Islam and Interreligious Engagement: Sample Course Descriptions for MAR Students

Islam-Focused Courses:

**Islamic Ethics**

This course introduces central concerns, sources, and debates in Islamic ethics, and surveys a variety of subfields, including Qur'anic, prophetic, sexual, environmental, and medical ethics. Emphasis is placed on understanding the methods of Islamic ethics; connections between conceptions of the Divine, human person, and society; and how diversity, identity, and context shape ethical perspectives.

**Islamic Religious Thought**

This course introduces Islamic religious thought by exploring foundational sources, religious sciences, institutions, and debates related to theology, exegesis, law, and ethics. Emphasis is on connections and distinctions among various branches of religious thought; diversity within traditions; and major theologians, exegetes, scholars, and jurists. A foundation is provided for students focused on Islam, as well as for students seeking a robust introduction to Islam.

**Muslim Global Histories**

This course explores Islam, a religious tradition claimed by more than 1.6 billion practitioners around the globe. Our interdisciplinary approach will trace the historical development and contemporary conditions of the Islamic tradition. Viewing Islam from different perspectives offers an opportunity to experience the richness of this tradition, and interacting with primary and secondary source materials will allow students to engage with various layers of the Islamic experience.

**Never Wholly Other: Religious Diversity in Islamic Theology and Exegesis**

This course examines Islamic perspectives on religious diversity, other religious and non-religious traditions, and interreligious engagement. It involves exploration of primary Islamic sources (including the Qur’an and Hadith) and traditional and contemporary interpretations drawn from exegetical, legal, polemical, and theological discourses. Emphasis is placed on theological, exegetical, and contextual assumptions; interpretative methodologies; and on the relevance of the Islam-specific conversation to broader discussions of religious diversity and interreligious engagement.

**The Qur’an – Engaging a Sacred Text**

This course aims to introduce students to the Qur’an—the central touchstone in Islamic thought and practice—through intensive engagement with the text (in translation) and through exploration of the historical, practical and interpretative traditions surrounding the text. The course surveys
historical origins and development, highlights the Qurʾān’s pervasive role in the daily lives, rituals and artistic expressions of Muslims, and examines Qurʾānic form, content, and interpretation.

*Women, Islam, and Interpretation*

This course focuses on the complexity and diversity of Muslim women's attempts to assert agency and authority within Muslim communities. Great emphasis is placed on hermeneutical strategies, competing discourses, and identity and power negotiations. This course is relevant to students interested in Islam, in sex and gender, and/or in developing transformative interpretative strategies.

**Non-Islam Focused Courses Commonly Taken by IIE Students:**

*Religions in the City: Introduction to Interreligious Engagement*

The field of interreligious engagement is introduced through readings, site visits, spiritual practices, and self-reflection. Students aim to cultivate understanding of the phenomenon of religious diversity, central questions and concerns that arise in relation to religious diversity, and prominent approaches to this field.

*Introduction to the Bible*

This course offers an introduction to the core texts, narrative trajectories, historical backgrounds and theological concerns of the Bible as the canonical book of both Christianity and Western civilization. Key questions regarding the ethics of scriptural interpretation in the context of race, gender, class, ecology and an increasingly inter/nonreligious environment are discussed.