



Religious Studies (RELS) 206

The Islamic Tradition (Revision 4)

Status: Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#) for the current revision ❌

Delivery mode: [Individualized study online](#). Delivered via Brightspace.

Credits: 3

Areas of study: Arts or Humanities

Prerequisite: None

Precluded: None

Challenge: RELS 206 is not available for challenge.

Faculty: [Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences](#) 

Overview


RELS 206 has not been developed with the purpose of trying to defend or criticize Islam, nor is it meant to convince you of the validity of certain religious beliefs at the expense of others. The academic study of religion is in part about placing religious traditions in their proper socio-historical and economic contexts so we can better understand the growth and internal diversity of religious systems over a lengthy period of time. Doing so enables the individual to develop a real sensitivity to and understanding of the beliefs of religious practitioners without losing the analytical and critical methodology upon which the study of religion is built. The goal of *Religious Studies 206*, then, is to provide you with a strong, basic knowledge about Islam that will help you understand the historical, ritual, theological, and political manifestations of Islam and the diversity of voices and opinions within this religious tradition.

Outline

- Unit 1: A Brief History of Islam
- Unit 2: Pre-Islamic Arabia

- Unit 3: The Prophet Muhammad
- Unit 4: The Qur'ān
- Unit 5: The Five Pillars of Islam
- Unit 6: The Sunnah of the Prophet—The Prophet as Moral Exemplar
- Unit 7: The Sharī'ah
- Unit 8: Philosophy and Theology
- Unit 9: Shī'ism
- Unit 10: Sufism
- Unit 11: Islamic Responses to Modernity
- Unit 12: Women in Islam
- Unit 13: Islam in a Global and Post 9/11 World

Evaluation

Students must hand in all their assignments by the end of the stipulated contract date and complete the exam with a passing grade of **D (50 percent)**  or higher.

In order to pass the course, students must hand in their assignments, pass the exam, and achieve a composite grade of D (50 percent) or higher between the exam and the assignments.

Activity	Weight
Assignment 1	10%
Assignment 2	15%
Assignment 3	15%
Assignment 4	20%
Final Examination	40%
Total	100%

The **final examination** for this course must be requested in advance and written under the supervision of an AU-approved exam invigilator. Invigilators include either ProctorU or an approved in-person invigilation centre that can accommodate online exams. Students are responsible for payment of any invigilation fees. Information on exam request deadlines, invigilators, and other exam-related questions, can be found at the [Exams and grades](#) section of the Calendar.

Materials

Digital course materials

Links to the following course materials will be made available in the course:

Quinn, Anthony, Irene Pappas, Michael Ansara, and Johnny Sekka. *The Message: The Story of Islam*, (Online Video). Directed by Moustapha Akkad. Filmco International Productions, 1976.

Physical course materials





The following course materials are included in a course package that will be shipped to your home prior to your course's start date:

Ayoub, Mahmoud M. *Islam: Faith and History*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2004.

Other Materials

All other materials are available online through the course home page or the Digital Reading Room.

Important links

- › [Academic advising](#) 
- › [Program planning](#) 
- › [Request assistance](#) 
- › [Support services at AU](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery modes may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

Opened in Revision 4, March 10, 2025

Updated May 1, 2026

View **previous revision** 
