



# THE ERA OF THE FOUR CALIPHS AND HASAN

## HST 301 | Fall, 2026

**Instructor:** Imam Abdur Rahman      **Class Times:** Wednesdays 7:00 – 9:30 PM, Sep 2 – Dec 16, 2026  
**Office Hours:** By appointment only      **Class Location:** Plano Masjid – IACC (in-person and online)  
**Instructor Email:** [AbdulRahmanBashir@planomasjid.org](mailto:AbdulRahmanBashir@planomasjid.org)      **Zoom Meeting ID:** TBA  
**Admin Email:** [TaqwaAdmin@PlanoMasjid.Org](mailto:TaqwaAdmin@PlanoMasjid.Org)      **Zoom Password:** TBA  
**Instructor:** Imam Abdur Rahman Bashir      **Office Hours:** By appointment only  
**Google Classroom:** <https://classroom.google.com/c/ODY1NzEzNjMzNzYw?cjc=jbne32ev>

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

‘Irbāḍ b. Sāriya (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave us a profound exhortation which made our hearts afraid and our eyes weep. We said, 'O Messenger of Allah, it seems like the exhortation of someone bidding farewell, so advise us.' He said, 'I command you to be conscious of Allah, and to hear and obey even if an Abyssinian slave is put in command over you. Whoever amongst you lives long will see much disagreement, so hold onto my way [sunna] and the way [sunna] of the Rightly Guided and Guiding Caliphs. Hold onto it with your molar teeth! And beware of newfangled matters, for every innovation is misguidance.'" – Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī

This course covers the thirty years following the death of the Prophet ﷺ — the era in which the Muslim community was led by Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, and al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī (may Allah be pleased with them all). Students will trace the major events of each caliphate, the expansion of the early Muslim state, and the fitna that tested the community from within — engaging the history honestly, including its most difficult chapters, and grounding it throughout in the theological framework and creedal positions of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah regarding the Ṣaḥābah.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To learn how Muslim scholars evaluate historical sources, and why methodology matters when studying a period this contested
2. To get an overview of the major contributions of each caliph
3. To draw lessons in leadership from the best leaders in Islamic history
4. To learn how the early Muslims simultaneously took on the two superpowers of their time — the Roman and Persian empires — and defeated them with unwavering faith and courage
5. To answer the frequently asked question, "Did Islam spread by the sword?"
6. To draw important lessons from the incredible fitna [political strife] that emerged during early Islam and ultimately led to the assassinations of ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī
7. To gain an understanding of the Kharijite mentality and its dangers
8. To gain a clear, grounded understanding of the Sunni creed regarding the Ṣaḥābah who lived through the fitna

### TEXTBOOKS

Recommendations for textbooks will be provided throughout the course. Class notes will be provided by the instructor.

## **CLASS POLICIES**

1. 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 review the class recording before the next session.
2. You are expected to complete the assigned reading before coming to class. Not doing so will disqualify you from asking questions during class.
3. You may use electronic devices exclusively for class-related purposes. Cell phones must be silenced during class.
4. 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.
5. All quizzes must be completed on time. No exceptions allowed.
6. No make-up quizzes will be permitted without a documented excuse. Students who miss a quiz with a legitimate excuse must email me as soon as possible.
7. Please bring a water bottle. Sessions are long, and staying hydrated makes a real difference.

## **COURSE ASSESSMENT & GRADING**

Quiz 1 — 25%

Quiz 2 — 25%

Quiz 3 — 25%

Quiz 4 — 25%

All quiz questions are multiple choice only. Coverage and exact timing for each quiz will be provided in that quiz's form description once published.

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

That simplifies this a lot — if quizzes happen off-site (via Google Classroom, on their own time), they don't need to claim a session date at all. Here's the cleaned-up version, with all 15 dates purely for lecture content:

## **TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE**

*This outline is tentative and may shift as the course progresses. Reading assignments and specific page references will be provided in Google Classroom as the semester unfolds. Quizzes are administered off-site via Google Classroom; timing for each will be announced separately and will not take up class session time.*

| Session | Date   | Topic                                                                                                                           |
|---------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1       | Aug 26 | Course orientation. Methodology — how Muslim scholars evaluate historical sources, and why it matters for this era specifically |
| 2       | Sep 2  | The death of the Prophet ﷺ and the crisis of succession — Saqīfah and the moment that shaped everything after                   |
| 3       | Sep 9  | Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq — character, election, early priorities as caliph                                                            |

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| 4  | Sep 16 | Abū Bakr — the Ridda Wars, consolidation, legacy and succession planning                            |
| 5  | Sep 23 | ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb — character, early life, transformation                                        |
| 6  | Sep 30 | ʿUmar — governance, administrative innovations, expansion of the state                              |
| 7  | Oct 7  | ʿUmar — the conquests, assassination, and legacy                                                    |
| 8  | Oct 21 | ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān — character, early caliphate, the Qurʾānic standardization                       |
| 9  | Oct 28 | ʿUthmān — growing tensions and the roots of unrest                                                  |
| 10 | Nov 4  | ʿUthmān — the siege and assassination, the opening of the fitna                                     |
| 11 | Nov 11 | ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib — character and the start of his caliphate                                       |
| 12 | Nov 18 | The Battle of the Camel                                                                             |
| 13 | Dec 2  | Ṣiffīn, the arbitration, and the emergence of the Khawārij                                          |
| 14 | Dec 9  | al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī — his caliphate, the abdication to Muʿāwiyah, and ʿĀm al-Jamāʿah                  |
| 15 | Dec 16 | Theological synthesis — the Sunni creed regarding the Ṣaḥābah, tying the narrative together, review |