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**Religious Studies 3121A - Introduction to Islamic Ethics**

**Faculty of Theology**

**Fall 2021**

**Instructor:** Ingrid Mattson, PhD

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\*Note that email is the preferred method of communication.

Office Hours: by appointment on zoom

**Time and Days:**  Wednesday 6:00 – 8:30 pm **Room:** W104

**Prerequisites:** One RS or TH Islamic Studies course at or above the 1000-level or previous extensive knowledge of Islam.

**Course Description****:** Islamic ethical reasoning is a holistic approach to living in this world, reconciling the principles and tools of Islamic law with the responsive spirit of the Qur’an and the exemplary conduct (the *Sunnah*) of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. In this class, we will examine the beliefs, principles and priorities of Islamic ethical reasoning. Students will practice articulating and critiquing ethical positions within this discursive tradition through discussion, collaborative presentations and written assignments.

**Learning Outcomes -** By the end of this class you should be able to:

* Describe the authority Islamic theological ethics gives to human reason and “the heart” in ethical deliberations, as well as the significance of “fitra” in determining the human capacity for ethical reasoning.
* Articulate the major ethical themes found in the Qur’an and the Sunna.
* Explain the historical and theological reason why diversity of opinion is a feature of Islamic ethical discourse.
* Describe the five major maxims (*qawāʾid*) and purposes (*maqāṣid)* of the Sacred Path and how they are invoked in Islamic ethical reasoning.
* Demonstrate an ability to support and critique a position on a disputed ethics policy or position using the discursive tradition of Islamic ethical reasoning

**Textbook and Course Materials:** No textbook needed. Readings will be uploaded to OWL class site.

**Assignments & Method of Evaluation:**

1. Weekly attendance 10%
2. Participation in online forum (20%)
3. Collaborative mini-case study – persuasive presentation (20 %)
4. Oral presentation of research for ethics paper (20%)
5. Research paper on topic in Islamic ethics (30%)

**Attendance:** There are 13 weeks of classes. You must be present in 11 of those classes to earn full points. 2 points will be deducted from your attendance grade for each class missed after that.

**Online Forum:** Each Thursday I will post 1-3 questions on the online forum based on the previous day’s lecture and discussion (including discussion of the readings) or presentation by another student. You must make two postings by answering one of those questions and responding to another student’s post or answer two of the questions. This must be completed by Sunday at noon.

**Collaborative mini-case study:** During the last class before Reading Week, the professor will distribute a list of scenarios involving an ethical dilemma or conflict. Collaborate with one or two other students to choose one of the scenarios. You and your partner(s) will present your case in the class after Reading Week. You will have 15 minutes to present your case using Islamic ethical reasoning. Other students will respond with questions and critiques for 10 minutes. You must submit a one-page list of terms invoked and sources used to the professor on the day of the presentation.

**Oral presentation of research on a contested topic in Islamic Ethics:** A 15-minute presentation on your research topic; ten minutes for Q & A. Presentation much include the following:

* Identify the topic and why you chose it
* Explain necessary context and facts
* Map out the Islamic ethics discourse surrounding this topic
* Identify particular areas of tension and their sources
* Critically assess available arguments and positions
* Suggest a preferred solution or way forward to resolution if possible
* Give a list of sources cited and consulted
* Listen to suggestions from the class and respond to feedback

**Research paper on a topic in Islamic Ethics:** In this 12-15-page paper, you will present your final research in written form. Check “Mattson Writing Guidelines” in the Resources folder on OWL for technical information and tips for writing a good paper. See below for list of suggested research topics.

**Syllabus/Class Schedule**

**\*Note: changes may be made once class has begun**

**September 8 – Introduction to Islamic Ethics**

* Determine Class Community Guidelines
* Discuss Assignments and Methods of Evaluation
* Lecture: Human Capacities and Resources for Moral Reasoning

**September 15 – Moral Themes in the Qur’an**

* Read: Fazlur Rahman, “Man as Individual,” Chapter 2 of *Major Themes of the Qur’an.*
* Read: Fazlur Rahman, “Man in Society,” Chapter 3 of *Major Themes of the Qur’an.*
* MA Students read: A. Kevin Reinhart, “Ethics and the Qur’an,” *Encyclopedia of the Qur’an,* General Editor Jane D. McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2002),v. 2, 55-79.

**September 22 – The Sunnah as a Source of Islamic Ethics**

* For those who have not taken a *hadith* course, please read: Jonathan A.C. Brown, “The Prophet’s Words, then and Now: Hadith and its Terminology,” Chapter 1 of *Hadith: Muhammad’s Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World,* 2nd edition(Oneworld, 2017).
* Read: Lawrence Rosen, “Muhammad’s Sociological Jurisprudence,” Chapter 10 from *The Justice of Islam.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 176-186.
* MA Students read: Ibn Ashur*,* "The Prophet's Intent,” selection from Chapter 6, *Treatise on Maqāṣid al-Shariʿah.*

**September 29 – Legal Reasoning – Major Sources and Methods**

* Read: A. Kevin Reinhart," Islamic Law as Islamic Ethics," *Journal of Religious Ethics*, vol. 11/2 (Fall 1983), 186-203.
* MA Students read: Wael Hallaq, “Groundwork of the Moral Law: A New Look at the Qur’an and the Genesis of Sharīʽa,” pp 256-278.

**October 6 – Diversity and the Ethics of Disagreement in Islam**

* Read: Taha Jabir Alwani, Chapters 2 & 3 of *The Ethics of Disagreement in Islam*
* Read: Musa Furber, “Reducing the Role of Decision-Making Biases in Muslim Responsa,” Tabah Analytic Brief, No. 12. Abu Dhabi, U.A.E.: Tabah Foundation, 2012.

**October 13 –**  **Legal “Maxims” or “Canons” (*Qawāʾid*)**

* Read: Umar Abd-Allah, “Living Islam with Purpose,” pp. 23-36.
* Read: Mehrunisha Suleman and Aziz Sheikh, “Islam and COVID-19: Understanding the Ethics of Decision Making During a Pandemic,” [Islam and COVID-19: Understanding the ethics of decision making during a pandemic (jogh.org)](http://www.jogh.org/documents/2021/jogh-11-03049.htm).
* MA Students read: Abul Fadl Mohsin Ebrahim and Aasim I. Padela, “The Islamic Juridical Principle of Dire Necessity (*al-ḍarūra*) and Its Application to the Field of Biomedical Interventions,” in *Medicine and Shariah: A Dialogue in Islamic Bioethics,* edited by Aasim I. Padela (University of Notre Dame Press, 2021): 57-70.

**October 20 –** **“Priorities” or “Goals” (*Maqāṣid)* of the Sacred Path**

* Read: Umar Abd-Allah, “Living Islam with Purpose,” pp. 18-22.
* TH 5213 and MA Students read: Ingrid Mattson, “Gender and Sexuality in Islamic Bioethics,” in *Islamic Bioethics, Current Issues and Challenges,* edited by Alireza Bagheri and Khalid Alali (New Jersey: World Scientific Publishing, 2017), 57-84.

**October 27 - The Relationship Between Individual and Collective Responsibilities**

* Zainab Alwani, *Kafāla:* The Qur’anic-Prophetic Model of Orphan Care,” in *The Journal of Islamic Faith and Practice,* Vol. 3, Issue 1 (2020), 4-30.
* Ingrid Mattson, “Of Fences and Neighbors: An Islamic Perspective on Interfaith Engagement for Peace,” written for the Dunedin Abrahamic Interfaith Group, 2013.
* MA Students read: Reading from Adnan Zulfiqar, *Collective Duties (Fard Kifāya) in Islamic Law: The Moral Community, State Authority and Ethical Speculation in the Premodern Period,* 2018 University of Pennsylvania PhD dissertation.

**November 3 – Reading Week – no class**

**November 10 – Collaborative Mini Case Study Presentation (RS 3121 Students)**

* TH 5213/MA Students must be present to give feedback to students presenting.
* TH 5213/MA students read: Cyrus Zargar, “Virtue and Manliness in Islamic Ethics,” in *Journal of Islamic Ethics* 4 (2020): 1-7; and, Zahra Ayubi, “De-Universalizing Male Normativity: Feminist Methodologies for Studying Masculinity in Premodern Islamic Ethics Texts,” in *Journal of Islamic Ethics* 4 (2020): 66-97.

**November 17 – TH 5213/MA Book Report Presentations**

* All students must be present and attentive; this week’s forum will engage with the topics discussed and presented in the book reports.
* RS 3121 Students read: “The Islamic View of Consumption and Material Development in the Light of Environmental Pollution,” in *Islam, Christianity and the Environment*, Mabda English Monograph Series no. 9 (Amman, Jordan: Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, 2011), 1-17.

**November 24 – Contemporary Applications**

* Read: Khaled Abou El Fadl, “Islamic Ethics, Human Rights and Migration,” in Ray Jureidini and Said Fares Hassan, eds., Migration and Islamic Ethics (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2020): 13-27.
* Read: Judgment Sheet in the Islamabad High Court, Islamabad (Judicial Department) W.P. No. 1155/2019 “Islamabad Wildlife Management Board through its Chairman versus Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad through its Mayor and 4 others.”

**December 1 – Case Study Presentations**

**December 8 – Case Study Presentations**

**\*December 15:** Final Papers Due

**Examples of Possible Topics for Presentations and Research Papers (Just to give you an idea…)**

1. **Community Ethics/Social Justice**

* Is the death penalty in contemporary nation-states ethical?
* With an aging population, what are the ethical guidelines for allotting health-care resources?
* What should be done with juvenile offenders in the criminal justice system?
* What would an ethical migrant workers’ policy look like?
* What are the ethics of participation for religious scholars in state-sponsored consultations, conferences and advisory boards?

1. **Family Life and Sexuality**

* Adoption: Does the religious community have an obligation to facilitate and encourage it?
* Polygamy: Can it ever be ethical in a nation-state in a modern nation state?
* LGBTQ: Should Muslims support marriage equality? What are the community’s ethical obligations to LGBTQ Muslims?
* Elder care: Is there a communal obligation to support the elderly? All of them? How might this be done?

# Political Ethics

# What are the ethical obligations of citizenship?

* How should the mosque manage political and social justice concerns?
* Are there any ethical guidelines for political advocacy?
* What is an ethical land-use and ownership policy?
* What are the ethical obligations of settlers, immigrants, those brought to Canada involuntarily and their descendants to the Indigenous People in Canada?

1. **Ethics of War and Peace**

* Are there any absolute limits to tactics in warfare?
* Is torture of the enemy in war ever justified?
* What limits should be placed on the sale of weapons to other countries?
* Do Muslims have a communal obligation to participate in the armed services of the nations of which they are citizens?

1. **Environmental Ethics and Animal Rights**

* Can animal testing ever be ethical?
* Should for-profit companies be allowed to bottle and sell water?
* Do wild animals have the right to exist?
* How far can governments go in regulating individual consumption to stop the harmful effects of climate change?

1. **Medical Ethics**

* What are the ethics of pre-natal genetic testing and treatments?
* Organ transplantation: How should patients be prioritized? Should donors be paid?
* End of Life Care: Are there any circumstances in which it would be unethical for a Muslim health care professional to exercise a conscientious objection against participating in MAD?
* What are the Islamic ethics governing the regulation of abortion?

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**\*\*This is not a comprehensive bibliography but offers a sample of monographs that deal with Islamic Ethics.**

**Ethics and Law Databases**

* Islamic Medical and Scientific Ethics Database: [Home Page · Islamic Medical & Scientific Ethics (georgetown.domains)](http://imse.ibp.georgetown.domains/home)
* ShariaSource at Harvard Law School: [SHARIAsource](https://beta.shariasource.com/)

**Theory**

Abou El Fadl, Khaled. *Reasoning with God: Reclaiming Shariʿah in the Modern Age.* Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014.

Abou El Fadl, Khaled. *Speaking in God’s Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women.* Oxford: Oneworld, 2001.

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**Ethical Approaches to Politics, Society and Economy**

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**APPENDIX**

**HURON ACADEMIC POLICIES & REGULATIONS 2021 - 2022**

**Prerequisite and Antirequisite Information**

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that they have not completed any course antirequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

**Student Code of Conduct**

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. While in the physical or online classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf>.

**Attendance Regulations for Examinations**

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

1. A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.
2. Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Review the policy on Attendance Regulations for Examinations here: <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/attendance.pdf>.

**Statement on Academic Offences**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf>. The appeals process is also outlined in this policy as well as more generally at the following website: <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf>.

**Turnitin.com**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism.  All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

**Statement on Use of Electronic Devices**

It is not appropriate to use electronic devices (such as, but not limited to, laptops, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

**Statement on the Recording of Class Activities**

Students may not record or distribute any class activity, including conversations during office hours, without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student’s own private use.

**Academic Consideration for Missed Work**

Students who are seeking academic consideration for missed work during the semester may submit a self-reported absence form online provided that the absence is **48 hours or less** and the other conditions specified in the Senate policy at  
<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf> are met.

Students whose absences are expected to last **longer than 48 hours**, or where the other conditions detailed in the policy are not met (e.g., work is worth more than 30% of the final grade, the student has already used 2 self-reported absences, the absence is during the final exam period), may receive academic consideration by submitting a Student Medical Certificate (for illness) or other appropriate documentation (for compassionate grounds). The Student Medical Certificate is available online at  
<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf> .

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. **Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.**

Students who have conditions for which academic accommodation is appropriate, such as disabilities or ongoing or chronic health conditions, should work with Accessible Education Services to determine appropriate forms of accommodation. Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>.

**Policy on Academic Consideration for a Medical/ Non-Medical Absence**

1. **Consideration on Medical Grounds for assignments worth *less than 10%* of final grade: Consult Instructor Directly and Contact Academic Advising**

When seeking consideration on **medical grounds** for assignments worth *less than 10%* of the final course grade, and if the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported absences, the student should contact the instructor directly. The student need only share broad outlines of the medical situation. The instructor **may** require the student to submit documentation to the academic advisors, in which case she or he will advise the student and inform the academic advisors to expect documentation. If documentation is requested, the student will need to complete and submit the [Student Medical Certificate](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform_15JUN.pdf). The instructor may not collect medical documentation. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation.

1. **Consideration on Non-Medical Grounds: Consult Huron Support Services/Academic Advising, or email** [**huronsss@uwo.ca**](mailto:huronsss@uwo.ca)**.**

Students seeking academic consideration for a **non-medical** absence (e.g. varsity sports, religious, compassionate, or bereavement) will be required to provide appropriate documentation where the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence have not been met, including where the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported. All consideration requests must include a completed [Consideration Request Form](https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Forms/Academic%20Consideration%20Request%20Form%202020.pdf). Late penalties may apply at the discretion of the instructor.

Please review the full policy on Academic Consideration for medical and non-medical absence at: <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf>. Consult [Huron Academic Advising](https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/academic-advising/) at [huronsss@uwo.ca](mailto:huronsss@uwo.ca) for any further questions or information.

**Support Services**

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation, students should email an Academic Advisor in Huron’s Student Support Services at [huronsss@uwo.ca](mailto:huronsss@uwo.ca). An outline of the range of services offered is found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>.

Department Chairs, Program Directors and Coordinators are also able to answer questions about individual programs. Contact information can be found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/contact/faculty-staff-directory/>.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your workload is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor. If you are considering reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines. Please refer to the Advising website, <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/academic-advising/> or review the list of official Sessional Dates on the Academic Calendar, available here: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm>.

You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP and/or Scholarship/Bursary eligibility.

**Huron Student Support Services:** <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>

**Office of the Registrar:** <https://registrar.uwo.ca/>

**Student Quick Reference Guide**: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/#1>

**Learning Development and Success:** <https://www.uwo.ca/sdc/learning/>

**Accessible Education:** <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>

**Western USC:** <http://westernusc.ca/your-services/#studentservices>

**Mental Health & Wellness Support at Huron and Western**

University students may encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. Huron offers a variety of services that are here to support your success and wellbeing. Please visit <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life-campus/student-services/wellness-safety> for more information or contact staff directly:

**Wellness Services:** [huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca)

**Community Safety Office**: [safety@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:safety@huron.uwo.ca)

**Chaplaincy:** [gthorne@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:gthorne@huron.uwo.ca)

**Additional supports for Health and Wellness** may be found and accessed at Western through <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.