DESCRIPTION: This multimedia course is an historical introduction to Islam. Students will study Islamic faith, belief and practice from earliest origins up to contemporary resurgence, while becoming acquainted with the revelation of the Qur'an. The course is designed to provide an accurate portrait of the Prophet and an overview of the pivotal events in the spread of Islam, along with sketches of people who have significantly affected Muslim tradition. Students will review Muslim history from the establishment of the great Umayyad and Abbasid empires to the regional developments of the Seljuk, Mongol, Safavid, Mughal and Ottoman dynasties, including the emergence of modern Muslim states. Moreover, students will consider the impact of the current war in Iraq and the aftermath of 9/11 on both the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds as they reflect on Islam’s relationship to democracy and modernity, while focusing on the origins and growth of extremism and terrorism in the name of Islam. Some special topics to be addressed are: Islamic doctrine and law, Sufi mysticism, gender issues and the roles of women, fundamentalism and jihad, and Islam in America. This is a reading- and writing-intensive course. It is oriented to both those who have little or no prior knowledge of Islam and those who already have a background in Islam. The course will neither glorify nor critique Islam as a religion but allow students to see how Muslims view themselves.

TEXTS: Reza Aslan’s No god but God: The Origins, Evolution and Future of Islam, Michael Sells’ Approaching The Qur’an, Joyce M. Davis’ Between Jihad and Salaam: Profiles in Islam and Asma Gull Hasan’s Why I Am a Muslim: An American Odyssey. In addition, daily lecture and discussion outlines will be provided.

EVALUATION: Two Exams (a take-home Midterm and a take-home/in-class Final, 20% each), a Comparative-Analysis Paper (based on two field trips, 20%), two Book Reviews (15% each) and Class Participation (based in part on attendance, 10%). Students in the Honors Program are welcomed to consider doing an additional project for Honors credit.

EXAMS: Both exams are based on the lectures, the reading assignments and class discussions. The take-home Midterm (distributed on 2/21) will consist of several essays reflecting primary discussions and is due in class no later than 2/23. The Final Exam will cover only the material from the second half of the course and will consist of an in-class part with many identifications and short-answer questions, and a take-home part of two essay topics (distributed on 4/20). The essays are due in class no later than 4/27. (See Procedure below.)
COMPARATIVE-ANALYSIS PAPER: Two field trips will be arranged for students to attend Sunni and Shiite mosques and prayer services. This paper is to reflect a student’s first-hand observations and experiences, thus notes and bibliography are not needed. This paper, due on 4/20, must be at least six pages long and at a minimum include the following elements:
1. Field Information—Give the full names of the institutions visited and their denominational affiliation (Sunni or Shiite). Give the exact date and time of the visit, and the name of the presiding official. (One short paragraph)
2. Placing Information—Describe the outside and inside appearance of each building, the way visitors are greeted at each service, and the sorts of people in each community, i.e., social class, ethnic background, dominate gender, average age, number present. Were you comfortable sitting with and talking to those attending each service? Why or why not? (Three short paragraphs)
3. Description of Activities and Symbolism—Give an entertaining anecdotal account of what happened during each visit or at each service. What was the emotional tone of each service? Consider the following questions for each service: Was the opening dramatic or casual? Was congregational participation emotional or reserved? Was the service spontaneous or ritualistic? How did the service end? What art and symbolic images did you notice in and around each site? (Approximately two pages)
4. Analysis—Compare the visits in terms of the following question: As far as you could tell from these experiences, how are these communities similar and different? (Three or more pages)

BOOK REVIEWS: The first review, on Joyce M. Davis’ *Between Jihad and Salaam: Profiles in Islam*, is due on 2/16, and the second review, on Asma Gull Hasan’s *Why I Am a Muslim: An American Odyssey*, is due on 3/30. Each review must be no less than four full pages long. Students should begin reading both books and outlining their impressions as soon as possible. Students are encouraged to discuss those impressions, and any procedural questions they may have beyond the instructions in the next paragraph, with the instructor during office hours or by e-mail. However, class time will be set aside for discussion and analysis of each book during the due period.

PROCEDURE FOR ALL DOCUMENTS: All student-generated documents, the take-home Exams, the Comparative-Analysis Paper, and the Book Reviews, will be graded on substance, grammar and on how well these style instructions are followed, which must be adhered to precisely. No exceptions! All documents must be left-justified and double-spaced, with a clear 12-point font (Times New Roman preferred) and one-inch margins all around (including the first page). After document titles, which may be in 18-point font, the student should single space and type their name in 14-point font. After the author’s name, the student should double space and begin the first paragraph of the paper. Only the final page of the document may come up a little short of one inch. All documents must be stapled in the upper left-hand corner. No title page! If a student hands in a review or paper with a title page, it will be returned and treated as late. It is imperative that students work diligently to ensure written work is turned in on time to avoid being downgraded by one full grade per day (i.e., an A- demoted to a B- and a C+ to a D+).

COURSE WEB SITE: Students will discover on this web site an extensive bibliography and some of the best links to Islam online, both of which might be useful for research work in this and other courses. At the top of this web site, there is an Adobe Acrobat file link, labeled Course Grades. To access, simply go to Rogers’ Home Page via the address above and click on the History 379 blue-link in the winter schedule.