PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY:

The full set of school regulations and procedures is contained in the Undergraduate Student Handbook which is available online at your MyAberdeen page. Students are expected to familiarise themselves not only with the contents of this leaflet but also with the contents of the Handbook. Therefore, ignorance of the contents of the Handbook will not excuse the breach of any School regulation or procedure.

You must familiarise yourself with this important information at the earliest opportunity.

COURSE CO-ORDINATOR/COURSE TEAM

King’s College KCG17
Office hours by appointment
Tel.: 01224-27-3112
Email: zohar@abdn.ac.uk

Discipline Administration:

Mrs Claire Hargaden
50-52 College Bounds
Room CB001
01224 272366
divrs@abdn.ac.uk
TIMETABLE
Tuesday, 12-2, Old Brewery OBF01

Students can view their university timetable at
http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/timetables-550.php

COURSE DESCRIPTION
In this course we will discuss the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad, the main figure in Islam, through whom the Quran was revealed. The course will look at the existing sources for this biography and the problems that they present to modern scholars. It will examine various research approaches to this topic and discuss the advantages and shortcomings of each approach. Through a discussion of the main episodes in the life of the Prophet we will learn of the various ways for understanding these episodes. The course will also discuss the status of Muhammad against other prophets in Islam and against the Qur’ān; and the relevance of his biography for contemporary Islam.

INTENDED AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES
On successful completion of the course students will have

1. Detailed knowledge of the biography of Muḥammad.
2. Good knowledge of Muslim sources for the life of Muhammad and how to use them.
3. Good knowledge of, and an ability to apply, scholarly approaches to the life of Muhammad.

The course aims are:
- To introduce students to, and familiarise them with the main episodes in the life of the Prophet Muhammad.
- To introduce students to, and familiarise them with the construction of Muhammad's image in Islam.
- To introduce students to, and familiarise them with Muslim sources for the study of Muhammad's life.
- To introduce students to, and familiarise them with scholarly approaches to the life of Muhammad.
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**READING LIST**

**Week 1 / 15 Sep 2015 Introduction**

Week 2 / 22 Sep 2015 The birth of Muḥammad (1) [Primary Sources]

Primary:
https://archive.org/details/TheLifeOfMohammedGuillaume  

Secondary:


- Crone, Patricia. “What do we actually know about Mohammed?,” *Open Democracy* (web publication [www.opendemocracy.net]), 31 August 2006. Available from:  
https://www.hs.ias.edu/sites/hs.ias.edu/files/Crone_Articles/Crone_What_do_we_actually_know_about_Mohammed.pdf  

Week 3 / 29 Sep 2015 The birth of Muḥammad (2) [Identification & analysis: names, terms, motifs, Qur'ānic vocabulary]

Primary:
- *The Gospel of John*, 14:16

*The Gospel of Mark*

Qur’ânic commentaries (*Tafsîr*) to Qur’ân 61:6:


For the following commentaries see: [http://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp?tMadhNo=0&tTafsirNo=74&tSoraNo=1&tAyahNo=1&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&LanguageId=2](http://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp?tMadhNo=0&tTafsirNo=74&tSoraNo=1&tAyahNo=1&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&LanguageId=2)


Secondary:
- Use reference literature (e.g., The Encyclopaedia of Islam; Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān, to identify and define names, terms, motifs found in the text.

**Week 4 / 06 Oct 2015 The birth of Muḥammad (3) [Parallel texts; Contextualisation and secondary sources]**

**Primary:**

**Secondary:**


**Week 5/ 13 Oct 2015 The opening of Muḥammad's breast (1):** Primary Sources; Identification & analysis: names, terms, motifs, Qur'ānic vocabulary

**Primary:**

**Secondary:**
- Use reference literature to identify and define names, terms, motifs, Qur'ānic vocabulary.

**Week 6 / 20 Oct 2015 The opening of Muḥammad's breast (2):** Parallel texts; Contextualisation and secondary sources

**Primary:**
- Watt, W. Montgomery, M. V. Mcdonald (trans.). *The History of Al-
  Tabari, Vol. 6: Muhammad at Mecca.* SUNY Series in Near Eastern
- Ibn Kathīr, 'Imād al-Dīn Abū al-Fidā' Ismā‘īl al-Dimashqī (d. 1335). *The
  Life of the Prophet Muḥammad (Al-Sīra al-Nabawwiyya).* Le Gassick,
  Trevor, Fareed Ahmed and Mustafa 'Abd al-Wahid, trans & ed. Reading:
- Identify additional parallels from other primary sources (e.g.,
  Historiography, *Tafsīr* (to surahs 94; 17:1), *Ḥadīth* literature).

**Secondary:**
- Use reference literature to identify and define names, terms, motifs,
  Qur’ānic vocabulary.
- Rubin, Uri. *The Eye of the Beholder: The Life of Muḥammad as Viewed
  *Floor 7  .(297.63 RUB )*
- Andrae, Tor. *Mohammed: The Man and his Faith.* Theophil Menzel,
- Vuckovic, Brooke Olson. *Heavenly Journeys, Earthly Concerns: The

**Week 7 / 27 Oct 2015 The journey to Syria (1) [Primary Sources; Identification & analysis: names, terms, motifs, Qur’ānic vocabulary; Parallel texts]**

**Primary:**
- Ibn Kathīr, 'Imād al-Dīn Abū al-Fidā' Ismā‘īl al-Dimashqī (d. 1335). *The
  Life of the Prophet Muḥammad (Al-Sīra al-Nabawwiyya).* Le Gassick,
  Trevor, Fareed Ahmed and Mustafa 'Abd al-Wahid, trans & ed. Reading:

**Secondary:**

**Week 8 / 03 Nov 2015 The journey to Syria (2) [Contextualisation and secondary sources]**

**Primary:**

**Secondary:**

**Week 9 / 10 Nov 2015 Presentations**

**Week 10 / 17 Nov 2015 Presentations**

**Week 11 / 24 Nov 2015 NO CLASS (write your essay!!)**

**Week 12 / 01 Dec 2015 Conclusions**


**LIST OF PRIMARY SOURCES**

*Sīra* (biographies of the Prophet Muḥammad):


Historiography:


Of these, in particular the following volumes:


Hadīth (sayings and deeds of the Prophet)


**Tafsīr** (commentary to the Qur’ān):


For the following commentaries see: [http://www.altafsir.com/Tafsir.asp?tMadhNo=0&tTafsirNo=74&tSoraNo=1&tAyahNo=1&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&LanguageId=2](http://www.altafsir.com/Tafsir.asp?tMadhNo=0&tTafsirNo=74&tSoraNo=1&tAyahNo=1&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&LanguageId=2)


LIST OF SECONDARY SOURCES

Reference works


Index Islamicus. http://bibliographies.brillonline.com/browse/index-islimic
http://www.oxfordbibliographiesonline.com/

Selected books and articles


Crone, Patricia. “What do we actually know about Mohammed?,” *Open Democracy* (web publication), 31 August 2006. [www.opendemocracy.net](http://www.opendemocracy.net) [https://www.hs.ias.edu/sites/hs.ias.edu/files/Crone_Articles/Crone_What_d o_we_actually_know_about_Mohammed.pdf](https://www.hs.ias.edu/sites/hs.ias.edu/files/Crone_Articles/Crone_What_do_we_actually_know_about_Mohammed.pdf)


Schacht, Joseph. “A revaluation of Islamic Traditions,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. 1949pp. .143–154 (Per 900 Roy); Also available for online reading through JSTOR.


ASSESSMENT
1st attempt:
A 5,000 words essay (70%);
A presentation in class (10%);
Two literature reviews (2x10%).
Resit: 1 essay of 5000 words (100%).

Click to view the University Level Descriptors (ANNEX A).
Click to view the University Assessment Scale Band Descriptors (ANNEX B).

ESSAYS
One essay is required in the course. It should be 2500 words in (including footnotes, but excluding bibliography and primary texts). It will account for 60% of the course mark.

The essay is due on Monday 30 November 2015.

The purpose of this essay is to give students an opportunity to

a) Gain in-depth knowledge of a specific episode from the Prophet Muḥammad's traditional biography.

b) Do hands-on research work with primary sources of classical Islam.

c) Acquire research methodology.

d) Gain tools for independent research.
ESSAY TOPIC

Explore one of the episodes from the Prophet Muḥammad's biography, with reference to primary (ṣīra, ḥadīth, Qur'ān and commentaries, historiography) and secondary sources.

A. **Choose an episode** from the biography of the Prophet Muhammad (other than the one(s) analysed in class discussions)

B. **Identify 2 different primary texts**, which discuss this episode, from **2 different primary sources**. The 2 sources should belong to **2 different genres** (ṣīra, ḥadīth, commentaries to the Qur'ān, historiography).

The texts should be about 1 page long each (book pagination);

The text from the earlier source will be **your main text**.

1. **Analyse your main text**, referring to:
   a. **Source** — Genre (which; what is its purpose); author (date of death; geographical/ denominational/ political/ etc. affiliation?); context in which the text is put within that source (e.g., as commentary to a specific Qur'ānic verse; as part of chronological description of the Prophet's life; as part of discussion on a certain topic in ḥadīth, e.g. prayer).

2. **Contextualise** the given text within the general biography of the Prophet (use of secondary literature will be very handy here).

3. **Discuss any relevant secondary literature**. A good starting point will be the Encyclopaedia of Islam (entry dedicated to the specific episode); Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān; biographies of the Prophet (preferably critical), etc.

4. **Identify the transmitters** of the text (isnād) — year of death, geographical affiliation, significance (e.g., caliph, relative of the Prophet, significant traditionist). The *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition/ online might be a good starting point.
5. Identify any names, places, terms (e.g., hijra) that are mentioned in the text. This should be a short comment, often in brackets or in a footnote. E.g.,
"According to the text, this event occurred two years before the hijra". \(^1\) [Then give a short definition of the hijra in a footnote].

6. Identify any Qur'ānic verses that are mentioned in the text (such verses will often be referred by the editor/translator of the text in a footnote, or even in the text itself; if unsure please consult tutor).

7. Discuss any of these terms / names/ places that you find interesting, odd, intriguing, etc.;

8. Identify and discuss additional unique motifs, if applicable.
(Secondary literature can help).

9. Comparison with a parallel text: Point out and discuss the similarities/ differences between your main text and other chosen text (from the additional primary source). Try to explain such differences, relating to differences such as time and place where each author lived, identity of transmitters, genre of source, etc. Secondary literature might be helpful here, either with direct arguments or as a source of inspiration.

The essay structure should thus be:

Introduction (±500 words): present the chosen episode and text (sources: genre and author, contextualisation within the Prophet’s biography). Include the primary text (the text will not count towards word count of the essay)

Discussion: Identify names, places, and terms in the text; discuss interesting motifs, etc.; compare to other primary text; additional insights, if any, suggested by secondary literature. Include the other primary text (the text will not count towards word count of the essay)

Conclusions: What did the analysis reveal (what was not obvious through
literal reading of the text alone).
PRESENTATION (10% of final mark)
Each student will give a 10-minute presentation in which they will briefly present their topic and texts, their findings so far and the challenges that the texts presents them with.

The aim of this presentation is to
(a) enable students to present the midterm results of their work;
(b) receive helpful insights from their peers; and
(c) practice skills of talking to an audience and presenting one's research.

LITERATURE REVIEWS (2 x 10% of final mark)
Two reviews, of approximately 1,000 words each, critically discussing a relevant scholarly work of the secondary literature concerning the life of the Prophet Muhammad.
The first review is due on Tuesday 06 October 2015.
The second review is due on Tuesday 03 November 2015.

ASSESSMENT DEADLINES
- The 2 texts are due on Tuesday 13 October 2015.
- The first review is due on Tuesday 06 October 2015.
- The second review is due on Tuesday 03 November 2015.
- The presentations will take place on 10 November 2015 and 17 November 2015. Specific dates will be arranged in the first week of the course.
- The essay is due on Monday 30 November 2015.
SUBMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

Reviews: Submit one paper copy to the course coordinator in class.

Presentation: Will be given orally in class.

Essay: Submit one paper copy to the drop boxes in CB008 in 50-52 College Bounds and one electronic copy to Turnitin via MyAberdeen. Both copies to be submitted by 3.00pm on the due date.

Please note: Failure to submit both to Turnitin, and also one identical hard copy with the Turnitin receipt attached will result in a deduction of marks. Failure to submit to Turnitin will result in a zero mark.

RESIT INFORMATION

The resit is 100% essay of 5,000 words.

Access to the resit which is provisional on:

- All submitted coursework having been submitted and graded at CGS E3 or higher.
- Student having a valid Class Certificate. Students with C7’s are not eligible for resits.