



AFFILIATED WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

Renison University College
Affiliated with the University of Waterloo
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Renison University College Land Acknowledgement

With gratitude, we acknowledge that Renison University College is located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Hodinohsyó:ni, and Attawandaran (Neutral) Peoples, which is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometres on each side of the Grand River from mouth to source. Our active work toward reconciliation takes place in all corners of our campus through research, learning, teaching, community building and outreach. We are guided by the work of our Reconciliation and Restoring Steering Committee and Anti-Racism and Decolonization SpokesCouncil, as well as the [University of Waterloo's Office of Indigenous Relations](http://uwaterloo.ca/indigenous-relations).

Winter 2023

Course Code: SI 450R/RS 450R

Course Title: Reading the Quran

M 6:00PM – 8:50PM REN 2918

Instructor: Shiraz Sheikh

Office: REN 3111

Office Phone: N/A

Office Hours: M 3:30 – 4:30

Email: s26sheik@uwaterloo.ca

Course Description

Although the Quran is one of the world's most widely read books, it is also one of its least understood books. In this course we will attempt to come to terms with the Quran through a careful study of its content, form, style, central themes, and process of canonization. Emphasis will also be placed on the Quran's vast interpretive tradition (tafsir), as well as the various ways in which scholars attempt to understand the Quran's textual history and its various stylistic and linguistic features.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes - (Upon completion of this course, students should be able to)

- A. To understand the main aspects of the academic study of scripture
- B. To come to a better understanding of how scholars (both traditional and modern) study the Quran
- C. To be able to critically analyze a wide variety of Quranic materials, including medieval and modern works concerned with Quranic interpretation
- D. To gain a firm grasp of academic writing and citation methods

Required Text

- Nasr, S. H., et al (eds), The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary (HarperCollins, 2015)
- Wills, Garry, What the Quran Meant and Why It Matters (Viking, 2017)

Readings Available on LEARN

Supplementary readings will be provided on LEARN

Course Requirements and Assessment

Assessment	Date of Evaluation (if known)	Weighting
Critical Assessment Assignment 1	January 27	10%
Critical Assessment Assignment 2	February 17	10%
Critical Assessment Assignment 3	March 24	10%
Critical Assessment Assignment 4	April 10	10%
Book Report (Wills)	March 3	30%
Final Research Essay	April 20	30%
Total		100%

Critical Assessment Assignments 1 - 4

Total four for entire semester. You will be responsible for submitting a Critical Assessment based on one of your required readings, paired with a chapter (or chapters) from the Study Quran. These are short written assignments, designed to gauge your understanding of the material and to help you frame the lessons and content of the course. Each Critical Assessment should be no more than two, double-spaced pages in length.

Book Report

Prepare a book report for a scholarly work assigned by the instructor. Carefully read Gary Wills' book, *What the Qur'an Meant and Why It Matters*. The first part of the report must thoroughly summarize the book's content (but not chapter-by-chapter). The second part must offer an analysis of the author's underlying argument. This assignment is designed to provide you with an opportunity to think critically about this important book. It will also help you hone your academic writings skills. Moreover, close study of this text will prove to be very beneficial in preparing for the research paper and the take-home exam.

The report is out of 100 and is worth 30% of the total course mark. For a "good" mark, you have to (1) follow the format guidelines to a tee; (2) offer an effective summary of the text; (3) demonstrate to me, through your analysis of the work in question, that you have given considerable thought to the material.

Final Essay

Students are required to write one 6-8 page argumentative paper. Students will be given a list of topics to choose from. The final essay is out of 100 and is worth 30% of the total course mark. A rubric will be provided for this assignment. Since this assignment is intended to be a final course requirement, the due date will be set during the official final exam period.

Course Outline

Notes on readings.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
1	Jan 9 – 13	The Quran and Religionswissenschaft	Q 1 and 112 (with commentary) Nasr, "General Introduction" Izutsu, "The Islamization of Old Arab Virtues" LEARN
2	Jan 16 – 20	The "Event" of the Quran	Q 68, 73, 74, 89, 94, 96 (with commentary) Abdel Haleem, "Quranic Arabic" LEARN Donner, "The Historical Context" LEARN
3	Jan 23 – 27	The Early Revelations: Prophecy and Eschatology	Q 78–114 (excluding 89, 94, 96, 112) (78, 99, 101 with commentary)

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
			Rustom, "Qur'an and Eschatology" LEARN
4	Jan 30 – Feb 3	Quranic Structure, Content, Style	Q 67–77 (excluding 68, 73, 74) (67 and 76 with commentary) Mattson, "How to Read the Quran" LEARN
5	Feb 6 – 10	The Textual History of the Quran	Q 40–66 (excluding 53) (36, 48, 54, 55, 59 with commentary) al-Azami, "The Islamic View of the Quran" LEARN Motzki, "Alternative Accounts of the Qur'an's Formation" LEARN
6	Feb 13 – 17	Week 6 topics The Quran and Islamic Law	Q 5 (with commentary) al-Tayyib, "The Quran as Source of Islamic Law" LEARN
	Feb 20	Family Day	
	Feb 21 – 24	Reading Week	
7	Feb 27 – Mar 3	Israelite and Arabian Prophets in the Quran	Q 10–12 (12 with commentary) Rustom, "What is Tafsir al-Qur'an bi'l-Qur'an?" LEARN
8	Mar 6 – 10	Classical Quranic Exegesis	Q 19–23 (19 and 20 with commentary) Saleh, "Quranic Commentaries" LEARN
9	Mar 13 – 17	Sufi Approaches to the Quran	Q 18 and 53 (2:255, 18:60–82, 33:33, 53:1–18 with commentary) Chittick, "The Quran and Sufism" LEARN Michon, "The Quran and Islamic Art" LEARN
10	Mar 20 – 24	Shi'i Approaches to the Quran	Q 33 (with commentary) Mayer, "Traditions of Esoteric and Sapiential Quranic Commentary" LEARN
11	Mar 27 – 31	The Quran and the Islamic Intellectual Tradition	Q 13–17 (15 and 17 with commentary), 24 (24:35 with commentary) Damad, "The Quran and Schools of Islamic Theology and Philosophy" LEARN

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
12	Apr 3 – 6	The Quran and Other Religious Traditions	Q 2 and 4 (2:1–153 with commentary) Lumbard, “The Quranic View of Sacred History and Other Religions” LEARN
	Apr 7	Good Friday	
	Apr 10	The Quran in Contemporary Contexts	Q 3, 6–9 (3 and 9 with commentary), and 34–39 (36 with commentary) Dakake, “Quranic Ethics, Human Rights, and Society” Dagli, “Conquest and Conversion, War and Peace in the Quran”

Cross-listed course

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, an SDS/RS cross-list will count in an SDS major average, even if the course was taken under the Religious Studies rubric.

Late or Incomplete Work

Late assignments will be deducted 2% off the assignment grade per day after the due date (including weekends) for a maximum of 5 days. After this, no late submissions will be accepted.

Coursework Submission Policy

All assignments must be prepared in .DOCX or .PDF format and submitted electronically through the appropriate drop box in the course LEARN site.

It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor, in the first week of term or at the time assignment details are provided if they wish to submit an alternate assignment.

Policy on Plagiarism

“Policy 71’s glossary defines plagiarism, in part, as “presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others (whether attributed or anonymous) as one’s own in any work submitted whether or not for grading purposes”...

The Vice-President Academic and Dean has the authority to assess instances of plagiarism and the resultant penalties that are raised by an instructor. An instructor can propose a grade

penalty to the Vice-President Academic and Dean, who will decide whether to accept the penalty or initiate a formal inquiry.”

For additional information on how plagiarism is dealt with at Renison, review the policy from where the above text is copied: [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#).

Students should also be aware that copyright laws in Canada prohibit reproducing more than 10% of any work without permission from its author, publisher, or other copyright holder. See Waterloo’s policy on [Fair Dealing](#). Violation of Canada’s Copyright Act is a punishable academic offence under [Policy 71 – Student Discipline](#).

Turnitin.com: Text matching software (Turnitin®) may be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin® is used to verify that all materials and sources in assignments are documented. Students’ submissions are stored on a U.S. server, therefore students must be given an alternative (e.g., scaffolded assignment or annotated bibliography), if they are concerned about their privacy and/or security. Students will be given due notice, in the first week of the term and/or at the time assignment details are provided, about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin in this course.

Electronic Device Policy

Unless the student has formal accommodations from accessibility services allowing the recording of lectures or other material, video-recording the lectures is strictly prohibited. Audio recordings are allowed with the instructor’s permission. Taking photos of the board is only allowed in certain cases and with the permission of the instructor.

Attendance Policy

Students are required to attend lectures but is not mandatory. If you miss a lecture, it is your responsibility to find what you missed. The instructor will not spend time outside class lecture or provide notes to students who miss lectures.

Communication Policy

Email, using the uWaterloo provided email address, is the approved method of communication for Renison. The Office 365 email that you use to login using your WatIAM login and password is secure and confidential. Take caution when forwarding your WatIAM email to an external email service as confidential information forwarded to a third-party provider could be a data security breach and violation of FIPPA (Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act) under which all students, staff, and faculty are bound by law.

Final Examination Policy

For **Winter 2023**, the established examination period is **April 13-28**. The schedule will be available early February. Students should be aware that student travel plans are not acceptable grounds for granting an alternative final examination time. See the [Final Examination Schedule](#).

Accommodation for Illness or Unforeseen Circumstances

The instructor follows the practices of the University of Waterloo in accommodating students who have documented reasons for missing quizzes or exams. See [Accommodation due to illness](#).

Academic Integrity, Grievance, Discipline, Appeals and Note for Students with Disabilities

Academic Integrity: To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity](#) and the [Arts Academic Integrity](#) websites for more information.

Renison University College is committed to the view that when a problem or disagreement arises between a faculty member and a student every effort should be made to resolve the problem through mutual and respectful negotiation. Most issues are resolved by a student/faculty meeting to discuss differences of opinion. It is only after this stage, when a common understanding or agreement is not obtained that further actions listed below could be taken.

Discipline: Every student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their own actions. [Check the [Office of Academic Integrity](#) website for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration, should seek guidance from the course professor or academic advisor. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties are imposed under the University of Waterloo [Policy 71 – Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check the [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4](#). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the

Department's administrative assistant, or Academic Advisor, who will provide further assistance.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances](#) (other than a petition) or [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72, Student Appeals](#).

Academic Integrity Office (UWaterloo): The website can be found at uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

[AccessAbility Services](#) is located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, and collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

Students are encouraged to register with AccessAbility Services (AAS) at the start of each term if they require accommodations due to a disability. However, some students not connected to AAS may require accommodations later in the term. In that case, you should immediately consult with your instructor and/or your Academic Advisor.

Intellectual Property

Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of the instructor, which can include:

- lecture handouts and presentations (e.g., PowerPoint slides)
- lecture content, both spoken and written (and any audio or video recording thereof)
- questions from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams)
- work protected by copyright (i.e., any work authored by the instructor)

Making available the intellectual property of instructors without their express written consent (e.g., uploading lecture notes or assignments to an online repository) is considered theft of intellectual property and subject to disciplinary sanctions as described in [Policy 71 – Student](#)

[Discipline](#). Students who become aware of the availability of what may be their instructor's intellectual property in online repositories are encouraged to alert the instructor.

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health supports if they are needed.

On Campus

- [Counselling Services](#): counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4096
- [MATES](#): one-to-one peer support program offered by the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) and Counselling Services
- [Health Services](#) – Student Medical Clinic: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

Off Campus, 24/7

- [Good2Talk](#): Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- [Empower Me](#): Confidential, multilingual, culturally sensitive, faith inclusive mental health and wellness service.
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 844-437-3247
- [Here 24/7](#): Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- [OK2BME](#): set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning teens in Waterloo. Email: ok2bme@kwcounselling.com Phone: 519-884-0000

Full details can be found online at the [Faculty of ARTS](#) website.

Download [UWaterloo and regional mental health resources \(PDF\)](#)

Download the [WatSafe](#) app to your phone to quickly access mental health support information.

A Respectful Living and Learning Environment for All

Everyone living, learning, and working at Renison University College is expected to contribute to creating a respectful environment free from harassment and discrimination.

Harassment is unwanted attention in the form of disrespectful comments, unwanted text messages or images, degrading jokes, rude gestures, unwanted touching, or other behaviours meant to intimidate.

According to the Ontario Human Rights Code, discrimination means unequal or different treatment causing harm, whether intentional or not, because of race, disability, citizenship, ethnic origin, colour, age, creed, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, or other personal characteristic.

If you feel that you are experiencing the above from any member of the Renison community (students, staff, or faculty), you may contact Melissa Knox, Renison's external anti-harassment and anti-discrimination officer, by email (mnknox@uwaterloo.ca) or by phone or text (226-753-5669). Melissa is an employment and human rights lawyer and part-time Assistant Crown Attorney for the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General. Melissa is experienced in case management, discipline and complaints processes, and works with organizations across Canada to foster safe, respectful, and inclusive work and learning environments through policy development, educational workshops, conflict mediation and dispute resolution, and organizational culture audits.

For additional information see Renison's [Harassment, Discrimination, and Abuse](#) policy.