

Class Plan for *The Emergence of Islam*

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Note: *The Emergence of Islam* may serve as the primary textbook for a class on the Qur'an, Muhammad and the Qur'an, or Islamic Origins. It might also serve as one of the textbooks used in a class on the Introduction to Islam generally, or in a module/section on Islam in a course on World Religions, Western Religions, or Abrahamic Religions. The class plan below is meant to be a useful resource for all such cases. It is structured according to twelve weeks of class time (2 classes per week), and integrates the sources included in *A Reader on Classical Islam* (ed. Peters), along with chapters of two important books by Fred Donner and Kenneth Cragg. *A Reader on Classical Islam* was chosen because it includes a wide range of classical sources and remains readily available for order.

Instructors who would like to use this syllabus as a basis for a semester long class might consider supplementing the readings with additional primary sources (and might take advantage of the paragraph "Texts to Supplement..." below). Instructors who would like to use this class plan as a basis for a module of a broader course might condense it by eliminating some of the primary sources integrated here. A five-week module might be achieved by allotting two weeks to Part 1 (introduction + chs. 1-3) of *The Emergence of Islam*, two weeks to Part 2 (chs. 4-7) and one week to Part 3 (ch. 8 + conclusion).

Texts to Supplement *The Emergence of Islam*

Instructors might refer to the selection of texts below to develop their own class plan around *The Emergence of Islam*. In addition, instructors may consult the "online resources" document on the Fortress site for recommended websites that might be integrated into a class plan.

A. Recommended Translations of the Qur'an

The Quran: A New Translation, trans. T. Cleary, Starlatch press (clear language, helpful format, original and often insightful renderings of the Arabic)

The Qur'an, trans. T. Khalidi, Penguin (clear language, renders the traditional Islamic understanding of the text, but without tendentious commentary)

n.b. The translations of Abdel Haleem, Hilali/Muhsin Khan, and Yusuf Ali are marked to different degrees by tendentious commentary (or by the presentation of traditional views as though they were the evident and original meaning of the Qur'an). They might be avoided as a text of reference for class use, but they could be useful for illustrating modern/contemporary Muslim perspectives on the Qur'an.

B. Readers with Excerpts of and Annotations on Primary Sources

A Reader on Classical Islam, ed. F. Peters

Classical Islam: A Sourcebook of Religious Literature, ed. ed. N. Calder, J. Mojaddedi, and A. Rippin

Modern Islam, ed. Kurzman

Princeton Reader in Islamist Thought, ed. Euben and Zaman

C. Classical Islamic Sources in English Translation

al-Bukhari, *Hadith Collection* (Dar al-Salam Publishers)

Ibn Ishaq, *Life of the Messenger of God* (Oxford University Press)

Ibn Kathir, *Commentary on the Qur'an* (Dar al-Salam Publishers)

al-Tha'labi, *'Ara'is al-Majalis, or Lives of the Prophets* (Brill)

D. General Reference Works on Islam

The A to Z of Islam, ed. L.W. Adamec

The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam, ed. G. Newby

The Historical Dictionary of Islam, ed. Adamec

E. General Introductions to Islam

A. Rippin, *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*

F. Rahman, *Islam* (useful for a Muslim perspective)

F. Works on Islamic History

F. Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers* (a revisionist view of early Islamic history)

M. Hodgson, *Venture of Islam* (3 volumes, a useful global history)

A. Silverstein. *Islamic History: A Very Short Introduction*

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Class Plan: Islam: Classical Sources and Contemporary Questions

I Introduction

WEEK 1

A. Introduction to the Study of Islam

reading: * *The Emergence of Islam*, Preface, Introduction to Part 1

B. Introduction to the Islamic Sources

- reading:* * Peters, *Reader*, chapter 1, sections 1, 2, 4-8 (excerpts of material from the Qur'an and Islamic biographical literature on Adam, Abraham, and Moses).
- * Peters, *Reader*, chapter 2, sections 1-4 (on Muhammad's birth and call to prophecy).

II The Traditional Historical Narrative of Islam's Emergence

WEEK 2

A. Islam and Mecca

- reading:* * *The Emergence of Islam*, chapter 1, pp. 11-19
- * Peters, *Reader*, chapter 2, sections 8-12 (on Muhammad's preaching and night journey).

B. Muhammad and the Quraysh

- reading:* * *The Emergence of Islam*, chapter 1, pp. 19-29
- * Peters, *Reader*, chapter 2, sections 13-16 (on Muhammad's migration to Medina).

WEEK 3

A. Islam in Medina

- reading:* * *The Emergence of Islam*, chapter 2, pp. 31-39
- * Peters, *Reader*, chapter 2, sections 17-23 (on the Constitution of Medina and Muhammad's conflict with the Jews).

B. The Triumph of Islam

- reading:* * *The Emergence of Islam*, chapter 2, pp. 40-57
- * Peters, *Reader*, chapter 2, sections 24-31 (on Muhammad's triumph in Arabia).

WEEK 4

A. The Islamic Conquests

- reading:* * *The Emergence of Islam*, chapter 3, pp. 59-70
- * Peters, *Reader*, chapter 3, sections 27-28 (on *jihad*).

B. The First Caliphs

- reading:* * *The Emergence of Islam*, chapter 3, pp. 70-77
- * *The Emergence of Islam*, Conclusion to Part One
- * Peters, *Reader*, chapter 3, sections 10-14 (on the succession to the Prophet).

WEEK 5

A. Review: The Timeline of Islam's Emergence

(instructors might review the Timeline on pp. xviii-xix of *Emergence*, while referring to the maps on pp. xv and 67; alternatively instructors may want to use a film such as *The Message* – for a Muslim presentation of Muhammad's life, or the Iranian film, *The Messiah*, directed by Nader Talebzadeh, for a Muslim presentation of the life of Jesus).

B. MID-TERM EXAMINATION

III The Qur'an and the Origins of Islam

WEEK 6

A. Muhammad's Life and the Formation of Islamic Doctrine

reading: * *The Emergence of Islam*, Introduction to Part 2
* Peters, *Reader*, chapter 5, sections 1-11 (on hadith and Islamic law).

B. The Message of the Qur'an

reading: * *The Emergence of Islam*, chapter 4, pp. 93-111

WEEK 7

A. The Qur'an's Theology

reading: * *The Emergence of Islam*, chapter 4, pp. 111-119
* Peters, *Reader*, chapter 4, sections 4, 10 (on God's throne).

B. The Qur'an's Conversation with the Bible

reading: * *The Emergence of Islam*, chapter 5
* Genesis, chs. 18-19; The Book of Jonah (to supplement the discussion on Sarah and Jonah in the Qur'an, pp. 129-30 of *Emergence*)

WEEK 8

A. Rethinking the Biography of the Prophet

reading: * *The Emergence of Islam*, chapter 6

B. New Theories on the Life of Muhammad

reading: * Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, chapter 2

WEEK 9

A. Rethinking the Historical Context of Islam's Emergence

reading: * *The Emergence of Islam*, chapter 7, Conclusion to Part 2

B. Islam, the Arabs, and Abraham

reading: * K. Cragg, *Event of the Qur'an*, chapter 3, "Scripture for the Arabs"

WEEK 10

A. The Qur'an and the Bible

(Instructors might use this class to have students, in groups or as individuals, present studies on Biblical characters in the Qur'an; i.e. one group might be assigned Adam, another Noah, etc.; each group would be tasked with identifying how the Qur'anic account differs from that of the Bible, and *why* the Qur'an chooses to present this character as it does).

B. MID-TERM EXAMINATION

IV Contemporary Perspectives

WEEK 11

A. The Imitation of the Prophet

reading: * *The Emergence of Islam*, Introduction to Part 3

(instructors might also have students research *fatwas* by using the link to the *fatwa* bank in the document "online resources")

B. The Cases of Egypt, Pakistan, and Iran

reading: * *The Emergence of Islam*, chapter 8, pp. 173-196

(instructors might use this class to have students divided into groups and assigned to study the place of Islam in the modern development of one of these states)

WEEK 12

A. Islam and Modernity

reading: * *The Emergence of Islam*, chapter 8, pp. 196-201

(instructors might have students do research on websites dedicated to the "scientific miracles" of the Qur'an)

B. Summary and Review

reading: * *The Emergence of Islam*, Conclusion