What is Islam, Fall 2013

Class code
MEIS-UA 9691 - 001/ HIST-UA 9085 - 001/ RELST-UA 9085 - 001

Instructor Details
Stefano Taglia
st42@soas.ac.uk
office: School of Oriental and African Studies, Main Building, 5th Floor, office 511
office hour: Thursdays 2-3 or by appointment

Class Details
Thursday, 10.00 – 13:00
Location to be confirmed.

Prerequisites
None

Class Description
This course explores the origins of Islam and the development of rituals and doctrines to the 21st century. It assumes no previous background in Islamic studies. Students will learn about topics such as the Koran and the Prophet, Islamic law, the encounter of East and West during the Crusades, and Islam in Britain. They will find out how Muslims in different regions have interpreted and lived their religion in past and present. Readings will include not only scholarly works but also material from primary sources, for example the Koran, biographies and chronicles. The course consists of a combination of lectures, seminar discussions, field trips and includes other media, such as film.

Desired Outcomes
On successful completion of the course, a student will:
. have knowledge of the history, rituals and doctrines of Islam
. have developed independent perspectives based on the secondary literature
. be aware of some of the important issues and debates arising in the study of Islam
. have an understanding of the diversity of how Islam has been practised and interpreted over time
. have developed skills in researching and writing essays and thinking critically about the subject

Assessment Components
1) Test, week 7, 60 minutes, weighting: 20%.
2) Essay proposal, hand-in date: week 9, 1,000 words, weighting: 10%.
3) Essay, hand-in date: week 12, 5,000 words, weighting: 40%.
4) End of semester examination, 90 mins., weighting: 30%.
Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class.

Test
The purpose of the test is to see if you have mastered basic material, and made sense of it. The test contains one identification question on an event, person or concept from a list of three and a Text Identification.

For the first part you are expected:
a) to give the date of the event, or death date of the person (you are expected to give either (1) the precise date (e.g. 632), or (2) the date correct to within 12 years plus or minus (e.g. for “632”, 644 is
acceptable, 645 is not) or (3) the date stated in quarters of a century. Thus for a date 649, the only
correct answers would be “2nd quarter of the 7th-century” or “2nd quarter of the 600’s”.
b) to explain the significance of the concept, person, or event, for the topic of the course,
c) to include as much more information as you have time to write.

For the Text Identification you are expected:
a) to identify the author and the work,
b) to explain the selection’s significance within the work as a whole,
c) to place it in the context of the course.

Essay proposal
This paper should take the form of a research proposal for the essay in which you have a brief
description of your proposed topic, approach and materials. That is, what are you trying to find out,
how are you going to do it, and what kind of books and articles are you going to use in order to do so?
Consequently, the proposal should at least include the essay’s topic, the main question(s) you want to
ask, the main parts of the essay and the argument that you want to make in addition to an annotated
bibliography, which demonstrates knowledge of the relevant literature. The proposal should be no
longer than 1.000 words, including bibliography. For writing the annotated bibliography cf. for instance
http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specifc-types-of-writing/annotated-bibliography. You are
asked to use a minimum of 6 secondary sources in addition to the textbook by Brown (if you want to
use the latter). At least two of these should be from academic journals. In addition you should use at
least one article from the Encyclopedia of Islam.
The annotated bibliography is for the proposal only, DO NOT include it into the final essay. Here, a
normal bibliography with the bibliographical date is sufficient.

Essay
An essay should fulfill the following criteria:

CONTENT
The essay (a) has a clearly defined thesis statement, (b) is original and goes beyond class discussion, (c)
uses a number of relevant secondary texts (d) uses primary sources read in class where appropriate.

REASONING, ORGANIZATION, & DEVELOPMENT
The essay (a) is coherently and consistently argued, (b) has well developed paragraphs arguing one
idea well substantiated with appropriate evidence and contributing to the proposed thesis, (c) displays
consistency between the thesis statement and the conclusion, and (d) shows evidence of classifying,
identifying and arranging information in logical order.

LANGUAGE, FORM, AND STYLE
The essay (a) is written in clear, direct, lucid formal language, (b) is written in grammatical sentences
with correct spelling and punctuation, and (c) uses a coherent system of references.

CRITICAL THINKING
The essay (a) shows that the student draws reasonable inferences from secondary texts and (where
appropriate) primary sources, (b) synthesises and integrates information and ideas into the
argumentation of the thesis statement well, (c) displays evidence of creative and independent
thinking, and (d) presents an autonomous interpretation of the texts read and is not a mere rehashing
of information.

Grade A: An assignment which has all the above qualities.
Grade B: An assignment which has all or most of the above qualities, but at a more modest standard,
failing short of excellence.
Grade C: An assignment which has some of the above qualities in a modest degree, but fails to achieve others.
Grade D: An assignment which does not display the above qualities to a modest degree, but which manages to demonstrate some slight evidence of effort and understanding.
Grade F: An assignment which displays very little effort or understanding, or which contains no material relevant to the task set.

You are asked to use a minimum of 6 secondary sources in addition to the textbook by Brown. At least two of these should be from academic journals. In addition you should use at least one article from the Encyclopedia of Islam.
Please insert page numbers and include a word count.

**Grade 4:** End of semester examination
You have to answer three from a list of ten essay questions. The criteria are as above, except that references are not required.

**Grade conversion**
NYU in London uses the following scale of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

- A=94-100
- A-=90-93
- B+=87-89
- B=84-86
- B-=80-83
- C+=77-79
- C=74-76
- C-=70-73
- D+=67-69
- D=65-66
- F=below 65

Where no specific numerical equivalent is assigned to a letter grade by the class teacher, the mid point of the range will be used in calculating the final class grade (except in the A range, where 95.5 will be used).

**Grading Policy**
NYU in London aims to have grading standards and results in all its courses similar to those that prevail at Washington Square.

**Attendance Policy**
NYUL has a strict policy about course attendance. **No unexcused absences are permitted.** While students should contact their class teachers to catch up on missed work, you should NOT approach them for excused absences.

Excused absences will usually only be considered for serious, unavoidable reasons such as personal ill-health or illness in the immediate family. Trivial or non-essential reasons for absence will not be considered.
Excused absences can only be considered if they are reported in accordance with guidelines which follow, and can only be obtained from the appropriate member of NYUL's staff.

Please note that you will need to ensure that no make-up classes – or required excursions - have been organised before making any travel plans for the semester. See also section 11.1 - Make up days.

Absence reporting for an absence due to illness

1. On the first day of absence due to illness you should report the details of your symptoms by e-mailing absences@nyu.ac.uk including details of: class(es) missed; professor; class time; and whether any work was due including exams. Or call free (from landline) 0800 316 0469 (option 2) to report your absences on the phone.

2. Generally a doctor’s note will be required to ensure you have sought treatment for the illness. Contact the Gower Street Health Centre on 0207 636 7628 to make an appointment, or use HTH general practitioners if you cannot get an appointment expediently at Gower Street.

3. At the end of your period of absence, you will need to complete an absence form online at http://bit.ly/NuCl5K. You will need to log in to NYU Home to access the form.

4. Finally you must arrange an appointment to speak to Nigel Freeman or Donna Drummond-Smart on your first day back at class. You must have completed the absence form before making your appointment.

Supporting documentation relating to absences must be submitted within one week of your return to class.

Absence requests for non-illness reasons

Absence requests for non-illness reasons must be discussed with the Academic Office prior to the date(s) in question – no excused absences for reasons other than illness can be applied retrospectively. Please come in and see us in Room 308, 6 Bedford Square, or e-mail us at academics@nyu.ac.uk.

Further information regarding absences

Each unexcused absence will be penalized by deducting 3% from the student’s final course mark. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.

Unexcused absences from exams are not permitted and will result in failure of the exam. If you are granted an excused absence from an examination (with authorisation, as above), your lecturer will decide how you will make-up the assessment component, if at all (by make-up examination, extra coursework, viva voce (oral examination), or an increased weighting on an alternate assessment component, etc.).

NYUL also expects students to arrive to class promptly (both at the beginning and after any breaks) and to remain for the duration of the class. If timely attendance becomes a problem it is the prerogative of each instructor to deduct a mark or marks from the final grade of each late arrival and each early departure.

Please note that for classes involving a field trip or other external visit, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive at an agreed meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion.

Please refer to the Student Handbook for full details of the policies relating to attendance. A copy is in your apartment and has been shared with you on Google Docs.
Late Submission of Work

Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor. Late work should be submitted in person to a member of NYU London staff in the Academic Office (Room 308, 6 Bedford Square) during office hours (Mon – Fri, 10:30 – 17:30). Please also send an electronic copy to academics@nyu.ac.uk for submission to Turnitin.

Work submitted within 5 weekdays after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 10 points on the 100 point scale.

Written work submitted more than 5 weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

Please note end of semester essays must be submitted on time.

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism: the presentation of another piece of work or words, ideas, judgements, images or data, in whole or in part, as though they were originally created by you for the assignment, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

Please refer to the Student Handbook for full details of the plagiarism policy.

All students must submit an electronic copy of each piece of their written work to www.turnitin.com and hand in a printed copy with the digital receipt to their professor. Late submission of work rules apply to both the paper and electronic submission and failure to submit either copy of your work will result in automatic failure in the assignment and possible failure in the class.

Electronic Submission

The Turnitin database will be searched for the purpose of comparison with other students’ work or with other pre-existing writing or publications, and other academic institutions may also search it.

In order for you to be able to submit your work onto the Turnitin website, you will need to set up an account:

1) Go on to the Turnitin website http://www.turnitin.com
2) Click ‘Create Account’ in the top right hand corner
3) Select user type of ‘student’
4) Enter your class ID & Turnitin class enrolment password (these will be e-mailed to you after the drop/add period, or contact academics@nyu.ac.uk if you have misplaced these).
5) Follow the online instructions to create your profile.

To submit your work for class, you will then need to:

1) Log in to the Turnitin website
2) Enter your class by clicking on the class name
3) Next to the piece of work you are submitting (please confirm the due date), click on the ‘submit’ icon
4) Enter the title of your piece of work
5) Browse for the file to upload from wherever you have saved it (USB drive, etc.), please ensure your work is in Word or PDF format, and click ‘submit’
6) Click ‘yes, submit’ to confirm you have selected the correct paper (or ‘no, go back’ to retry)
7) You will then have submitted your essay onto the Turnitin website.
8) Please print your digital receipt and attach this to the hard copy of your paper before you submit.
it to your professor (this digital receipt appears on the web site, immediately after you submit your paper and is also sent to your e-mail address). Please also note that when a paper is submitted to Turnitin all formatting, images, graphics, graphs, charts, and drawings are removed from the paper so that the program can read it accurately. Please do not print the paper in this form to submit to your lecturers, as it is obviously pretty difficult to read! You can still access the exact file you uploaded by clicking on the ‘file’ icon in the ‘content’ column.

Please also see the Late Submission of Work policy, above.

Students must retain an electronic copy of their work for one month after their grades are posted online on Albert and must supply an electronic copy of their work if requested to do so by NYU in London. Not submitting a copy of a piece of work upon request will result in automatic failure in the assignment and possible failure in the class. NYU in London may submit in an electronic form the work of any student to a database for use in the detection of plagiarism, without further prior notification to the student.

Penalties for confirmed cases of plagiarism are set out in the Student Handbook.

Required Text(s)
Ahmed, Leila: A Quiet Revolution. The Veil’s Resurgence, from the Middle East to America, New Haven, CT 2011 ISBN: 9780300170955. (We will discuss this book in week 12)

Supplemental Texts(s) (not required to purchase as copies are in NYU-L Library)

Reference works and websites:
2. *Index Islamicus* [online via SOAS, NYU]. This is the essential bibliographical database to find books and articles.
3. *Oxford Bibliographies* (Islamic Studies) For finding resources on the topic that you chose for your essay these annotated bibliographies very useful and include for instance entries on Dome of the Rock, Women in Islam, Theology, People of the Book, Islam in Europe/North America, jihad, Orientalism [online via SOAS, NYU]
4. *International Medieval Bibliography*[online via Senate House, NYU] – if you are searching for something comparative.
5. *Oxford Islamic Studies Online* has various resources related to the study of Islam, from its origin to the present day, including maps and images [online via NYU or SOAS library].

[http://www.uga.edu/islam/](http://www.uga.edu/islam/) (Islam and Islamic Studies Resources)
[http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/islam/islamsbook.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/islam/islamsbook.html) (Internet Islamic History Sourcebook, primary sources)

For writing essays I recommend (especially for Freshmen):

**Internet Research Guidelines**
For students it is often difficult to decide what material from the internet is appropriate for essay writing. As a general rule: avoid any material that is freely available (such as Wikipedia) and use only material that you access via NYU, SOAS, Senate House or another academic library.

**Additional Required Equipment**
None

**Session 1**
Introduction
5 Sept

**Session 2**
Terminology/Basic Concepts, Field Trip to the BritishMuseum
12 Sept
Brown, *Introduction*, 3-18 (ch. 1)

Task II: Take the virtual tour: Arabic Script: Mightier than the Sword under
Study the sections “related objects” under
[http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/galleries/middle_east/room_34_the_islamic_world.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/galleries/middle_east/room_34_the_islamic_world.aspx)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 3</th>
<th>Early Islam and Muhammad</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19 Sept</td>
<td>Required reading: Brown, Introduction, 19-68, 105-128 (chs. 2-4, 7/8)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Session 4</th>
<th>Sources I - The Koran</th>
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<tr>
<td>26 Sept</td>
<td>Required reading: Brown, Introduction, 69-87 (ch. 5)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Primary source: Koran, sura 12 (Yusuf/Josef) (BB)</td>
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  - Task II: Watch the Koran recitation: [link](http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-6094846957551566977) and think about the following questions: What does this video tell us about the community in Texas? What does this video tell us about the practice of Koran recitation?

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<tr>
<th>Session 5</th>
<th>Sources II – Hadith</th>
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<tr>
<td>3 Oct</td>
<td>Required reading: Brown, Introduction, 88-101 (ch. 6)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guiding questions for the article by Juynboll:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- What is the author’s main argument?</td>
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<td>- On what basis does the author argue that the ‘common link’ in the isnad is the person who originated the hadith?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- When were these women-demeaning hadiths put into circulation? (pp. 345-350 can be skimmed over)</td>
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  - Task II: Search for a topic (or several topics) of your choice in the hadith database: [link](http://www.hadithcollection.com/index.php) and identify two hadiths that you would like to discuss in class. Please mark down the title of the work and the exact number of the respective hadith (e.g. Sahih Muslim Book 025, Hadith Number 5341) so that we can look them up in class.

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<th>Session 6</th>
<th>Diversity: Sunnism and Shiism; Ritual</th>
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<tr>
<td>10 Oct</td>
<td>Required reading: Brown, Introduction, 129-146 (ch. 9)</td>
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<th>Session 7</th>
<th>Theology and Philosophy</th>
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<tr>
<td>17 Oct</td>
<td>Required reading: Brown, Introduction, 172-192 (ch. 11)</td>
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pp. 91-109 (BB)

**[written test (60 minutes)]**

### Session 8

**Islamic Law**

24 Oct

I required reading: Brown, *Introduction*, 149-171 (ch. 10)

primary source: *Koran* (translation M. A. S. Abdel Haleem), sura 16 (al-Nahl), verse 67; sura 4 (al-Nisa), verse 43; sura 2 (al-Baqara), verse 219; sura 5 (al-Ma’ida), verse 90/91 (BB)

Task II Compare the translation of these verses on alcohol to the other translations available at

http://www.altafsir.com/ViewTranslations.asp?Display=yes&SoraNo=1&Ayah=0&toAya
h=0&Language=2&LanguageID=2&TranslationBook=3

Task III: Search two or more of the following fatwa online sites for ‘alcohol’. Identify two fatwas that you would like to discuss in class. Please send these to me per email until 23 October. The fatwas should be copied into a word document with information where you found the respective fatwa (website, number of fatwa if given or URL otherwise)


### Session 9

**East meets West: The Crusades**

31 Oct

required reading:


[Essay proposal due]

### Session 10

**Field Trip to the Regents Park Mosque and the Haziziye Mosque (Dalston)**

14 Nov

Please read in preparation for this trip in the “Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān” the entry ‘Mosque’ (SOAS library start page -> electronic resources -> A-Z databases -> Brill Reference or via NYU library)

### Session 11

**Islam in Europe**

15 Nov


### Session 12

**Islam and Women**

Discussion of Ahmed, *Quiet Revolution*

21 Nov

Task II: Search in the subject index of the Koran (Quran) for the Koranic provisions on divorce

http://www.altafsir.com/Quran_Search_Eng.asp (take the ‘Royal Aal al-bayt Institute’ translation)

In this session we will watch the film “Divorce Iranian Style” (1998)

[essay due]
Session 13
28 Nov
Islamism
required reading

Session 14
5 Dec
What is Islam Reconsidered, Revision
- reflection on the key themes of the course
- clarification of questions
- discussion of exam preparation

Session 15
12 Dec
End of semester examination

Classroom Etiquette
Toilet breaks should be taken before or after class or during class breaks. Food & drink, including gum, are not to be consumed in class.

Mobile phones should be set on silent and should not be used in class except for emergencies.

Laptops are only to be used with the express permission of the teacher.

Please kindly dispose of rubbish in the bins provided.

Required Co-curricular Activities
The co-curricular excursion will take place on Thursday.

**Date:** 31 Oct 2013

**Venue:** Regents Park Mosque and Aziziyе Mosque

**Meeting time:** 10:00

**Meeting point:** NYUL

Suggested Co-curricular Activities
Visit to the Victoria and Albert Museum (Islamic Gallery); lectures and events at the School of Oriental and African Studies (http://www.soas.ac.uk/about/events/)

Your Instructor
I studied History, Politics and Economics of the Middle East at SOAS, where I also completed my PhD in late Ottoman history. I am teaching Near and Middle Eastern History at the School of Oriental and African Studies, at undergraduate and postgraduate level. My research focuses on the intellectual history during the reform period (19th century) in the
Ottoman Empire. The focus of my work is on the role of religion, the meaning of modernity and the feasibility of a multi confessional and multi ethnic empire based on the civic nationalism embodied in the idea of Ottomanism. I am the author of “Re-appropriating Islam: Religious discourse in the Young Turk opposition press of the nineteenth century,” forthcoming, and “The Young Turks, intellectualism and their importance of Ottoman and Turkish history,” Turkish Area Study Group Review 20 (Autumn 2012). I have another article being reviewed with Past & Present, “Exiled Activists or Cosmopolitan Intellectuals? The Young Turks Opposition in Paris.” I am working on a book proposal for Stanford University Press, with the title of The Intellectuals dilemma: the writings of Ahmet Riza and Mehmet Sabahettin on reform and the future of the Ottoman Empire.