Course Description

Studies Islam in its historical, religious, and political dimensions and assists in the understanding of its contemporary vitality and attraction as a faith, a culture and a way of life.

General Course Purpose

To introduce the student to the history, faith, beliefs, theology, and practices of Islam with an emphasis on diverse manifestations of Islamic culture in different ethnic and social contexts and provide overview of essential rituals of Islamic life, mystical practices of Sufis, certain popular forms of religious practice, sources and application of Islamic law, and distinctive Islamic artistic and literary forms.

Course Prerequisites/Co-requisites

None.

Course Objectives

At the completion of the course, the student will be able to examine the theology, history, and main social and legal institutions of Islam. Specifically, the student will be able to:

- Demonstrate a broad knowledge of the history of Islam
- Describe the basic doctrines of Islamic religion, distinguishing its internal diversities and summarizing its overall unifying elements
- Identify key characteristics of the Qur’an, the Prophet, and Islamic law
- Explain major elements of Islamic religious practice, rituals, sects, mysticism and popular traditions
- Describe the ethnic, geographical and linguistic spread of Muslims around the globe
- Discuss Islam as a grand world civilization, describing its contributions in the fields of art, architecture, and literature, as well as its role in the Scientific Revolution that culminated in Isaac Newton
- Synthesize the understanding of Islam in order to process, make sense of, and explain the realities of the twenty-first century world of Islam

Major Topics to be Included

Critical attention will be given to the following topics:

- Historical and cultural background for the development and expansion of Islam
- Theological aspects of Islam including the importance of the life of the Prophet Muhammad, the Qur’an, and the Five Pillars of Islam
- Centrality of law in the Islamic religious system
- Theological principles and ritual practices of Sunni and Shi’a Islam
- Islamic spiritual-mystical tradition known as Sufism
- Revival and reform in Islam
- Examination of Islam in the world today