

## **An introduction to the foundations of Islam and to medieval Islamic philosophy**

**Start date**      Friday 11 March 2022                      **End date**                      Sunday 13 March 2022

**Venue**              Madingley Hall  
Madingley  
Cambridge  
CB23 8AQ

**Tutor**              **Dr Karim Esmail**                      **Course code**                      2122NRX081

**Director of ISP and LL**                      Sarah Ormrod

**For further information**                      [intenq@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:intenq@ice.cam.ac.uk)

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### **Tutor biography**

**Dr Karim Esmail** lectures at both Cambridge and Oxford. He was educated at London, Oxford, Cambridge, and Harvard. He was awarded a British Academy Studentship and the Gregg Bury Prize at Cambridge. He was formerly a Research Fellow at Oxford, Burney Student at Cambridge, and a Visiting Fellow at Harvard. Alongside international articles, he is the author of three volumes of an original philosophical work on the nature and existence of God.

## Course programme

### Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the Terrace Bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00	Dinner
<b>20:30 – 22:00</b>	<b>Beginnings: Pre-Islamic Arabia; Muhammad; The Qur'an</b>
22:00	Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

### Saturday

07:30	Breakfast (for residents only)
<b>09:00 – 10:30</b>	<b>Developments: Sunna &amp; Hadiths; Expansion; Sunnis &amp; Shiis; Shari'a</b>
10:30	Coffee
<b>11:00 – 12:30</b>	<b>Duties: The Five Pillars</b>
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free time
16:00	Tea
<b>16:30 – 18:00</b>	<b>Mysticism: Sufism</b>
18:00 – 18:30	Free time
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	<b>The transmission of Greek philosophy to the Muslim world; Al Kindi</b>
<b>21:30</b>	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

### Sunday

07:30	Breakfast (for residents only)
<b>09:00 – 10:30</b>	<b>Al Kindi; Al Farabi</b>
10:30	Coffee
<b>11:00 – 12:30</b>	<b>Al Ghazali</b>
12:45	Lunch

**The course will disperse after lunch**

## **Course syllabus**

### **Aims:**

The course aims to:

- provide an understanding of the origins of Islam and its early historical development, its key text and beliefs and duties, and its main mystical element.
- provide an understanding of some of the key elements in the thought of some its great early philosophers.

### **Content:**

Religion has played a highly important part in the lives of human beings. This course is an introduction to the foundations of one of the great religions of the world, Islam. It is also an introduction to some of the key elements in the thought of some of its great early philosophers. The first session considers pre-Islamic Arabia and the prophet of Islam, Muhammad, and the revelation which he received and which is Islam's sacred text, the Qur'an. The second session considers the matter of the example of the prophet and it considers the period after his death including the division between Sunnis and Shiis and it considers (briefly) Islamic law. The third session considers five key religious duties, the so-called "Five Pillars" of Islam. The fourth session considers the main mystical element in Islam, Sufism. The fifth session considers the transmission of Greek thought to the Muslim world and some of the key elements in the thought of al Kindi. The sixth session continues in its consideration of some of the key elements in the thought of al Kindi and it considers some of the key elements in the thought of al Farabi. The final seminar considers some of the key elements in the thought of al Ghazali.

### **Presentation of the course:**

The course will involve lectures and group discussion.

**As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to gain:**

- An understanding of the origins of Islam and its early historical development, its key text and beliefs and duties, and its main mystical element.
- An understanding of some of the key elements in the thought of some its great early philosophers.

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## Reading and resources list

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Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. Any essential reading is marked with an asterisk \*

<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Publisher</b>
<u>Introductions to Islam</u>		
Waines, D.,	<i>An Introduction to Islam</i>	Cambridge
Rahman, F.,	<i>Islam</i>	Chicago
<u>Works on Islamic Philosophy</u>		
Davidson, H. A.,	<i>Proofs for Eternity, Creation and the existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy</i>	Oxford
Leaman, O.,	<i>An Introduction to Classical Islamic Philosophy</i>	Cambridge