COURSE DESCRIPTION: In this course, students will learn about the origins, transformations and diffusion of Islam in the world. Since the 7th century, the life of Muhammad and the Arab conversions, Islam as a religion, civilization, and culture has existed in a global context. From Morocco to China, Muslims developed sources, ideas and patterns that have influenced their descendants and others. With an in-depth understanding of Islam as a religion, civilization, and political force, class members will connect Muslims of today to their histories and cultures. Students will become familiar with different approaches to the study of Islam, learn about important episodes and changes in Islamic history; improve critical and analytical thinking by reading and discussing a variety of Islamic and Western sources; and analyze patterns of interaction between Islam and the world.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
Students will increase their knowledge of Islam as a world religion, understanding Muslims a little better in the past and now.
Students will read and discuss the methods of religious studies with Islam as core examples.
Students will write assignments, showing their analysis and experience of Islam in the world.
Students will connect the in-class learning with the experiences of visiting the ports and places we visit while aboard the Semester at Sea MV Explorer.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

_The Quran_, any translation in English will do, the variety will benefit the instruction. Free copies are available for download, see quran.com.

AUTHOR: John L. Esposito
TITLE: Islam: The Straight Path
PUBLISHER: Oxford University Press
ISBN #: 978-0195396003
DATE/EDITION: 2010 Fourth Edition

AUTHOR: Naglaa Ghali
TITLE: _Write it in Arabic: A Workbook and Step-by-Step Guide to Writing the Arabic Alphabet._
PUBLISHER: Fun with Arabic
ISBN #: 978-0973051230

Author: Richard W. Bulliet
Title: The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization
Publisher: Columbia University Press
ISBN #: 978-0231127974
Date/Edition: 2006

Topical Outline of Course

A1- January 12: What is Religious Studies? How will we proceed?
   Encyclopedia Britannica Online “Study of Religion” article

   Esposito “Introduction” and Chapter 6 “Islam and Change”
   In-Class Writing Assignment “What do you know about Islam?”

A3- January 16: Arabic – The Sacred Language of Islam
   Ghali, Write It in Arabic, pages 1-37

January 17: Hilo

A4- January 19: Arabic and Global Islam
   Ghali, Write It in Arabic, pages 38-70
   Introduction to The Quran

A5- January 22: Islam and the Five Pillars
   Esposito Chapter 1 “Muhammad and the Quran” pages ix-xvi, 1-31
   Student Group Presentations on a surah from The Quran

A6- January 25: Islam and History
   Esposito Chapter 2 “The Muslim Community in History” pages 32-67

A7- January 27: Religion and Politics in Islam
   Esposito Chapter 3 “Religious Life” pages 68-114
   Notebook prep – Islam in Japan

January 29 - February 3: Yokohama, Transit, Kobe

A8- February 4: Interpreting Islam
   Esposito Chapter 4 “Modern Islamic Reform Movements” pages 115-157
   Notebook prep – Islam in China

February 6-11: Shanghai, Transit, Hong Kong
A9- February 12:
Esposito Chapter 5 “Religion & Politics” pages 158-222
Notebook prep – Islam in Vietnam

February 14-19: Ho Chi Minh City

A10- February 20:
Esposito Chapter 6 “The Struggle for Islam in the 21st Century” pages 223-252
Notebook prep – Islam in Singapore

February 22-23: Singapore

A11- February 24:
45 minute Mid-Term Exam (Religious Studies, Esposito text, Arabic alphabet, some surah)
Notebook prep – Islam in Myanmar

February 27-March 4: Rangoon

A12- March 5:
Religious Studies of Islam: Sacred Space (Students identify the own readings from Library materials: reference sources, book chapters, journal articles. One-page reports about what each student learned from their own research will be due in class.)
Student Presentations on a surah from The Quran (there are 114 surah - plural is suwar - in The Quran. Student Groups will each choose one of the shorter ones and explain how a Muslim reader draws meaning from the text. The on-board library has books and references sources that will inform the presentations. A one-page outline of the surah and its meanings must be submitted by each group at the end of class.

A13- March 7:
Religious Studies of Islam Holy Days (Students identify the readings)
Notebook prep – Islam in India

March 9-14: Cochin

A14- March 15:
Religious Studies of Islam: Gender (Students identify the readings)
Student Presentations on a surah from The Quran (there are 114 surah - plural is suwar - in The Quran. Student Groups will each choose one of the mid-length ones and explain how a Muslim reader draws meaning from the text. The on-board library has books and references sources that will inform the presentations. A one-page outline of the surah and its meanings must be submitted by each group at the end of class.

A15- March 18:
Religious Studies of Islam: Art and Beauty (Students identify the readings)
Student Presentations on a surah from The Quran (there are 114 surah - plural is suwar - in
The Quran. Student Groups will each choose one of the longer ones and explain how a Muslim reader draws meaning from the text. The on-board library has books and references sources that will inform the presentations. A one-page outline of the surah and its meanings must be submitted by each group at the end of class.

A16- March 24:
Religious Studies of Islam: Law and Justice (Students identify the readings)
Notebook prep – Islam in Mauritius

March 21: Port Louis

A17- March 23:
Religious Studies of Islam: Conversion (Students identify the readings)
Student Presentations on a surah from The Quran – From a surah, students will work together to analyze a hadith, or saying of the Prophet Muhammad, which explains the interpretation of a surah. A one-page outline of the many hadith (plural is ahadith) and their meanings must be submitted by each group at the end of class.

A18- March 26:
Religious Studies of Islam: the End Time (Students identify the readings)
Notebook prep – Islam in South Africa

March 28-April 2: Cape Town

A19- April 3:
Bulliet Chapter 1 “The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization” pages vii-viii, 1-45

A20- April 5:
Bulliet Chapter 2 “What Went On?” pages 47-93

A21- April 8:
Bulliet Chapter 3 “Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places” pages 95-133
Notebook prep – Islam in Ghana

April 10-14: Takoradi transit Tema

A22- April 15:
Bulliet Chapter 4 “The Edge of the Future” pages 135-161
In-Class Writing Assignment ‘What Do You Now Know about Islam?’

A23- April 17:
Student Presentations on a surah from The Quran – From a surah, students will work together to analyze a hadith, or saying of the Prophet Muhammad, which explains the interpretation of a surah. A one-page outline of the many hadith (plural is ahadith) and their meanings must be submitted by each group at the end of class.
A24- April 20
Notebook prep – Islam in Morocco

April 23-27: Casablanca

A25- April 28 A Day Finals (Islam in the World, Surah, topics in the study of Islam, Bulliet text)

May 2: Arrive in Southampton

FIELD WORK
Field lab attendance is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Please do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of our field lab.

FIELD LAB (At least 20 percent of the contact hours for each course, to be led by the instructor.)

Casablanca, Morocco will be our last port of call before finishing the voyage in Southampton, England. Morocco is a predominantly Muslim country, making it a perfect place to culminate our semester-long study of Islam in the World. One of the world’s largest mosques, Hassan II mosque, is an appropriate finishing spot. Non-Muslims may visit, taking a guided tour. The University of Casablanca also has faculty members who I can contact to be expert teachers for the class.

The cosmopolitan city of Hong Kong has multiple communities of Muslims. There are at least five mosques in the city. Although we may not be able to go inside as non-Muslims, when we visit the mosques and see them in their lived space and as part of the city’s community students will observe the current diversity of Islam in the World.

FIELD ASSIGNMENTS
Student notebooks/journals – before arriving at each port, class time will include preparation on Islam in that port, city and country. Islam is a world religion and each place we visit will have a Muslim Community. The students will be asked to look for evidence (Mosques, Arabic signs, prayer rugs, dress, etc.) of Muslims in each place and write about the experience. Some places will be harder than others.

In at least one port, the students must buy a typical food from a Muslim vendor and do their best to find out what history and significance the food or meal has for Muslims in that area. After trying the food and describing the experience in their notebooks, they must also write about that food as an entry in their notebooks.

Evaluation of the journal entries will be cumulative as they learn more about Islam and look for its evidence in the port cities. As we travel further west into the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean we will arrive in areas of greater Muslim density. Students who notice Islamic life in more detail, connecting to their in-class material will do better on their journal assignments.

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC
Arabic alphabet and language - 40 points
Port Notebooks/Journals (10 ports) - 100 points
In-Class Group Presentations on Surah from The Quran – 60 points
Religious Studies of Islam (Readings and Discussion) - 100 points
Field Lab (outline summary of material with 2 page conclusion) - 100 points
Mid-Term and Final Exams (50 points each) - 100 points

Total - 500 points

RESERVE LIBRARY LIST
The VIRGO catalog shows that there are ample materials, reference sources and book chapters for many different readings of Islam for the Semester-at-Sea students. When they identify their own reading assignments on the topics of Religious Studies of Islam there looks to be ready material on board the ship.

ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS
I would like to explore ways that students might access the on-line materials for learning about Islam. One of the best website is quran.com. It has all the surahs of the Quran, in Arabic and in English translation with recorded chant for each verse. Wikisource also has many versions of the Quran for free. One of the better ones with Arabic transliteration is the version provided by the Progressive Muslims Organization.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
For the “Religious Studies of Islam” readings and class discussions, students will identify readings within the assigned topics. The Library aboard the ship will be sufficient for the course, having reference sources, chapters in books and scholarly articles.

HONOR CODE
Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University’s honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager’s Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: “On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment.” The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed “[signed].”
Islam is straight in that it is a correct and firmly established way, pure and protected from any crookedness or deviation from the truth. Allah describes those who want to block people on the path of Allah: "Who averted (people) from the way of Allah and sought to make it (seem) deviant while they were, concerning the Hereafter, disbelievers." Islam, which is submission to the commands of Allah, is also a familiar and well-trodden path, the path of all the Prophets and their followers. As Allah says: And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger-those will be with the ones upon whom Allah has bestowed favour of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous.

Islam: The Straight Path is a really poignant and engaging introduction to the vast topics surrounding Islam. John L. Esposito presents the complex history of 13 odd centuries of faith, innovation, expansion, trade, commerce, and sadly in more recent times, the spread of fanaticism. This is a book I think everyone in the west should read so as to gain an insight into the culture and faith of Muslims, and how to not allow media bias to prejudice our interactions with our Islamic brothers and sisters.

Islam: The Straight Path is a really poignant and engaging introduction to the vast topics surrounding Islam. The revivalist mood and orientation of resurgent Islam has also affected the status and rights of non-Muslims. The creation of more Islamically oriented societies, especially the introduction of Islamic laws, has resulted in varying degrees of tension, conflict, violence, and killing in the name of religion. For militant Muslims, Christian minorities are often seen as those who cooperated with colonial powers, benefited from their protection, and were the fruit of Christian missions. The Bahai of Iran and the Ahmadiyya of Pakistan, on the other hand, are regarded as apostates or heretics who rejected and broke away from Islam.