

NES 596Q  
Scott Lucas  
Fall 2008  
Office Hours Wed 1-3 p.m.

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## QUR'ANIC STUDIES

This graduate seminar examines the growing field of Qur'anic Studies. It provides an overview of the Qur'an and the classical tradition of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*) prior to the exploration of two broad genres of modern works: comprehensive commentaries, like Sayyid Qutb's *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, and thematic commentaries, like Fazlur Rahman's *Major Themes of the Qur'an* and Amina Wadud's *Qur'an and Woman*. Knowledge of Arabic is not a prerequisite for this course.

### Books for Purchase:

Asad, Muhammad. *The Message of the Qur'an*. Dar al-Andalus, 1980.  
Rahman, Fazlur. *Major Themes of the Qur'an*. Bibliotheca Islamica, 1989.  
Stowasser, Barbara. *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation*. Oxford, 1994.  
Taji-Farouki, Suha (ed.). *Modern Muslim Intellectuals and the Qur'an*. Oxford, 2004.

### Optional:

Wadud, Amina. *Qur'an and Woman*. Oneworld, 1999.

### REQUIREMENTS:

Students will write two assigned short paper (5 pages) and one seminar paper (22-30 pages) on a topic of their choice.

Paper topics and preliminary bibliography are due October 29.

Students will also be submitting 1-2 page summaries of assigned readings throughout the semester. These assignments will not be graded, but failure to submit three summaries by the end of the semester will seriously affect one's class participation grade.

GRADING: Short papers (30%), Seminar paper (60%); Class participation (10%)

Required Readings for all students are marked with (\*\*); check Electronic Reserve for select items.

### I. Introduction to the Qur'an and the Art of *Tafsir*

**Aug. 27: Overview of the seminar;** introduction to English translations/interpretations of the Qur'an; introduction to Muhammad Asad's *The Message of the Qur'an*;

<http://www.geocities.com/martinkramerorg/WeissAsad.htm>

A useful internet source: <http://www.altafsir.com/>

Qur'anic recitation; reference tools

**Sept. 3: Overview of the Qur'an (1):** Meccan Suras

\*\* *The Message of the Qur'an*, Suras al-Isra' (17), al-Anbiya' (21), Luqman (31), al-Shura (42), 'Abasa (80), Takwir (81), Zalzala through al-Nas (99-114)

**Sept. 10: Overview of the Qur'an (2):** Medinan Suras

\*\* *The Message of the Qur'an*, Suras Al 'Imran (3), al-Fath (48), al-Hujurat (49), al-Hadid (57), al-Mumtahana (60).

**Sept. 17: Classical Tafsir (1): An overview**

\*\* Ayoub, Mahmoud. *The Qur'an and its Interpreteters*, vol. I (1984), pp. 1-40  
Gatje, Helmut. *The Qur'an and its Exegeis* (1976), pp. 30-44; 130-71; 187-214.

Böwering, Gerhard. "The Light Verse: Qur'anic Text and Sufi Interpretation,"  
*Oriens*, 36 (2001): 113-44.

Calder, Norman. "Tafsir from Tabari to Ibn Kathir: problems in the description of a genre, illustrated with reference to the story of Abraham," in G.H. Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef, *Approaches to the Qur'an* (1993), pp. 101-41.

Saleh, Walid. *The formation of the classical tafsir tradition: the Qur'an commentary of al-Tha'labi* (d. 427/1035) (2004), pp. 1-25, 77-99, 205-221.

Wheeler, Brannon. *Prophets in the Quran: An Introduction to the Quran and Muslim Exegesis* (2002)

Decasa, George C. *The qur'anic concept of umma and its function in Philippine Muslim society* (1999).

\*\* "Tafsir," *EI2*

**SHORT PAPER #1 DUE**

**Sept. 24: Classical Tafsir (2): Women in the Qur'an**

\*\* Stowasser, Barbara. *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation* (1994).

**Oct. 1: Classical Tafsir (3): Tafsir al-Tabari** (translated by S. Lucas)

\*\* Surat Ya Sin (36) and Surat al-Rahman (55)

\*\* "al-Tabari," *EI2*

**Oct. 8: Western Scholarship on the Qur'an**

\*\* Lester, Toby. "What is the Koran?" *Atlantic Monthly*, 283.1 (Jan. 1999):43-65.

\*\* Motzki, Harald. "The Collection of the Qur'an: A Reconsideration of Western Views in Light of Recent Methodological Developments," *Der Islam*, 78 (2001): 1-34.

\*\* Rippin, Andrew. "Literary Analysis of Qur'an, Tafsir, and Sira: The Methodologies of John Wansbrough," in Richard Martin (ed.), *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies* (1985), pp. 151-63.

Boullata, Issa. "The Rhetorical Interpretations of the Qur'an: I'jaz and Related Topics," in Andrew Rippin, *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'an* (1988), pp. 139-157.

Donner, Fred. *Narratives of Islamic Origins* (1998), pp. 35-61.

Madigan, Daniel. *The Qur'an's Self-image: Writing and Authority in Islam's Scripture* (2001).

Powers, David. "The Exegetical Genre *nasikh al-Qur'an wa mansukhuhu*," in Andrew Rippin, *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'an* (1988), pp. 117-38.

Robinson, Neal. *Discovering the Qur'an: A Contemporary Approach to a Veiled Text* (1996).

Whelan, Estelle. "Forgotten Witness: Evidence for the Early Codification of the Qur'an," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 118.1 (Jan.–March 1998): 1-14.  
*Journal of Qur'anic Studies* (an electronic resource)

## Part II: Systematic Modern Commentaries

### Oct. 15: Introduction to five commentators: Sayyid Qutb, Abul A'la Mawdudi, Abul Kalam Azad, Yusuf 'Ali, and al-'Allamat al-Tabataba'i

- \*\* Qutb, Sayyid. "Introduction" in *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, 1:xvii-xxv.
- Abu Rabi', Ibrahim. *Intellectual Roots of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World* (1996), pp. 62-165.
- Boullata, Issa. "Sayyid Qutb's Literary Appreciation of the Qur'an" in *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'an* (ed. Issa Boullata), pp. 354-71.
- Nasr, Seyyed Vali Reza. *Mawdudi & the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (1996).
- \*\* Mawdudi, Abul A'la. "Preface" & "Introduction" in *Towards Understanding the Qur'an*, 1:1-31.
- Douglas, Ian Henderson. *Abul Kalam Azad: An Intellectual and Religious Biography*. Edited by Gail Minault and Christian Troll (1988), pp. 1-96, 196-222.
- \*\* Azad, Abul Kalam, *The Tarjuman al-Qur'an*. Trans. Syed Abdul Latif (1996 [1960]). 1:xxv-xliii.
- Sherif, M.A.. *Searching for Solace: A Biography of Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Interpreter of the Qur'an* (1994).
- \*\* al-Tabataba'i, Muhammad al-Husayn. *Al-Mizan: An Exegesis of the Qur'an*. 1:3-16.

A useful internet source: <http://almizan.org/>

### PAPER #2 DUE

### Oct. 22: Basic Principles

- \*\**The Message of the Qur'an*, Suras 1; 2:30-39, 208-9, 255, 284-6.
- \*\* Surat al-Fatiha: *Shade*, 1:1-8; *Understanding*, 1:33-8; *Tarjuman*, 1:5-9, 193-4.  
Extra: *Tarjuman*, 145-89 and *al-Mizan*, 1:39-60.
- \*\* Ayat al-Kursi (2:255) *Shade*, 1:318-24; *Understanding*, 1:196-8.
- Adam/Iblis (2:30-39) *Shade*, 1:45-56; *Understanding*, 1:59-67.  
Extra: *al-Mizan*, 1:158-176 and 177-213.
- Islamic Society (2:208-9) *Shade*, 1:236-42; *Understanding*, 1:162-3;  
*Tarjuman*, 2:88-9.
- Closing Prayers (2:284-6) *Shade*, 1:378-88; *Understanding*, 1:225-8.

### Oct. 29: Warfare

- \*\**The Message of the Qur'an*, Sura 2:153-7, 190-5, 217-8, 256; (Suras 8, 9).  
(2:153-57) *Shade*, 1:149-56; *Understanding*, 1:127-8
- \*\* (2:190-95) *Shade*, 1:205-15; *Understanding*, 1:151-4; *Tarjuman*, 2:80-4.
- \*\* (2:217-18) *Shade*, 1:255-61; *Understanding*, 1:167-9; *Tarjuman*, 2:93-4.  
(2:256) *Shade*, 1:324-30; *Understanding*, 1:199; *Tarjuman*, 2:121.
- Firestone, Reuven. *Jihad: The Origin of Holy War in Islam* (1999).

SEMINAR PAPER TOPICS & PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE OCT 29

**Nov. 5: Marriage and Women's Dress**

- \*\* *The Message of the Qur'an*, Suras 2:221-3, 4:1-4, 4:34-5, 24:30-1, 33:53-9. (2:221-23) *Shade*, 1:267-74; *Understanding*, 1:171-3; *Tarjuman*, 2:96-7.
  - \*\* (4:1-4) *Shade*, 3:22-42; *Understanding*, 2:5-8; *Tarjuman*, 2:209-11.
  - \*\* (4:34-5) *Shade*, 3:128-40; *Understanding*, 2:35-7; *Tarjuman*, 2:226-7.
  - \*\* (24:30-1) *Understanding*, 6:222-42.
- Gatje, Helmut. *The Qur'an and its Exegesis* (1976), pp. 248-61 (Muhammad 'Abduh/Rashid Rida on polygamy)

**III. Modern Thematic Approaches**

**Nov. 12: Fazlur Rahman**

- \*\* *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (1989).
- Saeed, Abdullah. "Fazlur Rahman: a framework for interpreting the ethico-legal content of the Qur'an," in Suha Taji-Farouki (ed.), *Modern Muslim Intellectuals and the Qur'an* (2004), pp. 37-62.

**Nov. 19: Progressive Muslims: Farid Esack & Amina Wadud**

- \*\* Safi, Omid. "Introduction: The times they are a-changin' - a Muslim quest for justice, gender quality and pluralism," in Omid Safi, *Progressive Muslims* (2003).
- Esack, Farid. *Qur'an, Liberation, & Pluralism* (1997).
- \*\* Wadud, Amina. *Qur'an and Woman* (1999).

**Nov. 26: NO CLASS: Eid al-Shukr**

**Dec. 3: Future directions?**

- \*\* Günther, Ursula. "Mohammed Arkoun: towards a radical rethinking of Islamic Thought," in Suha Taji-Farouki (ed.), *Modern Muslim Intellectuals and the Qur'an* (2004), pp. 125-54.
- Kermani, Navid. "From revelation to interpretation: Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and the literary study of the Qur'an," in Suha Taji-Farouki (ed.), *Modern Muslim Intellectuals and the Qur'an* (2004), pp. 169-92.
- \*\* Christmann, Andreas. "'The form is permanent, but the content moves': the Qur'anic text and its interpretation(s) in Mohamad Shahrour's *al-Kitab wal-Qur'an*," in in Suha Taji-Farouki (ed.), *Modern Muslim Intellectuals and the Qur'an* (2004), pp. 263-86.
- Ayatullah Ja'far Subhani, *The Islamic Moral System: A Commentary of Surah al-Hujarat* (2003)

**Dec. 10: Paper/Research presentations**

THE FINAL SEMINAR PAPER IS DUE DECEMBER 16 BY 3:00 PM.