

TRS 342.51 Online

Islam and the Environment

Summer III, 2015

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Office Hours: Available daily via e-mail

Course Description

“And there is no animal in the earth nor bird that flies with its two wings, but that they are communities like you” (Qur’an 6:38)

“The earth has music for those who listen.”
-George Santayana

This course is an overview of environmental issues and Islamic approaches to these challenges based on the major sources of Islam: the Qur’an and the Hadith (i.e. the sayings and actions of Prophet). We will also discuss Islamic legal strictures to protect the environment. Special emphasis will be given to contemporary Islamic activism on the protection of the natural world. We will elaborate on the beauty of nature as laid out in the Islamic sources as well as the legal prohibitions of the destruction of nature. The course will be interdisciplinary, including perspectives from not just Islamic Studies, but the natural science as well.

Class Format

Each day there will be a recorded presentation by the instructor on the topic of the day as well as a PowerPoint presentation of the material. These will be posted the day before the class day. Students are also expected to complete the reading assignment, watch the video and go over the PowerPoint. Generally the PowerPoint will cover the reading assignment with additional information. Occasionally there will be additional films related to the day’s topic. All films will be available online and the links will be posted on Canvas.

Course Aims

The primary goals of the course are to engage students with an alternative way of viewing the world around them and to give students an awareness of Islam and its approaches to the environment, in specific, and, more generally, its engagement with pressing social, cultural, ethical, and scientific issues. Students should come away from the course with a general understanding of Islam and Islamic principles regarding the natural world and humanity’s place within it.

Grading

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 = 60-69
F = 59 and below

Course Requirements

10%--Recorded Presentation
15%--Quizzes
25%--5-6 page final paper on topic of choice
25%--Final Exam
25%--Participation (Posted Discussion Questions and Responses to Others' questions and Presentations)

Description of Requirements

Recorded Presentation—Each student will make one recorded presentation to the class. The presentation can be done individually or in a group of two. The topics for presentations are found at the end of the syllabus. Students will be expected to gather some information firsthand, from either a religious institution or individuals, including library sources. The presentations will be recorded and posted to Canvas by 12am on the assigned day. Students can choose the date of their presentation in the Canvas calendar. There will be no more than two presentations each day. If the presentation is a group presentation, each member of the group will be required to lead part of the presentation. Students are expected to submit to the instructor an outline of the presentation and a bibliography of sources consulted on the day of the presentation. Presentations will be graded not on the quality of the video, but on its content and on the outline and bibliography.

Quizzes---Each Friday, there will be quiz which covers that week's video lectures, PowerPoint notes, and readings. The quizzes will be conducted in Canvas, will be timed, and can be taken anytime during the day. If your grade on your quiz is not to your satisfaction, you will be given one opportunity to retake it. Note however that if you retake the quiz the second grade will be your quiz grade even if it is lower than your original grade.

Final Paper— Students may choose any topic related to Islam and the environment. This topic must also be approved by the instructor. Given that this is a four week summer course, paper topics should be decided upon as soon as possible, ideally within the first week and should be submitted to the instructor no later than **July 28**. The paper should be no less than 5 pages and no more than 7 pages in length (typed in 12 point font, double spaced). The final paper must be submitted via Canvas or email by **11:59pm EDT Monday, August 10**.

Final exam—There will be final examination on **August 13** which will consist of multiple choice question on Canvas as in the weekly quizzes and essay questions. Each component will account for 50% of the final exam grade. The essay questions will be posted on the morning of August 13 and are due by **11:59pm EDT** that day.

Participation— Each student is expected to actively engage in the discussions of the class. This is done by posting to the discussion boards for the daily notes and readings as well as to the presentations of the other students. As part of this, each student is expected to post at least one thoughtful question in response to that day's reading assignment. I and others in the class will respond to the questions in kind.

Statement on Mutual Respect, Discrimination and Bias- John Carroll University is committed to fostering ethical and moral values that are consistent with Jesuit and Catholic traditions. Among the central values of the University are the inherent dignities of every individual as well as the right of each person to hold and to express his or her viewpoint. When these views conflict it is the obligation of members of the community to respect other perspectives.

The University welcomes students, faculty, staff, and visitors from diverse backgrounds and it works to ensure that they will find the University environment free of discriminatory conduct. It is unacceptable and a violation of University policy to harass, abuse, or discriminate against any person because of age, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability.

Furthermore, each member of the JCU community is expected to take an active role in fostering an appreciation for diversity and inclusion and sending the message that bias-related acts will not be tolerated. "Bias" is defined as intentional or unintentional actions targeting a person because of a real or perceived aspect of that person's identity, including (though not limited to) age, gender, religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, or (dis)ability.

All bias incidents, including those occurring in the classroom, should be reported using the JCU Bias Reporting System at <http://sites.jcu.edu/bias/>.

Questions about the Bias Reporting System or bias incidents may be directed to Dr. Terry Mills, Assistant Provost for Diversity and Inclusion, at tmills@jcu.edu or (216) 397-4455. For more information about University policies and community standards for appropriate conduct, please refer to the Dean of Students web page at <http://sites.jcu.edu/deanofstudents>. For more information about the University commitment to diversity and inclusion, please see <http://sites.jcu.edu/diversity>.

Disabilities-- Students with documented disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations if needed. If you believe you need accommodations, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities at ext. 4967 as soon as possible. Accommodations will not be granted retrospectively.

Academic Honesty--With the academic community it is expected that a high level of honesty will be maintained. Any violation of this standard is inexcusable and will not be tolerated. Any apprehended instance of cheating or plagiarism on written assignments or tests will result in at least an “F,” besides possible disciplinary actions.

Required Texts

Abdul-Matin, Ibrahim. *Green Deen: What Islam Teaches about Protecting the Planet*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2010. (IAM) The book is available both in print and as an e book and a Kindle book

All other assigned readings will be posted on the Canvas site

Useful online sites

www.quranexplorer.com: This site has the full text of the Qur’an in English from several translators. The text is searchable. The site also has a selection of Hadith literature.

Class Schedule

(Texts for the reading assignments will be posted to Canvas unless noted below)

WEEK ONE

Mon. July 20: Introduction to Course and Islam
Tues. July 21: The Place of Human Beings on Earth, Khalifa
Wed. July 22: Spiritual and Theological Aspects
Thurs. July 23: Ayatology and Rahmatology
Fri. July 24: Quiz I

WEEK TWO

Mon. July 27: Philosophical Aspects
Tues. July 28: Practical Aspects
Wed. July 29: Legal and Ethical Aspects
Thurs. July 30: Islamic Environmentalism
Fri. July 31: Quiz II

WEEK THREE

Mon. Aug 3: Waste (Assigned reading: IAM 1-72)

Tues. Aug 4: Watts (Assigned reading: IAM 73-114)

Wed. Aug 5: Water (Assigned reading: IAM 115-141)

Thurs. Aug 6: Food (Assigned reading: IAM 141-190)

Fri. Aug 7: Quiz II

WEEK FOUR

Mon. Aug 10: Muslim Responses to the Environmental Crisis

Tues. Aug 11: Environmental Concerns and Social Development

Wed. Aug 12: Genetic Modification and Muslim Ethics

Thu. Aug 13: **Final Exam.**

Presentation Topics:

Possible paper topics include:

Choose an aspect from this list which you find interesting, or appropriate for you. You are absolutely free to choose another topic that is not on this list, but you must have the instructor's approval.