

RE: Resubmission of GE Application for designation in “Foundations of Society and Culture Areas”

To the GE Committee:

I’m writing to resubmit my course materials for “ISL M20/REL M20-Introduction to Islam” for designation as a GE course which fulfills requirements for the following Foundations of Society and Culture areas: Historical Analysis and Social Analysis.

I received the following feedback from the committee after their review of the course material for designation in these categories last year. (I would like to add here that due to some administrative turn over in different departments, the feedback was not conveyed to me until a few weeks ago. I am therefore taking this opportunity to resubmit the GE application with the clarification sought by the committee.):

The committee was impressed by the course and sees it as a better fit into either Social or Historical Analysis than Literary Cultural or Philosophical Linguistic Analysis. However, the use of primary sources for Historical Analysis was unclear. The committee felt the course was missing a clear explanation of an introduction to historical or social methodologies.

Clarification:

The “Introduction to Islam” course is thematically organized such that I cover nine main topics over the course of the quarter. These include “Late Antiquity and Pre-Islamic Arabia,” “Prophet Muhammad and his Legacy,” “The Qur’an,” “Sufism,” and “Islamic legal interpretation,” among others. In reviewing each one of these topics, I follow the following schema:

- a) An overview which covers the history of the topic from understandings/trajectories in early Islam up to the modern period
- b) An exploration of contemporary approaches to the topic and how it figures in confessional and non-confessional discourses
- c) An analysis of one or more primary source(s) relevant to the selected topic and one or more academic research articles.

I describe in greater detail below my unit on “Prophet Muhammad and his Legacy” to show how my course material engages both historical and sociological methods and analyses.

My main objectives in teaching about Muhammad and his legacy are to a) review the biography of Muhammad, b) review historical source criticism especially as it concerns orality and writing in early Islamic Arabia and the reliability of our historical sources, c) analyze how Muslim communities across the centuries have shaped and re-shaped Muhammad’s legacy and how this legacy is re-invented according to diverse historical and social exigencies d) analyze

selected Western representations of Muhammad (in recent years, I've focused on Washington Irving's 19th century biography *Mahomet* as well as the more recent Danish Cartoon controversy).

In order to realize the first two objectives (which entail historical literacy and analysis), I ask students to read the following primary sources: Qur'anic verses on the Prophet; an excerpt from Ibn Ishaq's biography of Prophet Muhammad which deals with a well-known text that has come to be called, "The Constitution of Medina," as well as excerpts about Muhammad's wives and life in Medina as represented in a tenth century biographical collection by the scholar Ibn Sa'd. In my lecture, I review how scripture (namely the Quran) can be judiciously used as a historical source and how his biography is constructed from a variety of historical sources. I review debates about the "historical Muhammad" and also go over strategies for reading the early Islamic texts (Arabic texts in translation). I require TAs to engage in more detailed discussion of these primary sources and also include questions on these sources in the midterm exam to assess how well students are understanding them.

The second two objectives, which entail social and sociological analysis, build on the first two. Drawing on the basic historical literacy about Muhammad's life and an understanding of the historical source material, students transition to considering how confessional communities across time and place remember the founder of their religion and the issues that arise with respect to representations of that memory. In lecture, I show them Arabic calligraphic descriptions of Muhammad (known as *hilya*) as a form of sacred portraiture and review how this art form became a creative medium for Muslims across the ages to reflect on the various qualities of Muhammad. Students are required to read about pictorial depictions of Muhammad in central Asia, a discovery which surprises many of them because of a popular misconception that Islamic doctrine prohibits such representations. Through lecture and section discussions, students are asked to engage with how and why the memory of Muhammad comes to acquire meaning in different localized contexts be it in Central Arabia or in Central Asia (for the Ilkhanid dynasty). I conclude this unit with a lecture and readings on Western depictions of Muhammad drawing on examples from medieval Europe as well as the United States in the twenty-first century. I review the historical contexts for these depictions and the sociological phenomena they represent with respect to encounters between communities of different faith traditions. My analyses of issues of memory and representation as well as of multi-faith relations draws on sociological methodology. Building on a historical understanding, students are asked to reflect on how social groups (i.e. localized communities across the Muslim world and in the West) create meaning from the legacy of Muhammad and how that memory-making is deeply embedded in sociological circumstances.

The following is a list of readings which I usually assign for this unit on Muhammad and his Legacy with the caveat that I change the selection of readings in different iterations of the course. The sources that are underlined are primary sources in translation (originally in Arabic).

Other secondary sources, such as Wijdan Ali's article, incorporate thorough analysis of primary sources:

"Introduction to Islam" course unit on Prophet Muhammad and his Legacy

1. Life of Muhammad

Readings

Jonathan Brown, *Muhammad: A Very Short Introduction*, Chapters 1-2.

"Muhammad in the Qur'an," Classical Islam, pp. 16-18.

Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad*, "Constitution of Medina," pp. 231-3.

2. Legacies of Prophet Muhammad in Muslim tradition and in Western Imagination and Culture

Readings

C. Enst, *Following Muhammad*, pp. 72-92.

J. Brown, *Muhammad: A Very Short Introduction*, Chapter 3

"Ibn Sa'd on Muhammad's Wives," pp. 30-35.

Wijdan Ali, "From the Literal to the Spiritual: Development of Prophet Muhammad's Portrayal from 13th Century Ilkhanid Miniatures to 17th Century Ottoman Art," *EJOS IV* (2001).

Website on Danish Cartoon Controversy (link on CCLE)

Recommended: Einboden, Jeffrey. "Washington Irving in Muslim Translation: Revising the American 'Mahomet.'" *Translation and Literature*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2009, pp. 43-62.

Through this overview of the schema of topics, objectives, and readings for one of the units of my course, I hope that I have exemplified how the course as a whole engages with both historical and social analysis. As I mentioned at the outset, each one of the topics I cover follows this scheme of historical and sociological analysis.

I am happy to provide further clarification as required by the committee.

General Education Course Information Sheet

Please submit this sheet for each proposed course

Department & Course Number _____
 Course Title _____
 Indicate if Seminar and/or Writing II course _____

1 Check the recommended GE foundation area(s) and subgroup(s) for this course

Foundations of the Arts and Humanities

- Literary and Cultural Analysis
- Philosophic and Linguistic Analysis
- Visual and Performance Arts Analysis and Practice

Foundations of Society and Culture

- Historical Analysis
- Social Analysis

Foundations of Scientific Inquiry

- Physical Science
With Laboratory or Demonstration Component must be 5 units (or more)
- Life Science
With Laboratory or Demonstration Component must be 5 units (or more)

2. Briefly describe the rationale for assignment to foundation area(s) and subgroup(s) chosen.

3. List faculty member(s) who will serve as instructor (give academic rank):

Do you intend to use graduate student instructors (TAs) in this course? Yes No

If yes, please indicate the number of TAs _____

4. Indicate when do you anticipate teaching this course over the next three years:

2018-19	Fall Enrollment		Winter Enrollment		Spring Enrollment	
2019-20	Fall Enrollment		Winter Enrollment		Spring Enrollment	
2020-21	Fall Enrollment		Winter Enrollment		Spring Enrollment	

5. GE Course Units

Is this an ***existing*** course that has been modified for inclusion in the new GE? Yes No

If yes, provide a brief explanation of what has changed.

Present Number of Units: _____

Proposed Number of Units: _____

6. Please present concise arguments for the GE principles applicable to this course.

General Knowledge

Integrative Learning

Ethical Implications

Cultural Diversity

Critical Thinking

Rhetorical Effectiveness

Problem-solving

Library & Information
Literacy

(A) STUDENT CONTACT PER WEEK (if not applicable write N/A)

- 1. Lecture: _____ (hours)
- 2. Discussion Section: _____ (hours)
- 3. Labs: _____ (hours)
- 4. Experiential (service learning, internships, other): _____ (hours)
- 5. Field Trips: _____ (hours)

(A) TOTAL Student Contact Per Week **(HOURS)**

(B) OUT-OF-CLASS HOURS PER WEEK (if not applicable write N/A)

- 1. General Review & Preparation: _____ (hours)
- 2. Reading _____ (hours)
- 3. Group Projects: _____ (hours)
- 4. Preparation for Quizzes & Exams: _____ (hours)
- 5. Information Literacy Exercises: _____ (hours)
- 6. Written Assignments: _____ (hours)
- 7. Research Activity: _____ (hours)

(B) TOTAL Out-of-class time per week **(HOURS)**

GRAND TOTAL (A) + (B) must equal at least 15 hours/week **(HOURS)**



COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Introduce students to the basic doctrines, scripture, rituals, and history of Islam.
- Familiarize students with reading and analyzing primary sources in translation.
- Examine a range of views on contemporary issues including women's rights, Qur'anic interpretation, Sufism, and Islamic law.
- Acquire background and analytical tools necessary to contextualize and understand Islam as it is presented in the public sphere.
- Develop stronger oral communication and writing skills

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING POLICY

Attendance and Participation: 20%

Participation grades will depend on the quality and regularity of a student's contributions to class discussions. You must show that you have done the readings to earn full points for class participation. Performance on pop quizzes will be factored into the participation grade.

Three Tests (in class): (20% each) 60% total. No final exam.

Final Paper: 20% (Assignment to be distributed separately). Due Wednesday, 12/12; submit on Turnitin.

Late papers will be downgraded one grade for each day they are late.

nb: The cutoff for A+ in this course is 99%. For all other grades, it is the default cutoff on Gradebook.

ELECTRONICS POLICY

This class is a "device-free zone." Students should take notes on paper rather than on their laptops or other electronic devices. Please turn off your cell phones and electronic devices for the duration of class. Infractions of this policy will negatively affect your grade. [The article, "Laptops are Great. But Not During a Lecture or Meeting,"](#) (NYTimes) sums up my rationale. Students with a valid excuse should see me for an exemption.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Carl Ernst, *Following Muhammad Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World*.

Jonathan Brown, *Muhammad: A Very Short Introduction*.

All other course material posted on CCLE website.

Recommended (you may purchase copies online.): Ira Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (ISBN 978-0521779333). [This is an excellent reference source for the entire course.]

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Students are required to attend all lectures and sections and to participate regularly in class discussions. There will be an attendance sheet to record your physical presence in discussion section. Lateness, absences, and leaving class early will negatively affect your grade. Students are entitled to one excused absence from section. Additional absences for any reason will negatively affect your grade. The class will be most successful if all students participate freely and fully in class discussions. It is expected that all students will come to class having done the readings and be fully prepared to engage. Weekly discussion questions on the readings will be posted. You are expected to take notes on these discussion questions and be prepared to answer them in lecture and your discussion sections. Keep in mind that all the different components of the course are important, and the tests draw on both the readings and the lectures.

IN-CLASS TESTS (See syllabus for dates)

The tests will assess your understanding of key terms and concepts as well as your ability to synthesize and analyze material presented in class lectures and readings. You are expected to be present for all tests and to arrange your work, personal commitments, and travel schedules accordingly. There will be no make up tests given except in cases of documented emergencies. If you miss a test, you will get a failing grade for that test.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

All students are expected to abide by the academic integrity and honesty policies of the UCLA community. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, multiple submissions, and facilitating academic misconduct. If you are unsure of how to interpret the policy, please see me or seek guidance from the office of the Dean of Students (<http://www.studentgroups.ucla.edu/dos/students/conduct/>). See also, the UCLA Student Conduct Code:

<http://www.studentgroups.ucla.edu/dos/assets/documents/scc12.pdf>

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be immediately referred to the Dean of Students office.

***I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus. Changes will be posted to the CCLE site.**

I. Introduction

1. 9/27—Introduction to course
2. 10/2—Carl Ernst, *Following Muhammad*, Preface and pp. 1-69.

II. Pre-Islamic Arabia

3. 10/4—Ira Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies*, 3-17.
 Alan Jones, *Early Arabic Poetry*, (Volume 1), pp. 1-4.
 Charles Lyall, *Translations of Ancient Arabian Poetry*, (selections).

III. Prophet Muhammad and his Legacy

4. 10/9—Life of Muhammad

Jonathan Brown, *Muhammad: A Very Short Introduction*, Chapters 1-2.

“Muhammad in the Qur’an,” *Classical Islam*, pp. 16-18.

Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad*, “Constitution of Medina,” pp. 231-3.

5. 10/11—Legacies of Prophet Muhammad in Muslim tradition and in Western Imagination and Culture

C. Enst, *Following Muhammad*, pp. 72-92.

J. Brown, *Muhammad: A Very Short Introduction*, Chapter 3

“Ibn Sa’d on Muhammad’s Wives,” pp. 30-35.

Wijdan Ali, “From the Literal to the Spiritual: Development of Prophet Muhammad’s Portrayal from 13th Century Ilkhanid Miniatures to 17th Century Ottoman Art,” *EJOS IV* (2001).

Website on Danish Cartoon Controversy

IV. The Qur’an

6. 10/16— The Quran in the Lifetime of Muhammad and Early Muslims

C. Ernst, *Following Muhammad*, pp. 93-105.

I. Mattson, “How to Read the Quran” in *Study Quran*, pp. 1588-1600.

ADDITIONAL READINGS ON CCLE

7. 10/18— *Tafsir* (Interpretation) as Mediator of Qur’anic Text

Farid Esack, *The Qur’an*, “Understanding and Interpreting the Qur’an,” 121-45.

al-Qurtubi on the Interpretation of the Quran, in *Classical Islam*, pp. 97-102.

Amina Wadud, *Qur’an and Women*, pp 1-14 (1st edition) and preface to 2nd ed.

V. Basic Practices and Central Doctrines

8. 10/23— F. Denny, *Introduction to Islam*, “Basic Beliefs and Practices” pp. 107-37.

Malik on *zakat*, pp. 36-38.

“One American’s Pilgrimage to Mecca.”

Online Zakat calculator (http://www.islamicity.com/mosque/Zakat/Zakat_calculator.shtml).

C. Ernst, pp 108-127.

9. 10/25— TEST 1

VI. Islamic History: [Chronological overview: Caliphate, Empire, Dynasties, Colonialism, Nation-states]

10. 10/30— Richard Martin, *Islamic Studies*, pp. 22-38.

S.H. Nasr, “A Brief Journey through Islamic History,” in *Islam*, pp. 115-52.

Familiarize yourselves with maps and timelines for Islamic History:

http://www.edmaps.com/html/islamic_world.html

C. Ernst 127-141.

VII. Shi'ism

11. 11/1— Shi'ism-Historical Overview

Roy Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*, pp. 7-17.

J. Cole & N. Keddie (eds.) "Introduction" in *Shi'ism and Social Protest*, pp. 1-29.

I. Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies*, pp. 96-7.

ADDITIONAL READINGS ON CCLE

12. 11/6— Shi'ism-The Islamic Republic of Iran

Selections from *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought*, pp. 155-80.

ADDITIONAL READINGS ON CCLE

VIII. Islamic Law and Legal Interpretation13. 11/8— Khaled Abou El Fadl, "Shari'ah" in *Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics*, 7-26.

Classical Islam, Ibn Hazm on dispute and variation in Islamic law, pp. 202-6.

14. 11/13— M.K. Masud et al, *Islamic Legal Interpretation*, pp. 1-32.

ADDITIONAL READINGS ON CCLE

15. 11/15— TEST 2

IX. Women

16. 11/20— Ernst, 142-51.

Azizah Y Al-Hibri, "Introduction to Muslim Women's Rights," in *Windows of Faith*, pp. 51-71.

Sa'diyyah Shaikh, "Transforming Feminisms: Islam, Women, and Gender Justice," in Omid Safi, ed. *Progressive Muslims*, pp. 147-62.

17. 11/27— Legal Reform in Contemporary Muslim Societies

Readings TBA

X. Sufism

18. 11/29— Ernst, 163-82.

Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 156-82.

Classical Islam, Al-Ghazali on the path of the Sufis, pp. 228-32.

Rumi, *Mathnavi*, (selections).

19. 12/4— Sufism part 2 and Conclusions

Ernst, 200-213.

20. 12/6— TEST 3