

BT429 – Theology Lectureship



History of Christian-Muslim Relations

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Course Dates: March 19-23, 2018

2 Credit Hours

Course Description

Increasingly, Christians in North America are encountering Muslims. A review of the ways in which Christians and Muslims have interacted in a variety of contexts in the past provides guidance for our current relationships. This course covers such topics as Christianity in the Arab world at the time of Muhammad, the initial conquest of the Christian regions of the Middle East and North Africa by Arab armies, and the Muslim treatment of Christian communities in conquered territories. It goes on to explore the Christian-Muslim encounters in medieval times—both the military clashes and the more peaceful exchanges of medieval scholars. Current relations in the context of Christian missionary efforts, the immigration of Muslims to the West, and post-colonial conflicts receive special focus.

Texts

Glaser, Ida, and Hannah Kay. *Thinking Biblically about Islam: Genesis, Transfiguration, Transformation*. Carlisle, Cumbria: Langham Global Library, 2016.

Tieszen, Charles. *A Textual History of Christian-Muslim Relations: Seventh-Fifteenth Centuries*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015.

Learning Objectives

The encounters of Muslim cultures with Western cultures are often portrayed as a “clash of civilizations.” This course aims to go beyond portraying the encounters as a simple polarization and to demonstrate their complexity in their broader historical context. Another objective of the course is to explore the history of concepts such as “jihad” and “crusade” which figure prominently in Christian-Muslim dialogues today, in order to remove misunderstandings. As a way of specifically measuring your progress I want you to be able to:

- 1) outline the sequence of major encounters between Christians and Muslims that shaped their respective perceptions of each other;
- 2) identify the broad concepts and paradigms that Christians and Muslims have used to regulate their relationships with each other;
- 3) describe the key institutions, events and people involved in Christian-Muslim encounters throughout their history;
- 4) discern the major trends in the historiography of Christian-Muslim relations and the major challenges faced by historians studying these encounters;
- 5) compare and contrast the present state of Christian-Muslim relations with their relations in the past;
- 6) evaluate critically current Christian portrayals of Islam, as well as Muslim portrayals of Christianity;
- 7) analyse a historical problem in a responsible way, and to interpret religious motivation in the context of cultural influences;
- 8) appreciate the breadth, variety, and complexity that has defined Christian-Muslim relations through the centuries;
- 9) and compare and contrast the development of another faith tradition with that of your own in a fair and compassionate manner.

Course Requirements and Weighting

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|--------------------------|-----|
| • Required readings | 25% |
| • Book review | 25% |
| • Research Paper | 30% |
| • Final Exam – take-home | 20% |

Required Readings (25%)

March 19th 2018

Read the selections of primary source readings. These will be used in class discussions, so you may want to take notes about what you find significant, and about what you want to ask further questions. At the beginning of the first class, hand in a slip of paper indicating you have read all the selections or the percentage you have read.

1. Charles Tieszen, *A Textual History of Christian-Muslim Relations*
-See Appendix for Primary Source Readings
2. Photocopied readings
-See Appendix for Primary Source Readings

Book Review (25%)

March 22nd 2018

Read *Thinking Biblically about Islam* by Ida Glaser and write a review of at least 6-7 pages. A balanced review includes three sections: a summary of contents, an assessment of strengths and weaknesses, and personal interaction and impact.

In assessing strengths and weaknesses, ask questions such as the following:

- Who are the authors, and why did they write the book?
- Who is the intended audience?
- On what sources do the authors rely for their information about the beliefs and practices of Islam and Christianity?

- How thoroughly or fairly have the authors treated their material?
- To what extent do the authors contribute to our understanding of Christian-Muslim relations?
- What are the authors' explicit or implicit assumptions about the goals or benefits of Christians interacting with Muslims?
- What lessons can be learned to facilitate further interaction with Muslims?

For an excellent guide on writing a review, see

<https://apps.carleton.edu/curricular/history/resources/study/criticalbookreview/>

Research Paper (30%)

April 6th 2018

Choose one or more of the following topics and research how that topic has been addressed by both Christians and Muslims in recent history. Compare writings by Christians and Muslims from the 19th century (see bibliography) to writings from the past 50 years, preferably at least two from each period. Identify which aspects of the discussion have remained the same and which have changed, and analyze why there is continuity or discontinuity. To what extent is there evidence that Christians have heard and understood Muslim responses and that Muslims have heard and understood Christian responses to their questions? To what extent are the writings influenced by the political, social, intellectual or cultural contexts of the writers? Assess the arguments themselves, and explain why you find them persuasive or weak.

Your paper should be about 10 pages long and must contain an outline and a thesis statement on the first page, and a bibliography of sources consulted. Citations should be in footnote style, formatted according to the college's guidelines.

Possible topics:

- Doctrine of the Trinity
- Doctrine of the Unity (*tauḥīd*) of God
- Jesus as the Son of God
- Muhammad as the final prophet of God
- Miracles as evidence of divine nature or prophetic authority
- Divinity of Jesus Christ
- Prediction of Muhammad in the Bible
- Jesus as a human prophet of God
- Crucifixion of Jesus / Christ's death as an atoning sacrifice for sins
- Muhammad as the perfect pattern for living / Muhammad's moral character
- Reliability and authority of the Bible
- Divine origin of the Qur'an
- Reliability and authority of the Hadith
- Salvation by faith alone
- Necessity of obedience to the Sharia
- Spread of Christianity
- Spread of Islam
- Crusades
- Jihad
- Christian missionary activity

- Muslim witness and da‘wa
- Conversion and stories of converts
- Adapting the Christian gospel to a Muslim context
- Adapting Islam to the modern world
- Role of the Caliph
- Relation of politics to religion
- Polygamy and marriage
- Treatment of women
- Slavery
- Sufism in Islam
- Sectarian divisions or denominations
- Prayer
- True worship of God
- Islam and Muslims in prophecy

Final Exam (20%)**March 29th 2018**

The final exam will be a take-home exam consisting of three essay questions to be completed within the week following the course. You will be able to choose from at least two questions from each of the three time periods—classical, medieval, and modern.

Course Outline

The course will consist of lectures and class discussions on the topics below, interspersed with student-led explorations of primary texts from the various periods of Christian-Muslim relations throughout history.

- Historiographical issues in the study of Christian-Muslim Relations
- Christianity in Arabia and surrounding regions before Islam
- Christians and Christianity in the Qur’an
- Christian experience of Arab conquest and rule
- Theological dialogue under Muslim rule
- Impact of the Crusades and Catholic missionary work
- Reformation and Renaissance leaders and Islam
- European colonialism and Christian missions
- Development of Christian scholarship on Islam in the 20th century
- Modern Muslim views of Christianity
- Christian missionary strategies in the latter half of the 20th century
- Recent initiatives at dialogue since 9/11

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Muslim perceptions of Christian-Muslim relations

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- Hussain, Amir. *Oil and Water: Two Faiths: One God*. Kelowna, BC: CopperHouse, 2006.
- Kateregga, Badru D., and David W. Shenk. *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1997.
- Soharwardy, Syed B. *Deafening Hate: A Comprehensive Rebuttal to Taliban, Al-Qaeda, Daesh (ISIS) & Islamophobes*. Islamic Supreme Council of Canada Muslims Against Terrorism, 2016.

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- Braswell, George W. *Islam: Its Prophet, Peoples, Politics and Power*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996.

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Ghazee-pore: Self-published, 1862. Vol. 1 [Link](#); Vol. 2 [Link](#)

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Appendix – Primary Source Readings for History of Christian-Muslim Relations

1. Early Christian responses to Islam
 - John of Damascus and al-Kindi – read Tieszen, pp. 15-19, 77-84
2. Christianity in the language of Islam
 - Patriarch Timothy I – read Tieszen, p. 50-57
 - Theodore Abu Qurrah – read Tieszen, pp. 31-50
 - Abu Raita al-Takriti – read Tieszen, pp. 57-77
3. Refuting Christianity and defending Islam
 - Abu 'Isa al-Warraq - read Tieszen, pp. 85-95
 - al-Jahiz and al-Tabari – read Tieszen, pp. 97-109
4. Muslim critiques of Christianity in al-Andalus
 - Ibn Hazm and al-Baji – read Tieszen, pp. 143-157
5. A Catholic defence of Christianity
 - Thomas Aquinas and others – read Tieszen, pp. 175-188
6. The Crusades
 - READ: William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds done beyond the Sea*, trans. Emily Atwater Babcock. Volume 1 (Columbia University Press, 1943), 366-374 [Handout].
 - READ: Ibn al-Athir, *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period*, Part 2, trans. D. S. Richards (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 322-324, 330-335 [Handout].
7. After the Mongol invasions
 - Ibn Taymiyyah – read Tieszen, pp. 188-197.
8. After the Ottoman capture of Constantinople in 1453
 - Nicholas of Cusa – read Tieszen, pp. 222-237
9. Protestant Reformers
 - READ: Henrich, Sarah, and James L. Boyce. "Martin Luther—Translations of Two Prefaces on Islam: Preface to the *Libellus de ritu et moribus Turcorum* (1530), and Preface to Bibliander's Edition of the Qur'an (1543)." *Word & World* 16, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 262-266 [Handout]; the entire article is available at http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/issues.aspx?article_id=456.
 - READ: Malcolm, Noel. "Comenius, the Conversion of the Turks, and the Muslim-Christian Debate on the Corruption of the Scripture." *Church History and Religious Culture* 87 (2007): 482-485, containing a translation of Comenius's preface to Turkish Bibles [Handout]
10. Gospel of Barnabas
 - READ: *Gospel of Barnabas*, introduction, chapters 43-44, 211-222 [Handout].

11. Christian-Muslim debates in Delhi, 1854
-READ: Pfander, C. G., *The Mizan-ul-Haqq (Balance of Truth)*, revised by W. St. Clair Tisdall (London: Religious Tract Society, 1910), 106-125 [Handout].
12. Missionary work among the Arabs
-READ: Samuel Zwemer, *The Disintegration of Islam* (London: Fleming H. Revell, 1916), 7-10, 171-178 [Handout].
13. Modernist Muslim interpretation of the Bible
-READ: Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *The Mohomedan Commentary on the Holy Bible* (Aligarh: Sir Sayyid Academy, Aligarh Muslim University, 2004). The Second Discourse on what is revelation and the Word of God [Handout].
14. Muslim response to Christian missionaries
-READ: Wood, Simon A., *Christian Criticisms, Islamic Proofs: Rashīd Riḍā's Modernist Defense of Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2008), 139-144 [Handout].
15. Muslim theology of witness
-READ: Isma'il al-Faruqi, "On the Nature of Islamic Da'wah," in *Christian Mission and Islamic Da'wah: Proceedings of the Chambésy Dialogue Consultation* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1982), 33-44 [Handout].
16. Evangelical Christian missiology
-READ: Phil Parshall, *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism: Evangelical Approaches to Contextualization*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980, pp. 157-180 [Handout].
17. A Muslim initiative at dialogue
-READ: *A Common Word between Us and You*, English Monograph Series, 4 (Jordan: The Royal AAL al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, 2009), 7-12, 30-38, 83-91 [Handout].
18. The Muslim diaspora in Europe
-READ: Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 62-77, 208-213 [Handout].
19. Theological reflections on the name of God / Allah
-READ: Miroslav Volf, *Allah: A Christian Response* (New York: HarperOne, 2011), 79-94 [Handout].