

Scheme of work – Islam

This scheme of work for AS Religious Studies (7061) is designed to help you plan your teaching.

Assumed coverage

This scheme of work is based on 90 guided learning hours.

It allows eight weeks for the Year 1 AS content and a further eight weeks for the Year 2 content, leaving approximately four weeks for Dialogues.

Sources of wisdom and authority

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| **Week** | **Learning activities** | **Resources** |
| 1–3 | The Qur’anStudents should be aware of a diversity of Muslim views where appropriate.Students should understand: * Muslim beliefs about revelation and compilation of the Qur’an
* importance of the Arabic text – how this is reflected in the treatment of Qur’an in worship and in everyday life
* translation as interpretation and importance of trustworthy translation.

Nature points to consider:* revealed scripture
* word of God
* created and uncreated Qur’an
* final and complete
* confirmation of previous scriptures
* compilation of Prophetic message delivered by the Prophet over 23 years
* variant readings (recitations) and their significance.

Authority points to consider: understanding of the importance of the Arabic text and the distinction between the Words of the Qur’an and their meaning and implications, which relate to the issues of translation and interpretation. Revelation points to consider:* night of power
* descent of the Qur’an and the nature of prophetic inspiration.

Note that the emphasis must be on explanation, not on summary or description of the event – better to approach it as a commentary on rather than an account of the event. Compilation points to consider: * traditional accounts of the Prophet’s use of secretaries and written recording of Qur’an
* beliefs about role of Prophet in ordering verses (but see Shi’a beliefs about Ali’s role below)
* role attributed to God in protecting the Qur’an and guaranteeing authenticity of text: 15:9 Preservation of Qur’an after Prophet’s death;
* role of Abu Bakr and Uthman
* Shi’a beliefs about the compilation of the Qur’an by Ali
* early debates among Muslims about the completeness of the record – an example: verse of stoning – see Hadith Muslim 17:4194; Hadith Qudsi.

Importance of the Arabic text points to consider* word of God
* stimulus to spiritual experience (experience of being addressed directly by God
* being aware of the divine origin/speaker of the words) Develops taqwah
* the nature of the script and the importance of accompanying recitation to guarantee correct word-recognition
* variant readings (Qiraat) – acknowledged as permitted by God but seen as having little impact on meaning of text
* Warsh and Hafs – two commonly accepted recitations today
* importance of, and limitations, of translations – need to understand Qur’an but open to interpretation.

The influence of Muslim beliefs about the Qur’an points to consider:* influence of beliefs about the Arabic text
* use in worship eg recitation
* development of taqwah; basis of deen (Where worship is understood as living life in submission to God)
* everyday life: basis of deen (as above) handling of Book
* superstitious usage where words of Quran are popularly considered to contain divine power
* art and architecture
* evaluation of claims about the accuracy of the record and of how complete it is, and of the importance of interpretation (eg Qur’an 4:34 for a verse translated/interpreted in a wide range of ways).

Dialogues: Note also that this information can be used in the Philosophy unit as part of an investigation of the nature of religious experience. | [QuranIndex.net](http://quranindex.net/http%3A/quranindex.net/) provides searchable Qur’an text, could be used for verses containing the words ‘The Qur’an’Qur’an 2:2, 10.37, 12:2; 85:21–22Compilation of the Qur’an by Ali – [al-islam.org](http://www.al-islam.org/shiite-encyclopedia-ahlul-bayt-dilp-team/belief-shia-in-completeness-quran) Various Muslim sources deal with early debates among Muslims, re whether Qur’an contains all that The Prophet revealedArgument that the Qur’an is all that is needed – [quran-islam.org](http://www.quran-islam.org/main_topics/islam/pillars/al-salat_%28P1192%29.html) |
| The ProphetMuch of the material covered above in relation to Qur’an could also be applied to questions about Muhammad and his significance for Muslims today.Consider the Sufi perspective.Cover Seal of the Prophets Qur’an 33:40: see Amadhi IslamConsider relationship with earlier Prophets – similarities and difference(s). Image of ‘Last brick in the wall’ from hadith.Note: there is a variant reading of khatim rather than khatam but with same meaning.Discuss: * Hadiths: oral traditions re Prophet’s sayings and actions compiled by both Sunni and Shi’a Muslims, eg Collection by Bukhari c 850 CE
* Isnad: the chain of transmission used to establish that the reported saying or action can be traced back to the Prophet himself, but very difficult to authenticate. Shi’a and Sunni Muslims only accept those transmitted within their own traditions (but many are transmitted along both lines)
* Matn: the body of the hadith including the context in which the action or saying takes place. The setting can be assessed for historical accuracy by comparing with other hadith/traditions concerning life of Prophet. The reported saying or action can be checked against the Qur’an and other authenticated hadith. The Qur’an cannot be contradicted, so any report contradicting the Qur’an would be considered false
* classification of hadith including the recognition that at the time of collection there were many false hadiths in circulation
* examples of hadiths: can be used relating to any topic on the specification
* varying attitudes among Muslims: many give hadith a status second only to Qur’an and see it as authentic reports of actions and sayings of the Prophet and authoritative guide to behaviour. Contrast with those who reject the authority of the hadith and see the collections as representing the views of the scholars of the time, not the authentic revelation. See the Sunnah of Muhammad as that recorded in the Qur’an, not that evidenced by reported hadith.
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| ImamsNote that this is very focused and not a general study of the role and importance of Imams. Consider the status of an Imam: divinely appointed, unbroken succession. Cover the number of Imams: 14 infallibles; Twelvers; Severners Discuss Imam Mahdi – and beliefs about how this Imam may/may not act as an authority for Muslims today – view of Ahmadiyya Muslims.Discuss the relationship between the authority of the Imam and the authority of the Prophet. | [Shi’ite Encyclopaedia](http://al-islam.org/) Qur’an 4:59; 42:23. |

God

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| **Week** | **Learning activities** | **Resources** |
| 4–5 | Discuss oneness: * unique – therefore cannot be compared to anything else and cannot be described using the same terms; ‘uncompromising monotheism’ – one creator, one controlling power – everything else is created and controlled (but see debate on pre-destination and free will below)
* God has no partners – sin of Shirk – attributing God’s power/authority to anything other than God.

Extension: work could consider the relationship between the essence and attributes of God with reference to both the throne verse and the names of merciful and compassionate and differences in Sunni/Shi’a emphases.Note: contrast/tension with the ideas reflected here and beliefs in a personal God and Sufi perspective.Note: the work done here on religious language can also be applied in philosophy context and dialogues.Define personal God: God as ‘Person who’ acts not impersonal ‘power that’ affects things around it. Define the Bismillah – and the importance of these qualities of God.Discuss God as merciful and compassionate (7:156) and the source of these qualities in others.Discuss anthropomorphic language:* hand and face (debate also applies to throne of God)
* Hanbali: stresses literal interpretation of Qur’an
* Ashari: believe the statements without knowing what they mean/not like human face or hands
* Mutazili: God does not have a body – esoteric interpretation of Qur’an.

Give a general introduction to Sufism and mysticism (note the link to Philosophy paper) and esoteric interpretation of the Qur’an (unveiling its inner mysteries/hidden meanings).Cover a summary of Sufi cosmology – following Ibn al-Arabi (d 1240 CE).Discuss God – the ultimate reality expresses and conceals Himself in each level of creation. All creation is God but at different levels of existence.Discuss three levels of divine unity pre-creation: aloneness but desiring to be known so expresses/manifests itself in Noor-e-Mohammad (light of Muhammad) which in turn expresses itself in Soul of Muhammad which is One with Allah. All of creation is within God and within the Soul of Muhammad, waiting to be expressed.(1) the expression of the attributes of God as they are shared among the potential individual human souls. (2) the expression of the potential souls in immaterial souls ‘the soul of celestial delight’.(3) the immaterial soul breathed into material bodies and a material world. All levels are expressions of God – the soul is part of God but covered or hidden by the levels of creation separating the material world from Aloneness. Al-Nur, the Light 24:35.Note: all the concepts interlink. | AnthropomorphicFace of God eg 2:115Hand of God eg 3:73 – and Throne verse.See YouTube for short videos on Ashari interpretationQuotes from Nahj al-Balagha to illustrate Shia belief ‘Senses cannot touch Him’: [Wikipedia: Nahj-al-Balagha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nahj_al-Balagha) Key Sufi ideas are summarised in a range of online and textual sources including Brown. D, *A new introduction to Islam*Meditation on the meaning on Surah 24:35 [lulsuficenter.org](http://www.lulsuficenter.org/) |

Self, death and afterlife

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| **Week** | **Learning activities** | **Resources** |
| 6–7 | Discuss concept of worship: broadest meaning to live according to God’s will eg online article at [Islam101.com](http://islam101.net/) This links to concept of Muslim (see Expressions of religious identity). Moral test 76:2 – to be debated with reference to God’s omniscience and Al-Qadr below. Also martyrdom suggests relative unimportance of this life. Define Mutazili: free willDefine Ashari: doctrine of acquisition – God creates all possibilities and the actions to match the choices humanity makes from among those possibilities – creative activity limited to God but humans responsible for their choices/intentions through which they acquire the actions God creates. God’s foreknowledge of the choices that will be made, have led some Muslims to argue for complete determinism and no free will.Define Bada:based on verses such as 13:11 – the belief that while the destiny of sinners may appear to be fixed, it can be changed if their behaviour changes. There is no change in God’s knowledge of the destiny of that individual**,** only the destiny they actually face.Discuss soul: range of beliefs in Islam – include Sufi ideas.Define Barzakh: ‘in the grave’ between death and final judgement.Discuss judgement, heaven and hell as they are described in the Qur’an 47:15 – the garden and the fire. Interpretations based on literal understanding of physical resurrection; symbolic interpretations suggesting spiritual continuation. | Qur’an 51:56 Qur’an 76:2 [Mawdudi ‘*Let us be Muslims*’ section on Worship](http://www.understandingworldreligions.com/books_pdf/Mawdudi_Let_Us_Be_Muslims.pdf)Bada – 13:11Soul – 39:42 |

Good conduct and key moral principles

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| **Week** | **Learning activities** | **Resources** |
| 7–8 | Make links to life as a moral test/purpose of life/preparation for judgement.Discuss greater jihad – personal spiritual and moral development; constant battle with personal weaknesses.Illustrations of ‘personal freedom and judgement’ may vary considerably – and reflect later topics of study (ie A-level only topics). Shari’ah as a comprehensive guide to human behaviour but flexible in its application – three of five categories are left open to human judgement; some forbidden actions are permitted under certain circumstances, eg eating non-halal food permitted if ‘forced by hunger’. Some duties only become binding under specific circumstances, eg hajj. Understanding of Shari’ah also varies according to the school/tradition, eg use of Qiyas analogy, and ijtihad, and according to the value attributed to hadith. For those progressing to A-level this provides a basis for dialogues with ethical studies.Discuss examples of rulings: * the embryo is not human – only a potential life; ensoulment does not take place at conception – majority view states 120 days. Embryos therefore have no rights and may be treated in the same way as any cell of the body, eg as a source of stem cells. IVF (AIH) permitted.
* unborn child – abortion permitted up to 120 days – and in the opinion of some modern jurists where it is the lesser of two evils after that time (ie mother facing death if pregnancy continues).

Hanafi school gives most flexible interpretation – Maliki school contrasts – or Jafari (Shi’a).Lesser jihad – relevant points to consider: * war at the time of the Prophet: arrows, swords, horseback – hand to hand fighting where enemies could be individually targeted
* combat/fighting not permitted in Makkah when living among non-Muslims
* limited combat fighting permitted, then made a duty for able-bodied men in Makkah when commanded by the Prophet. Examples of way use of force was limited – Battle of the Trench and conquest of Makkah
* key verses in Qur’an.

21st century issues to consider:* who has the authority to call armed Jihad?
* given the consequences of weapons of mass destruction can their use be consistent with jihad – consider contrast with nature of warfare at the time of the Prophet
* terrorism: definition and Muslim responses (for those progressing to A-level this provides a basis for dialogues with ethical studies)
* meaning of Khalifah (stewards) – Adam created as khalifah
* animal rights in Islam
* role – past and present, eg from preservation of local environment/food sources/water sources at time of Prophet to awareness of global influences of human activity on the environment such as fossil fuels/ greenhouse gases and global warming; pollution of waterways and rest of environment by plastic and waste; issues of packaging and over consumption. These may be evidenced and illustrated in a range of ways.
 | YouTube search on ‘Islam sanctity of life’Qur’an 17: 32–33; 5:32Qur’an 23:14 for stages of creation within the womb[Stem cell research](http://islam101.net/index.php/science/221-stem-cells-research) [aboutjihad.com](http://www.aboutjihad.com/) [islamicsupremecouncil.org](http://www.islamicsupremecouncil.org/) [muslimclimateaction.org.uk](http://www.muslimclimateaction.org.uk/) |

Expressions of religious identity

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| **Week** | **Learning activities** | **Resources** |
| 8–9 | Discuss the concept of Muslim: one who surrenders or submits. Seen as the natural condition of the whole of creation but society and education may lead people astray from being Muslim. One becomes a Muslim through personal commitment and living, not birth.Consider the declaration of shahadah – and acting that commitment out in life. Shi’a addition of ‘Ali is the viceregent of God’ (translated variously). Shi’a importance of obedience to the Imam of the age.Discuss:* if a Muslim is one who lives in submission to God, an individual may only be truly called a Muslim at certain times, if not all of her life is lived in obedience to God
* alternatively if ‘Muslim’ is ‘member of Umma’ one may still be a Muslim while breaking Shari’ah. Diversity of Muslim identity because of diversity of understanding Shari’ah.

Define the concept of Pillar: supports on which Islam is based. Concept of 5 pillars from Sunni Islam – in Shi’a Islam Salah and Hajj are among a wider range of duties.Discuss purpose: * variously explained by scholars, eg transformation of the character from imperfect human to perfect Muslim
* development of Taqwah (God consciousness)
* unification of Umma to reflect the oneness of God
* reminder of teaching of Qur’an/Islam
* These can be illustrated with reference to both Salah and hajj.

Discuss Salahdifferences: * Shi’a practice allows the five prayers to be combined into three
* forehead may rest on a small piece of baked clay from Karbala
* there are minor differences in positions of arms and legs during prayer
* differences in the Adhan (attributed to Umar) may also be referenced.

Discuss the importance of outward actions: * cause and witness of unity
* help develop right frame of mind
* impossible for some disabled and elderly
* pointless without right intention/state of mind (except as a means to develop that intention/state of mind)
* underlying intentions and states of mind – essential for fulfilment of the purposes of prayer; especially significant among Sufis.

Discuss hajj:note that as with Salah above – required knowledge and understanding is limited. Those who are not familiar with the ritual of hajj will need some awareness to explain its significance and importance.Hajj as practised early 20th century compared and contrasted with how it was practised at the end of the century – eg how modern transport/facilities/wealth/numbers attending have transformed aspects of hajj (and continue to do so) while the underlying practices remain the same. The significance and importance of hajj should be considered in the light of these, and ongoing, changes.Note: internet sources quote official figures for 1920 of fewer than 60,000 foreign pilgrims.Define significance and importance: spiritual significance/significance as a pillar – see above. Relevance to those living in poverty; limits on numbers and any restrictions.Discuss the changing role of the mosque in the community: this requires some understanding of what it was and what it has become, what it did and what it does now. Example(s) may but need not be limited to the UK, and may, or may not, be limited to the London Central Mosque. Students must be able to refer to the London Central Mosque when required to do so.Discuss the changing role in: * worship including Jummah prayers
* mosques divided along sectarian or national lines – source of unity or division?
* central mosques
* education
* social welfare
* shari’ah courts
* outreach
* political activism
* local and national organisation.
 | [Mawdudi ‘*Let us be Muslims*’ section on Worship](http://www.understandingworldreligions.com/books_pdf/Mawdudi_Let_Us_Be_Muslims.pdf)[islamqa.org](http://islamqa.org/hanafi/qibla-hanafi/43809/the-inner-dimensions-of-prayer-2) [quran-islam.org](http://www.quran-islam.org/main_topics/islam/pillars/al-salat_%28P1192%29.html) Hajj from West Africa from a global historical perspective 19th and 20th centuriesHistory of Hajj in RussiaBurton, [*Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El Medinah and Meccah*](http://books.google.com/books?id=kXcOAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA226), 1857[Epidemics and overcrowding on pilgrim ships – early 20th century](http://web.usm.my/kajh/vol21_2_2014/KAJH%2021%282%29%20Art%204%2879-98%29.pdf)[iccuk.org](http://iccuk.org/) |