



# KENRICK-GLENNON

## S E M I N A R Y

### CH 555: Islam through Catholic Eyes

Fr. Michael John Witt and Dr. Sebastian Mahfood

2 credit hours

#### Course Description:

This course will endeavor to explore the relationship between Christianity and Islam beginning with *Nostra Aetate*'s statement below and compare this relationship with the myriad ways in which Catholicism encounters Islam in the world.

“The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all- powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth,(5) who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honor Mary, His virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the day of judgment when God will render their deserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting. Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.” (*Nostra Aetate*, § 3).

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#### Program Interface Goals:

Priestly Identity:	Students will gain a refined sense of their role as a public figure of religion as they explore the nuances of a religion (Islam) that has clerics and scholars, but not priests. They will gain a better understanding of the doctrinal and institutional developments of Islam and be able to contrast that with Christianity's hierarchy grounded in apostolic succession.
Priestly Spirituality:	Students will be challenged to consider their own spirituality grounded in Christ as they study another religion which honors Jesus as a prophet rather than as a divinity.
Priestly Ministry:	Students will come to know more about one of the fastest growing religions in the world today. This understanding can lead to fruitful dialogue with Muslim communities in our midst as well as dispelling commonly held misconceptions and prejudices of Muslims, Arabs, and anything regarding the Middle East.

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#### Global Vision Goals:

Interfaith Dialogue	Students will develop a better understanding of the differences
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between how Catholic's perceive Islam and how Islam perceives itself through direct interaction with Muslim imams and Islamic theorists.

Authentic Human  
Development

Students will be better able to interact with the Muslims who live among us as our globalized society increasingly brings us together.

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### Envisioned Outcomes:

- Students will develop an appreciation for the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Islamic world.
  - Students will develop an understanding of contemporary Islamic society through its history, traditions, and literature.
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### Course Requirements and Percentage Weight:

Semester Project – 50%  
Blogs – 25%  
Activities – 25%

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### Grading Scale – See Kenrick-Glennon Seminary's grading system

<http://www.kenrick.edu/kenrick/credential-program/course-listings-and-grading>

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### Classroom Procedures

The class is a seminar in which the two professors hope to facilitate student learning through a discussion-based format. Course materials are available in the student bookstore for residential students, on Amazon.com for non-residential students, and in the Blackboard course template. Students will be expected to maintain an online journal concerning their reflections on each of the weekly sessions and interact with one another and their course professors through that medium.

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### Required Texts

- Ali, Abdullah Yusuf. *The Holy Qu'ran*. Hertfordshire, England: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 2001.
- Aslan, Reza. *No God but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam*. New York: Random House, 2005.
- Rauf, Feisal Abdul. *What's Right with Islam: A New Vision for Muslims and the West*. New York: HarperOne, 2004.

Choose one from among the following or make a recommendation for a novel from a different region or era:

- Al-Shaykh, Hanan. *Beirut Blues*. New Kensington, PA: Anchor Publishing, 1996.
- Ba, Mariama. *So Long a Letter*. Trans. Modupe Bode-Thomas. Oxford and Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1989, 1980 (African Writers Series).
- Faiz, Faiz Ahmed. *Rebel's Silhouette: Selected Poems*. Trans. Agha Shahid Ali. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995, 1991.
- Farah, Nuruddin. *Sweet and Sour Milk*. St. Paul, Minnesota: Graywolf Press, 1992, 1979.
- Laye, Camara. *The Dark Child*. Trans. James Kirkup. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1954.
- Mahfouz, Naguib. *Sugar Street*. Trans. William Maynard Hutchins and Angele Botros Samaan. New Kensington, PA: Anchor Publishing, 1992, 1957.
- Rushdie, Salman. *Shalimar the Clown*. New York: Random House, 2005.

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### Recommended Texts

- Ali, Abdullah Yusuf. *The Meaning of the Holy Quran*. Beltsville, MD. Amana Publications, 2004.
- Ali, Daniel, and Robert Spencer. *Inside Islam: A Guide for Catholics*. Westchester: Ascension Press, 2003.
- Ali-Karamali, Sumbul. *The Muslim Next Door: The Qur'an, the Media, and That Veil Thing*. Ashland, OR: White Cloud Press, 2008.
- Ali, Mualana Muhammed. *The Holy Qur'an with English Translation and Commentary*. Wembley, UK: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat, 1991.
- Armstrong, Karen. *Islam: A Short History*. New York: Modern Library, 2002.
- Bergen, Peter L. *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama Bin Laden*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001.
- Egev, Tom. *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000.
- Greaves, Ron. *Aspects of Islam*. Washington, D. C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005.
- Ibrahim, Raymond. *The Al-Qaeda Reader*. New York: Doubleday, 2007.
- Jenkins, Philip. *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Kepel, Gilles. *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*. Cambridge, Ma: Belknap, 2002.
- Lewis, Bernard. *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity*. New York: HarperOne, 2002.
- Nasr, Vali. *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam will Shape the Future*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007.
- Pope Paul VI. *Nostra Aetate*. October 28, 1965. Online at [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decl\\_19651028\\_nostra-aetate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html)
- Posner, Gerald. *Why America Slept: The Failure to Prevent 9/11*. New York: Random

House, 2003.

- Owendale, Ritchie. *The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Wars*. London: Longman, 1985.
- Said, Edward. *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*. New York: Vintage, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *On Orientalism-Edward Said*. YouTube video online at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwCOSkXR\\_Cw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwCOSkXR_Cw)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1979.
- Steyn, Mark. *America Alone: The End of the World as We Know It*. Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 2006.
- Weigel, George. *The Cube and the Cathedral: Europe, America, and Politics without God*. New York: Basic Books, 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *God's Choice: Pope Benedict XVI and the Future of the Catholic Church*. New York: HarperCollins, 2005. (especially, Chapter 6, "Into the Future.")
- Ye'or, Bat. *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005.

## Class Schedule

Week 1	What is Islam? The Muslim Definition. The Catholic Truth of Islam.	Fr. Michael John Witt and Dr. Sebastian Mahfood	<p><b>Azzi, Joseph.</b> <a href="#"><i>A Christian Point of View about Islam</i></a>. Nisbey, 2000.</p> <p>Essay by Fr. Michael Witt</p> <p><a href="#">"Putting a Billion People in a Nutshell"</a> by Fr. Michael Witt</p> <p><a href="#">Islam</a>. HistoryChannel.com</p> <p><a href="#">"Pope Sparks Fury"</a> Blinkx.com</p> <p><a href="#">"Introduction to Islam"</a> by a 21-year-old Muslim YouTube.com</p>
Week 2	The Christian and Byzantine World at the Birth of Mohammed	Fr. Michael John Witt	<p><b>Aslan, Reza.</b> <i>No God but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam</i>. New York: Random House, 2005: XI-XX, 3-22.</p> <p><b>Rauf, Imam Feisal.</b> <i>What's Right with Islam</i>. New York: Harper One, 2006:1-40.</p> <p><b>Witt, Michael J.</b> Medieval Church History <a href="#">3</a>, <a href="#">4</a></p> <p><a href="#">"The Passion of Eesa"</a> -- YouTube.com</p> <p>Mhanna, Andre. <a href="#">"A Priest and a Prophet: A Study on the Origin of Islam and Its Christian Roots"</a></p> <p>Qur'anic Exercise I – Meccan vs. Medinan texts.</p>
Week 3	The Message of the Prophet and the Four Caliphs	Fr. Michael John Witt	<p><b>Aslan, Reza.</b> <i>No God but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam</i>. New York: Random House, 2005: 23-74.</p> <p><b>Witt, Michael J.</b> Medieval Church History <a href="#">9</a>, <a href="#">10</a>, <a href="#">11</a></p> <p><a href="#">"Islam: Empire of Faith -- The Messenger"</a> -- <a href="#">1</a> <a href="#">2</a> <a href="#">3</a> <a href="#">4</a> <a href="#">5</a> <a href="#">6</a> <a href="#">7</a> <a href="#">8</a> <a href="#">9</a> -- YouTube.com</p>
Week 4	Conquest: From the Invasion of Spain to the Conversion of the Turks	Fr. Michael John Witt	<p><b>Aslan, Reza.</b> <i>No God but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam</i>. New York: Random House, 2005: 75-139.</p> <p><a href="#">"Islam: Empire of Faith -- The Awakening"</a> -- <a href="#">1</a> <a href="#">2</a> <a href="#">3</a> <a href="#">4</a> <a href="#">5</a> <a href="#">6</a> <a href="#">7</a> <a href="#">8</a> -- YouTube.com</p> <p><b>Post research topic for semester project.</b></p>

<b>Week 5</b>	Cross v. Crescent: The Crusades	Fr. Michael John Witt	<b>Witt, Michael J.</b> Medieval Church History <a href="#">21</a> , <a href="#">22</a> , <a href="#">23</a> , <a href="#">24</a> , <a href="#">25</a> <a href="#">"Compilation of Western Film Clips on the Crusades"</a> -- YouTube.com <a href="#">"2nd Compilation of Western Film Clips"</a> -- YouTube.com
<b>Week 6</b>	Paradox: Judaism and Christianity in the Qu'ran	Fr. Michael John Witt	<b>Aslan, Reza.</b> <i>No God but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam.</i> New York: Random House, 2005: 140-219. <b>Rauf, Imam Feisal.</b> <i>What's Right with Islam.</i> New York: Harper One, 2006:41-77.
<b>Week 7</b>	Battle for the Mediterranean and the World: What Went Wrong	Fr. Michael John Witt	<b>Rauf, Imam Feisal.</b> <i>What's Right with Islam.</i> New York: Harper One, 2006: 173-249. <b>Witt, Michael J.</b> Modern Church History <a href="#">21</a> , <a href="#">22</a>
<b>Week 8</b>	Western Imperialism or Global Christian Evangelization?	Fr. Michael John Witt Dr. Sebastian Mahfood	<b>Aslan, Reza.</b> <i>No God but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam.</i> New York: Random House, 2005: 220-248. <b>Said, Edward.</b> <i>Covering Islam.</i> New York: Vintage Books, 1997: 162-173. <a href="#">[Link to PDF]</a> <b>Witt, Michael J.</b> Modern Church History <a href="#">49</a> , <a href="#">50</a> <b>Post Resource List for semester project.</b>
<b>Week 9</b>	The First World War and Pan-Arab Dreaming	Fr. Michael John Witt	<b>Witt, Michael J.</b> Modern Church History <a href="#">71</a> , <a href="#">72</a> , <a href="#">73</a> Read first half of chosen novel.
<b>Week 10</b>	Secularism and the Muslim Brotherhood	Fr. Michael John Witt Dr. Sebastian Mahfood	<b>Rauf, Imam Feisal.</b> <i>What's Right with Islam.</i> New York: Harper One, 2006: 113-172. <b>Witt, Michael J.</b> Modern Church History <a href="#">76</a> Read second half of chosen novel.
<b>Week 11</b>	Twentieth Century Expressions I	Dr. Sebastian Mahfood	<b>Fanon, Franz.</b> Excerpt from <i>A Dying Colonialism</i> by (" <a href="#">Voice of Algeria</a> ") <b>HistoryChannel.com</b> " <a href="#">Jean Baillard on the Algerian War</a> " A discussion of the novels.
<b>Week 12</b>	Semester Project Presentation	Dr. Sebastian Mahfood	<b>Deliver Class Presentation for Semester Project.</b>
<b>Week 13</b>	Qutb, Mawdudi, and Radical Islamists: The New Caliphate Dream	Fr. Michael John Witt	<b>Aslan, Reza.</b> <i>No God but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam.</i> New York: Random House, 2005: 249-266. <b>Rauf, Imam Feisal.</b> <i>What's Right with Islam.</i> New York: Harper One, 2006: 251-280. <b>Witt, Michael J.</b> Modern Church History <a href="#">77</a> , <a href="#">78</a> , <a href="#">79</a>
<b>Week 14</b>	Shi'ah Ascendancy	Fr. Michael John Witt	<b>Greaves, Ron.</b> <i>Aspects of Islam.</i> Washington, D. C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005: 96-117. <a href="#">"Shah Flees Iran"</a> HistoryChannel.com (52 secs)

			" <a href="#">Ayatollah Arrives in Iran</a> " HistoryChannel.com (51 secs)
<b>Week 15</b>	Can We All Live Together?	Fr. Michael John Witt Dr. Sebastian Mahfood	<b>Mhanna, Andre.</b> <a href="#">"The Prospects for Co-Existence of these Two Religions in the Third Millennium"</a> <b>Rauf, Imam Feisal.</b> <i>What's Right with Islam</i> . New York: Harper One, 2006: 281-284. <b>Witt, Michael J.</b> Modern Church History <a href="#">80</a> <b>3- to 4-page analysis of semester project topic due.</b>

## Semester Project

Concerning the semester project, the following schedule applies:

- 1) Pick a research topic on some aspect of current events (Iran, Afghanistan, Nigeria, the United States, etc.) in the Islamic world by Week 4
- 2) Provide a list of the resources to develop it by Week 8 (Turabian format) – include one of the recommended novels or select your own, two of the recommended readings, and three sources outside those on this syllabus
- 3) Develop a presentation for class via a website on your topic by Week 12 (Upload your presentation by the beginning of the week and interact with your classmates through a discussion forum designated for it.)
- 4) Write up a 3- to 4-page analysis of your topic by Week 15.

These dates are meant to help pace you through the project, but you can do any of the parts in advance if you like.

### Some Online Resources:



#### "Myth Today" -- Roland Barthes

Barthes talks about myth as depoliticized speech and instructs us on the pitfalls of becoming readers of myth (or mythologists).

<http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/~marton/myth.html>



#### "Muslim Networks, Muslim Selves in Cyberspace: Islam in the Post-Modern Public Sphere" Jon W. Anderson - Catholic University of America -

<http://www.mafhoum.com/press3/102S22.htm>