

Abilene Christian University

BMIS 458
Cross and Crescent
Fall 2010
ACU Study Abroad Program- Oxford campus

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Mission

ACU Mission: To educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.

College of Biblical Studies Mission: To provide leadership, preparation, and resources for effective worldwide ministry in the cause of Christ.

Department of Bible, Missions and Ministry: To provide Biblical training, Christian spiritual formation, and a Christian worldview for every student in the university.

BMIS 458, Cross and Crescent (McVey) **Primary Audience:** The course is aimed at missions and ministry students, but students of all majors are welcome. The course content will be especially relevant for those in cross-cultural ministry training; however, the course design will be such that all majors can benefit from the spiritual principles and relevancy of the topics.

Course Description: This course is designed to acquaint students with relevant issues related to the cultural/religious/political/historical context today between the majority worlds of Islamic and Western value systems with special emphasis on the theological context, the historical context of current cultural and social clashes, and the missiological context of strategies, methods and cross-cultural communication. Thus, this course seeks to fulfill the larger missions of ACU and the College of Biblical Studies by equipping students through spiritual enlightenment, informed awareness of divergent worldviews, and spiritual formation.

Prerequisites: As an upper division course for primarily juniors and seniors, this course ordinarily assumes the BIBL 101, 102, 211 and 212 have been completed.

Texts:

David Waines, *An Introduction to Islam*, 2nd Edition. Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Competencies/Measurements

1. Learners will recognize and relate to the origins of the Islamic faith and cultural value systems.	1. Measurement- Competency will be demonstrated by the completion of response papers and research projects that effectively communicate the student's ability to describe and define relevant biblical principles of Islamic faith and life with direct application to the study of the dialogue between Christianity and Islam. The final exam will also be used for measurement.
2. Learners will comprehend the essentiality of love, faith, courage, wisdom	2. Measurement- Participation in class and small group discussions, reading

and spiritual discernment in interactions with non-Christian faiths, especially Islam.	assignments, guest speakers, and completion of response papers will demonstrate ability of the learner to apply to his/her life the significance of these moral essentials. The spiritual journey paper, response papers and role playing assignments will be used to measure this level of competency.
3. Learners will analyze the present conflict between Western and Islamic worldviews.	3. Measurement- Reading assignments, class discussion, role playing, internet research and reviews of current articles dealing with cultural/political/religious aspects of the tension between the two worlds will demonstrate the learner's ability to differentiate between the two worldviews, breaking them down into identifiable socio-cultural components that can be compared and contrasted. The article review assignment will be used for measurement of this competency.
4. Learners will evaluate Islamic cultures and theologies in terms of their impact on the world.	4. Measurement- Learners' performances in reading assignments, interactions with guest speakers, completion of a final exam that will require recall and application of materials delivered through lectures will demonstrate their abilities to critically examine and appraise the impact of Islam. The final exam, book reviews, research paper and response papers will serve as measurements.
5. Learners will explore recent advancements in the world harvest and exponential growth of the Kingdom in developing countries, especially as this relates to Islamic people groups around the world and apply this analysis to their lives as well as to other Christians.	5. Measurement- Through group projects, response papers and research papers learners will show the relevance of these discoveries to their lives as well as to Christians everywhere, and propose innovative approaches to the challenges that Islam presents to Christian faith.

Assignments Upon Which Competencies and Measurements are based:

1. Articles/Response Papers- Read the assigned articles and respond to the prompts associated with each set of articles. Give evidence in your papers that you have read the articles (quotes, references, concepts, details). Weigh what you write in light of how your thoughts would also apply to common Christian practices, beliefs and interpretations as well so that you do not make statements that indicate a shallowness of reflection. Each paper should be single spaced, 3 to 4 pages.

Response papers may be assigned in addition to the articles. Articles and prompt questions will be assigned by the professor.

30% of grade

2. Reading the Qur'an- Read the following Suras in the Qur'an giving a summary of what is in each sura. On the longer suras (especially 2, 3 and 4), summarize the verses in sections. You may find convenient section divisions in Qur'ans on-line, or you may use your own as they present themselves to you in the text.

2, 3, 4, 42, 54, 57, 65, 70, 72, 87, 93, 96, 101, 107, 109, 112, 113

20% of grade

3. Book Review- a 5-7 page paper reviewing the textbook *Pilgrim's of Christ on the Muslim Road* by Paul-Gordon Chandler. The student should interact with the main themes of the book as well as compare and contrast the contents with lecture materials and their own experiences. The review should include an analysis of the principles and relevancy of contextualization, focusing on the core values of the Way of Christ and the possibilities of their incorporation into religious worldviews. In addition, the student should demonstrate adequate research of the author, settings, topic and other reviews of the book. See this website for advice on writing a good book review-

http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/book_reviews.shtml

20% of grade:

4. A. Interview/discussion with Muslims, attending assigned programmes of Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, Muslim Educational Centre for Oxford (Summertown) or Oxford Centre for Mission Studies. Attending film nights at the McVey's flat.

B. Final exam- essay/oral/presentation, to be decided. The final exam will most likely involve material from the textbook.

30% of grade

Attendance and participation: Due to our busy schedule and travels, one class session may be missed without excuse. Any other class sessions missed without legitimate excuse will result in the final grade being lowered by 5 points for each unexcused absence.

For the book reviews, the following rubric will be used for assessment.

Excellent- A	Above Average- B	Average- C	Not Acceptable- F
1. Carefully organized presentation of the topic, showing original insights (independent of the teacher and texts).	1. Well organized response to the topic with clear restatement of textual and lecture materials.	1. Adequate, routine response to the topic, but ideas are stated too generally.	1. Inadequate response to the topic due to plagiarism, badly underdeveloped thought or poor communication.
2. Very few or no mechanical errors (grammar, style, paragraph structure, bibliography, footnotes) with fluent, thought-provoking detail.	2. Mechanical errors present, but not distracting.	2. Style is moderately clear, but mechanical errors detract from communication.	2. Significant mechanical errors that block communication.
3. Twelve or more significant reference sources	3. At least eight significant reference sources.	3. At least six significant reference sources.	3. Fewer than six significant reference sources.
4. Demonstrating creative analytic and comprehension skills.	4. Accurate reporting of issues relating to the topic.	4. Moderately clear style.	4. No clear progression of thought, writer's voice fails to appear because of appropriation of others' words, incoherent.

Purpose of the Course:

Learners will examine modern and historical conflicts in a spiritual context, calling students to a higher level of understanding of the issues at stake and powers at play.

Learners will be encouraged toward a spiritually mature approach to life in today's spiritual realities and future life contexts.

Perspective:

Although we will maintain a high level of respect for the religion, cultures and people of Islam, this course represents a Christian perspective. The Lordship of Christ Jesus, the singular authority of the Bible, the uniqueness of the biblical worldview and the call to discipleship within a Kingdom lifestyle based on the principles of Jesus Christ are all firm foundations for this course.

Policies:

1. Students are expected to attend all class sessions, and a grade will be given each student for attendance. Illness, death in the family or school-sponsored trips are the only valid reasons for absence. You must notify me before your expected absences that might be excused or within one day of the missed lectures. Attendance grades will be lowered by a full letter upon the third unexcused absence. Three tardy records count as one unexcused absence. It is the student's responsibility to find out what materials, assignments or class plans might have been missed.

Attendance Grade:	28 of 30 class sessions	A
	26 of 30 class sessions	B
	24 of 30 class sessions	C
	22 of 30 class sessions	D
	21 or fewer of 30 sessions	F

2. If a date is assigned for a specific project, assignments are due at the beginning of the class session on the due date. Grades on any late assignments are immediately lowered by one letter after the day the work is due. After one week, the grade is lowered an additional letter. Work will not be accepted after two weeks (an F will be recorded). Any work missed on the day of an unexcused absence will be given a zero with no opportunity to make it up. Make up exams will be given according to the schedule set by the Dean's office.
3. Class participation is expected and essential for good academic performance. The students must keep up with reading assignments in order to be able to benefit from and engage meaningfully in class discussions.
4. I expect modest dress and politeness/courtesy to be at the highest standards within the classroom.
5. All cell phones must be turned off during class time. Disruptions by cell phones will receive one warning only. After a warning, the student's attendance grade will be lowered for disturbances by cell phones, pagers, etc. This includes text messaging or emailing from laptop computers.
6. Any student wishing to do work for extra credit can see me for assignments.
7. The highest standards of academic integrity are expected and will be enforced. Any cheating on exams, papers or assignments will be rewarded with immediate failure. Students will be encouraged to work together on some projects, but most assignments will represent individual effort and comprehension. Violations of academic integrity and other forms of cheating, as defined in ACU's Academic Integrity Policy, involve the intention to deceive or mislead or misrepresent, and therefore are a form of lying and represent actions contrary to the behavioral norms that flow from the nature of God. Violations will be addressed as described in the Policy. While the university enforces the Policy, the most powerful motive for integrity and truthfulness comes from one's desire to imitate God's nature in our lives. Every member of the faculty, staff and student body is responsible for protecting the integrity of learning, scholarship and research. The full Policy is available for review at the Provost's office web site (<http://www.acu.edu/campusoffices/provost>) and the following offices: provost, college deans, dean of campus life, director of student judicial affairs, director of residential life education and academic departments.
8. Grading Scale:

92-100=A
83-91 = B
74-82 = C
65-73 = D
<65 = F

Class Topics:

These are the broad categories of topics we will weave together in this class. We will explore additional topics as they arise and as you, the student, propose such topics. I hope this class will be a transitional point in your life, but that is really up to the Holy Spirit.

Cosmology – The Sovereignty of God; a Brief Look at Open Theology; True Biblical Restorationism; the Interplay of Culture/Worldview/Religion; Truth in a Pluralistic World.

Islam – Basic History, Theology, Cultures and Worldviews; the Influences of Prophet Muhammad; the Importance of Understanding a Different Religious Perspective; Spiritism and Folk Islam, Jihad and Ijtihad

Sources of Conflict – The Historical, Social, Cultural, Religious and Political Contexts; What Can I Do About this Conflict?

Call to Live in Love and Service – In this world of conflict and pluralism, the only voices that will be heard are transformation of life and compassionate service.

Note on grading standards:

Although I will use the most objective standards that I possibly can in grading all assignments, most of the assigned work upon which each student's grade will depend are reflections of levels of comprehension, ability to analyze, skill in communicating information, and level of personal involvement in the assignment. Therefore, class participation, sincerity, good class etiquette, promptness, and attendance will play major roles in deciding in favor of higher grades.

Personal Information:

Dan McVey has served as a missionary with the Churches of Christ in Ghana, West Africa, since 1982, working in leadership training, developing church planting teams, developing teams to pioneer new ethnic groups in evangelism, relief efforts (medical, disaster and water well drilling), urban and rural church growth. He was the director of the Nationwide Bible Institute (now Heritage Christian College) in Accra, Ghana, from 1984-1999. He has helped launch mission work in The Gambia, Senegal, Togo, Sudan and Burkina Faso, and has worked extensively in La Republique de Cote d'Ivoire. He has done graduate studies in inter-cultural studies and has a graduate degree in Muslim studies from Columbia International University. After he and his family lived in Yendi, Northern Region, Ghana, working with a team of African evangelists in church planting, leadership development and community development, focusing primarily on the Dagomba (Islamic) and Konkomba (animists) ethnic groups, Dan moved to ACU (2003-2008) to become a Missions Coordinator in the Halbert Institute for Missions. He is an adjunct faculty member for ACU, and Heritage Christian College (Ghana), and has worked in a similar capacity with Messiah Theological Institute (Uganda and Sudan). Dan and his wife Brenda now spend half of each year in Ghana on their farm, and half of the year guest lecturing and exploring community development and reconciliation in other parts of the world.

Bibliography:

Below are books I highly recommend for your reading and research. An expanded bibliography is also available upon request. Take note of the books from this list that I will comment on in class as the most useful.

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Internet Sites:

www.islamunveiled.com	www.ywam.org/wcn/islamic-world
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www.injil.org	www.ramadhan.org
www.answeringchristianity.org	www.islamicity.com
www.isamasih.net	www.islam.itl.org.uk/Jesus
www.dictionary.al-islam.com	www.alminbar.com
www.islamyesterday.com	www.islam-qa.com

Useful Software:

Alim, see website- www.alim.org

The World of Islam- Global Mapping International- info@gmi.org