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REFORMED  THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
DISTANCE EDUCATION

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CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTER WITH ISLAM  
DR. JAMES N. ANDERSON

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# Course Overview

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## *Course Description:*

OST540 Christian Encounter with Islam, 2 hours

Lecturing Professor and Professor of Record:

Dr. James N. Anderson

An introduction to the history, culture, traditions, beliefs, and practices of Islam. Students will reflect on the ways in which Islamic faith and life have been shaped by historical and cultural circumstances, study the diversity of Islam both in history and in contemporary expression, and develop a deeper understanding of Islam in order to love Muslims as their neighbors and witness more effectively to them.

## *Course Objectives:*

- To introduce the student to Islamic history, culture, traditions, beliefs, and practices
- To raise the student's awareness of the considerable diversity found within Islam, both historically and in its contemporary expressions
- To encourage the student to think biblically and critically about Christian engagement with Islam, both in the past and in the present
- To develop a deeper and more accurate understanding of Islam, so as to cultivate a greater love for our Muslim neighbors and a more effective witness toward them

## *Required Textbooks:*

Selections from *The Qur'an*, translated by M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, Oxford World's Classics. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2008.

Chapman, Colin. *Cross and Crescent: Responding to the Challenge of Islam*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008.

Riddell, Peter G. and Peter Cotterell. *Islam in Context: Past, Present, and Future*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003.

White, James R. *What Every Christian Needs to Know About the Qur'an*. Bloomington, MN: Bethany House, 2013.

## Required Articles

Corwin, Gary R. "Ten Things Worth Knowing About Islam." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 40.4 (October 2004): 416-17.

[A copy of this will be made available in the LMS]

\_\_\_\_\_. "Muslim Ministry in the Days Ahead: Two Fault Lines, Two Favorable Winds." Pages 275-282 in *Envisioning Effective Ministry: Evangelism in a Muslim Context*. Edited by Laurie Fortunak Nichols and Gary R. Corwin. Wheaton, IL: Evangelism and Missions Information Service, 2010.

[A copy of this will be made available in the LMS]

Tennent, Timothy C. "Followers of Jesus (Isa) in Islamic Mosques: A Closer Examination of C-5 'High Spectrum' Contextualization." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 23.3 (2006): 101-15.

[A copy of this will be made available in the LMS]

Travis, John, et. al. "Four Responses to Tennent." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 23.3 (2006): 124-26.

[A copy of this will be made available in the LMS]

## *Online Student Handbook:*

The [Online Student Handbook](#) has been designed to assist you in successfully navigating the Distance Education experience, whether you are taking a single course or pursuing a certificate or degree program. In it you will find valuable information, step-by-step instructions, study helps, and essential forms to guide you through every aspect of your distance education opportunity from registration to graduation. Please use this resource as your first-stop reference manual.

## *Summary of Requirements:*

1. Listen to all recorded [Lectures](#)
2. Complete all [Readings](#)
3. Participate in [Forum Discussions](#) (with other students and the professor)
4. Take the [Midterm Exam](#)
5. Take the [Final Exam](#)
6. Submit [Research Paper](#)
7. Submit [Christian Encounter Report](#)
8. Submit [Mentor Report or Course Application Paper](#)

# Meet the Professor

## *Lecturing Professor and Professor of Record:*



**Dr. James Anderson** is an ordained minister in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. Dr. Anderson came to RTS from Edinburgh, Scotland, and specializes in philosophical theology, religious epistemology, and Christian apologetics. His doctoral thesis at the University of Edinburgh explored the paradoxical nature of certain Christian doctrines and the implications for the rationality of Christian faith. His research and writing has also focused on the presuppositionalism of Cornelius Van Til, particularly his advocacy of the transcendental argument. Dr. Anderson has a longstanding concern to bring the Reformed theological tradition into greater dialogue with contemporary analytic philosophy. Before studying philosophy, Dr. Anderson also earned a Ph.D. in Computer Simulation

from the University of Edinburgh. He is a member of the Society of Christian Philosophers, the British Society for the Philosophy of Religion, and the Evangelical Philosophical Society. Prior to joining RTS Charlotte, Dr. Anderson served as an assistant pastor at the historic Charlotte Chapel in Edinburgh where he engaged in regular preaching, teaching, and pastoral ministry. He is active now in service at Ballantyne Presbyterian Church in Charlotte. He is married to Catriona and they have three children. You can follow his blog at [www.proginosko.com](http://www.proginosko.com) or on Twitter [@proginosko](https://twitter.com/proginosko)

## *Selected Publications by Dr. Anderson*

*Paradox in Christian Theology: An Analysis of Its Presence, Character, and Epistemic Status.* Paternoster Theological Monographs. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007.

*What's Your Worldview?: An Interactive Approach to Life's Big Questions.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014.

"The Lord of Noncontradiction: An Argument for God from Logic" co-authored with Greg Welty, *Philosophia Christi* 13:2. 2011.

Review of *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology* edited by Oliver Crisp and Michael Rea, *Ars Disputandi* 11. 2011.

"No Dilemma for the Proponent of the Transcendental Argument: A Response to David Reiter," *Philosophia Christi* 13:1 2011.

Review of *The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology* by Michael Sudduth, *Themelios* 35:2 2010.

# Grades

## *Forum Discussions (15%):*

The student is required to interact in two (2) forums:

1. Student-Professor Posts (15 total posts)
  - A. Personal Introduction Forum: The student is required to post a brief personal introduction to the professor/class. Suggested details include your vocation, where you live, your church background, why you chose RTS, and what you hope to gain through the course (1 required post).
  - B. 5 Topical Discussion Q&A Forums: The student is required to answer each topical discussion question with one (1) response. The professor will acknowledge the student's answer and will follow up with a subsequent question to which the student must also answer with one (1) response. Each topical discussion question therefore requires two (2) total posts/responses from the student (Total of 5 forums x 2 posts = 10 total posts).
  - C. Student-Professor Forum: The student is required to post four (4) times in this forum. Posts in this forum should focus on course-related content such as research paper topics, lectures and reading assignments, or other academic issues related to the course.
2. Student-Student Forum (5 total posts)

A post may be either a new topic or a response to an already existing topic.

## *Examinations (Midterm 15%, Final 20%):*

The midterm exam will cover lessons 1-6. The format of the exam will be a series of multiple choice questions based on the material covering the first half of the course. Use the Lesson Questions at the end of each lesson to assist you in studying. The student will have one and a half hours to complete this exam.

The final exam will be cumulative covering all lessons, 1-14. You should review all of the lecture material and course notebook in preparation for the exam. The final exam will consist of a series of short-essay questions based on all of the lecture material. The student will have three hours to complete this exam.

The midterm and final exams for this course are to be taken online in the Learning Management System (LMS). Please note that you will need to have a proctor for your exams. Your proctor can be anyone except a relative or current RTS Student. After clicking on the exam link you will be given detailed instructions about the exam. Please read these instructions carefully before entering the exam

## *Research Paper (30%):*

The student will write a critical research paper (3500-4500 words, excluding footnotes) on any topic covered in the lectures or reading. See section titled "[Research Paper Instructions](#)" in this syllabus.

### *Christian Encounter Report (10%):*

The student has two options for the Christian Encounter Report. Students are encouraged to select Option 1 unless there are no mosques in the student's area or if the visit would be viewed and received as less than amicable.

Option 1: You are to visit a mosque on a Friday afternoon. The focus will center on observing--but not participating in--a Muslim worship service. You should then write a short report (around 1000 words) reflecting on what you learned from this experience. This report should not be merely a description of what you observed, but a critical reflection on how it affected your understanding of Islam in relation to your own Christian faith. For example, you could address some of these questions:

1. What were your preconceptions before the visit?
2. How were your preconceptions confirmed or challenged?
3. Were you surprised by anything you observed or heard?
4. How does Muslim worship compare to Christian worship?
5. How did the visit affect your attitude towards Islam and Muslims?

Option 2: You are to find a Muslim and spend at least one (1) hour in conversation with him or her, asking them about what it means to be a Muslim. You should then write a short report (around 1000 words) reflecting on what you learned from this experience. The purpose of this report is not to proselytize, but rather to get the Muslim to explain their own beliefs. Some of the questions you could ask include:

1. What do they believe about the Quran and Muhammad?
2. How do they practice their faith?
3. What are their views on Jesus, the Bible, and/or Christianity?
4. What are their views on sin, salvation, and/or the afterlife?

### *Reading Report (5%):*

The student must complete all of the required reading and submit a reading report acknowledging how much of the required reading has been completed. No partial credit is given for readings that have not been completed.

### *Mentor Report OR Course Application Paper (5%):*

If you are enrolled in an **RTS Global** degree program, you are required to submit a mentor report at the end of the course. Every portion of the form (goals, summaries, assessments, and signatures) should be completely filled out by both the student and the mentor to receive full credit. You can download the Mentor Report form in your Canvas classroom.

If you are receiving your degree through another **RTS campus** (Orlando, Jackson, Charlotte, et. al.), or are a certificate student, or special student (i.e. from another seminary), you are asked to write a 200 word summary of how you perceive what you have learned in this course will fit

into the objectives you have for your ministry, your educational goals, or other objectives you wish to achieve in life. Course Application Papers (CAP) that fall well-short of 200 words will receive a grade deduction.

*Assignments:*

Best practice for your time management is for you to submit all assignments at the end of the week in which they fall, using the upload links provided in the LMS. All work must be submitted by midnight of the course end date, per your course start letter. You are responsible for turning in all assignments on time; no late submissions are permitted. Any student who needs an extension must get approval from the Registrar prior to that time.

*Contact Information:*

Reformed Theological Seminary, Distance Education  
2101 Carmel Road  
Charlotte, NC 28226  
(704) 900-1257  
1-855-854-6920  
FAX: (704) 366-9295  
E-mail: [dess@rts.edu](mailto:dess@rts.edu)  
Web site: [www.rts.edu/global](http://www.rts.edu/global)

# Lessons

Lesson One  
Preparation for Studying Islam

Lesson Two  
Overview of Islam

Lesson Three  
The Life of Muhammad

Lesson Four  
The History of Islam After Muhammad

Lesson Five  
Two Views of the Quran

Lesson Six  
Major Themes and Christianity in the Quran

Lesson Seven  
The Sunna and Hadith

Lesson Eight  
Islamic Law

Lesson Nine  
Diversity Within Islam

Lesson Ten  
Islamic Culture

Lesson Eleven  
Christian Encounters with Islam:  
Doctrine and History

Lesson Twelve  
Christian Encounters with Islam:  
Evangelism and Apologetics

Lesson Thirteen  
Christian Encounters with Islam:  
Missions

Lesson Fourteen  
Controversial Issues and  
Concluding Thoughts





# Research Paper Instructions

The student will write a critical research paper (3500–4500 words, excluding footnotes) on any topic covered in the lectures or reading. Make sure the paper has a clear and focused thesis. Some suggested topics are:

1. Comparing the Bible and the Qur'an (teachings, origins, interpretation, etc.)
2. Comparing Islamic and Reformed views on free will and predestination
3. Evaluating the “Insider Movements”
4. Islamic views on sin and salvation
5. Challenges in evangelizing Muslims (theological, cultural, political, etc.)
6. Christian responses to Muslim polemics
7. Lessons from the writings and ministry of Samuel Zwemer
8. Cooperation with Muslims on social issues (abortion, religious freedom, etc.)

The paper will be graded according to the following criteria, in no particular order: responsible use of Scripture, responsible use of sources, creativity, clarity, structure and coherence, cogency of argument, practical relevance, evidence of critical thinking, and good writing style (inc. grammar, spelling, and punctuation).

The paper should cite at least 8 scholarly sources. For the purposes of this paper, a scholarly source is a book or article by a recognized expert in the field (and not aimed at a popular level for a general audience)—ideally one that has been peer-reviewed. Wikipedia is clearly not a scholarly source. That said, with sufficient discernment, Wikipedia can be a useful pointer to scholarly sources and is generally reliable for fact-checking on uncontroversial issues. Please consult the professor if you have any doubts about whether a source is scholarly. You should not rely heavily on internet sources. Use the library!

The paper should be word-processed, not hand-written. Use a 12-point font and double line-spacing for the main text. Use section headings where applicable to improve readability. Use footnotes (10-point font) rather than endnotes. Use style for citations, footnoting, and bibliography. The paper should be submitted with a title page containing all of the following: the name and year of the course; your name; the professor's name; the title of the paper; and the exact word count for the main text of the paper (obtained from your word processor's word-count feature).

**Course Objectives Related to MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes**

Course: Christian Encounter with Islam

Professor: James N. Anderson

<b>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</b> <i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<b>Rubric</b> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None	<b>Mini-Justification</b>
<b>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</b>	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	1. Research paper tests student's ability to clearly and accurately articulate understanding of Islamic history, culture, and theology 2. Class discussion questions test understanding and application
<b>Scripture</b>	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Moderate	1. Discusses biblical texts relevant to Christian engagement with Islam 2. Compares Bible with Qur'an 3. Discusses issues for Bible translation in Muslim contexts
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	1. Discusses engagement with Islam by Reformed theologians and missionaries 2. Compares and contrasts Reformed doctrines and Islamic doctrines
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	1. Cultivates passion for outreach to Muslims as application of the "two great commandments" (Matt. 22)
<b>Desire for Worldview</b>	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Moderate	1. Sustained reflection on the Islamic worldview in light of (and contrasted with) the Christian worldview
<b>Winsomely Reformed</b>	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Strong	1. Encourages a critical but charitable approach to engaging with Islam from a distinctively Reformed perspective
<b>Preach</b>	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	None	
<b>Worship</b>	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	None	
<b>Shepherd</b>	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.	Minimal	1. Encourages concern for Muslims both in North America and worldwide
<b>Church/World</b>	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Strong	1. Promotes a responsible Christian engagement with Islam as a challenge both in North America and worldwide