

The Life of Prophet Muhammad (HI-536)

Hartford Seminary
Spring Semester 2018
Seyfeddin Kara
Email: skara@hartsem.edu

Time and Place: Online, Canvas

Course Description: This course is designed to critically investigate the accounts of Prophet Muhammad's life, achievements and his relations with Jewish and Christian communities in 6th-7th century Arabia. It will expose students to "classical", "critical," and "revisionist" studies/views on the life of the Prophet and the early history of Islam. The course will also examine the perception of the Prophet in Europe and the legacy of the Prophet Muhammad in modern Muslim communities. The reading list includes some of the most recent, ground-breaking studies as well as the earliest sources (in translation) on the subject. By the end of the course, students will have gained an insight into one of the most charismatic figures in human history and the various methods and approaches to the study of his life. The course is suitable for beginner and advanced level students as the reading material for each module is tailored accordingly. The course instructor will provide all reading material and aside from an inquisitive mind there are no prerequisites for the course.

Course Objectives:

- To develop an understanding of the life of the Prophet Muhammad in the historical context of the cities of Mecca and Medina.
- To expose students to the earliest Islamic sources on the Prophet, and various methods to study these sources.
- To provide up-to-date knowledge of current trends, debates and studies on the life of the Prophet and the early history of Islam.
- To study the perception of Prophet Muhammad in Western societies.
- To examine the legacy of Muhammad in modern Muslim communities.

The module will develop key skills such as:

- retrieving and utilising resources to which they have been directed
- identifying resources on their own initiative
- assessing the suitability and quality of resources
- planning and successful completion of written assignments
- self-organization and time-management
- self reliance and self criticism
- critical thinking

Master of Arts in Religious Studies: Learning Outcomes

1. To demonstrate foundational and critical knowledge of one's own religion by the study of the key historical events and major concepts surrounding the life of the Prophet and the origins of early Islam.
2. To enable students to understand various events and theories regarding the life of the Prophet and early Islam, and their relevance to Christian and Jewish communities of Arabia.
3. To demonstrate the knowledge, capacities, and willingness to respectfully engage other religions and world views by examining different perspectives on the study of the life of the Prophet and comparing the views of various groups such as Shi'ism and Sunnism, and Christianity.
4. To demonstrate knowledge of the practices of one's own religious tradition and the capacity to appreciate the practices of other religious traditions by studying some of the common concepts and interactions between Islam, Christianity and Judaism.
5. To demonstrate the ability to relate theory and practice in the social contexts in which a religion's communities exist, by studying the legacy of the Prophet Muhammad in modern Muslim communities.

Doctor of Ministry: Learning Outcomes

3. To demonstrate the knowledge, capacities, and willingness to respectfully engage the religious pluralism of contemporary American society through exposure to the teachings of other faiths and those who practice those faiths:
By studying the life of the Prophet and his attempt to create a multicultural community in Medina (the Constitution of Medina).
5. To demonstrate reflective and intentional critical assessment of their style of ministry in effecting change of their ministry setting: By studying the life of the Prophet and contemplating on the example of his engagement with the community in the different settings of the cities of Mecca and Medina.

PhD

1. Comprehensive knowledge in Christian-Muslim relations, theologies of interreligious engagement, or interfaith dialogue: By studying the Prophet's interactions with Christian and Jewish communities, and the relevant verses of the Qur'an that were revealed to the Prophet.
2. Competence to produce and engage in original research and writing to advance the scholarship on Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations for the benefit of faith communities, academy, and society: By exposing students to some of the earliest primary sources as well as the most recent studies, trends and methodological developments on the early history of Islam.
3. Competence to teach this area in religious communities and academia by providing advanced level learning on the subject.

Required Texts & Readings:

Harald Motzki, *Biography of Muhammad*, Leiden: Brill, 2002.

Harald Motzki, "The Question of the Authenticity of Muslim Traditions Reconsidered: A Review Article," in *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

Uri Rubin, *The Biography of Muhammad*, Leiden: Brill, 2000.

Michael Cook, *Muhammad*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Fred Donner, *M. Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam*, US: Harvard University Press, 2012

Jonathan Brockopp, *The Cambridge Companion to Muhammad*, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Gregor Schoeler, *The Biography of Muhammad: Nature and Authenticity*, trns. Uwe Vagelpohl, ed. and intr. James E. Montgomery, London: Routledge, 2011.

Patricia Crone, "[What do we actually know about Mohammed?](https://www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe-islam/mohammed_3866.jsp)" *Open Democracy*, 2008 (https://www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe-islam/mohammed_3866.jsp)

Trude Ehlert, "Muḥammad," in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, 2012. (http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0780)

Andreas Görke, "Authorship in the Sīra Literature" in *Concepts of Authorship in Pre-Modern Arabic Texts*, Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press, 2016.

Andreas Görke, Harald Motzki, Gregor Schoeler, "First Century Sources for the Life of Muḥammad? A Debate," *Der Islam*, 2012; 89(2), 2–59.

Stephen R. Shoemaker, "In Search of 'Urwa's Sira", *Der Islam*, 2011; 85 (2), 257–344.

Mahmood Ibrahim, "Social and Economic Conditions in Pre-Islamic Mecca," *Int. J. Middle East Studies* 14, 1982.

Harris Birkeland, *The Legend of the opening of the Muhammed's Breast*, Oslo: J. Dybwad, 1955, 5-54.

Ibn Ishaq, *The Life Of Muhammad*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955,

Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭābātābā'ī, *A Collection of Narrations on the Conduct and Customs of the Noble Prophet Muḥammad*, Kitchener, Ont.: Islamic Pub. House, 2007.

Ayatullah Ibrahim Amini, *Prophethood and the Prophet of Islam, Qum*, Iran: Ansariyan Publications, 2011.

Ibn Kathir, *The life of the prophet Muḥammad*, Reading: Garnet, 2006.

Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Understanding the life of the Prophet*, IFSO: Saudi Arabia, 1999.

Tariq Ramadhan, *In the Footsteps of the Prophet*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2010.

Said Amir Arjomand, "The Constitution of Medina," *Int. J. Middle East Stud.* 41 (2009), 555–575.

Anthony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001.

Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: the Islamic Near East from the sixth to the eleventh century*, London; New York: Longman, 1999,

Asma Afsaruddin, "Where earth and heaven meet: remembering Muḥammad as head of state," in *Cambridge Companion to the Muḥammad*, pp. 180-201.

Ghada Osman, "Pre-Islamic Arab Converts to Christianity in Mecca and Medina: An Investigation into the Arabic Sources," *The Muslim World*, 95 (1) (2005), 67-80.

Jason Dean, "Outbidding Catholicity. Early Islamic Attitudes toward Christians and Christianity, Exchange," 38 (2009), 201-225.

Uri Rubin, "The life of Muhammad and the Quran: the case of Muhammad 's hijra," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic And Islam* 28(2003).

Stephen Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, US: Philadelphia University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.

Allamah Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, *Hayat Al-Qulub Vol. 2 A Detailed Biography of Prophet Muhammad*, pp. 115-151

Ayatullah Ibrahim Amini, *Prophethood and the Prophet of Islam*, San Antonio, Tx : Zahra Trust, 1982.

Matthew Dimmock, *Mythologies of the Prophet Muhammad in Early Modern English Culture*, Mythologies of the Prophet Muhammad in Early Modern English Culture, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

John Tolan, “Impostor or Lawgiver? Muhammad through European Eyes in the 17th and 18th Centuries” in *The Image of the Prophet between Ideal and Ideology*, Germany: De Gruyter, 2014.

Jonathan A.C. Brown, *Misquoting Muhammad*, London: Oneworld 2016.

Jonathan A.C. Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in The Medieval and Modern World*, London: Oneworld, 2009.

Recommended Readings:

Behnam Sadeghi, “The Traveling Tradition Test: A Method for Dating Traditions,” *Der Islam* 85, S. 203–242.

Fred M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing*, Princeton, NJ Darwin Press 2006.

Mun'im Sirry, “The Early Development of The Quranic Ḥanīf”, *Journal of Semitic Studies* LVI/2 Autumn 2011, 345-366.

Ibn Ishaq, *The Life Of Muhammad*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955.

Ibn Hisham, *The Biography of the Prophet*.

John Burton, “Those Are The High Flying Cranes,” *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 1970 Volume 15, No. 2, 246-265.

Al-Tabari, *History of al-Tabari*, vol VII, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, cop. 1993.

Fred Donner, “Muhammad's Political Consolidation In Arabia Up To The Conquest Of Mecca: A Reassessment,” *The Muslim World*, 1979, 229–247.

Uri Rubin, "Prophetic Charisma in the Quran", in *Giovanni Filoramo* (ed.), *Carisma Progetico: Fattore di Innovazione Religiosa* (Brescia, 2003), 175-90.

Course Assignments and Learning Outcome Assessment objective covered:

Assignment	Due Date(s)	Learning Outcome(s) assessed by assignment	% of final course grade
Active Participation	TBA		30%
Reflection Paper	TBA	MA #1 DMIN#2	20%
Final Project	TBA	MA #4 and #5 DMIN#3	50%

Course Expectations and Classroom Policies:

Attendance Policy: Active attendance in class is required. If you know you will be unable to attend a class session please inform the professor in advance. Missing two sessions will result in an automatic lowering of your final grade by 10%. Missing three or more sessions will result in automatic failure of the course.

3 - 4 or more absences --- without a serious reason should be an automatic failure. We might want to discuss this further, but if a student misses 25% of class for any reason except a dire emergency it should be a failure or withdraw.

For online courses? I would suggest 3-4 or more weeks without posts equal 3-4 class absences and should be dealt with in the same manner.

The student handbook specifies the policy for DMin, which also fits the intensive or 5 day courses which is essentially if 25% of course is missed then the student fails the course. In a 14 week course, this would be 3.5 class absences - Students who are forced to miss a class session should contact the faculty member teaching the course to make arrangements to complete any coursework. In no case may Doctor of Ministry students miss more than one and a half day-long sessions per course per semester (in courses that meet on the D.Min. schedule for five days in a semester) and still successfully complete the requirements of the course.

Written assignment policy: Students are expected to write a 3000-word essay on a topic that will be provided in the second week of the teaching term. The essay will count 50% towards their final mark.

Essays must be submitted printed with the main text in a 12-point font with double line spacing. Footnotes or endnotes may be at a reduced font size (minimum 10-point) and may be single spaced. Word counts must be included on the first page of the essay. The essays must follow Turabian style guide.

For additional information on format, proper footnotes, acknowledgments, etc., students are directed to consult the *Hartford Seminary General Guidelines for a Research Paper*. These guidelines can be picked up in the student forms center or downloaded from our website at: <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/student-writing-resources/>. Students may also consult Kate L. Turabian's, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, (6th Edition, University of Chicago Press, 1996), upon which the guidelines are based.

Seminary research paper guide <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/student-writing-resources/>

Word count

The 3000-word count should **include**: all text, all footnotes or endnotes, all non-statistical appendices, all tables (all of this will be done automatically by a word-processor word count), and all words (e.g. captions) associated with pictorial illustrations (these will have to be counted by hand if the words fall within the picture boundary of the graphic. In addition, each graphic (graphs, diagrams and pictorial illustrations) should be counted as an extra 20 words.

The following should **not be** included in the word count: the bibliography, the title page (and any illustrations on it), and any acknowledgements or non-substantive preface.

Marking Penalties

Length in excess of stated limit:

- Between 5% and 20%: ten mark penalty
- Between 20% and 50%: twenty mark penalty
- Above 50%: mark of zero

Allowable Sources – Around 70 percent of the essay must rely on academic books and journal articles. 30 percent may rely on other sources.

Seminary Grading Scale

- A (95-100) Demonstrates excellent mastery of the subject matter, a superior ability to articulate this, and provides helpful connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.
- A- (90-94) Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter, ability to articulate this well, and makes connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.
- B+(87-89) Demonstrates a very good understanding of the subject matter, able to articulate lessons learned in the assignment well. Meets expectations of the course.
- B (83-86) Demonstrates an understanding of the subject matter and the ability to articulate lessons learned. Meets expectations of the course.
- B-(80-82) Demonstrates an understanding of the material at hand, has some difficulty articulating this, and basic connection of the material to daily life or contemporary issues/life. Meets basic expectations for the course.
- C+(77-79) Demonstrates a basic comprehension of the subject matter, weak articulation and connections. Does not meet expectations for the course.
- C (70-76) Demonstrates a minimal comprehension of the subject matter and has difficulty making connections. Does not meet expectations of the course.
- F (below 70) Unable to meet the basic requirements of the course.

- Grades range from A to C and F; A+'s and C-'s are not part of the grading system.
- On a 4.0 GPA scale -- A(4.00), A-(3.66), B+(3.33), B(3.00), B-(2.66), C+(2.33), C(2.00) and F(0.00). A grade point average of no less than B- (2.66) is required to maintain good standing. The minimum G.P.A. required for graduation is 2.75.

The Dmin grade scale is different! Any DMin student should be graded on fail, low-pass, pass, high-pass. High Pass(95-100), Pass (83-94), Low Pass(70-82), and Fail(below 70)

Email Policy: The instructor will use the official Hartsem student email addresses for all communications. Please check your Hartsem email account regularly.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: Academic honesty and integrity are expected of all students.

Plagiarism exists when: a) the work submitted was done, in whole or in part, by anyone other than the one submitting the work, b) parts of the work, whether direct quotations, ideas, or data, are taken from another source without acknowledgement, c) the whole work is copied from another source [especially a web based source], or d) significant portions of one's own previous work used in another course. See "Plagiarism" at <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/>.

Appropriate Classroom etiquette and use of technology: In order to respect the community within the classroom: 1) Mute all cell phones during class; 2) Utilize laptops for the sole purpose of taking class notes. Please do not surf the web, email, or other programs during class time. Such use of the computer during class is disrespectful of the class and professor, and may result in lowering your participation grade.

Inclusive Language:

Hartford Seminary is committed to a policy of inclusion in its academic life and mission. All members of the community are expected to communicate in language that reflects the equality of genders, openness to diverse cultural and theological perspectives, and sensitivity to one another's images of God.

Extensions: Extensions for papers will be given for illnesses or family emergencies only in consultation with the instructor.

Official Handbooks: For all other questions you might have regarding policies or procedures, please check the student handbook <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/student-handbook/> and seminary policies at Academic policies are listed at <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/>

COURSE OUTLINE:

Week 1: Introduction: The historical Muhammad

Patricia Crone, "[What do we actually know about Mohammed?](#)" (online article, no page numbers).

Michael Cook, Muhammad, 5-25

Ehlert, Trude, "Muḥammad" (online article, no page numbers).

Week 2: The methodological issues: Authenticity of Muslim traditions

Fred Donner, M. Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam, 39-90

Andreas Goerke, "Authorship in the Sīra Literature," 63-92

Harald Motzki "The Question of the Authenticity of Muslim Traditions Reconsidered: A Review Article" 211-258.

Recommended reading:

Fred M. Donner, Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing, (pp. 255-291)

Week 3: The methodological issues: Debate on the sources

Andreas Görke, Harald Motzki, Gregor Schoeler, "First Century Sources for the Life of Muḥammad? A Debate," 2–59.

Stephen R. Shoemaker, "In Search of 'Urwa's Sira," 257–344.

Recommended Reading:

Behnam Sadeghi, "The Traveling Tradition Test: A Method for Dating Traditions," 203–242.

Week 4: Arabia before the advent of Islam

Fred Donner, M. Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam, 1-39

Mahmood Ibrahim, "Social and Economic Conditions in Pre-Islamic Mecca," 343-358.

Harris Birkeland, *The Legend of the opening of the Muhammed's Breast*, 5-54

Recommended reading:

Mun'im Sirry, "The Early Development of The Quranic Ḥanīf", 345-366.

Ibn Ishaq, *The Life Of Muhammad*, 69-109

Week 5: The first revelations of the Qur'an

Gregor Schoeler, *The Biography of Muḥammad*, 38-80.

Ibn Ishaq, *The Life Of Muhammad*, 109-146

Recommended reading:

Ibn Hisham, *The Biography of the Prophet*, pp. 35-91

Week 6: Muhammad in Mecca

Uri Rubin, "Muhammad's Night Journey (Isra') to al-Masjid Al-Aqsa." 147-164

Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman*, 13-78

Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad*, 60-108

Recommended Reading:

John Burton, "Those Are The High Flying Cranes," 246-265.

Week 7: The personality of the Prophet

Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *A Collection of Narrations on the Conduct and Customs of the Noble Prophet Muḥammad*, 37-97

Ibrahim Amini, *Prophethood and the Prophet of Islam*, 101-118.

Ibn Kathir, *The Life of the Prophet*, 130- 185.

Week 8: The Migration

Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Understanding the life of the Prophet*, 163-199.

Tariq Ramadhan, *In the Footsteps of the Prophet*, 19-29.

Week 9: Muhammad as the head of Medina city state

Said Amir Arjomand, "The Constitution of Medina," 555–575.

Anthony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought*, 9-18.
Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 33-50.
Asma Afsaruddin, "Where earth and heaven meet: remembering Muḥammad as head of state," 180-201.

Recommended Reading:

Al-Tabari, *History of al-Tabari*, vol VII, 15-64
Fred Donner, "Muhammad's Political Consolidation In Arabia Up To The Conquest Of Mecca," 229–247.

Week 10: Muhammad, the Jews and Christians

Ghada Osman, "Pre-Islamic Arab Converts to Christianity in Mecca and Medina: An Investigation into the Arabic Sources," 67-80.
Jason Dean, "Outbidding Catholicity. Early Islamic Attitudes toward Christians and Christianity, Exchange," 201-225.

Week 11: The Prophet in the Qur'an

Uri Rubin, "The life of Muhammad and the Quran: the case of Muhammad 's hijra," 40-64.
Stephen Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, pp. 118-197.

Recommended reading:

Uri Rubin, "Prophetic Charisma in the Quran," 175-90.

Week 12: Muhammad in Shi'i Islam

Ayatullah Ibrahim Amini, *Prophethood and the Prophet of Islam*, 48-91.
Jonathan A.C. Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in The Medieval And Modern World*, 123-150

Recommended reading:

Allamah Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, *Hayat Al-Qulub Vol. 2 A Detailed Biography of Prophet Muhammad*, 115-151.

Week 13: Western Perceptions of Muhammad

Matthew Dimmock, *Mythologies of the Prophet Muhammad in Early Modern English Culture*, 1-64, 200-221.
John Tolan, "Impostor or Lawgiver? Muhammad through European Eyes in the 17 th and 18 th Centuries," 261-269.

Week 14: Interpreting Muhammad's Legacy

Jonathan A.C. Brown, *Misquoting Muhammad*, 114-214
Jonathan A.C. Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in The Medieval And Modern World*, 240-269.