



SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

Madrid

Course:	THEO-393 Special Topics: The Qur'an and the Bible
Semester:	Spring 2015
Time:	T R 11:00–12:15
Professor:	Carlos A. Segovia
Credits:	3
Prerequisites:	THEO-100 and one 200-level Theology course

1. Course objectives

Notwithstanding its distinctively discontinuous style, the Qur'an repeatedly draws on the stock of Biblical stories and legends, which one often finds elliptically reworked in its pages. Occasionally, however, such reworked stories are better understood in light of their para-Biblical, both Jewish and Christian, glosses, on which the Qur'an relies as well, therefore. But what is the ultimate purpose of these complex intertextual strategies and how must they be approached and classified? Is it possible to speak of the Qur'an, at least partly, as an exegetical work? And if so, what would this imply? Can the study of the Biblical and para-Biblical stories in the Qur'an, moreover, help to shed light on the development of the multilayered theological debate that took place in the 7th-century Near East? Lastly, which are the intertextual connections susceptible of being established between prophecy, eschatology, and messianology in the Qur'an – and how do they affect our understanding of Islam's origins? All these questions ought to be examined afresh to understand the message of the Qur'an in its inherent complexity and to implement interfaith dialogue.

Students who successfully complete the course will have achieved the following learning objectives:

- to understand the intertextual relations existing between the Qur'an and the Bible
- to canvass the main results achieved in the contemporary study of Quranic intertextuality
- to discern the message of the Qur'an in its inherent complexity and historical context
- to critically assess the implications of the above-referred notions for modern interfaith dialogue
- to determine, by one's own lights, how to better deal with all the aforementioned issues

2. Course description

The course divides into seven major sections:

- I) JEWS, CHRISTIANS, ARABS, AND THE BIBLE IN PRE-ISLAMIC ARABIA
- II) THE QUR'AN AS WITNESS TO A MULTILAYERED THEOLOGICAL DEBATE IN THE 7TH CENTURY?
- III) REWORKED STORIES AND FIGURES: A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY
- IV) AN UNNOTICED KEY BIBLICAL FIGURE IN THE QUR'AN? THE QURANIC NOAH AND THE ESCHATOLOGICAL CREDENTIALS OF THE QURANIC PROPHET
- V) PARA-BIBLICAL NARRATIVES IN THE QUR'AN?
- VI) APPROACHING THE BIBLE AND THE QUR'AN FROM A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE
- VII) BIBLICAL PROPHECY IN POST-QURANIC MUSLIM TRADITION (ANCIENT, MEDIEVAL, AND MODERN)

3. Text and other course materials

The text for the course is Roberto Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'ān and Muslim Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).

It is required and available at SLU Madrid bookshop.

A Kindle edition can be purchased through www.amazon.com

Unless otherwise indicated, reading assignments will be from Roberto Tottoli's aforementioned monograph.

Additional readings will be from:

- Abdel Haleem, Muhammad A. S. *The Qur'an: A New Translation*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

4. Supplementary bibliography:

- Block, C. Jonn. *The Qur'an in Christian-Muslim Dialogue: Historical and Modern Interpretations*. London and New York: Routledge, 2014.
- Griffith, Sidney H. *The Bible in Arabic: The Scriptures of the "People of the Book" in the Language of Islam*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013.
- Lodahl, Michael. *Claiming Abraham: Reading the Bible and the Qur'an Side by Side*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2010.
- Newby, Gordon D. *The Making of the Last Prophet: A Reconstruction of the Earliest Biography of Muhammad*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990.
- Rahman, Fazlur. *Major Themes of the Qur'an*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- Reeves, John C., ed. *Bible and Qur'ān: Essays in Scriptural Intertextuality*. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.
- Reynolds, Gabriel Said. *The Qur'ān and Its Biblical Subtext*. London and New York:

Routledge, 2010.

- Segovia, Carlos A. *The Quranic Noah and the Making of the Islamic Prophet: A Study of Intertextuality and Religious Identity Formation in Late Antiquity*. Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2015.
- Ter Borg, Marlies, ed. *Sharing Mary: Bible and Qur'an Side by Side*. Lexington, KY: Create-Space, 2010.
- Wheeler, Brannon M. *Prophets in the Quran: An Introduction to the Quran and Muslim Exegesis*. London and New York: Continuum, 2002.

5. Grading and attendance

In this course final grades are calculated as a weighted average of four scores: two exams, a paper, and participation. The scores are weighted as follows:

Midterm exam:	25%
Paper:	25%
Final exam:	25%
Participation:	25%

Exams and paper: The exams must be taken and the paper turned in on the dates assigned (see Section 6 below). Violations of this policy will result in the loss of a grade point (from B to C, for example) in all but the most exceptional cases.

Participation: This component of your final grade will be based on oral exercises and commitment to the class discussions, attendance, effort, and punctuality. Seven or more absences FOR ANY REASON constitute an unrecoverable loss of course content and will result in an F for the course. Mobile phones are to be switched OFF in class. Computers and tablets are to be used SOLELY for taking class notes. Students are expected not to interrupt class by leaving the room and returning during the class period.

Please note that, as a student in this course, you are required to adhere to the university's Academic Honesty Policy. Cheating, falsification, and plagiarism are strictly forbidden. Plagiarism is the intentional representation of someone else's thoughts or words as if they were one's own. Any violation of this policy will result in an F for the pertinent academic exercise. A detailed statement of the policy may be found at http://spain.slu.edu/academics/academic_advising/docs/Academic_integrity.pdf.

6. Course calendar

Jan. 15 (Section I)

I) JEWS, CHRISTIANS, ARABS, AND THE BIBLE IN PRE-ISLAMIC ARABIA

Jan. 15 – Session 1: *Introducing our Topic*

- The scriptural lore in the Qur'an
- Was there a pre-Islamic Arabic Bible?
- Jews, Christians, and Arabs in pre-Islamic Arabia
- Reasons for moving beyond a merely comparative approach.

Jan. 20 (Section II)

II) THE QUR'AN AS WITNESS TO A MULTILAYERED THEOLOGICAL DEBATE IN THE 7TH CENTURY?

Jan. 20 – Session 2: *The Quranic View on Jews, Christians, and Pagan Arabs*

- A reassessment of the anti-pagan formulas in the Qur'an
- Distinguishing between Christian formulas with anti-Jewish overtones, pro-Christian compromise formulas, anti-Christian polemical formulas, and both anti-Christian- and anti-Jewish supersessionist formulas in the Qur'an.
- A tentative chronology.
- Theological controversy, religious identity making, and the new Arab policy in the 7th-century Near East.

Jan. 22–Mar. 5 (Section III)

III) REWORKED STORIES AND FIGURES: A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY

Jan. 22 – Session 3: *Adam*

- Adam, the father of humankind and God's vice-regent on earth.
- God's preliminary warning to the angels.
- Adam's fall: an altogether different tale.
- The first prophet?
- Biblical and extra-Biblical sources of the Quranic Adam story.

► Reading assignment: - Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'an and Muslim Literature*, Ch. 1; Ch. 2, Section 1.

Jan. 27 – Session 4: *Noah*

- A prophet and apostle called Noah.
- Noah's opponents.
- Noah's complaint: a pre-Abrahamic dialogue between God and man.
- The Quranic flood story.
- Biblical and extra-Biblical sources of the Quranic Noah story.

► Reading assignment: - Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'an and Muslim Literature*, Ch. 2, Section 2.

Jan. 27 – Last Day to Drop a Class Without a Grade of W and/or Add a Class

– **Last Day to Choose Audit (AU) or Pass/No Pass (P/NP) Options**

Jan. 29 – Session 5: *Abraham*

- Abraham, God’s friend, as a typological model for the Quranic prophet..
- Neither Jew, nor Christian.
- Abraham’s scriptures.
- A note on the term *hanif*.
- Biblical and extra-Biblical sources of the Quranic Abraham story.

➤ Reading assignment: - Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur’ān and Muslim Literature*, Ch. 2, Section 3.

Jan. 30 – *Santo Tomás de Aquino* Holiday (University Closed)

Feb. 3 – Session 6: *Lot*

- A more compelling Biblical referent?
- Lot as God’s prophet and apostle.
- The eschatological coda to the story.

➤ Reading assignment: - Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur’ān and Muslim Literature*, Ch. 2, Section 4.

Feb. 5 – Session 7: *Joseph*

- “We shall now recite unto you the most beautiful of stories.”
- A supplementary typological model for the Quranic prophet?
- A note on Quranic ellipsis.

➤ Reading assignment: - Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur’ān and Muslim Literature*, Ch. 2, Section 5.

Feb. 10 – Session 8: *Moses*

- A prophet mentioned more than one hundred times...
- Why is he so central a figure in the Qur’an?
- Moses as a typological model for the Quranic prophet.
- An anti-Jewish polemic?
- Quranic additions to the Biblical story.

➤ Reading assignment: - Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur’ān and Muslim Literature*, Ch. 2, Section 6.

Feb. 12 – Session 9: *David and Solomon*

- David, king and prophet.
- An additional sacred book.
- Solomon’s legends in the Qur’an.

➤ Reading assignment: - Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur’ān and Muslim Literature*, Ch. 2, Section 7.

Feb. 17 – Warm-up session

Feb. 18 – Registration for Summer 2015 Sessions begins

Feb. 19 – Midterm exam

Feb. 20–23 – No Classes (Winter Break)

Feb. 24 – Session 10: *Jesus*

- The Quranic Jesus.
- Messiah vs. Son of God.
- The Messiah or a special prophet?
- Christology and Mariology in the Quran: towards a new interpretation.

► Reading assignment: - Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'ān and Muslim Literature*, Ch. 2, Section 8.

Feb. 26 – Session 11: *Job, Jonah, Elijah, Elisha and Others*

- Job, the faithful prophet.
- Jonah's mission.
- Elijah's posterity.
- Elisha.
- Idris.
- Dhu-l-Kifl.

► Reading assignment: - Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'ān and Muslim Literature*, Ch. 2, Section 9.

Mar. 3 – Session 12: *The “Unnamed” Prophets*

- Daniel?
- Isaiah?
- Jeremiah?

► Reading assignment: - Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'ān and Muslim Literature*, Ch. 2, Section 10.

Mar. 5 – Session 13: *The “Arabian” Prophets*

- Hud.
- Salih.
- Shu'ayb.

► Reading assignment: - Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'ān and Muslim Literature*, Ch. 2, Section 11.

Mar. 10–12 (Section IV)

IV) AN UNNOTICED KEY BIBLICAL FIGURE IN THE QUR'AN? THE QURANIC NOAH AND THE ESCHATOLOGICAL CREDENTIALS OF THE QURANIC PROPHET

Mar. 10 – Session 14: *The Quranic Noah Narratives and the Making of the Quranic Prophet as the Herald of the Eschaton (1)*

- The Quranic Noah narratives
- A regular, yet flexible, formal pattern
- A series of para-Biblical punishment stories?

Mar. 12 – Session 15: *The Quranic Noah Narratives and the Making of the Quranic Prophet as the Herald of the Eschaton (2)*

- Reading between the lines: the Quranic Noah narratives as witnesses to the life of the Quranic prophet?
- Their key sequence: opposition and vindication
- The Quranic prophet as the herald of the eschaton (and messiah?)

Mar. 13 – Last Day to Drop a Class and Receive a Grade of W

Mar. 17–26 (Section V)

V) PARA-BIBLICAL NARRATIVES IN THE QUR'AN?

Mar. 17 – Session 16: *The Parabolic Use of Natural Order in the Prologue to the Book of the Watchers (1 Enoch 1–5) and Its Fragmentary Quranic Parallels*

- The paraenesis behind Qur'an 7:36; 10:6; 16:81; 24:41, 44, 46.
- An echo of 1 Enoch 1–5?
- Implications for the modern study of the Qur'an.

Mar. 19 – *San José* Holiday (University Closed)

Mar. 24 – Session 17: *“Those on the Right” and “Those on the Left” (Qur'an 56:1-56): Re-interpreting the Founding Myth of Islam in Light of Apocalypse of Abraham 21–2 and Other Writings*

- The enigmatic human groups in Qur'an 56:1-56 and the founding myth of Islam.
- A polemical rewriting of Apocalypse of Abraham 21–2?
- A simultaneous albeit indirect use of Romans 4/Galatians 3 and Justin Martyr's *Dialogue*?

Mar. 26 – Session 18: *Revisiting the Quranic Noah: The Para-Biblical Subtexts of the Quranic Noah Narratives*

- Opposition to Noah in pre-Islamic Jewish and Christian literature.
- Textual precedents of the Quranic Noah narratives.
- Their more plausible sources.

Mar. 30–Apr. 1 – *Semana Santa* (University Closed)

Apr. 2 – *Jueves Santo* Holiday (University Closed)

Apr. 3 – *Viernes Santo* Holiday (University Closed)

Apr. 5 – Easter

Apr. 5 – Post-*Semana Santa* University Move-In Date

Apr. 6 – Easter Monday - Classes resume (full day)

Apr. 8 – Registration for Fall 2015 Semester begins

Apr. 7 (Section VI)

VI) APPROACHING THE BIBLE AND THE QUR'AN FROM A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Apr. 7 – Session 19: *Three Messages but One God?*

- God and man in the Hebrew Bible.
- God and man in the New Testament.
- God and man in the Qur'an.

► Reading assignment: - Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'ān and Muslim Literature*, Chs. 3 and 5.

Apr. 9–23 (Section VII)

VII) BIBLICAL PROPHECY IN POST-QURANIC MUSLIM TRADITION (ANCIENT, MEDIEVAL, AND MODERN)

Apr. 9 – Session 20: *Biblical Stories, Muslim Historiography, and the Sealing of Salvation History: From the Qur'an to Ibn Ishaq and Beyond*

- Ibn Ishaq's original work on Biblical history as a prelude to Muhammad's sending.
- Muhammad's sending and the sealing of salvation history.
- Ibn Hisham's reworking of Ibn Ishaq writings: Muhammad's biography alone?
- Muslim historiographers and the Biblical prophets.

► Reading assignment: - Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'ān and Muslim Literature*, Chs. 4 and 8.

Apr. 9 – Paper due

Apr. 14 – Session 21: *The Biblical Prophets in Quranic Exegesis*

- The origins of exegetical literature.
- Al-Tabari on the Qur'an and the Bible.
- Re-interpreting the Qur'an in symbolic form: the Biblical prophets in Muslim spirituality.

► Reading assignment: - Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'ān and Muslim Literature*, Ch. 6.

Apr. 16 – Session 22: *The Biblical Prophets in the Hadith Literature*

- What is the Hadith literature?
- Muhammad and the prophets / Muhammad amongst the prophets?
- Muhammad's ascension to heaven and intercessory role.

► Reading assignment: - Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'ān and Muslim Literature*, Ch. 7.

Apr. 21 – Session 23: *The Literary Genre of the Stories of the Prophets*

- Collecting the tales of old: the 'Stories of the prophets' as an independent literary genre in early Muslim culture.
- Wahb b. Munabbih and other key authors.

► Reading assignment: - Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'ān and Muslim Literature*, Ch. 9.

Apr. 23 – Session 24: *Medieval and Modern Developments*

- The stories of the prophets in medieval Islam.
- Modern developments and debates.
- Contemporary insights.

► Reading assignment: - Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur'ān and Muslim Literature*, Ch. 10.

Apr. 28–30 (Group Presentations)

Apr. 28 – Session 25: *Group Presentations A*

► Group presentations and discussion

Apr. 30 – Session 26: *Group Presentations B*

► Group presentations and discussion

May 1 – *Día del Trabajo* Holiday (University Closed)

May 5 (Conclusion)

May 5 – Session 27: The meaning and function of the Biblical narratives in the Qur'an: some provisional conclusions

May 11 (12:00-15:00) – Final exam

7. Guidelines for writing your paper, preparing the group presentations and taking your two exams

You will have to write a research paper (c. 5,000 words) on one of the topics of the course.

Group presentations should normally involve three students and be no longer than 10 minutes. All students will be asked to participate in the presentations scheduled for sessions 26 and 27 (see Section 6 above).

The midterm exam will cover Sections I–III of the programme (on which see Section 2 above). It will consist of three sections in which you will be respectively asked to (1) identify, analyse and evaluate a theological issue, (2) write a brief essay (of c. 500 words) on a topic that you will have to choose out of two, and (3) undertake a textual analysis (of c. 500 words) by likewise choosing between two texts. Each section of the midterm exam will be worth 1.25 points; 0.25 additional points will be for style. Your midterm grade will be that of your midterm exam.

The final exam will cover Sections III–VII of the programme. Like the midterm exam, it will consist of three sections in which you will have to (1) identify, analyse and evaluate a theological issue, (2) write a brief essay (of c. 500 words) on a topic that you will have to choose out of two, and (3) undertake a textual analysis (of c. 500 words) by once more choosing between two texts. Like in the midterm exam, each section of the final exam will be worth 1.25 points; 0.25 additional points will be for style. As mentioned above (see Section 5), your final grade will be calculated as a weighted average of four scores including your two exams, your paper, and your participation throughout the course.

You will be allowed to bring your class and home notes to both exams, provided they are handwritten. No other materials will be admitted, though.

8. Collection of student work for assessment

Saint Louis University – Madrid Campus is committed to excellent and innovative educational practices. In order to maintain quality academic offerings and to conform to relevant accreditation requirements, we regularly assess our teaching, services, and programs for evidence of student learning outcomes achievement. For this purpose we keep on file anonymised representative examples of student work from all courses and programs such as: assignments, papers, exams, portfolios, and results from student surveys, focus groups, and

reflective exercises. Thus, *copies of your work for this course, including exams, oral presentations, and/or submitted papers may be kept on file for institutional research, assessment and accreditation purposes.* If you prefer that Saint Louis University-Madrid Campus does not keep your work on file, you will need to communicate your decision in writing to your professor.

9. Academic accommodations

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor; and
- university-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by going to http://spain.slu.edu/academics/learning_resources.html.

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at +34 915 54 58 58, ext. 204, send an e-mail to counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu, or visit the Counselling Office (San Ignacio Hall). Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

10. Office hours and e-mail

T R 10:25–10:55 and by appointment in San Ignacio Hall (3rd floor, Room 5). E-mail contact: segoviaca@slu.edu