Christian-Muslim Relations in Arabia: Ibadi Islam and Interfaith Theology in the Sultanate of Oman

Description

The Sultanate of Oman is the only Muslim nation in the world that practices Ibadi Islam as the official national religion. Ibadism incorporates an austere piety with an openness to engaging in dialogue with other Islamic schools of thought and other faiths. Oman has a long tradition of religious pluralism both within Islam and other faiths, which makes it an ideal place to engage in inter-Islamic and Christian-Muslim dialogue. In this two-week travel seminar in Oman, participants will attend lectures and meetings with Ibadi imams and scholars, engage in interfaith dialogue with students in the Institute of Sharia Sciences, meet missionaries of the American Protestant Mission in Oman, and explore the interfaith context of Oman with visits to a Hindu temple; Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant worship centers; and some of the oldest mosques in Islam.

This course is limited to matriculated Hartford Seminary students. All students accepted to this course will receive scholarship that will cover the room, board, and onsite costs (the cost without scholarship is $1800). Students are responsible for their own airfare. The cost of Hartford Seminary tuition for this 3-credit course is $975 (no additional aid will be given from Hartford Seminary).

Please contact the Registrar’s Office for complete application information, which includes an essay and reservation fee which must be submitted by November 3rd. Interested students must also meet before December 15 with Najib Awad, Associate Professor of Christian Theology, to discuss preparatory readings and other course assignments.

Meeting dates

Period in Oman is from Thursday, 2 January 2015, through Wednesday, 15 January 2015.

Instructors

Instructor of record
Najib Awad, Associate Professor of Christian Theology
860.987.8048 / nawad@hartsem.edu
Meeting, by appointment

On-site coordinator
Justin Meyers, Director of Education at the Al-Amana Centre, Sultanate of Oman

Schedule

Detailed schedule and itinerary will be provided during early December 2014
Objectives

a. To explore Ibadi history, theology, ancient texts, institutions, and approaches to interfaith collaboration, as informed by local imams and scholars;
b. To engage in interfaith dialogue with students in the Institute of Sharia Sciences, and be exposed imamate preparation and duties;
c. To meet missionaries of the American Protestant Mission in Oman and learn about the Christian perspective of Muslim-Christian relations;
d. To encounter a broad range of Oman's political and religious leaders in an environment of open inquiry and exchange; and
e. To reflect upon one's own insights and transformation set in motion by an extended exposure to a cultural context other than one's own.

Procedure

The course begins with sessions for orientation and preparation of participants, held in the first half of December. Students must then read the available required texts in preparation for travel in early January. The centerpiece of course activity involves the two-week tour period in Oman, with a wide range of experiences and conversations providing on-site educational opportunities. The course concludes with preparing a final paper that will be discussed with the instructor of record following the return from Oman in mid-January.

Required reading

-Check up the pasted dropbox link for the readings the center in Oman ask you to acquaint yourselves with before and while you are in Oman.

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7mwwks4ivjqkqqd/AAAtYrWK0gdAPppQsFnk0-3Qa?dl=0

-Six required texts are the basis for course preparation and on-site discussion, as well as being foundational for the final paper. Two other texts are strongly recommended for ample preparation and further background. Note especially that all required texts are to be read in advance of travel to Oman, except those that will be provided on-site.

Required books


**Required articles**

Bos, Michael. “Islam in Oman” — manuscript available from instructors. Read whole article.
Reformed Church in America, Commission on Theology. Excerpts from statement on Muslim-Christian Relations. Adopted by General Synod - June 24, 2010. – Provided on-site in Oman.
Presbyterian Church USA, statement on Muslim-Christian Relations. — Provided on-site in Oman.

**Recommended books**


**Grades**

Throughout this course, grades for masters level students are reported on an A / B / C basis. These grades mean:

- **A** Exceptional in several or most ways; such work completes all tasks, is creative and even original in content, and displays mastery of expression.
- **B** Adequate in all basic ways; parts of the task are slighted, the content has minor weaknesses, and expression is competent yet not consistently compelling.
- **C** Inadequate in some ways; does not address significant tasks, shows weak or erroneous content, and expression sometimes obstructs understanding.

**Course participation (50% of grade)**

Attendance at and active participation in the entire course is expected of all students. This includes the preparatory sessions, on-site activities, and a follow-up meeting. Exceptions are only allowed if advance permission has been granted by the instructors, and only for unavoidable absences. In all cases, substantive failure to meet this requirement (e.g., by not attending the preparatory and follow-up sessions or more than 20% of the on-site activities) automatically precludes successful completion of the course. The participation grade includes active familiarity with all required readings.

**Written assignments (50% of grade)**
Students are expected to provide three sorts of written materials as accountability for the course learning. (1) A critical review of three of each of the book-length required or recommended readings, selected by the student in conversation with the instructor of record, no longer than 1,000 words per review. (2) A reflective journal of the on-site period, the style and format of which will be determined in conversation with the instructor of record. (3) An integrative final paper that summarizes and synthesizes the student's central insights from the readings and experiences of the course, with special attention to how these relate to the student's larger program of study, no longer than 4,500 words exclusive of footnotes and bibliography. Details for these assignments will be provided at the preparatory meeting with the instructor of record. All written materials must be sent by e-mail to the instructor of record by 31 January 2015.

Course extensions

Past experience has shown that timely completion of all assignments and the entire course is essential to successful completion of one's academic program. As a result, late submission of writing assignments is strongly discouraged and course extensions are not permitted.

Plagiarism warning

Plagiarism is the failure to give proper credit for the words or ideas of another person, whether published or unpublished, and is strictly prohibited. Credit will not be given for written work in this course containing plagiarism, and plagiarism may result in a failing grade for the entire course. Please consult the Plagiarism Policy of the Hartford Seminary Catalogue, and/or contact the instructor with questions in this regard.