Culture in Perspective: the Near East and the Islamic World (A005152)

Course Specifications
Valid as from the academic year 2018-2019

Lecturers in academic year 2018-2019
Janssen, Caroline
LW21 lecturer-in-charge

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2018-2019
A (semester 2) English self-reliant study activities 5.0 h
integration seminar 5.0 h
seminar: coached exercises 35.0 h

Offered in the following programmes in 2018-2019

- Master of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures (main subject Middle East Studies) 6 A
- Exchange Programme Oriental Languages and Cultures 6 A

Teaching languages
English

Keywords
Cultural history, Social history, history of mentalities, research perspectives, Arabic and Islamic Studies, Quranic Studies (the Qur'anic context), Arabic literature, Arabia, Near East, Ethiopia, cultural heritage

Position of the course
This course places well-defined themes from the culture/cultural history of the Near East and the world of Islam in a broad cultural perspective and analyses the dynamics of scholarly research from this point of view.
This course contributes to the following learning outcomes: 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5.

Contents
Culture in perspective is a course which focuses on the interpretation of complex themes. The student is familiarized with research perspectives and their impact on the outcome of an investigation. Complex relations between cultures are the focal point of this course.

Three themes are explored.
In the first part the interwovenness of the cultural traditions of the Near East and Arabia is the focal point. The central theme is the conceptualization of paradise and hell.

The second and most important part of this course is devoted to the Qur'anic discourse about Jesus and Mary, and research perspectives in the field of Early Qur'anic Studies.
The interconnectedness of the religious traditions of the Near East, Ethiopia, and Arabia is shown, as well as the links between the three main monotheistic religions Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It is made clear that not only the 'Great Texts' but also oral and apocryphal traditions are essential for the study of the Qur'anic context.

We deal with the question why the Qur'anic discourse on Mary and Jesus is different from that of the New Testament, what the Qur'an 'does' with the traditional accounts on the prophets of the Near East, and why. The Quranic text is juxtaposed to Christian subtexts.
The third theme is vegetarianism. What do Muslims think of vegetarianism? Here too the links and partial overlap between cultures is explored.

Initial competences
Students have a good general knowledge of the history and cultures of the Near East
and the Islamic world (level BA in Oriental Languages and Cultures or a minor in Oriental Languages and Cultures, or similar competences).

Final competences
1 Students have an insight in the complex relations between Judaism, Christianity and the Quranic context.
2 Students realize that religions are diverse and have not always been what they are today; they understand that religion is more than a collection of dogmas.
3 Students know the main theories on the origin of the Quran and they can identify different research cultures. They have an insight in the complexity of the field.
4 Students learn how to be empathetic and engage in the interreligious dialogue with respect for other people's opinions.
5 Students understand that daring to think means that one questions the existing order including results of research on a permanent basis.
6 Students can make a distinction between the Qur'anic context, the Qur'an as text and the interpretations of Qur'anic exegesis.

Conditions for credit contract
Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'.

Conditions for exam contract
This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract.

Teaching methods
Integration seminar, self-reliant study activities, seminar: coached exercises

Extra information on the teaching methods
Students prepare classes by reading texts or articles. In the class the main points are explained and texts and interpretations are analyzed and discussed. Students are encouraged to react and establish links with their own background.

Learning materials and price
Reader consisting of text materials (Quran, Christian texts ...) in translation and articles (available through Minerva). Printing costs c. 10 euro.

References
Janssen, C. 2018, Maria, Jesus en de keten van revelaties en profeten. Een hypothese wat de Koran doet met de protagonisten van het christendom, vanuit welke mogelijke gronden en met welk effect, Brussel.
Lange, Chr. 2016: Paradise and Hell in Islamic Traditions, Cambridge.
Lange, Chr. 2017: Mohammad. Perspectieven op de profeet, Amsterdam.

Course content-related study coaching
Active support during class sessions and through Minerva.

Evaluation methods
End-of-term evaluation and continuous assessment.

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the first examination period
(Approved)
Written examination with open questions, open book examination

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the second examination period

Written examination with open questions, open book examination

Examination methods in case of permanent evaluation

Participation, assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent evaluation

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

Extra information on the examination methods

PE: written exam with open questions
NPE: participation in discussions and research assignments

Calculation of the examination mark

PE 70%
NPE 30%

If a part of the exam is not taken and the final score would be more than 10/20 the final score will be reduced to the highest non-pass score. When unsatisfactory grades are obtained on parts of the exam the final mark may be lowered.

Facilities for Working Students

1. Possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance.
2. Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year
3. Alternative time for feedback is possible

Students need to send an e-mail (mention as subject: "werkstudent CIP") and schedule an appointment before Oct. 1st in order to work out a solution.

For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy

(Approved)