Module Syllabus

1. Introduction

Outline / What is our topic?
The module provides an introduction to Islam, exploring the key aspects of its thought and practice and early history from around 600 to 1100 CE. Topics covered include the three dimensions of Islam (on the basis of the Hadith of Gabriel); the five pillars; the life of Muhammad and the early Muslim community; the Qur'an and Hadith; Sunnism and Shi'ism; the notion of one God (the Islamic approach to monotheism); prophecy and the purpose of human life; and various intellectual schools (such as dogmatic theology, philosophy and Sufism).

The first five weeks focus on the historical and practical aspects of Islam. The final five weeks focus on the inner workings of the Islamic faith and practice, exploring the Islamic conception of God as one; the origin and the goal of human existence; the purpose and nature of prophecy; Islam’s relationship to other religions; and the Islamic conception of history.

Module educational aims
- To introduce students to key beliefs and practices of Islam
- To introduce students to a basic Islamic worldview, including the concept of God, the God-human relationship, the role of prophets and scripture(s), Islam’s relation to other religions (such as Judaism and Christianity), and the general cosmology and eschatology
- To familiarise students with the early history of Islam
- To help students understand the diversity within Islam (schisms, various intellectual schools, etc.)

Module learning outcomes
- Ability to engage critically with primary and secondary sources
- Ability to summarise and develop arguments
- Familiarity with key terms and concepts in Islam
- Ability to think through issues in the framework of a basic Islamic worldview
- Familiarity with major aspects and schools of Islamic thought

Lectures, seminars and participation / How can I get involved?
Apart from materials that will enable you to take notes, bring this module syllabus to every lecture. You must also bring the printouts of the seminar texts to the respective seminar (unless you absolutely prefer bringing a tablet/laptop to view the electronic files, which is discouraged because internet connection is not always stable), because close textual analysis and discussion are essential activities in
the seminar component of this module. You must have actively read and annotated the assigned text with your own observations and questions before coming to each lecture and seminar. You will not wish to be the only member of the group who cannot follow a text that is being discussed.

KEATS & Maughan Library / Where do I find relevant sources?
Required textbooks (for purchase or lending from the library):

All other required readings are available for download on KEATS.

For essay writing, consult the Online Reading List (https://kclrl.talis.com/lists/207DD337-7EAC-B0E3-3304-C24ABBE5651D.html) and the library’s TRS subject guide (http://libguides.kcl.ac.uk/trs), which lists various databases for your use. Please contact the module tutor or Maughan Library if relevant sources are missing from the library. There are weblinks to additional resources on KEATS.

2. Module plan & readings
Week 1 – 23 September: A general introduction to the module & the religion of Islam (Hadith of Gabriel)
Watch at home: Islam: Empire of Faith (via YouTube link on KEATS)
Recommended: Esposito, ‘General Information’, in What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam, pp. 3-4
Seminar: Introduction & brief discussion of this week’s topic and reading

Week 2 – 30 September: The first dimension: islam and its five pillars
Lecture reading: The Vision of Islam, pp. 1-34 (ch. 1 & 2); Illustrated Guide, pp. 234-235
Recommended: Illustrated Guide to Islam, pp. 176-177; 208-209
Recommended films: Hajj: The Journey of a Lifetime (a documentary); Le Grand Voyage (a French film); or any film on hajj and share your thoughts in the seminar
Seminar: How can each of the five pillars be considered as a way of submitting to God (islam)? & the Five Pillars board game

Week 3 – 7 October: Life of Muhammad and the early Muslim community
Watch at home: Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet (focus on the historical bits; you can skip personal narratives)
Lecture reading: Illustrated Guide to Islam, pp. 18-39
Seminar text: Esposito, What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam, pp. 11-16
Recommended films: History Channel: Muhammad the Prophet (similar to the assigned documentary but shorter); The Message (an old Hollywood film)
Seminar: What was revolutionary about the changes that Muhammad brought to the Arab society at the time? & the Sira board game

Week 4 – 14 October: The Qur’an and Hadith
Seminar text: Sells, Approaching the Qur’an, pp. 161-173; select Hadiths; Surat Yusuf (the chapter on Joseph in the Qur’an)
Seminar: Listen to Sells’ CD and discuss the seminar text on the Qur’an and Hadith. What are the structural and textual characteristics of the Qur’an and Hadith? In the light of Brown’s
categorization (in the lecture reading) of different types and collections of Hadiths, how would you categorize the Hadiths that you read in the seminar? What is your impression of the Qur’anic version of the Joseph story?

**Week 5 – 21 October: Shiism and the early Muslim community after the Prophet’s death**


Seminar: How did Shiism emerge? What distinguishes Shiism from other branches of Islam? What is the Shiite conception of leadership? Compare caliphate and imamate. How do Shiites and Sunnis differ in their interpretations of the event of Ghadir Khumm?

**Reading Week** (no class, no office hours)

**Week 6 – 4 November: The second dimension – *iman*: the oneness of God (*tawhid*)**

Lecture reading: *Vision of Islam*, pp. 37-78; 103-104; 120-131 (ch. 3)

Recommended: *Vision of Islam*, pp. 79-120; Esposito, pp. 27-31; *Illustrated Guide*, pp. 126-127; 130-133

Seminar: What is the Islamic conception of God? & essay clinic

**Week 7 – 11 November: *Iman* (cont’d): prophecy (the message of the prophets; Islam and other religions) and the return (eschatology)**

Lecture reading: *Vision of Islam*, pp. 132-192 (ch. 4); 193-213 (ch. 5)

Recommended: Esposito, pp. 72-94; 5-9; *Illustrated Guide*, pp. 134-139

Seminar: What is the Islamic conception of the human being and the purpose of human life? How does Islam relate to other religions?

**Week 8 – 18 November: *Iman* (cont’d): the intellectual schools (philosophy and dogmatic theology)**


Seminar: What are the key differences between the major intellectual schools in Islam? & essay clinic (formatting, grammar and tips on Arabic names)

**Week 9 – 25 November: The third dimension: *ihsan* (Sufism)**

Lecture reading: *Vision of Islam*, pp. 265-294 (ch. 7); *Illustrated Guide*, pp. 244-251

Recommended reading: *Vision of Islam*, pp. 295-317 (ch. 8); *Illustrated Guide*, pp. 206-207

Seminar text: Sulami, *The Book of Sufi Chivalry* (read the introduction + parts 1 & 2 (if your birthday is an odd number); read the introduction + parts 3 & 4 (if born on an even day)

Recommended: Sulami, *The Book of Sufi Chivalry* (part 5)

Seminar: Summarise the content of Sulami’s treatise on chivalry. How is *futuwwa* related to *ihsan?*

**Week 10 – 2 December: Islamic history in perspective**

Lecture and seminar reading: *Vision of Islam*, pp. 321-335 (ch. 9 & 10); Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History*, pp. 41-77 (ch. 2)

Recommended: *Illustrated Guide*, pp. 96-117

Seminar: What is the Islamic approach to interpreting history?

**Revision Class: Wednesday 4 May 2016, 12:00-13:00, K2.31**
3. Assessment / How will my work be assessed?
(If you are a Study Abroad student at King’s in Semester 1 only, please also see Section 4 below.)

- **Coursework essay** (2500 words, contributing 40% to your module mark) on an essay question listed at the end of this syllabus.
  Due: **Monday 23 November 2015, BEFORE 4pm, on KEATS**

  Feedback will be available on KEATS no later than Monday 21 December 2015. Feedback tutorials will offer further guidance on improving your work.

- **Unseen written exam** (2 hours, contributing 60% to your module mark): 2 out of 5 questions must be answered.
  The examination will take place in Period II (May-June 2016).

Scope of assessment
Coursework essay questions generally relate to some topics covered in the first half of the module.
Examination questions normally deal with most of the remaining topics, but care is taken to avoid overlap across both sets of questions. Some examination questions may be formulated so as to encourage analysis, in the same answer, of topics that were investigated in different sessions, including those that fell early in the module.

What is a good essay/exam answer?
- Good essays and examination answers will demonstrate a nuanced grasp of any topic, an awareness of its religious/political/social/historical contexts and a capacity to develop a well-reasoned argument that is convincingly supported by reference to suitable evidence and is presented in a structured manner using clear English.
- For more details please see the link to marking criteria below (“Essential Information”).
- Best approaches to essay writing will be discussed as part of the teaching programme in the module. Students should seek advice if they are unsure of anything.

Essential information: How do I submit my essay?
- **The Faculty of Arts & Humanities cover-sheet** needs to be the first page of the submitted essays; please follow this link: http://www.kcl.ac.uk/trs/study/handbook/assessment/taught/submission.aspx
- **The candidate number** (e.g. W01234) on the cover-sheet needs to be accurate and of the present academic year. Your work cannot be attributed to you on the College systems, if this information is incomplete or wrong.
- **The word limit** includes all footnotes/endnotes, but excludes the bibliography, which you should provide. There is a 5% tolerance: no penalty will be incurred for essays that are up to 5% over the word limit. Beyond that tolerance band, two marks will be deducted for every 5% of excess words until 50% is reached. After 50%, three marks will normally be deducted for each further 5% of excess words.
- **The MHRA/Harvard reference style** has been adopted for this module. Please find the *Quick Guide to Reference Styles in TRS* in the TRS Handbook online. The presentation of your work, including the insertion of page numbers, quality of referencing and bibliographical information and the standard of English, has a strong bearing on the mark given for it.
- **Submission BEFORE 4pm**: Your work must be submitted via the assessment submission section of the KEATS area for the module, by the published deadline, i.e. before 4pm on the relevant day. Work with a TurnitIn time stamp of 4:00pm counts as a late submission (see next point).
- **Late submissions** will be treated as follows:
  Unless an extension has been granted by the Chair of the UG Programme Board of Examiners on the basis of a Mitigating Circumstances Form (MCF), supplied with supporting evidence, or comes to be granted retrospectively:
  - Work submitted within 24 hours after the original deadline will be marked, but the mark for this element will be capped at the pass mark of 40%.
  - Work submitted more than 24 hours after the original deadline will not be marked, and the submission will receive a mark of zero.
- **Mitigating Circumstances Forms**: MCFs can be downloaded from the Policy Zone of the College
Extensions retrospectively: An extension may be granted retrospectively, providing the MCF with supporting documentation is submitted no later than 7 days after the missed assessment and supporting documentation has been received no later than 21 days after the missed assessment. Please note that extensions are granted by the TRS Assessment Board Chair and NOT by individual module tutors.

- Plagiarism: Please make sure that you understand the College rules on plagiarism. Information is available at: http://www.kcl.ac.uk/library/help/plagiarism/index.aspx, and you should also have been enrolled on a KEATS plagiarism module.
- Oral presentations and plagiarism: The College’s rules on plagiarism apply to oral presentations, handouts and Powerpoint presentations just as they do to written work submitted for assessment. You must acknowledge any and all sources used in presentations and accompanying material, and must present all material in your own words except for explicitly acknowledged quotations from others.
- Collusion also counts as misconduct. Think twice before circulating your work to other students.
- Marking: Your essays for this module will be assessed according to Model 3: https://www.kcl.ac.uk/trs/study/handbook/assessment/taught/markmodels.aspx
- Essays: First and second markers will apply the Faculty’s Undergraduate Marking Criteria: http://www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/study/handbook/sguides/assessment/ugmarkcrit.pdf

Classroom presentation and participation are assessed in line with these Marking Criteria: https://www.kcl.ac.uk/trs/modules/level6/files/TRS-Marking-Criteria-for-presentations.pdf

4. Study Abroad Students: Semester 1 only
If you are studying at King’s in Semester 1 only, then you must submit a final essay in lieu of the summer examination as follows:
- Final essay in lieu of exam (3000 words in place of a 2 hour exam, contributing 60% to the module mark). Please choose a second essay question from the list given at the end of this syllabus.
  Due: Monday 7 December 2015 BEFORE 4pm in hardcopy to the TRS Office.

5. Essay Questions
Please choose ONE question:

(1) Compare three different commentaries (tafsirs) on Sura 112 Ikhlas. What are the main differences between them in method and content of interpretation? What is unique about each commentary? From the three different commentaries on this sura, what can be said about its core message?

Tips: Make sure that you provide a brief biography and the intellectual background of each commentator using additional sources such as the entries in the Encyclopaedia of Islam (second edition) and other scholarly material. Also, ensure that you provide a broader context to your discussion by consulting the books listed in the Online Reading List (under the section on the Qur’an).

*Asterisks indicate the importance of each source

**Primary source:**

*Secondary sources* (in addition to those included in the Online Reading List):
- Badawi, Elsaid M. and M. Abdel Haleem, ‘kh-l-s’, in Dictionary of Qur’anic Usage, Brill Online

(2) Analyse Surat Yusuf (chapter 12 of the Qur’an) in detail. How is it different from the Joseph story in the Book of Genesis? What do modern scholars say about the historical connection between the Qur’anic and Biblical versions of the story? What do you think are the key themes and messages of the Qur’anic story of Joseph, bearing in mind the historical context in which this sura was revealed?
Robson, J.

*Reinhart, A. Kevin,  

**Newman, Andrew,  
Juynboll, G. H. A.  

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**Berg, Herbert,  
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*Ahmed, Shahab, et al.  

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Wheeler, B. M.,  

Waldman, M.  

Rendsburg, G.  

Mir, Mustansir  

Johns, A.  

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*Firestone, R.,  

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*Bernstein, Mark,  


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*Goldman, S., ‘ Joseph’, in Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an, Brill Online  

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The Wiles of Women, the Wiles of Men: Joseph and Potiphar’s Wife in Ancient Near Eastern, Jewish, and Islamic Folklore (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995)  


Wheeler, B. M., Prophets in the Qur’an (London: Continuum, 2002)

(3) How do Sunnis, Shiites and Western scholars differ in their evaluative method and criteria in assessing the authenticity of Hadith literature?

Secondary sources (please also consult the Online Reading List):  


**Berg, Herbert, The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam: The Authenticity of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000)  


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‘How We Know Early Hadīth Critics Did Main Criticism and Why It’s So Hard to Find’, Islamic Law and Society, 15 (2008): 143-184 <drjonathanbrown.com>  

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**Newman, Andrew, The Formative Period of Twelver Shi’ism: Hadith as Discourse Between Qum and Baghdad (Richmond: Curzon, 2000)  


Robson, J., ’ Hadith’, Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd edition, Brill Online
(4) What is the place of ‘suffering’ in Shiism? Begin with a discussion of suffering in Islam in general to introduce the subject. Make sure that you examine the significance of suffering in Shiism in the following three areas in equal measure: Shi‘ite history, teachings and practices.

Secondary sources (please also consult the Online Reading List):
Ayoub, Mahmoud, “Asura”, Encyclopaedia Iranica <http://www.iranicaonline.org>
**Ayoub, Mahmoud, Redemptive Suffering in Islam: Study of Devotional Aspects of Ashura in Twelver Shi‘ism (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1978)
Chelkowski, Peter, ‘Dasta’, in Encyclopaedia Iranica
---, ‘Ta‘ziya’, in Encyclopaedia Iranica
‘Hosayn b. ‘Ali’, in Encyclopaedia Iranica

Further resources:

(5) What is the significance of Abraham (Ibrahim) for Islam? Discuss his historical significance for Islam as well as the importance of the concepts, teachings and practices associated with him in Islam. Make sure that you discuss ‘the religion of Abraham’ (Din Ibrahim) as mentioned in the Qur’an and also other relevant passages on Abraham in the Qur’an.

Secondary sources (do not rely entirely on encyclopedia articles; consult the books and articles listed in the bibliographies of these encyclopedia articles to add depth to your discussion):
*Brodeur, Patrice C., ‘Religion’, in Encyclopaedia of the Qur’an, Brill Online
**Busse, Heribert, ‘Abraham (Ibrahim al-Khalil)’, in Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE, Brill Online
Firestone, Reuven, ‘Ṣāfī and Marwa‘, in Encyclopaedia of the Qur‘ān, Brill Online
Hawting, Gerald R., ‘Idolatry and Idolaters’, in Encyclopaedia of the Qur‘ān, Brill Online
---, ‘Ka‘ba’, in Encyclopaedia of the Qur‘ān, Brill Online.
Marlow, Louise, ‘Friends and Friendship’, in Encyclopaedia of the Qur‘ān, Brill Online
Netzer, Amnon, ‘Ebrahim’, in Encyclopaedia Iranica
*Reuven, Firestone, ‘Abraham’, in Encyclopaedia of the Qur’an, Brill Online
Rubin, Uri, ‘Hanif’, in Encyclopaedia of the Qur‘ān, Brill Online
Schick, Robert, ‘Place of Abraham’, in Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE, Brill Online