



**Religious Studies 2504F/G (670)**  
**Islam at the Cinema**  
**Fall/ Winter 2025-2026**

**Instructor:** Tourage, Mahdi  
**Email:** [mtourage@uwo.ca](mailto:mtourage@uwo.ca)

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**Course Information**

**Calendar Description:**

This course examines depictions of Islam and Muslims in films produced by both Muslims and non-Muslims. Using cinema as a mediator of religious thoughts, values, assumptions, and struggles, the primary goal of this course is to understand the efficacy of cinema in creating, reflecting, negotiating, resisting, or embracing basic Islamic assumptions.

**Extra Information:** 3 hours, 1 - 2 hours screening.

**Course Weight:** 0.50  
**Breadth:** Category B  
**Subject Code:** RELSTUD

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.



Religion Department  
King's University College  
Fall 2025  
RS 2504 F

# Islam at the Cinema

## **Instructor:**

Dr. Mahdi Tourage

[mtourage@uwo.ca](mailto:mtourage@uwo.ca)

Office hours for fall term 2025:

Online: Mondays 10-11 am (Zoom)

Office location will be announced in class

## **Course Description:**

Film is usually taken as the arena of humanity's quest for self-realization/expression and the repository of the collective struggle and memory of such a quest. But it could also be the producer of the very contours of this quest. We will take cinema as an "archive" (both product and producer) of thoughts, values, assumptions, resistances and struggles through audio-visual symbolic form. We will contextualize and historicize representations of Islam and Muslims in films produced by Muslims (both in the West and in the Muslim world) and non-Muslims (Hollywood, for example) to make sense of the construction of Islam through this creative medium. Our goal is to understand the efficacy of cinema in creating, reflecting, negotiating, resisting, combating or embracing the underpinning assumptions of Islam in the public sphere. We will employ cinema's visual codes and conventions (such as narrative, filmic statement, enunciation, the gaze, suture) as conceptual tools to see how the knowledge of self and other is constructed in films, and to test the assumption of the universality of cinema's visual codes and conventions.

## **Course Learning Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of the course, students will demonstrate:

1. A thorough understanding of the complexities, and peculiarities of representation of the "other," especially Muslims (and Islam)
2. A good understanding of social, institutional, textual/doctrinal, and historical expressions of Muslims/Islam that shape the filmic representations
3. A good understanding of the critical methodologies of study of religion through films

## **Mode of Instruction:**

- Online

## **Course Textbooks/Material**

- No textbook to purchase for this course

## **Method of Evaluation:**

- 50% Weekly responses to a question I will post from lecture (10 responses, 250 words each)  
Details will be posted on OWL Brightspace.
- 10% Film Review based on themes from lectures  
You will write one "film" review, rubric with detailed questions will be provided via OWL Brightspace. (Due: October 24, 2025)
- 40% Final Take-Home Exam (Due Date: Dec. 14, 2025)

Instructions on OWL Brightspace.

### **Academic Considerations:**

This course begins on the day announced by the University and continues until the last class, honouring all important dates derived from University approved guidelines and academic policies (<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/academic-dates-and-events/> ).

- Each unexcused missed class/assignment will result in a deduction of 2% of your participation mark.
- Students are responsible for seeking consideration as noted in the Western University Calendar: [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/exam/courseoutlines.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/courseoutlines.pdf)
- Students submitting work for which Academic Consideration has been granted must submit their missed work (on OWL) within 2 days after the end of the period for which the student received Academic Consideration.
- Late penalties for work that is overdue is 5% per day late, papers that are more than a week late receive 0%.
- I know so many things happen in our lives that could prevent us from attending the class. And I am sympathetic to students' predicaments, but sending me an email about your car problem or sudden illness or accident and death in the family will not excuse an absence because absences are verified and authorized by your academic counsellor not me.)
- Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor.
- All assignments must be your own writings.

\*You must post a weekly reading response by the end of each week of classes (by the end of every Sunday). Your response will be a summary of the main points of the reading and insights it offers in understanding the "film" you are assigned for that week. What is it that the author trying to say, and how their main points let us read this "film"? Also include questions you will have about the reading or lectures (concepts/points that you find confusing or not explained).

**UPLOAD THESE AS PDF ONLY, makes it easier for me to open. Thank you!**

- Post your reading and class responses on BRIGHTSPACE>COMMUNICATION>GROUPS.
- There is no specific format for your entries. Aside from summary of the readings, feel free to write about your own reaction to the material, like you found this point really surprising or banal or whatever.
- The purpose of weekly entries is for me to take a look at and see if there is anything the student want to say, add, or is not clear about, second to show that you have done the readings. So you can write in point form, short sentences, a long essay kind of entry, creative ways of expressing your thoughts acceptable (memes, short videos). Have any questions about the reading or class discussions or previous class? post it there. Please post these as PDF, MAKES IT EASIER FOR ME TO OPEN

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### **Academic Integrity / Remote Proctoring:**

- Link to Western Scholastic Discipline policy: [https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)
- Course policy on use of generative AI, including translation/grammar aids to follow
- This course uses Turnitin

### **A note from your Instructor:**

I am honored that you have trusted me with your education, a responsibility that I do not take lightly. I am committed to your intellectual development, and enthusiastic about your various responses to the study of the subject matter of this course. Of course I expect as much commitment from you to this course as well. Please call on me early and often for help with the complex nature of the texts we study, issues we discuss that you find compelling or confusing, or the challenges of academic work and its relevance to practical concerns. I welcome questions and conversations about your writing and thinking, and your plans for the future. I am available after class, for lunch, dinner, coffee, and of course, during scheduled office hours or by appointment.

In this course we will try to create an organic community of learning, an open and inviting classroom in which we can exercise democracy and education as a practice of freedom. This would be a classroom that reflects an ideal vision of the

world we would like to live in. We will learn from each other, teach others, love and respect each other, honor every one's unique soul and journey in life, appreciate what each one of us brings to this class and what we give and take from each other. We will listen to each other carefully, ask for clarification, critique each other's ideas intelligently and respectfully, and sharpen our thought processes and arguments. We hope to create transformative moments in ourselves, in the learning community that we create every time we meet, and hopefully in the larger world around us.

**Accessibility, Inclusion, and Disability Accommodations:**

All are welcome in my class. Come as you are! Really. If the design of this course creates obstacles to your full participation, please notify me to discuss adjustments. This is true for those who have a formally documented disability with the university and those who do not (this includes folks with invisible impairments and/or those who pass/compensate).

Talk to me early on in the course please. Requests for accommodation should be made as early as possible, but there is no expiration date on inclusivity. It is never too late to discuss issues regarding access – this is true for ALL of your classes, not just mine. I also encourage you to register with University's disability services if you are able.

**General Instructions:**

If this is your first Islamic Studies class, please:

1. read a general introduction to Islam, anything above the level of *Islam for Dummies*.
2. visit the following website and browse attentively: <https://www.pbs.org/empires/islam/index.html>
3. For the translations of the Qur'an we will be using this website, which has several translations: <https://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=1&verse=1>

Schedule of Readings: TBA

# KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

## GENERAL COURSE POLICIES

### 2025-2026

#### **1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences**

##### **Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)**

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

##### **Academic Consideration for Student Absence**

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at [https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses\\_enrollment/exams\\_and\\_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf](https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams_and_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf).

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

For further information, please see:

[https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/academic\\_consideration\\_Sep24.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf)

##### **Absences from Final Examinations**

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

## **Religious Accommodation**

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

## **2. Support Services**

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

[https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/](https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/)

Academic Support Services at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

### **GBSV Support:**

King's is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing [Care@kings.uwo.ca](mailto:Care@kings.uwo.ca) or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by [email](#) or by calling 519-661-3568.

Further supports can be found on this website: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also [https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html)

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

### 3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

**Use of Electronic Devices:** Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

**Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom:** King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

### 4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with your instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality Reports - TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

### **5. Copyright of Course Material**

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

### **6. Use of Recordings**

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

### **7. Policy on Attendance**

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.