



Introduction to Learning the Sacred Sciences

MRF 101 | Summer, 2024

Instructor: Shaykh Arsalan Haque

Office Hours: By appointment only

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Class Times: Sundays, 2:30–3:30 PM; Wednesdays, 7–8 PM

Class Location: Plano Masjid

Zoom Meeting ID: 871 8477 8597

Zoom Password: marifa

PREREQUISITES

None

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A man came to Abū al-Dardā' while he was in Damascus. Abū al-Dardā' asked him, "What has brought you here, my brother?" He replied, "A hadith which you relate from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace." Abū al-Dardā' asked, "Have you come for some worldly need?" He replied, "No." "Have you come for business?" He replied, "No." "You have come only to seek this hadith?" He said, "Yes." Abū al-Dardā' then said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, say: 'Whoever travels a path seeking sacred knowledge, Allah will place him on a path leading to Paradise. The angels lower their wings for the student of sacred knowledge, pleased with what he is doing. The creatures in the heavens and earth seek forgiveness for the student of sacred knowledge, even the fish in the water. The superiority of the religious scholar over the devout worshipper is like the superiority of the full moon over the other heavenly bodies. The religious scholars are the heirs of the prophets. The prophets leave no money as a bequest, rather they leave knowledge. Whoever seizes it has taken a bountiful share.'" (Related by Imāms Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, and Ibn Mājah)

This is the introductory course for the Marifa Program. In this course you will learn about:

- the virtues of seeking knowledge;
- the etiquette of learning the sacred sciences; and
- the pitfalls of learning.

You will also receive an overview of the major Islamic sciences and what they entail through what are known as *al-mabādī al-ʿashara* [the ten introductory principles].

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To appreciate the benefits and challenges of studying the sacred sciences
2. To conceptualize the course of study
3. To be inspired to pursue a serious study of the sacred sciences

TEXTBOOKS

Required:

1. al-Ḥanbalī, Ibn Rajab, *Heirs of the Prophets*. Starlatch
2. Ibn Jamā' al-Kinānī, Badr al-Dīn, *Etiquette of the Learner*. Turath Publishing.

Recommended:

1. al-Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid, *The Book of Knowledge*. Fons Vitae.

CLASS POLICIES

1. You have the option to audit this course or take it for credit. If you choose to audit the course, you must abide by the Marifa Audit Policy outlined on the web site.
2. Make every possible effort to be on time! Coming late or leaving early can leave you with misunderstandings about what is discussed during class. If you are late or absent, be sure to listen to the class recording before the next class.
3. You are expected to read the assigned portion of the textbook before coming to class. Not doing so will disqualify you from asking questions during class.
4. You may use electronic devices exclusively for class-related purposes. Cell phones must be silenced during class.
5. Use your full name during all Zoom sessions. Do not use nicknames or fake names. Names that are not on the roster will be removed from the meeting.
6. All assignments must be submitted on time. No exceptions allowed.
7. No make-up exams will be permitted without a documented excuse. Students who miss an exam with a legitimate excuse must email me as soon as possible.

COURSE ASSESSMENT & GRADING

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| Assignments (Qty: 3) | 30% |
| Online Quizzes (Qty: 3) | 30% |
| Online Final Exam (due Jul. 28) | 40% |

Note: Your final grade must be higher than 70% in order to receive credit for this course.

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE & READING ASSIGNMENTS

| Date | Lecture | Reading Assignment Due |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Sun. Jun. 30 | 1: Introduction & Overview | None |
| Wed. Jul. 3 | 2: Virtues of Seeking Knowledge | <i>Heirs</i> , Chapters 1-5 |
| Sun. Jul. 7 | ** No Class ** | None |
| Wed. Jul. 10 | 3: Virtues (contd.) | <i>Heirs</i> , Chapters 6-10 |
| Sun. Jul. 14 | 4: Etiquette of Seeking Knowledge | <i>Etiquette</i> , Chapters 1-3 |
| Wed. Jul. 17 | 5: Etiquette (contd.) | <i>Etiquette</i> , Chapters 4-6 |
| Sun. Jul. 21 | 6: Pitfalls of Learning | None |
| Wed. Jul. 24 | 7: Overview of the Islamic Sciences | None |