

BRIERCREST

HIS 869 Church History Seminar: History of Christian-Muslim Relations Winter 2024

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Course Dates: February 19-23, 2024

Course Delivery Method: In-Person Modular

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

Accad, Martin. *Sacred Misinterpretation: Reaching across the Christian-Muslim Divide*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019.

Thomas, David, ed. *Routledge Handbook on Christian-Muslim Relations*. London: Routledge, 2019.

Tieszen, Charles. *A Textual History of Christian-Muslim Relations: Seventh-Fifteenth Centuries*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015.

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>) 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

Please submit all written assignments to Canvas.

Pre-course Assignments

1) Primary Source Readings (10%) – due February 19, 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 19, at 9:00 a.m. submitted on 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) Essay (20%) – due February 19, at 9:00 a.m. submitted on Canvas

Read the following chapters in the *Routledge Handbook on Christian-Muslim Relations*, edited by David Thomas: 8a, 8b, 9, 10, 13, 14, 23-27, 36-45 (about 200 pages). Write a 7-page essay contrasting the relations between Christians and Muslims in society today with their relations in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period. What are key aspects that have remained the same, particularly in theological disputes? How did Western imperialism and increased immigration change the relationship between Christians and Muslims? What do you see as positive efforts at maintaining peaceful relations between the two? Do Evangelicals have a responsibility to move beyond "peaceful relations" to also bear a faithful witness to Muslims? If so, what would be some of the best ways to do so?

Mid-Course Assignments:**4) 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. For the historical research portion, you will need to do additional research. In addition to your textbooks, another excellent resource is the volumes of *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, edited by David Thomas.

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:**5) Course Review Essays (15%) – due Saturday, March 1, submitted on 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.

6) Research Paper (20%) – due Friday, April 19, submitted on 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 may be consulted but should 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.

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/>.

Attendance Policy

In order to benefit fully from a seminary education, to be good stewards of time and finances, and to be considerate of their classmates and faculty members, students must be in class at every opportunity.

Modular Courses

Students are expected to attend 100 per cent 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 (1) 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.

Online Courses

If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending scheduled meeting times, then up to 20% of meeting time can be foregone. Students missing scheduled meeting times should make every effort to inform the course professor prior to any time missed. 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.

Semester-Based Courses

All students missing more than two full weeks of a particular course from registration to the last day of classes will receive an automatic fail (0%). A student may appeal a course failure due to excessive

absences. Successful appeals will be granted only in rare cases where all absences are clearly beyond the student's control. Appeals must be made through the Academic Appeal Process.

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.

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](#).

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

As members of the Briercrest learning community, students have a responsibility to conduct themselves with integrity and honour. Students who cheat on exams, plagiarize, inappropriately collaborate, or use generative AI (e.g., ChatGPT) without instructor authorization in the preparation and/or submission of their assignments violate the trust placed in them by their instructors, fellow students, and the seminary. Any such actions constitute a breach of academic honesty and will result in serious consequences, such as failure of an assignment, failure of a course, or expulsion from the seminary.

Plagiarism, whether intentional or involuntary, is the submission of the work of others, published or unpublished, in whole or in part without acknowledgment or proper documentation. All information, ideas and/or direct quotations taken from other primary or secondary sources must be documented appropriately. Students are responsible to ensure they are using their sources with transparency and honesty. For more details, consult the [Seminary Calendar](#). In addition to being familiar with these pages, instructors assume that you have completed the Briercrest Academic Integrity course on [Canvas](#) and understand the information contained in it.

Academic Accommodations

Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition (mental or physical) who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should contact the ARC Coordinator in person (L234 in the Library), by phone (1-306-801-6159), or by email (arc@briercrest.ca). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.). It is recommended that students meet with their professors to discuss the requirements of their accommodations (i.e., how the student will receive lecture notes, or how the professor wants to receive extension requests).

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-Warraq - 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
 - READ: William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds done beyond the Sea*, trans. Emily Atwater Babcock. Volume 1 (Columbia University Press, 1943), 366-374 [on Canvas].
 - READ: Ibn al-Athir, *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period*, Part 2, trans. D. S. Richards (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 322-324, 330-335 [on Canvas].
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: Henrich, Sarah, and James L. Boyce. "Martin Luther—Translations of Two Prefaces on Islam: Preface to the *Libellus de ritu et moribus Turcorum* (1530), and Preface to Bibliander's Edition of the Qur'an (1543)." *Word & World* 16, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 262-266 [on Canvas]; the entire article is available at http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/issues.aspx?article_id=456.
 - 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
 - READ: Pfander, C. G., *The Mizan-ul-Haqq (Balance of Truth)*, revised by W. St. Clair Tisdall (London: Religious Tract Society, 1910), 106-125 [on Canvas].

12. Missionary work among the Arabs
-READ: Samuel Zwemer, *The Disintegration of Islam* (London: Fleming H. Revell, 1916), 7-10, 171-178 [on Canvas].
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
-READ: Wood, Simon A., *Christian Criticisms, Islamic Proofs: Rashīd Riḍā's Modernist Defense of Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2008), 139-144 [on Canvas].
15. Muslim theology of witness
-READ: Isma'il al-Faruqi, "On the Nature of Islamic Da'wah," in *Christian Mission and Islamic Da'wah: Proceedings of the Chambésy Dialogue Consultation* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1982), 33-44 [on Canvas].
16. Evangelical Christian missiology
-READ: Phil Parshall, *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism: Evangelical Approaches to Contextualization*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980, pp. 157-180 [on Canvas].
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
-READ: Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 62-77, 208-213 [on Canvas].
19. Theological reflections on the name of God / Allah
-READ: Miroslav Volf, *Allah: A Christian Response* (New York: HarperOne, 2011), 79-94 [on Canvas].

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