



SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY  
MADRID

**THEO-4930: Anthropology of Islam**  
Summer I 2018

**Class Days and Time:** MTWR, 12:00-14:10

**Classroom:** PRH-6

**Prerequisite(s):** Theo-100

**Credit(s):** 333

**Instructor:** Dr. Carlos A. Segovia

**Instructor's Email:** carlos.segovia@slu.edu

**Instructor's Campus Phone:** 91 554 58 58, ext. 229 / 235

**Office:** SIH-315

**Office Hours:** MTWR, 14:10–14:25

**Course Description:** Studying Islam from an anthropological standpoint means to analyse Islamic beliefs, practices, and communities as vectors of a symbolic meta-system which purpose is to solve specific problems of meaning in particular social-cultural historical contexts where those problems can be said to be meaningful. To determine which these problems and contexts are, and to examine how should one study them, are the fundamental goals of this course. A first preliminary qualification to be made thereof is that there is no single, cohesive Islam but different existing types of Muslim discourses about what islam is – as many as Muslim believer or socially and culturally significant Muslim groups. And a second one is that today's western concern with Islam cannot scape such characterisation, either. It is only by answering these questions – which must be carefully reflected upon first – that one may better understand the Muslim world and its present challenges. This course tries to provide a tool for that by focusing *inter alia* on two of the hottest topics under discussion today: the dynamics of gender and the relation between Islam, politics, and violence.

The course will combine lectures and workshops. Most of the work will be carried out through the collective reading, multi-layered examination, and thorough discussion of different materials.

**Course Goals and Student Learning Outcomes:** Students who successfully complete the course will have achieved the following learning objectives:

- to understand the way in which Islam must be approached from an anthropology-of-religion perspective

- to comprehend which are the social-cultural problems of meaning that Islam as a religion addresses, as well as the historical contexts in which such problems can be said to make sense
- to canvass, in light of the aforementioned points, some of the most important challenges that are peculiar to contemporary Muslim societies, in themselves and in relation to western culture
- to eventually apply this knowledge to ordinary problems and situations
- to determine, by one's own lights, how to better deal with all the previously mentioned issues

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, the Campus regularly assesses its teaching, services, and programs for evidence of student learning outcomes achievement. For this purpose anonymised representative examples of student work from all courses and programs is kept on file, such as assignments, papers, exams, portfolios, and results from student surveys, focus groups, and reflective exercises. *Thus, copies of student work for this course, including written assignments, in-class exercises, and exams may be kept on file for institutional research, assessment and accreditation purposes.* If students prefer that Saint Louis University - Madrid Campus does not keep their work on file, they need to communicate their decision in writing to the professor.

#### **Recommended Texts and Materials:**

The text for the course is Gabriele Marranci, *The Anthropology of Islam*, New York: Berg Press, 2008.

It is recommended and available at SLU Madrid bookshop. A Kindle edition can be purchased at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

The course will cover other materials as well. They will be provided in due time.

Supplementary bibliography:

Esposito, John. *Islam: The Straight Path*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, 4th ed.

Ohlig, Karl-Heinz, and Gerd-R. Puin, *The Hidden Origins of Islam: New Research into Its Early History*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2010.

Rahman, Fazlur. *Revival and Reform in Islam: A Study of Islamic Fundamentalism*. Oxford Oneworld Publications, 2000.

Ramadan, Tariq. *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Saeed, Abdullah. *The Qur'an: An Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge, 2008.

**Attendance Policy:** 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 and computers are to be

switched OFF in class. Students are expected not to interrupt class by leaving the room and returning during the class period.

**Course Requirements and Grading Rationale/System:** In this course final grades are calculated as a weighted average of three scores: three exams and participation. The scores are weighted as follows:

Participation: 33%

Essay paper: 33%

Final exam: 33%

**Final exam:** The final exam must be taken on the date assigned. 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. In your final exam you will be asked to formulate a question relative to the contents of the course and to write a six-page essay on it with the help of four concepts of your choice. You will be allowed to bring your class and home notes to the exam; no other materials will be permitted, though.

**Essay paper:** In addition to taking their final exam, all students must write a 6,000-word essay on any of the topics of the course, to be turned in (in printed form) on the date assigned. This essay should provide a brief literature review of the topic followed by an extensive analysis of the latter (with a precise conclusion on the main argument put forward in the analysis).

**Participation:** This component of your final grade will be based on several written exercises and commitment to the class workshops and discussions. Participation in the course workshops is mandatory – that is to say, all students will be asked to take part in, and actively contribute to, these.

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://www.slu.edu/madrid/academics>.

**E-mail:** Campus and course announcements will often be handled by e-mail. Students should check their "@slu.edu" e-mail regularly.

**University Statement on Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavours. The mission of Saint Louis University is "the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity." Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavours of teaching, research, health care and community service via which SLU embodies its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern.

The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy can be accessed on the Provost's Office [website](#). Additionally, SLU-Madrid has posted its academic integrity policy online: <http://www.slu.edu/madrid/academics>. As a member of the University community, you are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions and appeals.

The professor will review these matters during the first weeks of the term. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program, or the Academic Dean of the Madrid Campus.

**University Title IX Statement:** Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX deputy coordinator, Marta Maruri, whose office is located on the ground floor of Padre Rubio Hall, Avenida del Valle, 28 (mmaruri@slu.edu; 915-54-5858, ext. 213) and share the basic fact of your experience with her. The Title IX deputy coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the SLU-Madrid's Counseling Services on the third floor of San Ignacio Hall (counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu; 915-54-5858, ext. 230) or Sinews Multipletherapy Institute, the off-campus provider of counseling services for SLU-Madrid (www.sinews.es; 917-00-1979). To view SLU-Madrid's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web address: <http://www.slu.edu/Documents/Madrid/campus-life/SLUMadridSexualMisconductPolicy.pdf>.

**Students with Special Needs:** 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.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by going to <https://www.slu.edu/madrid/academics/student-resources>.

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Once successfully registered, the student also must notify the course instructor that they wish

to access accommodations in the course. Please contact Disability Services at [disabilityservices-madrid@slu.edu](mailto:disabilityservices-madrid@slu.edu) or +915 54 58 58, ext. 230 for an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about the student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services. For more information about academic accommodations, see "Student Resources" on the SLU-Madrid webpage.

Note: Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one are encouraged to contact Disability Services.

### Spring 2018 Course Schedule:

<b>MAY</b>	
Monday 21	<i>Summer I first day of classes</i> <b>Religious phenomena and world-religions from an anthropological perspective</b>
Tuesday 22	↓ (cont.)
Wednesday 23	<b>A historical-critical and social-science oriented look at the origins of Islam</b>
Thursday 24	↓ (cont.)
Sunday 27	<i>Last day to drop a class without a grade of W and/or add a class</i> <i>Last day to choose Audit (AU) or Pass/No Pass (P/NP) options</i>
Monday 28	<b>Theoretical parameters in the anthropological study of Islam</b>
Tuesday 29	↓ (cont.)
Wednesday 30	<b>Challenges for reading and interpreting the Qur'an and its message</b>
Thursday 31	↓ (cont.)
<b>JUNE</b>	
Monday 4	<b>Reassessing the dynamics of gender in the Qur'an</b>
Tuesday 5	↓ (cont.)
Wednesday 6	<b>Reassessing the dynamics of gender in modern Islam</b>
Thursday 7	↓ (cont.)
Monday 11	<b>Religious violence, the Qur'an, and western culture</b> <i>Last day to drop a class and receive a grade of W</i>
Tuesday 12	↓ (cont.)
Wednesday 13	<b>A sociological take on Salafism</b>
Thursday 14	↓ (cont.) <b>Paper due</b>

Monday 18	<b>On the sociology and anthropology of Takfiri terrorism</b>
Tuesday 19	↓ (cont.)
Wednesday 20	<b>Warm-up session</b>
Thursday 21	<b>Final exam</b>