OBJECTIVES
This course aims to explore the basic teachings of the Qur'an, its place among Muslims around the world, and the state of Qur'anic Studies today. Students are expected to gain insights into scriptural discourses, religio-spiritual manifestations, and diverse hermeneutical perspectives, as well as to sharpen their analytical, critical, and comparative skills. Being interdisciplinary by nature, the course combines a number of approaches, including literary, historical, sociological, psychological, philosophical, and mystical ones.

READINGS:
♦ Paul Myhre, ed., Introduction to Religious Studies (2009) [This text will introduce you to the academic field of Religious Studies];
♦ The Qur'an, A New Translation by M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (Oxford 2005);
♦ Fazlur Rahman, Major Themes of the Qur'an (1994 or 2009);
♦ Several short articles announced in class and then made available on Blackboard.

REQUIREMENTS:
♦ Three exams (20%+20%+25%=65%): tf, m/c, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and essay questions;
♦ Reaction paper/report (minimum 7 pages, 20%); instructions are posted on Blackboard under Assignments;
♦ Creative projects and/or group oral exams (15%): some spontaneous and others scheduled.

POLICIES:
The Blackboard System (www.blackboard.sdsu.edu)
The use of Blackboard is MANDATORY and you will be unable to get credit for the class without it. The lecture outlines, assignments, and other forums are regularly posted on Blackboard. In addition, all communications are transmitted through Blackboard. You are also encouraged to communicate with classmates on the DISCUSSION BOARD especially if you are participating in a group project or any other class activity.
Make sure that your computer and software programs are compatible with Blackboard at all times.

Attendance:
You are expected to attend lectures regularly; this is not negotiable. Recurrent absences will result in an early withdrawal from the course or a final "F" for the class. In case of absence, please obtain lecture notes from another student in the class, but remember that the notes of someone else may not guarantee your understanding of missed lectures. Missing lectures, or being late to lectures, will certainly jeopardize your chances to participate in the in-class projects and/or group oral exams, answer exam questions and, subsequently, obtain credit for the course.

Lecture Notes and Outlines:
Lecture notes cannot and will NOT be posted on Blackboard. This is not an on-line course. Lecture outlines, on the other hand, will be available on Blackboard the night before the lecture; remember that they are NOT sufficient for understanding the content of lectures, let alone the spontaneous discussions and other in-class activities; all three exams will include some questions derived from such discussions and activities.

Office:
I am available ONLY during office hours and look forward to discussing with you class requirements, topics covered, or any other concerns you may have about the class. If office hours are inconvenient, please talk to me before/after class to make an appointment. Please DO NOT leave notes/messages on/under my office door.
Note that there will be NO office hours during final exams week.

Phone:
You are welcome to call my office phone number if necessary, but ONLY during office hours.
Please DO NOT leave voicemail or messages with colleagues and department personnel.

E-mail:
E-mails are answered in the order received and, therefore, if your e-mail necessitates a response, be patient and wait for a couple of days before you assume it went unnoticed; thus, re-send it only after two days. More importantly, in an age of spam e-mails, unidentifiable e-mails will be unopened and deleted instantly; "unidentifiable e-mails" means e-mails without full name & class number in the SENDER and/or SUBJECT space. Thus, if you do not receive a response, check to see if you included full name & class number in the SENDER and/or SUBJECT space.

Laptops, cell phones, and other Electronics:
NOT ALLOWED during lectures; thus, turn them off and put them away, NO EXCEPTIONS.

see back for schedule
LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE:

Note that although I will highlight some of the most important points in the readings, I will not discuss the readings during the lecture time; I firmly believe that lectures and in-class discussions are meant to transcend the scope of the readings and delve into issues and perspectives we as a class come to realize and value as the semester progresses.

Note that the chapters in Myhre are intended to familiarize you with the academic discourse in religious studies in general and to help you utilize methods, approaches, and terminologies for the in-class discussions and for writing your paper; similarly, note also that the Qur’anic readings are assigned NOT based on the topics discussed every week and therefore you may read the text at your own pace; make sure to be aware of the suggestive schedule below in mind. [sura=chapter]

I. PRELIMINARY DISCOURSES

1/19 Introduction to religion, scriptures, and the Qur’an?
W-1 Myhre in Myhre, “What is religion?” 3-14;
Majed in Myhre, “How is religion studied?” 15-26;

1/26 Qur’anic Studies: Past and Present
W-2 Oliver in Myhre, “Religion as ‘truth-claims,’” 41-52;
Qur’an, Suras 1-4, pp.1-66.

2/2 Pre-Qur’anic Arabian Society and Religion
W-3 Haleem, “Introduction,” pp. ix-xxxviii;
Qur’an, Suras 5-6, pp. 67-93.

2/9 Muhammad and Revelation
W-4 Rahman, pp. 80-105;
Jacobsen in Myhre, “Sacred words, stories, writings, and books,” 53-66;
Qur’an, Suras 7-8, pp. 94-115.

EXAM I: (20%): tf, mc, fl/b, and short answer questions.

2/16 Time, Place, and Revelation
W-5 Plate in Myhre, “An Aesthetic approach to religion,” 67-78;
Rahman, pp. 132-49;
Qur’an, Suras 9-11, pp. 116-44.

2/23 Recitation and Memorization
W-6 Hotz in Myhre, “Ritual studies,” 194-209;

3/1 Compilation and Canonization
W-7 Rahman, pp. 150-61;

3/8 Interpretation (Tafsir) and Commentary
W-8 See Interpretation postings on Blackboard;
Qur’an, Suras 21-25, pp. 203-31;

3/15 Translation and Interpretation
W-9 See Translation postings on Blackboard

II. SELECTED QUR’ANIC THEMES

3/22 God and Worship
W-10 Rahman, pp. 1-16;
Qur’an, Suras 34-39, pp. 272-300.

EXAM II (20%): tf, mc, fl/b, and short answer questions.

---Spring Recess---

4/5 Cosmology and Eschatology
W-11 Rahman, pp. 65-79, 106-20;
Qur’an, Suras 40-50, pp. 301-342.

4/12 Good and Evil
W-12 Rahman, pp. 121-31;
Weaver in Myhre, “Violence and religion,” 97-114;
See Jihad postings on Blackboard;
Qur’an, Suras 51-63, pp. 343-375.

4/19 Law and Society
W-13 Hill in Myhre, “Religious ethics, moral values, and standards for human conduct,” 79-96;
Bhattacharyya in Myhre, “Social activism and engagement,” 115-34;
Rahman, pp. 17-36, 37-64;
Qur’an, Suras 64-79, pp. 376-408.

4/26 The Bible and its Peoples
W-14 Rahman, pp. 162-70;
Adam in Myhre, “Technology and religion,” 163-75;
Stratton in Myhre, “Studying science and religion,” 176-93;
Qur’an, Suras 80-95, pp. 409-427.

PAPER IS DUE: 5/3 (20%)

5/3 The Environment and Human Responsibility
See ecology postings on Blackboard;
Qur’an, Suras 96-114, pp. 428-446.

5/10 EXAM III:
 tf, mc, fl/b, short answer, and essay questions.