



Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology

ISLB33, Islamic Studies: Islam between Ideals and Practice, 7.5 credits

Islamologi: Islam mellan ideal och praktik, 7,5 högskolepoäng
First Cycle / Grundnivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by The Pro Dean of First and Second Cycle Studies at The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology on 2026-06-08 (U 2026/356). The syllabus comes into effect 2026-09-01 and is valid from the spring semester 2027.

General information

The course is offered as a freestanding course. It can be included in a first or second cycle degree.

Language of instruction: Swedish and English
Elements in other Scandinavian languages may occur.

Main field of study *Specialisation*

History of Religions G1F, First cycle, has less than 60 credits in first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Learning outcomes

On completion of the course, students shall be able to

Knowledge and understanding

- identify, describe, and explain differences and tensions between ideals and practices within Islamic traditions,
- understand how social, economic, material, gender-related, and political contexts and structures shape the conditions for lived religiosity,
- describe the main features of key debates on “Islam” as a scholarly concept and academic field in light of the diversity of Muslim life and Islamic intellectual traditions,

Competence and skills

- describe and discuss Muslim religious life using theoretical concepts and nuanced empirical examples,
- critically discuss, both orally and in writing, and draw conclusions about the relationship between questions of interpretation and Islamic diversity, with regard to theological variations, socio-political contexts, gender issues, and perspectives on power,
- independently reflect on methodological approaches in the study of religion,
- analyze advanced texts on Muslim religious practice and academic methodological discussions,

Judgement and approach

- evaluate and, on the basis of relevant evidence, provide nuanced perspectives on contemporary public debates concerning Islam and Muslims.

Course content

During the course, the diversity of Muslim religious practice in different national and local contexts is studied and analyzed, as well as how this diversity relates to conceptions of Islam as a unified religious tradition. The course explores boundary-making processes surrounding what is perceived as “correct Islam” in different contexts. It examines how such boundaries are negotiated in lived practice, both as expressions of changing social conditions and as responses to challenges posed by new religious actors, in both majority and minority settings.

Drawing on ethnographic research on Muslim religious life from recent decades, the course discusses how Islam as a theological and ritual tradition is shaped and reinterpreted, and how these processes have been theorized from perspectives of gender, power, and class. In addition, the course engages with ongoing scholarly discussions concerning the concept of “Islam” and its applicability in relation to the empirical diversity of Muslim religious life.

Course design

The teaching consists of lectures, group exercises, and 4–5 mandatory seminars. Absence from the seminars may be compensated for with written assignments in accordance with instructions from the lecturer. Students who are absent from more than 50 % of the seminars will need to retake the course.

If students, through no fault of their own – for example, due to an accident or sudden illness – have been unable to complete one or more mandatory components, the department is responsible for providing an equivalent alternative or another opportunity to complete the relevant component(s). This also applies to students who are serving as student representatives.

Assessment

The assessment is based on a written take-home exam.

The examiner, in consultation with Disability Support Services, may deviate from the regular form of examination in order to provide a permanently disabled student with a form of examination equivalent to that of a student without a disability.

Grades

Grading scale includes the grades: Fail, Pass, Pass with distinction

For a grade of Pass on the whole course, the student must have been awarded a grade of Pass for the written take-home exam. For a grade of Pass with distinction on the whole course, the student must have been awarded a grade of Pass with distinction for the written take-home exam.

Entry requirements

General entry requirements and successful completion of at least 15 credits within Religious Studies: Level 1 (REVA10/ÄRED11), of which at least 5 credits must consist of Module 4. Alternatively, general eligibility and successful completion of at least 15 credits within Islamic Studies: Level 1 (ISLA11), or the equivalent.

Further information

- The course is offered at the Centre for Theology and Religious Studies, Lund University.
- The course is also included as module 2 of ISLB14, Islamic Studies: Level 2.
- The credits allocated for course content that in whole or in part is commensurate with another course can only be credited once for a degree.