This course explores different modern approaches to the historiography of the origins of the Islamic religion and the biography of its founding personality, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib al-Hāshimī. Key themes explored include pre-Islamic Arabia and its religions, the Qurʾān and its textual history, and the construction of traditional biographical accounts of Muḥammad in the ḥadīth- and sīra-literature. [All readings are in English translation. No prior background in the subject is required.]

INSTRUCTOR  SEAN ANTHONY
Office: 309 McKenzie Hall
Office Hours: Tues, 9-11, 1-3pm; or by appointment
Email: swanthon@uoregon.edu

Course Website. Please consult the course website regularly for announcements. The website is accessible via UofO's Blackboard system (see http://blackboard.uoregon.edu). The site contains general course information, reading assignments, research guides, lecture handouts, study questions for discussion, paper assignments, visual images, links to other sites, etc.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Texts for purchase (available at the Duck Store or Copy Center):
Tarif Khalidi, tr., The Qurʾān (New York: Penguin, 2009)
NOTE: You are free to use any translation of the Qurʾān you desire or, even better, multiple translations. I personally favor Khalidi’s translation because I find its English the readable and his translations to mostly be a faithful, approximate representation of how the Qurʾān has been traditionally understood. To facilitate following and participating in class discussions and in-class readings, I recommend having a copy of this translation at hand.

NOTE: This is a pre-published version of my book, a copy of which you can pick up at the Copy Center only.

Readings, Assignments, and Class Participation: Please consult this syllabus frequently throughout the quarter. It will serve as your guide for the readings and assignments necessary for you to participate in and
benefit from class time to maximum extent possible. As is necessary, I will continue to update the content of the syllabus as needed, particularly the class schedule, as the quarter progresses.

**Readings.**
Much of the basic work you will be doing outside of class will focus on your readings. For most days, there are two types of readings present on the syllabus: primary source readings and supplemental readings. It is particularly important in this class to focus on the primary source readings—when you come to class at the beginning of the week, I expect that you will have read and taken notes for in-class discussion and questions on these assigned texts. Before each session, you must email to islamic.history.papers@gmail.com at least 3 questions about the primary source reading assignment.

These texts will most be from either the Qurʾān or early traditions about the life of Muḥammad and his companions (ḥadīth, sīra, etc.). If you find yourself particularly pressed for time, I much prefer you complete these readings prior to any others assigned for class. The second type of assigned readings, the supplemental readings, are provided in order to give you insight into how class discussion will be framed and to aid you in understanding the contexts of the primary source texts.

**Assignments and Tests.**
The bulk of your grade for this course will be evaluated based on two assignments: a term paper on a topic of your choice (see the handout 'Paper Prompts') due February 26 and a critical review essay comparing and contrasting Brown’s and Cook’s biographies of Muḥammad due during exam week that doubles as your final. Before both of these grades, you will be given a mid-term after we finish our component on the Qurʾān testing your proficiency in the basics of Muḥammad’s life and message and their Arabian context. All written work will serve as your attempt to express your own ideas in a medium-length essay (5 to 7 pages in length, 1.5 spaced, standard font such as Times New Roman or Garamond) on an assigned topic. These topics will require you to draw extensively upon the assigned readings and the ideas discussed in class and will be scrutinized and evaluated on the basis of the criteria of academic writing. Suggested topics can for your term paper can be found at the course website under the ‘assignments’ tab and should be emailed to islamic.history.papers@gmail.com as a Word file by 5:00pm Pacific Standard Time on the due date.

Developing and mastering the ability to write critically and to engage historical events and persons with critical acumen is a difficult, but worthwhile, task. Even if you never revisit the topic of this course again, the skills you acquire in writing and improving your essays will serve you well for the rest of your life. I therefore beseech you to take time to write your essays well. Further instructions on class paper assignments can be found on the assignment handouts.

**Class Participation.**
“80% of success is showing up.”
-Woody Allen

This class depends on you to function fully. If you do not participate in class discussions, do not present assigned articles, and fail to communicate to me any indication that you’ve read the texts (it could be in the
form of insightful observations or cantankerous bewilderment), then I will be compelled to give you a lowgrade.

**Grading Scheme:**
- Class Participation .................. 10%
- Mid-Term ............................ 25%
- Term Paper .......................... 35%
- Final Essay-Exam ................... 30%

**Other class policies**

*Computers, cellphones, etc.* Please, no texting, no email checking, no laptop/ipad/netbook usage in class. All of the readings you'll need for class will be available in your course packet, and I'd much prefer you interact with your classmates and me rather than a machine.

*Academic Honesty.* All of the regular rules of the university apply. If you are unfamiliar with these, please do consult the Student Conduct and Community Standards at the Office of Student Life:

http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/tabid/68/Default.aspx

All the work and ideas that you hand in must be your own, and my policy towards plagiarism is one of absolute zero tolerance. If you are unsure of what plagiarism is, an excellent guide exists here at UO:

http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/

*Attendance.* This class is taught for your sake and your peers' sake, so for Pete's sake, please attend class! The quality of your classroom experience and those of your classmates depends on your commitment. **Your grade will suffer if you do not attend, guaranteed.**

**Reference Works**

A selection of basic reference dealing with Islamic history and civilization be found at the Knight Library and accessed via the library's online resources. Below is a list of the most authoritative and useful:

- *Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd edition*; the gold standard of Islamic studies and abbreviated as *EI*. It is easily accessed online at: http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.libproxy.uoregon.edu/
- *Encyclopaedia of Islam THREE*; the third edition of *EI* is underway but still in its infancy, most including articles falling under the letter 'A'.
- *JSTOR*: useful for essentially any class you'll take here at Oregon, by logging into jstor.org via Oregon's proxy server and/or at the library, you have access to a wealth of scholarly articles on Islamic history and civilization. If you're looking for a place to find sources on the Internet, this should be one of your first stops (Wikipedia, while useful in some respects, tends to be VERY unreliable and/or ideological for early Islamic history).

On the course website I have also provided two introductory guides on the conventions of Islamic history that you will likely find essential;
• Arabic Names: A primer for beginners (or, why is everyone called ‘Abu So-and-so’ and ‘Ibn So-and-so’)
• Transliteration in Islamic Studies (a guide to the arcane science of deciphering the different methods used by scholars for writing Arabic, Persian and Turkish in the Latin alphabet)

CLASS SCHEDULE – FALL 2011

Part I: Framing the Study of Islamic Origins

Week 1
Mon Jan 06  Course Introduction Early Islam and the Historical Critical Method (or, History-Making vs. the Making of History)

Wed Jan 08  Debates over the ‘Historical’ Muḥammad and Contemporary Society
WATCH:
Fred M. Donner, “How Islam Began.” (accessible online: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RFK5uçfkhA)
READING:
Patricia Crone, “What do we actually know about Muḥammad?” (accessible online: http://www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe_islam/mohammed_3866.jsp)
Cook, Muhammad, 5-24.
Further Readings:

Week 2
Mon Jan 13  Arabia and Arabs before Islam
READINGS:
Two Odes attributed to Labid and Imru’ al-Qays, trans. Susan Stekevych.
Christian J. Robin, “Arabia and Ethiopia,” OHLA

Wed Jan 15  Arabian Religion(s) before Islam: Paganism and Monotheism
READINGS:
Selections from Ibn al-Kalbi, The Book of Idols, trans. N.A. Faris
Example of Early Rhymed Prose (Saj’), tr. G. J. Gelder
Further Readings:


**Part II: The Message**

**Week 3**

**Mon Jan 20** What is the Qurʾān and how was it preserved?

**WATCH (BEFORE CLASS):**

Angelika Neuwrith, “The ‘Late Antique Qurʾān’: Jewish-Christian Liturgy, Hellenic Rhetoric, and Arabic Language.” (accessible online: [http://video.ias.edu/Late-antique-quran](http://video.ias.edu/Late-antique-quran))

**READINGS:**


**Further readings:**


**Wed Jan 22** Prophets, Messengers and Angels in the Qurʾān

**READINGS:**

Q. 53 (*Al-Najm*), Q. 7 (*Al-Aʿrāf*), Q. 26 (*Al-Shūʿārā*), and Q. 3 (*Āl ʿImrān*)

**Further readings**


**Week 4**

**Mon Jan 27** Qurʾānic Monotheism and Arabian Cult

**READINGS:**


**Wed Jan 29** Belief, Unbelief and Eternal Consequences: Apocalypse, Judgement Day and Eschatology

**READINGS:**


**Further readings:**

Week 5
Mon  Feb 03  The Qur’ānic Community of Faith
   READINGS:
   Q. 23 (AL-MU’MINŪN), Q. 60 (AL-MUMTAHINA), Q. 62 (AL-JUM’A)
   Further readings:

Wed  Feb 05  MID-TERM EXAM

Part II: The Messenger

Week 6
Mon  Feb 10  Ḥadīth, Sīra, and Maghāzī as Historical Sources
   READINGS:
   Further Reading:

Wed  Feb 12 Ḥadīth Criticism: ‘Traditional’ and ‘Western’
   READINGS:
   Further Readings:

Week 7
Mon  Feb 17  Birth and Youth
   READINGS:
   Q. 105 (AL-ФİL)
   Further Readings:
   U. Rubin, *Eye of the Beholder: The Life of Muhammad as Viewed by the Early Muslims*
(Princeton: Darwin, 1995), chs. 3-4

Wed  Feb 19  Revelation and Persecution

READINGS
Q. 73 (AL-MUZZAMMIL) and Q. 74 (AL-MUDDATHTHR)
Ma’mar b. Râshid, Maghāzi, 12-21.

Further Readings:

Week 8
Mon  Feb 24  Hijra and Jihâd

READINGS:
Q. 8 (AL-ANFÂL)
Ma’mar ibn Râshid, Expeditions

Further Readings:

Wed  Feb 26  Jews and Meccans

RESEARCH PAPER DUE

READINGS:
Umma Document (2 versions: #1, tr. F. M. Donner and #2, tr. M. Lecker)
Q. 59 (AL-HASHR), Q. 48 (AL-FATH)
Ma’mar ibn Râshid, Expeditions

Week 9
Mon  Mar 03  Death and Succession

READINGS:
Ma’mar ibn Râshid, Expeditions,

Wed  Mar 05  Chronology and Thematic Elements in the Sîra

READINGS:
Q. 12 (AL-YÛSUF)
Rubin, Eye of the Beholder, 189-216

Week 10

² http://www.jstor.org/stable/4057424
Mon Mar 10  Non-Muslim Sources

READINGS

BL Add. 14.461, tr. S. Anthony
Pseudo-Sebeos, tr. R. W. Thomson
Doctrine of Jacob the Recently Baptized
John bar Penkayë, Rēš Mellē, tr. Sebastian Brock


in The Biography Of Muhammad: The Issue Of Sources, ed. H. Motzki (Leiden: Brill
2001) 276-297.

Wed Mar 12  Review