

NOVA COLLEGE-WIDE COURSE CONTENT SUMMARY REL 233 – INTRODUCTION TO ISLAM (3 CR.)

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. Provides exposure to Muslim culture and religious practices through an experiential element. Lecture 3 hours. Total 3 hours per week.

General Course Purpose

REL 233 provides students the opportunity to learn the basics of Islamic beliefs and major practices, become familiar with the main sources of knowledge and laws, identify diversity within Islamic practice including Sunni and Shia, contextualize contemporary topics relating to Islam and Muslims including jihad, global political movements, gender, culture, and dress, and understand the history and culture of Muslims in a variety of global contexts

Course Prerequisites/Corequisites

None.

Course Objectives

Upon completing the course, the student will be able to:

- Communication
 - Describe the main tenets of Islamic faith including the 5 pillars of practice
 - Compare and contrast Islam within the Abrahamic traditions
- Critical Thinking
 - Reflect on how Islamic beliefs and practices are centered around the concept of Oneness of God (Tawheed)
 - Reflect critically on contemporary geopolitical events, including extremism, in the light of historical and textual analysis
- Cultural and Social Understanding
 - Describe the social and political dimensions of Islam
 - Explain the historical context of Islam and the role of Prophet Muhammad in religion and how his teachings are the secondary source of knowledge in Islam
 - Present a reflection on their engagement and experience with the Muslim community through a field trip to an available mosque, or interview with an available scholar or a Muslim person
- Global Perspective
 - Evaluate the contemporary vitality of Islam in today's world
 - Explain the relationship of recent world events and wars with world politics, and how Muslims are victimized and blamed
- Personal Development
 - Analyze the moral teachings of Islam related to peace, patience, gratitude, honesty, kindness, reaching out to the poor and needy, and living a responsible life
- Main Beliefs and Major Practices of Islam
 - Describe the concept of oneness of God (Tawheed) along with other major beliefs.
 - Recognize the 5 pillars of practice.
- Intro to the Qur'an
 - Explain the primary role of the Qur'an, its history, organization, structure, style, and contents, including its scientific knowledge.
- History of Islam and Prophet Muhammad's Life and Legacy
 - Explain the historical context of Islam and the role of Prophet Muhammad

- Recognize the role of the hadith and its place as secondary source of knowledge in Islam.
- Contextualize the history of major Muslim groups, including but not limited to Sunni, Shia, Salafi, and Sufi.
- Islamic Law and Shariah
 - Synthesize and describe Islamic Law and Shariah as a system of principles and values, code of conduct, and sacred laws that provide Muslims guidance in various aspects of life.
- Islam in Global Contexts
 - Examine Islam as articulated in a variety of geographic settings around the world.
- Islam in America
 - Describe the history of African-American Muslims and other Muslims in America, their accomplishments, challenges, and issues.
 - Answer the question "What does it mean to be an American Muslim?"

Major Topics to be Included

- Main Beliefs and Major Practices of Islam
- Intro to the Qur'an
- History of Islam and Prophet Muhammad's Life and Legacy
- Islamic Law and Shariah
- Islam in Global Contexts
- Islam in America