

Summer Intensive Course—GTA 2015

Course Descriptions

Inspirations from Beauty: The Relevancy of the Account of Nabi Yusuf (‘a) in the Qur’an

Instructor: Usama Abdulghani

Duration: 5 Sessions

Introduction: Focusing on Sura Yusuf, the course at hand will endeavour to explain how the teachings of the Holy Qur’an can be practically applied in our daily lives to pave the way for the return of the “Yusuf of Fatima (s)”. While the contents will be based on authoritative material found in some of the best Shia *tafsir* regarding this wonderful story, the practical lessons will be drawn from the verses themselves and will be supported by the traditions of the Holy Prophet (s) and his Progeny (a). There will be reminders on spirituality, self-purification, akhlaq, life skills, as well as lessons on the social and political dimensions of our lives as Muslims living in the West.

Spiritual Anthropology

Instructor: Shuja Ali Mirza

Duration: 9 Sessions

Introduction: What is man? Where did man come from? Where is he now? Where is he going? What does it mean to be a human being? Does human life have any meaning? Anthropology is the science responsible for giving the answers to the questions posed. There are two types of anthropology which are based on two fundamentally different ways of understanding man. One is sacred while the other profane. The course will present the former while pointing out the shortcomings of the latter. As such, it will take as its point of departure the origin of man and trace, in a meta-historical fashion, his movement away from that origin. It will conclude with the arrival of man on the material plane of existence and his accelerating descent into the modern world. By lucidly describing this journey and the symptoms and underlying causes of the present quagmire, it will suggest a solution and a general course of action to be taken. This resolution of the current crisis and discord corresponds to man’s return to his origin and the ascent towards his final destination and goal. On the individual level, it means to embark upon the spiritual journey towards God, a journey that includes self-knowledge and self-purification. On the social plane, it means to cultivate a society that accords with Divine Guidance and conforms to Divine Law and which provides an environment that attracts, nourishes and sustains its inhabitants on a path of spiritual wayfaring.

Outline:

- Lesson One: Different types of Anthropology and the Fall of Man
- Lesson Two: Different Ways of Seeing Reality and the Unitive or Tawhidi Worldview
- Lesson Three: Manifestation (*tajalli*) versus Displacement (*tajafi*) and Absolute Unity
- Lesson Four: Getting Up from the Fall and True Felicity
- Lesson Five: Intellect, Knowledge, Action, and Social Action
- Lesson Six: Will, Love, and Passion
- Lesson Seven: Of Myth and Gods
- Lesson Eight: Modernity and its Isms
- Lesson Nine: Post-modernity and Alienation

United Ummah and Muslim Unity

Instructor: Shuja Ali Mirza

Duration: 3 Sessions

Introduction: It does not take much to convince Muslims that the Ummah is one, ideally and in principle. It is also easy to elicit from them admissions and even lamentations of the current state of affairs —of an Ummah that is plagued with disunity and discord. The causes of divisiveness that have left the Ummah in such a torn and tattered state are, no doubt, various and manifold. The course will try to understand some of these causes and will look for a “solution”. Realizing that unity will not be achieved just by being aware of the need, nor by harbouring a thousand good intentions, the study will turn to both the intellect and traditional authority for guidance.

Outline:

Lesson One: Unity vs Uniformity

Lesson Two: The United Ummah in the Qur’an

Lesson Three: The Imams (‘a) and Muslim Unity

Idols of the Modern World

Instructor: Salim Yusufali

Duration: 8 Sessions

Among the people are those who set up compeers besides Allah, loving them as if loving Allah but the faithful have a more ardent love for Allah - though the wrongdoers will see, when they sight the punishment, that power, altogether, belongs to Allah, and that Allah is severe in punishment. (2:165)

Introduction: Throughout history, one of the ugliest manifestations of the human being turning away from Allah has been the idol. Initially a rudimentary object fashioned of base material, the modern idol is subject to even a greater degree of worship, yet due to its sophisticated nature is able to penetrate into our hearts without our even being aware of its influence upon us. In this course we aim firstly to examine the definition and role of idols, the history of idol worship, and reasons behind idol worship from the Qur'an and *hadith*. We will then continue to study some of the idols of the modern era such as individualism, feminism, pluralism, democracy, modern forms of entertainment, and capitalism by reviewing scholarly critiques of these ideologies.

The Qur’ān and Meaning

Instructor: Rizwan Rashid

Duration: 5 Sessions

Introduction: The Qur’ān is the central sacred text of the Muslims par excellence. It is a divine gift originating from the celestial world and extending down into the realm of humanity. It is the greatest miracle left behind by the Seal of the Prophets (ﷺ), mandated to endure until the end of time. Through the multiple layers of meaning contained within it, it is meant to be man’s guiding compass in his return to God. Using Ayatullah Jawādī Āmulī’s exegetical work, *The Qur’ān in light of the Qur’ān*, this class will discuss some of the many facets of the Qur’ān. Topics will include: the reality of the Qur’ān, the Qur’ān’s inimitability, the Qur’ānic mission, the eternity of the Qur’ān, and understanding the Qur’ān. The conflict between modern hermeneutics and traditional *tafsīr* will also be broached.

Tawḥīd in Principle and Action

Instructor: Rizwan Rashid

Duration: 5 Sessions

Introduction: In so far as it conveys a fundamental ontological reality, the concept of tawḥīd plays a quintessential role within the final religion of Islam. As a descriptive principle, it affirms the existence and Oneness of God; as a prescriptive command and natural consequence, it demands that man direct his whole being towards the One. Taking inspiration from the works of the great *‘ulamā* within the *hawzā*, this course will provide an overview of the concept of tawḥīd. Topics will include: the ways of knowing God, proofs for the existence of God, the levels of tawḥīd, and tawḥīd in application.

The Prophet (ﷺ)—Perfect Man and Exemplar

Instructor: Mohammad Hasnain

Duration: 8 Sessions

Introduction: Today, when humanity is looking for a role model, the true etiquette and example (*sīrah*) of Prophet Muhammad(ﷺ) is the only real solution for this thirst. Moreover, as imperialist powers are putting tremendous efforts through electronic, print, and social media to distort the image of this perfect man, a superficial knowledge of his lifestyle is not enough and it is the responsibility of everyone, especially Muslims, to acquire an in-depth knowledge of it. This course is designed to provide the true picture of Prophet Muhammad’s (ﷺ) *sīrah*.

- Lesson One: Importance of the *sīrah-inabawī*
 - Lesson Two: Definition of *sīrah* and its role in our life
 - Lesson Three: Sources for Understanding the *sīrah*
 - Lesson Four: Categorization of Different Principles of *sīrah*
 - Lesson Five: Employment of Means
 - Lesson Six: Importance of Spreading the Message
 - Lesson Seven: Characteristics of a Religious Missionary
 - Lesson Eight: Causes of the Proliferation of Islam
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Qur’ānic Sciences

Instructor: Sayyid Asad Jafri

Duration: 2 Sessions

Introduction: This course will mainly focus on the historical context of the Holy Quran. Topics such as: Descent, Revelation and the Miracle nature of the Quran will be discussed. The purpose of such a course is to gain a better understanding of the Quran outside of the world of Tafseer. Its primary objective is to instigate and nurture a closeness with this Glorious Book that will lead us to want to delve deeper into its meaning.
