with regard to their own and other faith perspectives and practices of educational ministry.

Practices of Area of Specialization
• Demonstrate knowledge of theories and practices relevant to leadership in their own area of specialization.

Required Textbooks

**Additional Bibliography**

**The Quran in Translation**
For the meaning of the Qur’an, students are welcome to use any of the translations of the following scholars: Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Marmaduke Pickthall, Laleh Bakhtiar, Muhammad Abdel Haleem and Ahmad Zaki Hammad. ‘Abdullah Yusuf ‘Ali’s *The Meaning of the Holy Qur’an* is one of the oldest and tends to be the most widely disseminated. It is available on-line. Bakhtiar’s *The Sublime Qur’an* has the advantage of formal equivalence: she tries to use the
same English word for the same Arabic word consistently. Students have found Hammad’s *The Gracious Quran: A Modern-Phrased Interpretation in English* to be very smooth and easy to understand. Abdel Haleem’s translation tends to be popular in academic circles.

**Evaluation and Assignments**

*Each student should know from the outset that this course requires daily reading, both written and oral assignments and regular class participation. More than two unexcused absences will negatively affect the student’s grade. Any student with more than four unexcused absences will receive an automatic failing grade, without possibility of supplemental examination.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>15 %</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Research</td>
<td>35 %</td>
<td>Oct. 27th @ 11:00 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Research Paper</td>
<td>50 %</td>
<td>Dec. 1st @ 11:00 am</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

All essays and assignments must be handed in on time. Penalty for late assignments is 2% reduction in mark per day of lateness. Assignments will not be accepted after two weeks of the due date. Academic accommodation will only be considered when appropriate documentation (an official U of T medical certificate) is provided within ONE week of the due date. At all time, students are expected to do their own work. Plagiarism—to represent as one’s own any idea or expression of an idea or work of another in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work—is a serious academic offense and will not be tolerated. Students who plagiarize run the risk of suspension and other sanctions. For the definition of “academic work,” tribunal procedures, and more, see [http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm](http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm). For advice on academic writing, go to [http://www.writing.utoronto.ca](http://www.writing.utoronto.ca). If you wish to book an appointment with a writing instructor for individual help, go to [http://www.vic.utoronto.ca/students/tutorialservices/Writing_Centre.htm](http://www.vic.utoronto.ca/students/tutorialservices/Writing_Centre.htm). Make sure you book your appointment as early as possible.

Normally, students will be required to submit their research papers to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site. ([www.Turnitin.com](http://www.Turnitin.com))

For instructions on how to submit your paper through Turnitin, see course website. Both an electronic copy and a paper copy are required and must be handed in on time.

Students not wishing to submit their work through Turnitin must contact the instructor and set up a meeting by September 25th in order to discuss alternative arrangements.

**a. Attendance and Class Participation**
Attendance is mandatory. More than two unexcused absences will negatively affect a student’s grade. More than four absences without proper documentation (an official U of T medical certificate provided within one week of the absence) will receive an automatic FZ. Students are expected to attend class and to come prepared. You should expect to devote 3 hours or more outside of class for every hour of classroom instruction. Use this time to prepare the required readings and primary texts in advance. Always be ready to provide a brief summary of each reading, list the main points and explain how the readings relate to one another. Your class participation mark will reflect your participation in classroom discussions and three oral presentations, one of which will be on your book review, another on your research paper and a third on a topic to be determined on the first day of class.

b. Minor Research Paper: The Prophet Muhammad’s Leadership Through Modern Eyes
This paper explores the prophet Muhammad’s leadership through the lens of two modern theories. Students will focus on one major event in his life and explore it using the oldest of these theories (trait theory) and a second one chosen from among several more recent ones, exploring the strengths and weaknesses of both theories. Students will explore the prophet’s example in its historical setting, relating it to the world around them and the contexts of today. Events, theories and relevant bibliography will be handed out on the first day of class. Your papers should be 8-10 pages in double-spaced 12 pt Times New Roman font.

c. Major Research Paper
For this research topic, you may choose any second topic of your choice, as long as it is directly related to the course. You will not be provided with a bibliography, but will need to research it on your own. This assignment should be 15-20 pages in double-spaced 12 pt Times New Roman font.

For both assignments, footnotes and bibliography should consistently follow either Turabian’s Manual of Style or Chicago Manual of Style http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/1/. Your paper must include the following:

Title page. This includes the paper title, the student's name, the course code and name, the name of the instructor and the date of submission.

Introduction. The most important part of the Introduction is the thesis statement, setting out in the briefest possible form the exact proposition or hypothesis which the paper will demonstrate. The Introduction also provides the context necessary to show why the paper is important. To this end it identifies the research question and describes its broader setting in academic research. It gives attention to previous enquiry and available secondary literature (the status quaestionis). The Introduction should also include a description of the project as a whole (i.e. a one-paragraph road map outlining what you plan to do).

If you want, you can also include a section on method, for example, describing the relevant primary literature and the methods to be used for interpreting it.

Your introduction should not exceed one or two pages, depending on the length of your paper. Some students like to write two or three paragraphs: one with the thesis statement, one with the road map, and one on the state of the scholarship.

Exposition. The main body of the paper is the clarification, development, and demonstration of the thesis statement, using authoritative evidence. The exposition is typically organized as parts of an argument. The interrelationship of the parts of the exposition, and the direct relevance of each part of the exposition to the thesis statement, should be clear to the reader.
Conclusion. The thesis statement should be recapitulated, the demonstration should be summarized, the limitations of the demonstration and the remaining uncertainties should be acknowledged, and the implications of the study for the faith community, the wider scholarly community, and/or the world should be set forth.

Bibliography. Books, articles, and other sources that have been used must be listed. Primary and secondary literature should always be distinguished.

(This description is derived from the TST Basic Degree thesis requirements with some modifications.)

Grading scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Equivalents</th>
<th>Grade Point</th>
<th>Grasp of Subject Matter</th>
<th>Other qualities expected of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A RANGE: Excellent: Student shows original thinking, analytic and synthetic ability, critical evaluations, broad knowledge base.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Profound and Creative</td>
<td>Strong evidence of original thought, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound and penetrating critical evaluations which identify assumptions of those they study as well as their own; mastery of an extensive knowledge base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Clear evidence of original thinking, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound critical evaluations; broad knowledge base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B RANGE: Good: Student shows critical capacity and analytic ability, understanding of relevant issues, familiarity with the literature.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Good critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; good familiarity with the literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Satisfactory at a post-baccalaureate level.</td>
<td>Adequate critical capacity and analytic ability; some understanding of relevant issues; some familiarity with the literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FZ</td>
<td>0-69</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>Failure to meet the above criteria</td>
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Accommodations

Students with diverse learning styles are welcome in this course. If you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Accessibility Office as soon as possible. It takes time to put disability related accommodations in place. The sooner you meet with a Disability Counsellor at Accessibility Services, the quicker s/he can assist you to achieving your learning goals in this course. The University of Toronto is committed to facilitating the inclusion of students in all aspects of university life. For more go to www.accessibility.utoronto.ca or accessibility.services@utoronto.ca.
Schedule of Readings (may be subject to change):

1 Sep. 8

**Introduction**

**Required Readings:**
2. Guillaume, pp. xiii-35.

2 Sep. 15

**Pre-Islamic Arabia**

**Required Readings:**
2. Quran 99-114.

**Optional Readings:**

3 Sep. 22

**The Sources**

**Required Readings:**

**Optional Readings:**
1. Guillaume, pp. 70-108.

4 Sep. 29

**The First Revelations**

**Required Readings:**
3. Quran 96 (Recite), 97 (Power, Fate).

**Optional Readings:**
4. Quran 73 (The enshrouded one); 74 (The cloaked one); 18 (The cave).
5. Guillaume, pp. 117-158.

5 Oct. 6

**Prophecy and Poetry**

**Required Readings:**
2. Matthias Zahniser, “Messenger” in *EQ* (available on-line through the library website)
3. P. E. Walker, “Wilāya (2. In Shi’ism)” in *EI2* (available on-line through the library website)
6. Quran 26 (The Poets); 68 (The Pen).

6 Oct. 13

**Muhammad in Mecca**

1. Wilfred Madelung, “Isma” *EI2*
3. Muhammad Husayn Haykal, “The Story of the Goddesses” in *the Life of Muhammad* (available on-line and on course website)
4. Quran 80 (He frowned); 2: 30-39
5. Guillaume, pp. 159-218

Oct. 20

**Reading Week: No Classes**

7 Oct. 27

**Emigration to Medina**
Required Readings:
2. Guillaume, pp. 219-246.

Minor Paper due

8 Nov. 3

**Hadith**

Required Readings:

Optional Readings:
2. Guillaume, pp. 281-432.

9 Nov. 10

**The Prophet as Lawmaker and Legal Authority**

1. Buti, “Introduction” in *Jurisprudence* (available on-line and on course website)
3. Quran 59 (Exile)

Optional Readings:

10 Nov. 17

**Muhammad and the Esoteric Dimension of Islam**

Required Readings:
3. Quran 24 (Light)

11 Nov. 24

**Women and the Prophetic Tradition**

Required Readings:

**Optional Readings:**

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12 Dec. 1

**Muhammad in the Eyes of the West**

**Required Readings:**

**Optional Readings:**
4. Quran 110 (Succour/Divine Support); 48 (Victory)
5. Guillaume, pp. 627-690

**Research paper due**