HIS 869 Church History Seminar: History of Christian-Muslim Relations
Winter 2020

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Course Dates: Feb. 24-28, 2020

3 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.

COURSE INTEGRATION

As an Evangelical institution that prepares its students to engage the world, Briercrest Seminary seeks to develop an appreciation for the development of Christian-Muslim relations throughout history and in the modern period. This course examines the interplay of religion, culture, history, and individual personalities in the complex dynamic of Christian-Muslim interaction, in order to analyze these relationships from the vantage point of twenty-first century academic research with the view to recognizing its relevance in current contexts. Exploring the participation of Christians in a variety of models of interacting with Muslims will assist the student in being a witness of Christ Jesus in the Muslim community and in providing leadership for subsequent generations of Christians in developing healthy relationships with Muslims.

COURSE TEXTS


Students are expected to refer to Briercrest Seminary’s Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research Papers, available as PDF documents here: https://www.mybriercrest.ca/seminary/documents/.

These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: http://briercrest.ca/bookstore.

Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (https://briercrest.instructure.com; cf. http://briercrest.ca/online/canvas) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

COURSE OUTCOMES

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 Christian understandings of Muhammad and the Qur'an, and the history of Muslim understandings of Jesus Christ and the Bible. As a way of specifically measuring your progress I want you to be able to:

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

COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

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.

- Introducing Christian-Muslim Relations
- Christianity in Arabia and surrounding regions before Islam
- Earliest records of Arab invasions
- Christians and Christianity in the Qur’an
- Stories of Muhammad’s encounters with Christians
- Christian experience of Arab government
- Theological dialogue under Muslim rule
- Impact of the Crusades and Mongol invasions
- Christian-Muslim encounters in medieval Europe
• 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

ASSIGNMENTS

Pre-Course Assignments:

1) Primary Source Readings (10%) – due February 24, at 9:00 a.m.
Read the selections from Charles Tieszen’s book, A Textual History of Christian-Muslim Relations and the other primary sources as listed in the Appendix (total about 300 pages). Selections from primary sources not in the Tieszen text are located in the “Files” section for this course on Canvas. These selections will be the basis of the student-led discussions in class. On the first day of class, indicate what percentage of the readings you have completed.

2) Book Review (20%) – due February 24, at 9:00 a.m. submitted to Canvas
Read and write a review of Martin Accad’s book, Sacred Misinterpretation (about 350 pages). An academic review or critique consists of three parts: 1) a summary of the book’s contents, 2) an analysis of the author’s objectives, and 3) an evaluation of the book’s strengths and weaknesses. These three sections should be relatively equal in length.

In your analysis, discover what the author declares as his intention in the Preface and Introduction, and assess how well he achieves those objectives. In evaluating the book’s other strengths and weaknesses, include a discussion of how the author has handled historical sources—does he use primary sources whenever possible? Has he used a wide range of scholarly secondary sources?

The review should be 7 pages, double-spaced, with bibliographic details of the book on the first page.

3) Book Review (15%) – due February 24, at 9:00 a.m. submitted to Canvas
Read and write a review of John Tolan’s book, Faces of Muhammad (about 260 pages). Follow the pattern used with Accad’s book.

Mid-Course Assignments:

Class Presentation (15%)
Prepare a 30-minute class presentation and discussion on a primary source reading selected from the list below. For the first 15 minutes, present the historical context of the author and the reading selection. For the last 15 minutes lead the class in discussing the themes found in the reading and their importance for the history of Christian-Muslim relations.
The written submission will consist of the presentation of the historical context and the list of questions you have prepared to stimulate class discussion, along with a bibliography of 3-4 sources you have used in your research.

The selection of topics will be first-come-first-served. To avoid duplication, you should contact me with your choice as soon as possible. I will then post which readings are taken and which are still available.

**List of topics**
The readings for each topic are given in the Appendix. Where a topic has selections from multiple authors, choose only one author on which to focus.

- Early Christian responses to Islam
- Christianity in the language of Islam
- Refuting Christianity and defending Islam
- Muslim critiques of Christianity in al-Andalus
- A Catholic defense of Christianity
- The Crusades
- After the Mongol Invasions
- After the Ottoman capture of Constantinople in 1453
- Protestant Reformers
- The Gospel of Barnabas
- Christian-Muslim debates in Delhi in 1854
- Missionary work among the Arabs
- Modernist Muslim's interpretation of the Bible
- Muslim response to Christian missionaries
- Muslim theology of witness
- Evangelical Christian missiology
- A Muslim initiative at dialogue
- Muslim diaspora in Europe
- Theological reflections on the name of God / Allah

**Post-Course Assignments:**

4) **Course Review Essays (15%)** – due Saturday, March 7, 2020 submitted to Canvas
   A review of the course will consist of three essays 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. You are welcome to use your class notes, textbooks or any other source. Additional details will be given in class.

5) **Research Paper (25%)** – due Friday, April 24, 2020 submitted to Canvas
   Write a 16-page research paper on any aspect of Christianity's encounter with Islam, provided it is approached primarily from a historical perspective. See me some time shortly after the end of the course to have your topic approved, or to receive suggestions for a topic if you have difficulty finding one. Your subject should be concise enough to be examined in detail, and you should aim to be analytic and evaluative rather than merely descriptive.
This assignment should draw upon at least ten sources, both primary and secondary sources including journal articles. Internet sources should be limited to no more than two. This limitation does not apply to books or journal articles accessed online. Wikipedia should be consulted but not be cited as a source. Your paper must contain an outline and a thesis statement that is clearly stated and defended and must be formally written in accordance with the Chicago-Style Format Guide. Citations should be in footnote or endnote style, correctly formatted.

Alternate assignment: Instead of writing a research paper, you may choose to contribute an entry to \textit{Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History}. Five volumes of this series are available as e-books in our library. If this interests you, come see me for a list of possible authors for which entries are needed.

\section*{SEMINARY CALENDAR}

Students are expected to be aware of the policies that govern course work at Briercrest Seminary, all of which are published in the current Seminary Calendar: https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/academics/calendar/.

\textbf{Attendance Policy}

Students are expected to attend 100\% of each modular for which they register. If this is impossible due to extenuating circumstances, arrangements must be made with the course professor before the first day of class. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending class, a maximum of one full day of class can be foregone. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

\textbf{Course Schedules}

Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning and run a minimum of 30 hours through the course of the week. The schedule is determined by the course professor. Students should check the syllabus for specifics. When the syllabus does not state class times, students are responsible to check with the professor prior to making travel plans.

\textbf{Assignment Submission}

All assignments must be submitted no later than eight weeks after the last day of class as stated in the syllabus. The correct due dates will be clearly noted in the syllabus and each faculty member will state in their syllabus how assignments should be submitted. Assignments submitted within a week after the due date will be accepted with a 10 per cent penalty. For additional information refer to the late assignment policy or the extension policy in the academic calendar.

\textbf{Return of Graded Assignments}

Professors are expected to return graded assignments within six weeks of the due date. If they fail to do so, students may submit an inquiry to the Seminary. If an extension is granted, the professor is no longer obligated to meet this deadline.
Academic Honesty
Students are accountable to perform each task according to principles of academic honesty. Please refer to pages 24-25 in the academic calendar for more information.

Academic Accommodations
Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should discuss them with the course instructor after contacting the Director of the Academic Resource Centre in person (L234 in the Library), by telephone (1-306-756-3230) or by email (academicresourcecentre@briercrest.ca). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

General surveys


Christianity in Arabia and the surrounding regions before Islam


**Muhammad and Christians**


**Christian experience of the early Arab conquests**


**Dialogue and Theological Confrontation**


**Confrontations in Spain and North Africa**


**Confrontations in the Byzantine Empire**


**Crusades**


**Medieval and early modern encounters**


Protestant missionary efforts in the 19th century – India and Southeast Asia


Chiragh Ali. *A Critical Exposition of the Popular “jihád” showing that all the Wars of Mohammad were Defensive; and that aggressive War, or compulsory Conversion is not allowed in the Koran*. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co., 1885. Reprint, New Delhi: Global Media, 2003.


Protestant missionary efforts in the 19th – 20th century – Ottoman empire and Africa


**Debate and Dialogue in the 20th century**


**Clash of Civilizations?**


### Into the 21st century


### Christian perceptions of Islam


**Christian Ministry to Muslims**


**Muslim perceptions of Christianity**


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-Warraqa - 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

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: 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 [on Canvas]

10. Gospel of Barnabas
    -READ: Gospel of Barnabas, introduction, chapters 43-44, 211-222 [on Canvas].

11. Christian-Muslim debates in Delhi, 1854

12. Missionary work among the Arabs

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 [on Canvas].

14. Muslim response to Christian missionaries

15. Muslim theology of witness

16. Evangelical Christian missiology

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 [on Canvas].

18. The Muslim diaspora in Europe

19. Theological reflections on the name of God / Allah