ST540 – Christian Encounter with Islam
Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando

Fall 2015
Thursdays, 1 – 3 pm
John R. Muether
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Goals

1. To introduce the student to Islamic history, culture, traditions, beliefs, and practices.
2. To raise the student’s awareness of the considerable diversity found within Islam, both historically and in its contemporary expressions.
3. To encourage the student to think biblically and critically about Christian engagement with Islam, both in the past and in the present.
4. 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.

Course Overview

1. Introduction: Why Study Islam?
2. Christian Principles for Comparative Religion
3. Overview of Islam
4. History of Islam
5. Islamic Sources: Qur’an, Sunna, Hadith
6. Islamic Law
7. Diversity in Islam
8. Islamic Culture
9. Islam and the West
10. Islam in Global Perspective

Course Requirements

1. Class attendance and thoughtful participation.
   A. You are required to attend all the lectures. If you know that you will be unable to attend class on a particular date, please inform me in advance, otherwise you may be penalized for your absence.
   B. There will be opportunity for class participation and questions during the lectures.
   C. A proportion of your final grade (see below) will depend on your attendance record and your participation in the classes (thoughtful interaction with the professor and other students).

2. Report on mosque visit.
   A. A group visit to a local mosque will be arranged during the semester. (There may be more than one visit, depending on class size.) The visit will take place on a Friday afternoon and will center on observing (but not participating in) a Muslim worship service.
   B. The date(s) of the visit(s) will be announced early in the semester. If for good reason you are unable to attend the visit, please inform me as soon as possible so that an alternative assignment can be arranged.
C. You will write a short report (500-1000 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) Did the visit change your attitude towards either Islam or Muslims?

3. Reading assignments.
   A. A proportion of your final exam mark (and thus your final grade) will depend on your acknowledgment that you have completed the required reading (see below).
   B. You will be penalized for each uncompleted reading assignment.
   C. A reading schedule will be provided at the start of class.

4. Research paper.
   A. You are to write a critical research paper (3500–4500 words, excluding footnotes) on any topic covered in the lectures or readings.
   B. If you’re in any doubt about whether your topic is a suitable one, please run it by me first.
   Some suggestions:
   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 Movement”
   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.)
   C. Whatever topic you choose, make sure that your paper has a clear, focused thesis.

5. Final Exam
   A. The final exam will be taken in exam week.
   B. The exam will consist of multiple-choice and short answer questions based on the material covered in the second part of the semester. You will have two hours to complete it.
   C. You will be asked to sign a declaration that you have not discussed the content of the exam with anyone who has previously taken the exam.
   D. You will also be asked to indicate which of the required reading assignments you have completed and to sign a declaration to that effect.

Grading

1. Class attendance and participation – 10%
2. Final exam (including credit for reading assignments) – 25%
3. Canvas Forum Assignments, including report on mosque visit (others to be assigned) – 35%
4. Research Paper – 30%
**Required Reading**

A reading schedule will be provided at the start of class.

3. Additional readings provided by the instructor
# Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

**Course:** Christian Encounter with Islam  
**Professor:** Muether  
**Campus:** Orlando  
**Date:** Fall 2015

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<tr>
<th>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</strong></td>
<td>Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<td><strong>Scripture</strong></td>
<td>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.)</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<td><strong>Reformed Theology</strong></td>
<td>Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<td><strong>Sanctification</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<td><strong>Desire for Worldview</strong></td>
<td>Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<td><strong>Winsomely Reformed</strong></td>
<td>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.)</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<td><strong>Preach</strong></td>
<td>Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td><strong>Worship</strong></td>
<td>Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td><strong>Shepherd</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
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<td><strong>Church/World</strong></td>
<td>Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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