

# Islamic Studies

Convener: Professor Abdullah Saeed (Asia Institute)

Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in the world. It is embraced by approximately one-fifth of the world's population. The Islamic studies program at the University of Melbourne provides students with the opportunity to study the development of Islamic thought and Muslim societies from a broad multidisciplinary perspective. Dedicated teaching staff provide expertise in areas ranging from modern Islamic hermeneutics, political thought and gender issues, to the study of economics and finance in Muslim societies. Students who specialise in Islamic studies develop transferable skills that will enhance their career options. They are also able to expand on their interest and knowledge through an articulated structure of higher degree study at the University of Melbourne.

Islamic studies is one of a number of programs that constitute the Asia Institute. The Institute was established in 1998 as a major teaching and research initiative to strengthen the University of Melbourne's role as a major international centre for studies in Asian languages and societies. Islamic studies addresses the issues relevant to the development of Islam as a religion and civilisation from its origins to the present. It draws on broad multidisciplinary perspectives provided by subjects taught in the anthropology, Arabic studies, cultural studies, history, Indonesian studies, philosophy, political science and Islamic studies programs.

## Time commitment to study

As well as scheduled contact hours for lectures, tutorial and seminars a considerable additional time commitment is needed to complete the academic requirements of each subject.

A subject-specific time commitment to study will be provided by your lecturer or tutor at the beginning of semester to help you schedule your workload and successfully manage your time during the semester. In addition, general estimates of the total time commitment required to study a 12.5-point single semester subject in the Faculty of Arts can be found on page 1.

## Prerequisites

The Islamic studies program normally commences in second year. The general prerequisite for entry is the completion of 50 points of first year from any discipline within the Faculty of Arts. Unless otherwise stated there are no specific prerequisites, and subjects do not presuppose knowledge of the Arabic language.

## Diploma in Arts (Islamic Studies)

The Diploma in Arts (Islamic Studies) is only available to students who are currently enrolled in an undergraduate degree course at the University of Melbourne. It consists of a three-year sequence of study, and adds one year to the duration of your degree.

Students must complete 25 points of first-year arts subjects and 75 points of second/third-year subjects selected from the lists below, including 110-089 Understanding the Muslim World (*p.1*). Alternatively, students who have completed appropriate background studies at first year may complete 100 points of second/third-year subjects from the list below.

## Requirements for a major

A major in Islamic studies usually consists of eight 12.5-point subjects, totalling 100 points. It comprises:

- two first-year subjects in any Arts discipline (25 points); and
- six second/third-year subjects (totalling 75 points). These must include:
  - the program's compulsory subject: 110-089 Understanding the Muslim World (*p.1*) (12.5 points); and
  - three subjects from the list of core subjects below (37.5 points); and
  - two subjects from the list of optional subjects below (25 points).

## Islamic Studies subjects

### Core subjects

Students must take at least **three** of the following core subjects towards their Islamic studies major in addition to the program's compulsory subject 110-089 Understanding the Muslim World (*p.1*).

Second/third-year subjects	Sem.
<b>Compulsory subject</b>	
110-089 Understanding the Muslim World ( <i>p.1</i> )	1
<b>Islamic Studies</b>	
110-091 Islamic Political Movements ( <i>p.2</i> )	2
110-210 Muslim Philosophy and Thought ( <i>p.2</i> )	1

Second/third-year subjects	Sem.
110-211 Introduction to the Qur'an ( <i>p.2</i> )	N/A
110-215 Islam and Modernity ( <i>p.2</i> )	N/A
110-222 Islam and Human Rights ( <i>p.2</i> )	2
110-223 Islam in the West ( <i>p.2</i> )	N/A
110-224 Islamic Mysticism (Sufism) ( <i>p.2</i> )	N/A
110-230 Travel and Migration in Islam ( <i>p.3</i> )	N/A
110-231 Muslim Women and Islamic Feminism ( <i>p.3</i> )	2
110-227 Islam, Orientalism and the Arabs in Film ( <i>p.3</i> )	1
<b>History</b>	
131-046 Great Empires of Islamic Civilisation ( <i>p.7</i> )	N/A
131-066 The Modern Middle East ( <i>p.8</i> )	1
131-069 God Through History ( <i>p.8</i> )	N/A

### Optional subjects

Students may take not more than **two** of the following optional subjects toward their Islamic studies major. Students must consult the relevant area of study entries in this handbook to make sure that they meet the prerequisites, if any, for entry to these subjects.

Second/third-year subjects	Sem.
<b>Anthropology</b>	
121-063 Culture Change and Protest Movements ( <i>p.3</i> )	2
<b>Arabic studies</b>	
110-010 Arabic 3A ( <i>p.3</i> )	1
110-011 Arabic 3B ( <i>p.3</i> )	2
110-410 Arabic 4A ( <i>p.4</i> )	1
110-411 Arabic 4B ( <i>p.4</i> )	2
<b>Australian studies</b>	
102-211 Migrant Nation: Culture and Identity ( <i>p.3</i> )	1
<b>Cultural studies</b>	
106-064 Contemporary Cultural Studies ( <i>p.9</i> )	1
<b>English</b>	
106-036 Postmodernism ( <i>p.6</i> )	1
<b>History</b>	
131-025 Empire, Race and Human Rights: 1800-2000 ( <i>p.5</i> )	1
131-034 Gender, Culture and Identity ( <i>p.6</i> )	2
131-211 The History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict ( <i>p.11</i> )	2
<b>Philosophy</b>	
161-017 Does God Exist? ( <i>p.4</i> )	2
161-031 Philosophy of Christianity ( <i>p.5</i> )	N/A
<b>Sociology</b>	
166-085 Global Movements: Emerging Paradigms ( <i>p.3</i> )	2

## Honours

There is no honours program in Islamic studies.

## Career opportunities

The Islamic studies program is expected to be particularly attractive to students interested in working in an area where success depends at times on their understanding of Islam and Islamic culture. Examples of such areas include foreign affairs, international trade, immigration, ethnic affairs, journalism, social work and teaching.

## For more information

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## First/second-year subjects

### 110-089 Understanding the Muslim World

**Availability:** 1st and 2nd year

**Credit points:** 12.5

**Coordinator:** Dr M Kamal, Prof A Saeed, Dr A Gully

**Contact:** A 1.5-hour lecture and 1-hour tutorial per week (*Semester 1*).

**Description:** Students of this subject will study images of Muslim societies prevalent in the West. Selected excerpts from Western literature and media will be examined. These images will be considered in the context of the past

and present Muslim world. Particular attention will be given to the values, beliefs, practices and cultural rituals which have shaped Muslim societies. Students of this subject should become familiar with the origin and development of these societies. They will study both unity and diversity in the Muslim world, spanning Asia, Africa and Europe. Changes to Muslim life under the impact of colonialism and Westernisation will be studied as a means of understanding how Islam adjusts to changing circumstances.

**Assessment:** An assignment of 750 words 20% (due mid-semester), an essay of 2500 words 50% (due during the examination period), a tutorial journal of 750 words 20% (due during the examination period) and continuous tutorial participation 10%.

**Prescribed texts:** Materials supplied by the Institute.

## Second/third-year subjects

### 110-091 Islamic Political Movements

**Availability:** 2nd and 3rd year

**Credit points:** 12.5

**Coordinator:** Dr M Kamal

**Contact:** A 1.5 hour lecture and a 1-hour tutorial per week (*Semester 2*).

**Description:** This subject will look into the theological origins of Islamic political activism in the Qur'an and the Sunnah by studying the various relevant texts. It will trace the historical antecedents of contemporary Islamic political activism through a millennium and a half of the historical progress of Islam as a major political force in world history. The subject will explore sociopolitical reasons behind Islam's rise in the 20th century. Theoretical analyses of the political and sociopolitical class structure behind the rise of Islamic political activism in modern times will be used for this purpose. Students will then proceed to study in greater detail the major Islamic political-activist movements in the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, and North Africa. Students will also explore the implications of Islamic political activism for local and global peace and stability.

**Assessment:** An assignment of 1000 words 20% (due mid-semester), an essay of 2500 words 50% (due during the examination period), a tutorial journal of 750 words 20% (due during the examination period) and continuous tutorial participation 10%.

### 110-210 Muslim Philosophy and Thought

**Availability:** 2nd and 3rd year

**Credit points:** 12.5

**Coordinator:** Dr M Kamal

**Contact:** A 1.5-hour lecture and a 1-hour tutorial per week (*Semester 1*).

**Description:** This subject is an introduction to Muslim philosophy and theology, tracing the development of the major schools and doctrines. The subject will survey the early theological debates within their intellectual and sociopolitical contexts; the roots of the Sunni/Shi'i split, and the subsequent developments which led to the formation of theological schools within these two traditions; the translation of Greek philosophical works into Arabic; the development of philosophical schools in the Muslim world; and key contributions made by Muslim philosophers. Students will be introduced to some of the key works of great philosophers such as al-Farabi, Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd. On completion of the subject, students should be familiar with the theological and philosophical debates in the Muslim world, and their sociopolitical contexts.

**Assessment:** An assignment of 1000 words 40% (due mid-semester), an essay of 3500 words 60% (due during the examination period).

**Prescribed texts:** Materials supplied by the Institute.

### 110-211 Introduction to the Qur'an

**Availability:** 2nd and 3rd year

**Credit points:** 12.5

**Semester:** Not Offered

**Description:** This subject is taught entirely in English and is an introduction to the most important foundation text of Islam: the Qur'an which Muslims regard as the revealed word of God. It is the scriptural basis on which Muslims build their religious life and define the concepts of sacred and profane. Students will be introduced to the origins of the Qur'an; its overall structure, content; major themes; approaches to its interpretation; and its functions in Muslim religious, social and political life. Students will explore selected texts from the Qur'an in English translation and their interpretation by leading authorities, both early and modern. Themes covered in the subject should assist students in understanding contemporary debates on the relevance of Islam in the modern period.

### 110-215 Islam and Modernity

**Availability:** 2nd and 3rd year

**Credit points:** 12.5

**Prerequisites:** Usually completion of one Islamic Studies subject or permission from the coordinator.

**Semester:** Not Offered

**Description:** This subject, which is taught in English, deals with the life and thought of key Muslim intellectuals between 1850-2005. It examines attempts by Muslim men and women from a variety of backgrounds and orientations to come to terms with modernity as a Western project, while addressing critical issues facing Islam. The particular focus is the shaping of identity that is both modern and authentically Muslim. Areas for consideration include: renewal and reform; the impact of colonialism and globalization on Muslim discourse; the implications of independent judgement versus emulation for contemporary ulama; and issues associated with civil society, such as human rights, gender and a free press. In order to demonstrate the diversity of approaches by Muslim thinkers of the period, texts will be selected from a range of sources: traditionalist, modernist, post-modernist, liberal and secular. These may include extracts from the following: Abduh, Rida, Banna, Turabi, Mawdudi, Ghanushi, Qutb, Ahmad Khan, Arkoun, Khurshid Ahmad, Soroush, Mernissi, Hanafi, Mariyam Jameelah, Attas, Faruqi, Fazlur Rahman, Asad, Mutahhari, Khomeini and Shariati.

### 110-222 Islam and Human Rights

**Availability:** 2nd and 3rd year

**Credit points:** 12.5

**Coordinator:** Prof A Saeed

**Contact:** A 1.5-hour lecture and a 1-hour tutorial per week (*Semester 2*).

**Description:** In the last half-century, some Muslim governments and their opponents have asserted the need to bring about truly Islamic government. Much of the argument has centred on the need for an Islamic system of human rights. A discourse has developed drawing on ideas unique to Islam expressed in the Qur'an and other religious sources, and on other concepts founded in the universalising ideas of modern international law. These are immediate and powerful issues for governments and oppositions, and also for very many refugees fleeing human rights abuses. This subject focuses on the tensions and contradictions underlying modern Muslim discourse on human rights. It concentrates on the mid-twentieth century to the present, but situates the arguments in the context of the Qur'an and of early Islam. It examines Islamic ideas about human rights and the engagement of Muslims in the debate as theoreticians, lawyers and victims. It discusses the challenge of the modern international human rights discourse and its universalist claims.

**Assessment:** An assignment of 750 words 20% (due mid-semester), an essay of 2500 words 50% (due during the examination period), a tutorial journal of 750 words 20% (due during the examination period) and continuous tutorial participation 10%.

**Prescribed texts:** AE Mayer, *Islam and Human Rights: Tradition and Politics*, Westview Press 1991.

### 110-223 Islam in the West

**Availability:** 2nd and 3rd year

**Credit points:** 12.5

**Semester:** Not Offered

**Description:** This subject examines Islam in Australia and the West past and present, including immigration, ethnic politics, revivalism and what many call Western Islam. It explores how Muslims live in a culture that is secular and somewhat alien to the culture of Muslim majority countries. Students will consider several questions: how do Muslims, whether Australian-born or immigrant, negotiate the categories of Australian and Muslim? What shapes contemporary Muslim discourse in Australia and the West? What role do Muslims play in creating a pluralist and harmonious multi-cultural society? What are the Australian Muslim organizations and where do they stand on a set of social or political issues? The subject will include visits to Muslim institutions in Melbourne and interaction with their communities.

### 110-224 Islamic Mysticism (Sufism)

**Availability:** 2nd and 3rd year

**Credit points:** 12.5

**Prerequisites:** Usually completion of one Islamic studies subject or permission from the coordinator.

**Semester:** Not Offered

**Description:** Spirituality and Sufi understanding of life and reality have given inspiration to many people to achieve spiritual elevation and psychological satisfaction in life. This subject is intended to look into the Sufi Way as the spiritual dimension of Islam, its roots and philosophical meaning, and the factors which led to its emergence, its seeming conflict and reconciliation with the views of the Orthodox scholars, its socio-political dimensions as a popular religious trend, and such sufi practices as chanting, meditation and dance-like

rituals. It also explores the various sufi brotherhoods, and analyses the relevance of the sufi dimension of Islam to contemporary society.

### 110-227 Islam, Orientalism and the Arabs in Film

**Availability:** 2nd and 3rd year

**Credit points:** 12.5

**Coordinator:** Dr A Gully

**Prerequisites:** Fifty points of first year level study within the Faculty of Arts.

**Contact:** A 1-hour lecture, a 1-hour tutorial and a 2-hour screening per week (*Semester 1*).

**Description:** This subject focuses on the disparate modes of representation that separate the Muslim, Arab and Western media, and explores each world's cultural and ideological perspectives. This will be achieved by exploring the West's filmic codes and conventions that portray themselves and the Arab and Muslim 'others'. Intrinsic to these codes are Western modernity's two most dominant cinematic perspectives - the patriarchal 'Imperialist gaze' and the sexist 'Male gaze'. Students will gain analytical skills that assist them to uncover these gazes and the stereotyping practices in narrative cinema. They will also become aware of the subjectivities involved in the selection and editing processes of documentary filmmaking. The Eurocentric/Western conventions dominated by populist Hollywood cinema that provide us with an 'Orientalist' perspective of Islam are contrasted with the self-representation of filmmakers producing counter-cinema. Students will encounter Muslim and Arab perspectives on such important topics as migration, gender, sexuality and politics, as well as investigating themes of Imperialism, Orientalism and Post-Modernity. Students should complete this module with knowledge and an understanding of cinematic trends in the representation of Islam, Orientalism and the Arabs and of how film enables the viewer to identify with characters, places and situations. The module will also further considerably the students' historical and contemporary knowledge of the Muslim and Arab world.

**Assessment:** A 1500 word tutorial paper 40% (due during the semester), a 2500 word essay 50% (due during examination period), and 10% tutorial participation.

**Prescribed texts:** A subject reader will be available from the Bookroom at the beginning of semester

E Said, *Orientalism*, Penguin 1995. • Matthew Bernstein & Gaylyn Studlar (eds), *Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film*, I B Taurus 1997.

### 110-230 Travel and Migration in Islam

**Availability:** 2nd and 3rd year

**Credit points:** 12.5

**Prerequisites:** Usually fifty points of first year from any area of study within the Faculty of Arts.

**Semester:** Not Offered

**Description:** This subject explores historical patterns and models of migration and travel among Muslims, from the pre-modern period through to today, with the main focus being on the modern period. It engages with fictional and non-fictional accounts of non-Muslim societies through the eyes of historians, travellers and geographers from the pre-modern period, and asks such questions as: how do these writers interpret the space beyond those borders? It also examines interpretations of travel and migration by contemporary Muslim minorities in western countries. Among the topics it addresses are: to what extent does travel create a yearning for the homeland, and in what ways? The subject explores motivating factors beyond those of religious obligation and doctrine, such as self-affirmation and economic interest, and highlights how gender and ethnicity are reflected in such acts of movement.

### 110-231 Muslim Women and Islamic Feminism

**Availability:** 2nd and 3rd year

**Credit points:** 12.5

**Coordinator:** Dr A Gully

**Prerequisites:** Usually fifty points of first year from any area of study within the Faculty of Arts.

**Contact:** A 1.5-hour lecture and a 1-hour tutorial per week (*Semester 2*).

**Description:** Globalisation and recent world events have contributed to an increasing focus on Islamic societies. This focus coincides with some important developments in the study of gender in those societies. In this module students will encounter the various ways of examining gender and feminist discourse in Islamic societies. The subject introduces them to the interplay between gender, identity and modernity, focusing particularly, although not exclusively, on the Middle East. The subject will assess the influence of social, economic and legal factors on issues of gender and feminism, and will also examine those issues within the political and religious context of Islamic fundamentalism. It examines how identity is shaped by ethnicity, class, sexuality and religion, with some attention being given to the debates on Islamic and modernist discourses. The subject will be explored through two principal

methodological approaches. The first approach is theoretical, dealing broadly with historical sources, gendering, definitions and issues of feminism, gender and patriarchy, tradition and modernity, and legal and political discourses, including human rights. The second approach is experiential, representing women's experience through literature, rituality and spirituality. This subject includes some film and documentary analysis.

**Assessment:** Written assignment of 750 words 20% (due mid-semester); an essay of 2500 words 50% (due at the end of the semester); tutorial journal of 750 words 20% (due during the examination period); continuous tutorial participation 10%.

**Prescribed texts:** Materials supplied by Institute.

T Saliba (ed), *Gender, Politics and Islam*, Chicago University Press 2002.

