

HI-536 The Life of the Prophet Muhammad

Hartford Seminary

Spring 2021

thursdays, 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Instructor: Suheil Laher

Email: slaher@hartsem.edu

Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description

This course introduces students to the life of Muhammad ﷺ, the prophet-founder of Islam, and his depiction in both Muslim and non-Muslim sources. After sequentially examining his life, as presented in the early biographical sources, we turn to examine the diverse images and conceptions of him across history, among various Muslim circles (including Sunni, Shi'i and Sufi conceptions) as well as non-Muslims. We will also discuss the Prophet's teachings, and his roles (legislative, political, etc.). Students will also be introduced to the critical methods used in contemporary academic scholarship to investigate the Prophet's life.

Course Objectives

- Be able to identify and evaluate sources for the study of the life of the Prophet
- Be familiar with traditional accounts of his life, and how his mission transformed 7th-century Arabia
- Have a basic grasp of contemporary historical-critical methods
- Understand the Islamic conception(s) of prophecy, and the theological significance of the Prophet Muhammad
- Understand the significance of the Prophet Muhammad to Islamic law, ethics and spirituality
- Distinguish between different conceptions of the Prophet Muhammad amongst Muslim themselves, as well as among non-Muslims
- Be able to analyze contemporary issues involving the Prophet Muhammad, such as the Charlie Hebdo cartoon controversy

Program Learning Outcomes

- To demonstrate foundational and critical knowledge of one's own religion
- To demonstrate the knowledge, capacities, and willingness to respectfully engage other religions and world views
- To demonstrate knowledge and skills for dialogical and constructive engagement with diversity.
- To demonstrate the ability to relate theory and practice in the social contexts in which a religion's communities exist

List of Texts

Required

- Martin Lings, *Muhammad his Life based on the Earliest Sources*. 2006
- Tarif Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*. 2009.
- CCM = Jonathan Brockopp (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Muhammad*. 2010.

Recommended

- M. M. Azami, *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature*. 1978.
- VSI = Jonathan Brown, *Muhammad: A Very Short Introduction*. 2011
- Jabal Buaben, *Image of the Prophet Muhammad in the West*. 1996
- Alfred Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*. 1955
- Philip Hitti, *The Arabs: A Short History*. 1964
- Mohiuddin, Meraj. *Revelation: The Story of Muhammad: Peace and Blessings be Upon Him*. Whiteboard Press, 2016.
- Omid Safi, *Memories of Muhammad*. 2009
- Adil Salahi, *Muhammad: his Character and Conduct*. 2013
- Samira al-Zayid, *A Compendium Of The Sources On The Prophetic Narrative*, Daybreak Press.
- A Useful Graphical Timeline:

https://ia601500.us.archive.org/14/items/TimeLineOfTheSeerahV1.0.1/time-line-of%20the-seerah_v1.0.1.pdf

Assessment

Attendance & Participation	10%
In-Class Presentations	10%
Forum Discussions	30%
Weekly Quizzes	20%
Final Examination / Paper	30%

- Attendance: You must attend class regularly and promptly. More than two absences will reduce your grade in the course, unless there are extenuating circumstances.
- Presentations: Each student is required to sign up for one in-class presentation, where s/he will present on one of the readings for that week in 10-15mins. No two

people are allowed to present on the same reading, so if there is reading you really want to present it, then sign up ASAP; it is first-come-first-served. The presentation should be 10-15mins long, and should summarize the main points of the reading, but also show that you have thought about it and so you should include some analysis or critique or questions raised. It is optional to use other sources. You must upload your slides.

Rubric for Grading of Presentations:

Capable, succinct summary of material	75%
Timing You will lose points if your presentation is less than 10mins, and more than 17mins	5%
Time Management Did you cover all your material in the allotted time?	5%
Visual Aesthetics	5%
Critical Analysis Analysis, or critique, or questions raised	10%

- Forum Discussions: Each student will post TWO reflections per week. One reflection should be 100-250 words, to the Online Forums, and should show that the student has read and thought about the assigned readings(s) for that week. The other reflection should be 50-150 words and should be a response to another student's posts.
- Weekly Quizzes: will consist mostly of multiple choice and/or short-answer questions
- Final Exam will consist of essay questions. If a final paper is written instead, the topic must be approved by the instructor, and the paper should be 10-15 pages long.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism, the failure to give proper credit for the words and ideas of another person, whether published or unpublished, is strictly prohibited. All written material submitted by students must be their own original work; where the words and ideas of others are used they must be acknowledged. Additionally, if students receive editorial help with their writing they should also acknowledge it appropriately.

Credit will not be given for work containing plagiarism, and plagiarism can lead to failure of a course. Faculty will report all instances of plagiarism to the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean will then collect documented details of the case and advance any recommendations for further action to the Academic Policy Committee. Through this

process the situation will be reviewed and any additional penalties that may be warranted (up to and including expulsion from the school) will be determined.

For clarity as to what constitutes plagiarism, the following description is provided:

1. Word for word plagiarism: (a) the submission of another person's work as one's own; (b) the submission of a commercially prepared paper; (c) the submission of work from a source which is not acknowledged by a footnote or other specific reference in the paper itself; (d) the submission of any part of another person's work without proper use of quotation marks.



2. Plagiarism by paraphrase: (a) mere re-arrangement of another person's works and phrases does not make them your own and also constitutes plagiarism; (b) paraphrasing another person's words, ideas, and information without acknowledging the original source from which you took them is also plagiarism.

See Part II of Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, (7th Edition, University of Chicago Press, 2007) for an explanation of the proper ways to acknowledge the work of others and to avoid plagiarism.

3. Reuse of your own work: Coursework submitted for credit in one course cannot be submitted for credit in another course. While technically not plagiarism, this type of infraction will be treated in the same manner as plagiarism and will be subject to the same penalties. If you are using small amounts of material from a previous submitted work, that work should be referenced appropriately. When a student is writing their final program requirement (paper, project or thesis) it may be appropriate, with their advisor's permission, to include portions of previously submitted materials if properly referenced.

CLASS OUTLINE:

CLASS #	DATE	TOPIC & READINGS
1	1/21	INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS BIOGRAPHY? and ARABIA BEFORE ISLAM <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brown, VSI, 78-85• Sean Anthony, <i>Muhammad and the Empires of Faith</i> (UC Press, 2020), 235-240.• Lings, Ch.1-14 (p. 1-43)• (Khalidi, 1-19), (Hitti, 1-20)
2	1/28	THE MAKKAN PERIOD <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lings, Ch. 15-36 (p. 44-120) (Walid Saleh, "The Arabian Context of Muhammad's Life," <i>CCM</i> , 21-38)

3	2/4	<p>THE EMIGRATION TO MADINA, AND EARLY BATTLES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lings, Ch. 37-45, 48-52 (p. 121-167, 172-175) • Michael Lecker, ‘Glimpses of Muhammad’s Medinian Decade” in CCM, 61-82 <p> The Constitution of Madina, http://www.rogerlouismartinez.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Constitution-of-Medina.pdf</p>
4	2/11	<p>LATER BATTLES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lings, Ch. 58-61, 63, 66-67 (p. 212-241, 245-247, 255-264, 290-316) • Adil Salahi, (“The Fate of the Qurayza Jews”), <i>Muhammad</i>, 247-257
5	2/18	<p>THE FINAL YEARS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lings, Ch. 72-75 (p. 334-362) <p>THE PROPHET’S PERSON, CHARACTER AND FAMILY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safi, 140-152, 269-273 • Khalidi, 96-100, 104-123
6	2/25	<p>LOVING THE PROPHET: THE CARTOON CONTROVERSY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safi, 263-269, 273-276, 281-289 • Anne Norton, <i>On the Muslim Question</i>, 16-40 • Amir Hussain, “Images of Muhammad in Literature...” in CCM, 274 <p> Brent Singleton, <i>The Convert's Passion: An Islamic Anthology from Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain</i>, (Borgo Press, 2009), 166-167</p>
7	3/4	<p>THE PROPHET AS LAWGIVER AND LEADER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khalidi, 36-56 • Asma Afsaruddin, “Where Heaven and Earth Meet: Remembering Muhammad as Head of State,” CCM, 180-197 • Salahi, (“Muhammad: The Statesman”), 257-268 • Joseph Lowry, “The Prophet as Lawgiver...” in CCM, 83-102
8	3/11	<p>MIRACLES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khalidi, 175-207, 208-214 • Safi, (The Ascension), 165-182 • Uri Rubin, “Muhammad's Message in Mecca : Warnings, Signs and Miracles,” CCM, 39-59 • Haykal, <i>The Life of Muhammad</i>, selections on methodology from Preface to the Second Edition, lxxv-lxxxiv • (Frank Griffel, “Muslim Philosophers’ Rationalist Explanation...”: in CCM, 158-179)
9	3/18	<p>MEDIEVAL WESTERN VIEWS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Tolan, “European Accounts...” in CCM, 226-251 • Akbari, <i>Idols of the East</i>, 221-235 • Effendi, XXI-XXXIV

10	3/25	JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN VIEWS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reuven Firestone, “Jewish Views on the Birth of Islam,” <i>A History of Jewish-Muslim Relations</i>, 650-652 • Anna Moreland, <i>Muhammad Reconsidered: A Christian Perspective on Islamic Prophecy</i> (Notre Dame Press, 2020), Ch. 1 ✍ Nathaniel el-Fayyumi, <i>Garden of Wisdom</i>, 103-107 ✍ Samaw'al al-Maghribi, <i>Ifham al-Yahud</i>, selection ✍ David Benjamin Keldani (Abdul-Ahad Dawud), <i>Muhammad in the Bible</i>, selection
	4/1	NO CLASS
11	4/8	SHI'ITE AND SUFI VIEWS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khalidi, 124-150, 151-174 • Brown, VSI, 116-120 • (Shahzad Bashir, “Muhammad in Sufi Eyes...” in CCM, 201-225) • (Safi, 167-193)
12	4/15	MODERN VIEWS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown, VSI, 125-127 • Khalidi, 241-280 • Thomas Carlyle, <i>The Hero as Prophet</i>, 3-23
13	4/22	MODERN VIEWS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khalidi, 281-298 • Anne Marie Schimmel, “Prophet Muhammad in Iqbal's Thought”, <i>Islamic Studies</i>, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Dec. 1962), pp. 111-130 • (Brown, <i>Hadith</i>, 240-268) • (Kecia Ali, <i>Lives of Muhammad</i>, 200-230)
14	4/29	THE HEIRS OF THE PROPHETS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liyakat Takim, <i>The Heirs of the Prophet</i>, (SUNY, 2007), 181-184 (Concl.) • Camilla Adang, “Restoring the Prophet’s Authority” in <i>Religious Knowledge, Authority, and Charisma</i> (U. of Utah, 2013), 50-63. • Ron Shaham, “Western Scholars on the Role of the Ulama...” in <i>Guardians of Faith in Modern Times</i> (Brill, 2008), 171-192. • (Daphna Ephrat, “Spiritual Heirs of the Prophet” in <i>Religious Knowledge, Authority, and Charisma</i> (U. of Utah, 2013), 98-113.) • (Abdelkader Tayob, “Epilogue: Muhammad in the Future” in CCM, 293-308.)
	5/5	EXAM WEEK