I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The central concern of this course is to examine a variety of Christian experiences within the context of their engagement with Islam and Muslims. The course will be anchored in selected Christian-Muslim (formal) dialogues that began in March 1969 initiated by World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Pontifical Council of Interreligious Dialogue (formerly the Secretariat for Non-Christian Religions). Dialogues co-sponsored by Muslim organizations, like Al Albait Foundation and the World Islamic Call Society will also be discussed. We will examine in a historical sequence selected individual contributions of Muslim and Christian scholars at formal dialogues and the joint declarations that were issued from such meetings.

The course will begin with a brief introduction to Islam and its scripture, the Qur’an. Our focus will be to gain basic knowledge of Islam in relation to Christianity. This comparative theological perspective will allow us to see the broader framework pointing to the need for and imperative of interreligious dialogue as outlined by scholars and practitioners of these religious traditions. We will then look at the very idea of inter-religious dialogue and a variety of manifestations of dialogue between Christians and Muslims.

A historical overview of the formal dialogues from the 1970s and 80s will provide the platform for discussion of Christian and Muslim perspectives on critical issues and theological themes that were the focus of those dialogues, notably, peace and nonviolence, pluralism, human rights, etc. Following the study of these dialogues the final component of the course will be an overview and discussion of recent and present efforts in interreligious dialogue and the circumstances surrounding the new commitment to advancing Christian-Muslim dialogue globally. The context for recent initiatives for interfaith dialogue will receive special attention as it marks a new beginning which has led to a substantial increase in interaction and collaboration among people from across religious traditions in their resolve to combat common challenges faced by all.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Based on the departmental description of the undergraduate learning outcomes, this course will enable the student to:

- gain familiarity with texts within Christian and Muslim traditions that encourage dialogue
- become conversant with some of the main themes in the actual dialogues
- understand the current trends and directions in Christian-Muslim dialogue

These objectives will be achieved through the class activities noted below.
III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course requires daily reading, attendance, and active class participation; in-class and take-home written assignments; participation in and facilitation of a small-group discussion (SGD); a five-page book report; and two exams.

Note: All assignments submitted in this course should conform to the following format. Papers to be submitted to the instructor should be typed, double-spaced in Times New Roman, font size 12, with one inch margin on all sides. Please note that failure to place page numbers and correct grammar and spelling errors will adversely affect the grade for that assignment.

Header information for all submitted papers should be listed in the following manner:

| “Name”       | Theo 2410-103 - Spring 2011 |
| “Date”       | “Assignment title” |

A. Class Participation (10%): Active class participation is a very important component of this course and will be graded on the basis of your level of involvement in class activities including raising questions related to the course materials, comments on specific issues, and sharing other items of concern that may contribute to the overall objectives of the course. If you participated regularly in class your grade will be within the range of 80-95 points; if your participation happens to be sporadic the range will be between 55-80; and if the participation remained low throughout the semester your grade would be below 55.

B. Weekly Response Paper (20%): To help facilitate class participation and discussion each week the students will respond to a focus question related to a selected text from the assigned readings which would constitute as the weekly response paper. Hardcopy of the paper will be due in class every Wednesday. Each response paper will be worth 2 grade points; each student must submit ten papers to earn the maximum possible credit. This grade will be determined on the basis of (1) timely submission; (2) analytical depth of the response to the focus question; and (3) evidence of engagement with the readings.

Response papers should do all of the following:

1) answer the question based on that week’s reading assignment
2) clearly refer to the text/s (e.g., through a brief quotation and citation)
3) include some original, substantive commentary by you. This could be a question, analogy, example, or scholarly criticism.
4) be comprehensive yet concise (your response should be at least 300 words)
5) be well written and free of grammatical and typographical errors.

C. Book Report Project (20%): In addition to the textbook and other assigned readings each student will read an additional book and prepare a five-page book report. The draft of the report will be due in class on April 13th. Final report will be due on May 4th when the student will be asked to present a summary of the report in class. The report may go over five pages but should not be less than that (e.g. 4 ½ page-report will receive a point deduction). The book report must include responses to the following questions. Each question should be addressed separately and should be clearly identified by either the number or the question:
(i) What sort of book is this? What subjects are covered? What is the chronological limit? What field of work does it come out of? What kind of questions does this focus allow the author to answer/explore? What kinds of questions are precluded by this focus?

(ii) What is the overall point/thesis of the book? One way of looking at this is what bothers, delights, fascinates, frightens or repulses the author and what are they trying to do with that and why? Another way to consider this question is to ask what problem is this author trying to solve? Do their efforts work to your satisfaction?

(iii) What three new insights about the subject did you learn from this book?

(iv) Identify one confrontation with your own assumptions that you found in this text, i.e. what do you now have to at least consider differently than before reading this book?

(v) What useful connections do you find between the required readings, discussions in class, and this text? What relevant dis-connections do you find?

(vi) Would you recommend this book to others? to whom? why or why not?

It is very important that you follow scholarly standards in your writing and presentation. Please cite page numbers within the text of your report as extensively as possible. All assertions and statements taken from the book, whether they are quoted or paraphrased must be cited in a parenthetical format (e.g. author’s last name, p. xx). Similarly all references to ideas or critical issues referred to in your report must include a page reference from the book. Example: “the author includes a long discussion on Buddhism in Asia on “pages xyz”, but never mentions the presence of Buddhism in Indonesia which has a significant Buddhist following…. No book reports will be accepted without adequate in-text references. Book-reports will be graded on the basis of how strictly you observe the following: (1) scholarly format; (2) scholarly writing style and content and (3) timely submission and in-class presentation of the summary of the report.

D. Midterm and Final (20% + 30%): Final will not be cumulative.

IV. GRADING

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Participation (10%)</th>
<th>Weekly Response Papers (20%)</th>
<th>Book Report (20%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm (20%)</td>
<td>Final Exam (30%)</td>
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Grading Scale:
A=93-100       AB=88-92       B=83-87       BC=78-82       C=73-77       CD=68-72       D=60-67       F=0-59

V. COURSE ETIQUETTE

A. Attendance: Attendance in this course is mandatory and although it does not have a separate grade excessive absences will have a negative impact on your overall grade. Each student has TWO allowances for absences. Therefore starting with the third absence the student will begin to accrue negative points towards the final grade (1/2 point for each successive absence will be deducted). If a student missed class SIX times he/she may be withdrawn from the course and will be given a WA (withdrawal for excessive absences) or an F. Generally, if someone stopped attending without any notice to the instructor and the Registrar’s office, and did not officially drop the course, he/she will most likely receive a failing grade at the end of the course. If there is a valid excuse for missing a session, please speak to the instructor in person, preferably in advance of your scheduled absence.
Please note that there will be no make-up exams unless documentation is provided reflecting an emergency situation beyond your control. More importantly, in case of absence, please make sure you obtain notes from a classmate and any other relevant information you missed due to your absence. Additionally, it is your responsibility to approach the instructor during office hours or another agreed upon time to obtain any handouts or assignment particulars.

B. Punctuality: Punctuality is important in submitting assignments and in class attendance. If someone enters the classroom after the session has already begun, it disrupts the flow of class; it is also disrespectful of those who arrived on time. In the event you are late, please make sure to speak to the instructor immediately after the session is over to explain your situation. In general arriving to class late or leaving earlier than scheduled time will be treated as equivalent to half or full absence depending on the rate of recurrence.

C. Academic Honesty: All students enrolled in this course are subject to the policy and procedures on academic honesty established by Marquette University. Students are expected to know the rules of academic engagement. For more information on what this entails and for definitions of academic honesty and dishonesty please visit the university website at: http://www.marquette.edu/rc/academichonesty.shtml

D. Miscellaneous: Please refrain from chewing gum or eating in general during class time so you can participate in class discussion. Please note that laptop use will not be permitted in class. If you think your ability to fully participate in class will be impaired without one, please speak to the instructor privately to discuss your individual needs. All electronic devices must be shut off at the start of class.

VI. REQUIRED READINGS


6. Additional Readings available online or D2L:

   a--Vatican II document, *Nostra Aetate*

   b--Recent major Muslim initiative on interfaith dialogue: www.acommonword.org

d--David A. Kerr, “‘He Walked in the Path of the Prophets’: Toward Christian Theological Recognition of the Prophethood of Muhammad,” in *Christian-Muslim Encounters* eds. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Wadi Haddad (University Press of Florida, 1995), pp. 426-446. (D2L)


**VII. CLASS SCHEDULE (Mon/Wed)**

*Please bring your copy of the day’s assigned reading to class with you*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed 19 Jan</td>
<td>Introductions/Course Overview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 26 Jan</td>
<td>Islamophobia - VID: “Reel Bad Arabs” (57 mins)</td>
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<td>Weekly focus question #1: What are some of the critical issues pertaining to Islam and Muslims today?</td>
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<td>Mon 31 Jan</td>
<td>Islam in the Modern world/ The Qur’an (Robinson: 40-74)</td>
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<td>Wed 2 Feb</td>
<td>Muhammad and the Five Pillars (Robinson: 75-148)</td>
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<td>Weekly focus question #2: What is the core of Islamic tradition? In other words, what makes one a Muslim and how is it similar to and/or different with the practice of Christianity?</td>
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<td>Mon 7 Feb</td>
<td><em>Shar’iah</em> - A Guide to Muslim life (Robinson: 149-173)</td>
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<td>Wed 9 Feb</td>
<td>Small Group Discussion (SGD1) on Islam (focus questions 1 &amp; 2)</td>
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<td>Mon 14 Feb</td>
<td>Defining Inter-religious Dialogue (Michel: Forward, &amp; 1-6; A Common Word, online)</td>
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<td>Wed 16 Feb</td>
<td>The Need for Dialogue (Ayoub: pp. 1-16; Nostra Aetate: online)</td>
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<td>Weekly focus question #3: What two attitudes do you think are most important in interfaith dialogue? Why?</td>
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<td>Mon 21 Feb</td>
<td>Christian and Islamic Perspectives on Dialogue (Michel: 9-28; Ayoub: 17-41)</td>
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<td>Wed 23 Feb</td>
<td>Approaches to Dialogue (Michel: 29-49; Ayoub: 64-69)</td>
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<td>Weekly focus question #4: What are some of the central texts in Islam and Christianity that appear to mandate interfaith interaction/dialogue? Give concrete examples.</td>
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<td>Mon, 28 Feb:</td>
<td><strong>Midterm</strong> (<em>covering the materials read thus far</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 2 Mar</td>
<td>Small Group Discussion (SGD2) on interfaith dialogue (focus questions 3 &amp; 4)</td>
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Mon 7 Mar  Beginnings of Formal Dialogues (*Meeting in Faith*: 1-29; *Hinze*: 1-19)
Wed 9 Mar  Unity of God (*Meeting in Faith*: 49-57)
**Weekly focus question #5:** Describe three important things you observed while reading the accounts of early formal dialogues.

**March 13-20  -Spring Break – NO CLASSES**

Mon 21 Mar  Holiness in Islam and Christianity (*Michel*: 174-192; *Ayoub*: 73-79)
Wed 23 Mar  Martyrdom, Redemption, and Forgiveness (*Michel*: 108-119; *Ayoub*: 80-97)
**Weekly focus question #6:** Where do you see major differences between Christianity and Islam in respect to the themes discussed in these readings? Also note some similarities.

Mon 28 Mar  Hagar (*Michel*: 82-89)
Wed 30 Mar  Small Group Discussion (SGD3) on holiness and redemption (focus questions 5 & 6)
**Weekly focus question #7:** What roles can Hagar and Sarah play in the lives of Muslims and Christians today?

Mon 4 Apr  Guest Lecture by Dr. John Schmitt, “Catholic Views of Islam”
Wed 6 Apr  Christ and Muhammad (*Ayoub*: 111-116; 156-183; *Kerr*: 426-446)
**Weekly focus question #8:** Which of the Christian theologians in Kerr’s essay do you agree with and why?

Mon 11 Apr  Violence and Nonviolence (*Michel*: 149-166; Rashied Omar: online essay)
Wed 13 Apr  Small Group Discussion (SGD4) on women and role of prophets (focus ques. 7 & 8)
--Book Report draft due (no electronic submissions please)

Mon 18 Apr  Liberation and Ecology (*Michel*: 69-81; 167-173)
Wed 20 Apr  Christian Mission and Islamic *Da’wah* (*Meeting in Faith*: 73-86)
**Weekly focus question #9:** What are two most critical problems facing humanity according to Michel and how might they bring Christians and Muslims into a dialogue of action?

**April 21-25  -Easter Break – NO CLASSES**

Wed 27 Apr  Dialogue of Life and Ethical Issues (*Meeting in Faith*: 104-181)
Mon 2 May  Qur’an on Christianity and John Paul II on Islam (*Ayoub*: 187-211; 232-246)
**Weekly focus question #10:** What relevance do you see for the issues discussed in these readings for the present? Reflect on if they affect you personally, and if so, how?

Wed 4 May  Book Report project/Course Review
--Final Book Report due in class

*Save this syllabus for future reference*

*If you have a documented learning disability, you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations or services. To learn more, contact the instructor during office hours*