

ISLA 200
Islamic Civilization

Winter 2022

Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 8:35-9:25
Wednesday, January 5 - Thursday, January 20: via Zoom
(link available on the Announcements tab of MyCourses)
Monday, January 24 - Monday, April 11: STBIO S3/3

Instructor:

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Teaching Assistants:

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Mondays, 4:00PM-5:30PM

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Mondays, 9:30AM-11:00AM

Description

ISLA 200 is an introductory survey of the major textual traditions that collectively constituted Islamic civilization from the formative period of the 7th and 8th centuries CE, through the classical and post-classical periods, until the irruption of the European imperial powers in the Islamic lands in the 19th century CE. These textual traditions include Qur²ān-interpretation, ḥadīth-criticism; theology, law and jurisprudence; logic and philosophy; science and medicine; mysticism and Sufism; and poetry and belles-lettres. Attention will also be paid to other important aspects of Islamic civilization, including sectarianism and politico-religious authority; the Greek-into-Arabic translation movement; art and architecture; and conceptions of self and other. The final week of the class will be devoted to examining how the traditions of Islamic civilization were transformed in the 19th century.

Wednesday and Thursday classes will consist in lectures by Prof. Wisnovsky or a guest lecturer. Recordings of these lectures (including PowerPoints) will be uploaded to MyCourses. Monday classes will consist in small-group discussions, which will focus on the primary-source readings and be guided by the teaching assistants.

The readings are all in English and are a mixture of primary and secondary sources; they total, on average, just under 100 pages per week. The readings are accessible in the McGill Library in print and/or electronically, but for convenience's sake, PDF files of all the readings have been posted, week by week, in the Content menu of the ISLA 200 webpage on MyCourses.

Requirements and Grading

Students will be required to:

a) Take three in-class ID quizzes (10% each = 30% of final grade). The first ID quiz will take place in person, during class time, on Monday, February 7 (8:35AM-9:25AM); it will cover material from the readings and lectures between January 5 and February 7. The second ID quiz will take place in person, during class time, on Monday, March 14 (8:35AM-9:25AM); it will cover material from the readings and lectures between February 9 and March 14. The third ID quiz will take place in person, during class time, on Monday, April 11 (8:35AM-9:25AM); it will cover material from the readings and lectures between February 9 and April 11. For each ID quiz, students will choose three out of a list of six figures, works, movements, concepts, etc., and then write an identification for each of those three. (An overall list of twelve possible figures, works, movements, concepts, etc., from which the ID quiz's list of six will be drawn, will be posted on MyCourses by 5:00PM on the preceding Thursday.) The maximum length for each of the three identifications is one side of an exam booklet.

NOTE: If classes remain online for the remainder of the semester, another modality for the three ID quizzes will be announced.

b) Complete a take-home midterm (20% of final grade). For the take-home midterm exam, students will choose one out of a list of three essay questions to answer. The essay questions will relate to topics covered in the readings and lectures between January 5 and February 24. The exam is "limited" open book, i.e., you may only look at and cite the readings and lectures from the course. Your essay must be 1250 words long (+/- 50 words maximum). The take-home midterm exam will be posted on MyCourses at 5:00PM on Thursday, February 24. It will be due at 5:00PM on Monday, March 7.

c) Complete a take-home final (40% of final grade). For the take-home final exam, students will choose two out of a list six essay questions to answer. Three of the six listed essay questions will relate to topics covered in the readings and lectures between March 9 and April 11; the other three essay questions will relate to topics covered in the course as a whole, i.e., topics covered over the entire semester. You must choose one essay question from each of these two groups of three. The exam is "limited" open book, i.e., you may only look at and cite the readings and lectures from the course. Each of your two essays must be 1250 words long (+/- 50 words maximum). The take-home final exam will be posted on MyCourses at 5:00PM on Monday, April 11. It will be due at 5:00PM on the day scheduled during the exam period for the ISLA 200 final exam (TBD).

d) Participate in the eight Monday small-group discussion sessions (1% each plus 2 possible bonus points = 10% of final grade). Students will be given one point for each of the eight Monday small-group discussion sessions that they attend. Students who attend all eight Monday small-group discussion sessions will be given two extra bonus points. Discussion questions relating to one or more of the primary-source readings for that week will be posted on MyCourses by 5:00PM on the preceding Thursday. During the first 30 minutes of the Monday sessions, students will separate into groups of three or four; each group will separately address these discussion questions, aided by the TA's, who will circulate from group to group. During the final 20 minutes of the Monday sessions, groups will be selected at random by the TA's to present their answers to the discussion questions.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

WEEK 1: 89 pages.

Wednesday January 5: Outline and scope of the course.

Thursday January 6: The study of Islamic civilization.

M. Hodgson, "Introduction to the study of Islamic civilization", in *Venture of Islam*, Vol. I, "The Classical Age of Islam" (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 3-69.

S. Ahmed, *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 3-10 and 113-129.

Monday January 10: NO DISCUSSION SESSION.

WEEK 2: 76 pages.

Wednesday January 12: The late-antique context. Arabic poetry on the cusp of Islam.

Thursday January 13: The life of Muḥammad.

I. Lapidus, *Islamic Societies to the Nineteenth Century: A Global History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 7-54.

al-Khansāʿ, *Elegy (Marthiya)*, trans. G. van Gelder, in *Classical Arabic Literature: A "Library of Arabic Literature" Anthology* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 12-14.

Ibn Ishāq/Ibn Hishām, *Biography of God's Messenger (Sīrat Rasūl Allāh)*, trans. A. Guillaume as *The Life of Muḥammad* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, Pakistan Branch: 1978), 69-73, 104-107 and 181-187.

Kaʿb ibn Zuhayr, *Ode (Qaṣīdah)*, trans. M. Sells, as "Bānat Suʿād: Translation and introduction", *Journal of Arabic Literature* 21/2 (1990), 140-154.

Monday January 17: Group discussion #1.

WEEK 3: 103 pages.

Wednesday January 19: The Qurʾān: recitation and audition.

Thursday January 20: Qurʾān: text and interpretation.

M. Sells, *Approaching the Qurʾān*, 2nd ed. (Ashland, Oregon: White Cloud Press, 1999), 1-31 and 161-196 (plus audio files).

N. Calder, J. Mojaddedi and A. Rippin, *Classical Islam: A Sourcebook*, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 2012), 121-124 and 154-188 (*Sūrat al-Bayyinah* is on p. 8).

Monday January 24: Group discussion #2.

WEEK 4: 78 pages.

Wednesday January 26: The succession to Muḥammad and early sectarianism.

Thursday January 27: The emergence of Kalām.

Lapidus, *Islamic Societies to the Nineteenth Century*, 55-90.

Calder, Mojaddedi and Rippin, *Classical Islam: A Sourcebook*, 125-129.

M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, "Qurʾan and ḥadīth," in T. Winter, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Islamic Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 19-31.

K. Blankinship, "The early creed", in T. Winter, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Islamic Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 33-54.

al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, "Letter on free will and predestination", in A. Rippin and J.C. Knappert, eds and trans, *Textual Sources for the Study of Islam* (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble Books, 1987), 115-121.

Monday January 31: Group discussion #3.

WEEK 5: 120 pages.

Wednesday February 2: Ḥadīth.

Thursday February 3: The caliphate and politico-religious authority.

Lapidus, *Islamic Societies to the Nineteenth Century: A Global History*, 91-140.

Calder, Mojaddedi and Rippin, *Classical Islam: A Sourcebook*, 55-73.

L. Guo, "History writing", in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 4 (*Islamic Culture and Societies to the End of the Eighteenth Century*), ed. R. Irwin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 444-457

al-Ṭabarī, *History of Prophets and Kings*, trans. C.E. Bosworth in *al-Ṭabarī: History of Prophets and Kings*, Vol. 32 (*The Reunification of the Abbasid Caliphate*) (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 198-223.

al-Ashʿarī, *A Vindication of the Science of Kalam*, trans. R.J. McCarthy in *The Theology of al-Ashʿarī* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1953), 119-134.

Monday February 7: ID QUIZ #1.

WEEK 6: 130 pages.

Wednesday February 9: Legal theory (Guest lecture: Prof. Omar Farahat).

Thursday February 10: Legal scholars and their schools. Sunnism, Shiism and the state.

Lapidus, *Islamic Societies to the Nineteenth Century: A Global History*, 141-180.

Calder, Mojaddedi and Rippin, *Classical Islam: A Sourcebook*, 247-297.

W. Hallaq, "Islamic law: history and interpretation", in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 4, 142-183.

Monday February 14: Group discussion #4.

WEEK 7: 100 pages.

Wednesday February 16: The Greek-into-Arabic translation movement. Logic.

Thursday February 17: Argumentation theory and the practice of debating (Guest lecture: Dr Walter Young).

F. Rosenthal, trans., *The Classical Heritage in Islam* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), 15-73.

al-Kindī, *Sketch of Aristotle's Organon*, in N. Rescher, trans., "Al-Kindī's sketch of Aristotle's Organon," *The New Scholasticism* 37 (1963), 44-58.

Ibn Khaldūn [d. 1406], *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History - Abridged Edition*, trans. F. Rosenthal/abr. N.J. Dawood (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), 371-390.

Avicenna, "Autobiography", trans. D. Gutas in *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 10-19.

Monday February 21: Group discussion #5.

WEEK 8: 95 pages.

Wednesday February 23: Philosophy.

Thursday February 24: Astronomy and the mathematical sciences (Guest lecture: Dr Fateme Savadi).

al-Fārābī, *The Attainment of Happiness*, in M. Mahdi, trans., *Alfarabi's Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969), 13-50.

R. Wisnovsky, "Avicenna and the Avicennian tradition," in P. Adamson and R. Taylor, *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, 92-136.

S. Brentjes and R.G. Morrison, "Science in Islamic societies," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 4, 564-578.

Monday February 28: STUDY BREAK

Wednesday March 2: STUDY BREAK

Thursday March 3: STUDY BREAK

Monday March 7: TAKE-HOME MIDTERM.

WEEK 9: 99 pages.

Wednesday March 9: Medical theory.

Thursday March 10: Medical practice and popular medicine (Guest lecture: Prof. Aslihan Gürbüzel).

"The autobiography of Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq", in D. Reynolds et al., eds, *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 107-118.

P. Pormann and E. Savage-Smith, *Medieval Islamic Medicine* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 41-114.

Ibn Riḍwān, *On the Prevention of Bodily Ills in Egypt*, trans. M. Dols/ed. A.S. Gamal (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 77-78, 89-93, 99-103 and 112-118.

Monday March 14: ID QUIZ #2.

WEEK 10: 101 pages.

Wednesday March 16: Women in Sufism (Guest lecture: Prof. Sara Abdel-Latif).

Thursday March 17: Mystical theory.

A. Knysh, "Sufism", in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 4, 60-104.

Calder, Mojaddedi and Rippin, *Classical Islam: A Sourcebook*, 299-333.

al-Ghazālī, *Niche of Lights (Mishkāt al-anwār)*, trans. D. Buchman (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1988), 1-24.

Monday March 21: Group discussion #6.

WEEK 11: 118 pages.

Wednesday March 23: Arabic literary culture.

Thursday March 24: Persian mystical poetry (Guest lecture: Prof. Prashant Keshavmurthy).

J. Bray, "Arabic Literature", in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 4, 383-413

A. Arberry, ed., *Aspects of Islamic Civilization: The Moslem World Depicted Through its Literature* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1967), 155-190.

J.T.P. de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry: An Introduction to the Mystical Use of Classical Poems* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1997), 51-83.

Calder, Mojaddedi and Rippin, *Classical Islam: A Sourcebook*, 334-355.

Monday March 28: Group discussion #7.

WEEK 12: 109 pages.

Wednesday March 30: Art and architecture.

Thursday March 31: Conceptions of self and other.

M. Milwright, "Islamic art and architecture", in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 4, 682-742.

"The autobiography of Ibn al-ʿAdīm", in Reynolds et al., eds, *Interpreting the Self*, 165-178.

Ibn Faḍlān, *Mission to the Volga*, trans. J. Montgomery (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 3-39.

Monday April 4: Group discussion #8.

WEEK 13: 65 pages.

Wednesday April 6: European invasion and occupation.

Thursday April 7: Tradition and renewal.

Usāmah ibn Munqidh, *Memoirs*, trans. P. Hitti as *An Arab-Syrian Gentlemen from the Period of the Crusades* (New York: Columbia University Press, 200), 161-170.

al-Jabartī, *History of the Period of the French in Egypt*, trans. S. Moreh as *Napoleon in Egypt: al-Jabarti's Chronicle of the French Occupation, 1798* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2006), 19-40.

Ernest Renan, "Islam and science: Lecture presented at the Sorbonne, 29 March 1883", trans. S. Ragep (2011), 2-11.

Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, "Lecture on teaching and learning" and "Answer of Jamāl al-Dīn to Renan", in N. Keddie, trans., *An Islamic Response to Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) 101-108 and 181-187.

Muhammad ʿAbduh, *Essay on Divine Unity*, trans I. Musaʿad and K. Cragg as *The Theology of Unity by Muhammad ʿAbduh* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1966), 27-40.

Monday April 11: ID QUIZ #3.

McGill Policies

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures” (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Obviously, this is an unusual semester because Covid is still circulating. Please be sure to keep up with McGill's protocols surrounding Covid by checking this website regularly:
<https://www.mcgill.ca/coronavirus/#announcements>