



THEO/PHIL6333 Word of God in Christianity and Islam

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Theological and Historical Studies Division

Defend 2017

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Mission Statement

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

Core Value Focus

The seminary has five core values.

1. **Doctrinal Integrity:** Knowing that the Bible is the Word of God, we believe it, teach it, proclaim it, and submit to it. This course addresses Doctrinal Integrity specifically by preparing students to grow in understanding and interpreting of the Bible.
2. **Spiritual Vitality:** We are a worshiping community emphasizing both personal spirituality and gathering together as a Seminary family for the praise and adoration of God and instruction in His Word. Spiritual Vitality is addressed by reminding students that a dynamic relationship with God is vital for effective ministry.
3. **Mission Focus:** We are not here merely to get an education or to give one. We are here to change the world by fulfilling the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries. This course addresses Mission Focus by helping students understand the biblical foundations for fulfilling the Great Commission and the Great Commandments.
4. **Characteristic Excellence:** What we do, we do to the utmost of our abilities and resources as a testimony to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Characteristic Excellence is addressed by preparing students to excel in their ability to interpret Scripture, which is foundational to effective ministry.
5. **Servant Leadership:** We follow the model of Jesus and exert leadership and influence through the nurture and encouragement of those around us. Servant Leadership is modeled by classroom department.

The core value focus for this academic year is Characteristic Excellence.

Curriculum Competencies

NOBTS faculty members realize that all ministers need to develop specific competencies if they are going to have an effective ministry. To increase the likelihood of NOBTS graduates having an effective ministry, the faculty developed a competency-based curriculum after identifying seven essential competencies necessary for effective ministry. All graduates are expected to have at least a minimum level of competency in all of the following areas:

1. **Biblical Exposition:** to interpret and communicate the Bible accurately.
2. **Christian Theological Heritage:** To understand and interpret Christian theological heritage and Baptist polity for the church.
3. **Disciple Making:** To stimulate church health through mobilizing the church for missions, evangelism, discipleship, and church growth.
4. **Interpersonal Skills:** To perform pastoral care effectively, with skills in communication and conflict management.
5. **Servant Leadership:** To serve churches effectively through team ministry.
6. **Spiritual and Character Formation:** To provide moral leadership by modeling and mentoring Christian character and devotion.
7. **Worship Leadership:** To facilitate worship effectively.

The curriculum competencies addressed in this course are: *Biblical Exposition, Theological and Historical Perspective, Servant Leadership, Interpersonal Relationship, and Disciple Making.*

Course Description

This course is designed to expose the students to Islamic beliefs about prophecy and divine books. Special emphasis will be placed on understanding the complexity of beliefs surrounding the Qur'an. Students also will explore current theories for the origin of the present Qur'anic text. The desired outcome is that each student will be equipped to construct negative apologetic arguments in response to Islamic teachings about the Qur'an and the Bible.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course the student will

- Be prepared to compare cognitively and connotatively Islamic views of the Qur'an and Christian views of the Bible and Jesus Christ as Word of God.
- Be familiar with the Islamic views of revelation and the primary Qur'anic basis for these beliefs.
- Comprehend the relationships of Islamic culture which limit and shape Muslim views of the Bible.
- Appreciate the Islamic reverence for their book.
- Be familiar with the current arguments (both Muslim and non-Muslim) about the origin and codification of the Qur'an.
- Be equipped with skills to better engage in Christian apologetics with Muslims.

Course Teaching Methodology

The course will involve the following methodologies:

- Students will conduct guided research on subjects within the general topic of Islamic teachings concerning special revelation, the contrast between the God of the Bible and Allah in respect to revelatory content, the role of a prophet, Jesus as a Muslim prophet, validity of other heavenly books, codification of the Qur'an, historical problems with content of the Qur'an and the general nature of the Qur'an.
- Students will assimilate large sections of readings both on-line and in print books and articles as well as view lectures and view on-line video content.
- Students will participate in discussions of lectures, readings, audio and video materials.
- Students will critique and engage in constructing negative apologetic arguments concerning the Islamic doctrine of revelation.

Textbooks

The Holy Bible: your preferred English version.

The Qur'an: your preferred English version.

Dashti, 'Ali. *23 Years: A Study of the Prophetic Career of Mohammad translated by F. R. C. Bagley*. Costa Mesa, Ca: Mazda Publishers, 1994.

Esack, Farid. *The Qur'an: A User's Guide*. Oxford: One World, 2005.

Mattson, Ingrid. *The Story of the Qur'an: Its History and Place in Muslim Life*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008.

McAuliffe, Jane Dammen, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to The Qur'an*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

www.thesabiil.com Dr. Mike Edens, developer, Sept. 2013

Recommended Text

Wansbrough, John. *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*. Amherst: Prometheus, 2004.

Course Requirements

1. Each student will attend either in person or by mp3 recordings all plenary sessions and 50% of the breakout sessions of Defend 17. Students will write a ½ page response to each of the plenary sessions and 5 of the breakout sessions. **15% of final grade**
2. Reading report of the three required texts. **Due no later than Midnight March 20** by attachment to an email sent to medens@nobts.edu and cced to chaplainmatthewbryant@gmail.com subject line should include the course number and the assignment name.

The Grading Rubric:

- a. 3-11 points will be granted for a basic information (parts 1 and 2 of the review).
- b. An additional (to the basic 11 points from a.) range of 1-14 points will be granted for significant evidence of interaction with the author's intent and critic of utilitarian nature of the source.

The 3 elements on which the points will be assigned

1. 1-5 points will be assigned for communication of the purpose and thesis of the sources,
2. 1-5 points will be assigned for coherence of assessment of the author's intent and strategy.
3. ½-1 point for grammar and general presentation.

Content elements will be equally weighted. (Excellent (full credit), good (higher middle value) average (lower middle value) or needs much additional work (1 point) **25% of final grade**

3. Accessing Black Board content and meaningful interaction with discussion topics.
 - a. Up to 10% will be granted for meaningful participation in all discussion boards.
 - b. Up to 15% will be granted based monitored access to videos and power point presentations in the Black Board shell.**25% of final grade**
4. Research and report on an element within the 6 lectures concerning the subject presented in breakout sessions during Defend 17.. **Due no later than Midnight April 3, 2017** by attachment to an email sent to medens@nobts.edu and cced to chaplainmatthewbryant@gmail.com subject line should include the course number and the assignment name.
 - a. Each student will select one of the issues identified below or propose in writing other topics which are directly connected to a lecture presented in Defend 17. In either case the research topic must be submitted in writing by email to medens@nobts.edu and cced to chaplainmatthewbryant@gmail.com no later than **Jan 6, 2017 at Midnight**. The subject line of the email must contain PHIL/THEO6333 Defend17 Research Topic
 - b. Students will research the matter with regard to history and diversity of the issue in Islam, the impact of the issue on Muslim life and culture, impact of the issue on Muslim receptivity of the Gospel and proposals for individual and corporate Christian response to the issue. Students may propose in writing other topics which are directly connected to a lecture presented in Defend 17.
 - c. The grade is composed of 5 equal elements:
 1. Evaluation of the Presentation as a whole
 2. Sources of material (width, depth, and variety of resources)
 3. Use of materials (understanding, analysis and synthesis of the original sources)
 4. Coherence and feasibility of the strategy and argument of the work
 5. Effective comprehension and synthesis of the issues and research sources
 - d. Possible Research Issues:
 - i. The Qur'an professes to be a continuation of the Bible in revealing God's will for humanity.

- ii. Abrogation, or superseding, in reference to Islamic revelation has several meanings but common Muslims see the Qur'an as abrogating the Bible
 - iii. The Qur'an identifies Jesus, *ISA*, as a great prophet, faithful Muslim, who is not divine.
 - iv. The Qur'an identifies the Gospel, *Injiil*, as a book confirming books which came before it, which was sent down to Jesus.
 - v. Allah, the god of Islam, is said to be the God of the Christians and Jews; however, his character varies.
 - vi. Historical facts are ignored or denied in the Qur'an which is God-speech. (ie in the Qur'an, Mary, the mother of Jesus, is also Mariam—same name in Arabic-- the sister of Moses and Aaron)
 - vii. The Qur'an is a reproduction of an eternal tablet with Allah which is a warning to all humanity in all cultures. Yet the content has large portions devoted to the management of Muhammad's unique family.
 - viii. The Qur'an is only in Arabic yet the Arabic of the Qur'an is not pure. What does this say of Allah's "culture."
 - ix. Each language group is said to have a prophet in their language. Yet the Aramaic speaking Jewish nation of Jesus' day is said to revive a Greek book name—*Injiil*.
 - x. Student proposal
- e. Grading Rubric:

The grading of the project is divided into two parts:

I. Content is assessed in three ways (each representing 30% of the grade for the project)

- a. The diversity of research sources cited in the bibliography and documented in footnotes.
- b. The thesis of the research paper and demonstrated unity and coherence of the strategy to fulfill the research purpose.
- c. The integration of source material into the thesis of the paper.

II. The second portion of the grading is based in proper style and form. 10% of the grade is derived from this content.

35% of final grade

Evaluation of Grade

The student's grade will be computed as follows:

Attending plenary sessions	15%
Reading Report	25%
Blackboard discussions	25%
Research Report	35%

Course Policies

Appropriate Behavior

Each student is expected to demonstrate appropriate Christian behavior when working with and communicating with others. The student is expected to interact with other students in a fashion that will promote learning and respect for the opinions of others in the course. A spirit of Christian charity is expected at all times.

Academic Honesty Policy

All graduate and undergraduate NOBTS students, whether on-campus, internet, or extension center students, are expected to adhere to the highest Christian standard of honesty and integrity when completing academic assignments for all courses in every delivery system format. The Bible provides our standard for academic integrity and honesty. This standard applies whether a student is taking tests, quizzes, or exams, writing papers, completing Discussion Boards, or performing any other course requirement

Technical Assistance

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Blackboard Learning Management System NOBTS.Blackboard.com.
3. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

[Other paragraphs might be included, such as: expectations for reading assignments, policy on late assignments, academic honesty, classroom demeanor, extra credit]

Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer.

Plagiarism on Written Assignments

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

Course Schedule

Unit 1: Basic understanding of the Islamic view of Special Revelation (the Qur’an)

1. The nature of Islamic defense of the Qur’an in its claims to be divine revelation.

-The Qur’an claims all heavenly books were intended to establish Islamic religious practice and community in their day and were consistent with the Qur’anic content. In the blackboard assignment for this week, we will identify the marks of Islamic religious community and ask you to seek comparable Biblical material to text this assertion.

2. Historic Islamic strategies to defend the Qur’an as divine revelation are examined.

-How disputes were presented and resolved
-Definitions which developed

3. Current Islamic strategies to defend the Qur’an as divine revelation are examined.

Unit 2: The Office of Prophet in Islam

1. Islam recognizes all the prophets of Biblical revelation until Jesus, also identified as a prophet, and many Arabian prophets culminating with Muhammad.

-What is the prophetic role in Islam?
- How is the Muslim role of prophet comparable and different from Biblical prophets?
- How does the Qur’an “employ” the work and names of Biblical prophets?

2. The concept of abrogation.

Unit 3: Implications of the Muslim conception of the Qur’an as pure word of Allah

The uniqueness of the Qur’an in terms of revelation

- What is the Qur’anic assessment of the human condition and Allah’s response?
- How does the god of Islam relate to the action of revelation? What is his purpose in revealing and what is he revealing? What is the vehicle or means of revelation and is there human content in revelation?

Unit 4: Exploration of arguments for the apparent borrowed content of the Qur’an

Unit 5: Comparison of the Christian and Muslim concepts of Word of God

Compare and contrast Christian and Islamic concepts of Word of God.

- The concept of revelation and Word of God differ between the two communities. This is true with regard to the Bible and the eternal second person of the Trinity born of Mary-Jesus Christ
- The nature and use of the Qur’an in Islam differs from the Bible in striking ways. Muslims believe that it is an exact copy of the Book with their god. It is not read for meaning but memorized to quote back to god in worship. Subtle combinations with the Sunni view of Revelation which has been presented to this point will be observed in the following religious expressions: Shi’a, Sufi, Alawite, Ahmadiyya, Druze and Baha’i

Unit 6: Beginnings of apologetic arguments based in comparisons and contrasts between Christian and Islamic concepts of word of God

The Islamic Concept of the Qur'an as Word of God and internal contradictions.

- Sections of the Qur'an appear to be in conflict with the Islamic concept of revelation which requires all content to be "word of God." The Islamic Concept of Continuity of heavenly books (Moses' Torah, David's Zabur, and Jesus' Injil) contrasted with the Islamic Doctrine of Abrogation.
- The Qur'an claims continuity with the Bible. What are the central concepts of Islam and can parallel content be found in the Bible?
- The Qur'an claims all heavenly books were intended to establish Islamic religion practice and community in their day. What are the marks of Islamic community and is there Biblical content pointing to such community?

Selected Bibliography

Primary Sources

The Holy Bible

The Qur'an

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Electronic resources

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www.thesabiiil Dr. Michael H. Edens August 2013