ENGL 437 A – Muslim Women Writers (1 credit)
Fall 2003
Carmen Durrani, Asst. Prof. of Foreign Languages
Concord University
10/14/03 – 12/9/03
T, R 2 :00-2:50 p.m.

SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN DEVELOPMENT UNIT

DAY 1: Introduction to Understanding Islam and the Muslims (lecture: 2 hrs)

I. Objectives:

A) Students will explore definitions and give examples of the terms stereotype,

prejudice/bias, discrimination and intolerance with references to their own

experiences, preferences, opinions, assumptions or generalizations.

Activity: Pairs/groups can present their definitions and examples, and relate these

to September 11, 2001 events by asking, “What kinds of stereotypes, biases, and

discrimination were most evident at that time based on news reports?”

B) Students will be able to understand the fundamental teachings of Islam and the

ethnic diversity of Muslims in the world.

Activity: Students will answer the following questions in pairs/groups in order to

establish a base line of, a) their knowledge of Islam and, b) their cultural sensitivity:

1. True or false: Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in the US?

2. Name the holiest site of Islam?

3. What do Muslims believe about Jesus?

4. What is the meaning of the words “Islam”, “Jihad”, “Sharia”, “Hadith”?

5. What are the five tenets (pillars) of Islam?

6. What are the buildings for Islamic congregational worship called?

7. Are all Muslims Sunni?

8. What is the “adhan”?

9. Which day of the week is designated for larger congregational prayers?

10. What is the holy book of Islam called?

11. Which angel is believed to have conveyed the revelations to Prophet Mohammed ?

12. What do Christianity, Judaism and Islam have in common?

13. What distinguishes the three religions?

14. Does Islam have any recognizable icon such as a crucifix or star of David?

15. Can you name any of the six articles of faith?

16. The majority of Muslims are Arabs. (true or false?)

17. How do Muslims greet each other? One person says “*” and the other person responds by saying?“*“

18. What items of food and drink are forbidden to a Muslim?

19. Upon entering a mosque all visitors must take off their “*\_*” and women should dress modestly by covering what parts of their body?

20. How does one show respect to the Holy Book of Muslims?

21. How many times is a Muslim prescribed to pray daily, and what are the general times for these prayers ?

22. Who are the “People of the Book” that Muslims refer to, and which “Books” do they refer to ?

II. Test corrections followed by short lecture on ethical principles and practices of Islam.

Students will receive a glossary of frequently used words for memorization (See the Glossary, pp 405-07, in the textbook.)

III. Internet assignment for Day 2

Objective: Students will learn about the origins of the Arab immigrant communities in the U.S.

Activity: Research one of the following topics: a) the history of the Lebanese and Syrian Arab immigration to Worcester, Mass., b) the position of Arab-American women within the Arab culture and, c) the history of Muslim immigration to the USA.

Students will summarize the information in a minimum of 2 pages.

IV. Questions and answers: students may ask questions or give them in writing as time allows.

DAY 2: Introduction to Muslim Women Writers (see appended narrative) (lecture: 2 hrs)

I. Objectives:

1. Students will learn about the emergence and history of women’s movements in the United States, the Appalachian region and, foremost, in the Middle East.

2. Students will explore the use of the borrowed term “feminism” used by Western and Middle Eastern scholars.

3. Students will learn the different interpretations and uses of the veil (hijab) according to different religious and cultural practices of various societies.

Activity: students will interview Muslim women students in class/on campus about
the type of veiling and the practice of “veiling” or “not veiling” within their society’s cultural context.

4. Students will be able to list and define gender issues in Western and Islamic contexts and make a comparative analysis

II. Activities:

1. Students will search internet sites to read and write about women’s grassroot movements at the national, regional (e.g. Appalachian) and/or local levels.

2. They will conduct interviews with three different families(including their own) to collect data about activities that have empowered the women and contributed to the well-being of their families/communities, and report them to their fellow students.

3. They will reflect upon the proposed definition of “feminism”, i.e. changing expectations for women’s social and political roles and duties, and evaluating the role of gender in today’s society? How do feminist women writers empower themselves and other women by educating them and thus raising their awareness of global issues, such as the impending case in Nigeria concerning the stoning sentence of a young mother accused of having committed adultery.

III. Reading assignment for Day 3:Introduction to the anthology “Opening the Gates” pages xiv-xxviii. Summarize the most important comments in your journal for in-class discussion

DAY 3: Overview of the historical background of the Women’s Movements in the Maghreb, the Gulf States, Egypt and the Palestinian Occupied Territories (lecture : 2 hrs)

I. Objectives:

1. Students will be able to understand and describe the different socio-economic and political factors in each country leading to the emergence of women’s protests and a century of feminist writings of diverse literary genres.

Activity:students will submit in writing at least three questions on an index card. These cards will be randomly distributed on Day 4 to be answered by other students.

2. Students will recognize the gender issues in verses of the Qur’an and in a variety of texts grouped by the editors of “Opening the Gates” under three core themes.

II. Instructions for reading assignment for Day 4-6

As you read, please examine and make notes of the following situations in your journal for sharing in class:

1) Relationships between the characters in the (fictional) stories

2) Specific perspectives(male/female/Western/Arab/religious)

3) Elements of time and space within the family, tribe, community, nation-state.

4) Dichotomy of silence versus the discourse of the women, their surrender to the patriarchal system or protest.

5) Various points of view that have been used: (first-person/third-person/narrator).It is the filter through which the reader views the action of a fictional story. Indeed, you learn about a first-person narrator both from what the narrator does or says in the plot and how the story is told what is included or omitted; notice the sentence structure, tone or any figures of speech, etc. A third-person narrator may be objective(seeing only the external action of characters) or omniscient(the narrator can enter the minds and feelings of several characters). Sometimes a third-person narrator is omniscient with respect to one character but objective and/or limited to others. Some stories may feature multiple points of view through multiple narrators. Ask yourself whether you trust, like or dislike the narrator? Does the narrator reveal bias or irony? What is not being told and finally, how are his or her perceptions different from your own?

6) Which gender issues surface in the selected texts? What did you learn about these issues and how did you react to them? Will you change your opinion after learning about the historical and religious contexts in which they arose and remained unchallenged. How did the women activists bring about changes in their respective countries then and now? What remains to be done in the future?

7) What creates a common bond between Muslim Arab women and non-Arab Muslim sisters and between Muslim and non-Muslim women globally? (Internet search on the human rights women are entitled to)

8) Which reforms need to be put in place to safeguard the personal status rights of women?

9) What is the status of Muslim women in the Western countries?

10) How can literature advance the cause of women’s rights in the Middle East?

DAY 4-5: Discussion of gender issues and related topics in the following selected texts
(Estimated length of time : 4 hrs)

I. Objectives:

1. Students will be able to describe the relationships between characters in the stories.

2. They will be able to distinguish the specific male/female/Western/Arab/religious perspectives.

3. They will outline the elements of time and space within the family, tribe, community,nation-state.

4. They will interpret the meanings of silence and discourse as experienced by women.

5. They will describe the various points of view.

6. They will be able to recognize and elaborate on gender issues.

7. They will be able to understand the importance of the women’s individual rights and

8. discuss there forms needed to safeguard these rights.

9. They will be able to make a comparison of the status of Muslim women in the West.

10. They will be able to explain how literature can advance the cause of women’s rights in the Middle East.

DAY 4: discussion of the following texts dealing with the theme of awareness (2 hrs)

Additional objectives for this section:

1) Students will define the type of “awareness” embedded in a story, essay, poem.

2) They will then be able to demonstrate how each text relates to the theme of political and intellectual awareness of gender discrimination.

Activity: Pairs of students will be assigned to comment on a particular reading.

1. Etel Adnan (Lebanon): Growing Up to Be a Woman Writer in Lebanon, pp. 5-20

2. Warda al-Yaziji (Syrian): Warda al-Turk (poem), pp.21-22

3. Nadia Tueni (Lebanon): Who are you, Claire Gebeyli, pp. 23-25

4. Fadwa Tuqan (Palestinian): Difficult Journey, pp. 26-40

5. Hanan Ashrawi (Palestinian): The Gold Snake &A pair of Shoes. (handout)

6. Huda Shaarawi (Palestinian): Farewell, Betrothal, Wedding, pp. 41-48

7. Noha Radwan (Egyptian): The Silk Bands, p. 119

DAY 5: discussion of the following texts dealing with the theme of awareness (2hrs)

Activity: Pairs of students will be assigned to a specific reading.

1. Shirley Saad (Lebanese): Amina, pp. 49-53

2. Samira Azzam (Palestinian): The Protected One,pp. 54-56

3. Ulfa Idelbi (Syrian): Seventy Years Later, pp.57-62

4. Alifa Rifaat (Egyptian): Who will be the Man? and Honour, pp. 72-83

5. Khairiya Saqqaf(Saudi Arabia): I Saw Her and That’s Enough.

In a Contemporary House, pp. 84-91

6. Nadia Guendouz (Algeria): People, pp.102-103

7. Marie-Aimée Helie-Lucas (Algerian): Women,Nationalism and Religion in the

Algerian Struggle, pp.104-114

DAY 6: Final exam: take home essay on topics of interest approved by instructor

Please note: The modified syllabus and course outline follow on pages 5-8according to the actual format the mini-course has been offered in.

FALL SEMESTER 2003

ENGL 437A Muslim Women Writers
T, R 2:00-2:50 p.m.Admin. #310
Prerequisites :ENGL. 101-102, 205 or permission of theinstructor
Instructor: C.Durrani
10/14/03-12/9/03

Description:In this one-hour mini-course we will discuss a variety of topics of current interest as described by women writers from culturally diverse societies within the Islamic world. This short course will include an introduction to Islam and the most prevalent misconceptions held by Western observers. We will discuss a variety of works by female Arab authors,some composed originally in English, others translated from French and Arabic and explore the cultural, social, and political environment in which Arabic/Muslim women writers have developed their creative output.

Textbook:Opening the Gates: A Century of Arab Feminist Writing .Edited by Margot Badran &Miriam Cook. Indiana University Press: 1990

Course objectives:

1) Students will be able to understand the fundamental teachings of Islam and the ethnic diversity of Muslims in the world.

2) Students will learn about the emergence and history of women’s movements in the US, the Appalachian region and, foremost, in the Middle East.

3) Students will explore the use of the borrowed term “feminism” used by Western and Middle Eastern scholars.

4) Students will learn the different interpretations and uses of the veil (hijab).

5) Students will be able to understand and describe the different socio-economic and political factors in each country
leading to the emergence of women’s protests and a century of feminist writings of diverse literary genres in the Maghreb, Gulf States, Egypt and the Palestinian Occupied Territories

6) Students will engage in discussions of gender issues and related topics they will be able to identify and describe from various points of view.

7) They will be able to distinguish the specific male/female/Western/Arab/religious perspectives and the theme of political and intellectual awareness of gender discrimination.

8) They will be able to outline the elements of time and space within the family, tribe, community and nation-state.

9) They will interpret the meanings of silence and discourse as experienced by the women.

10) They will be able to understand the importance of the women’s individual rights and discuss the reforms needed to safeguard these rights.

11) They will compare the status of Muslim women in the West with the status described in the writings.

12) They will be able to explain how literature can advance the cause of women’s rights in the Middle East.

Materials:

1) Required reading materials (handouts and textbook)

2) Internet assignments

Instructional procedures:

Lectures, group discussion, cooperative learning strategies,individual writing assignments, use of internet resources.

Evaluation of student work:

The following grading scale will be used: A (90-100), B(80-89), C (70-79), D (60-60),

Weekly journal entries&class participation70 %

Mid-term essay15 %

Final essay15 %

Please note that all work is due at the beginning of the class period. Late assignments will only be accepted if prior notice and approval have been given.

Assignments are due on the dates specified. They need to be typed and double-spaced with 10-12 font size. Five points will be deducted fo revery day the assignment is submitted late. It will be graded in content and form according to quality of information and references. Due credit must be given to sources used for the assignments. Concord College plagiarism policy will be implemented.

Attendance:

Class attendance is required. More than two undocumented absences are considered excessive and may result in involuntary withdrawal from this course by the instructor and in an “F” grade. If you miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining lecture notes and any handouts. Students are required to take the mid-term and final exams. There will be no make-up testing unless the absence is duly documented prior or immediately after the missed class.

10/14 Introduction to understanding Islam and Muslims: part I

Exhibit of Middle Eastern arts and crafts items

Assignment:answer the question sheet on Islam (consult the English

translations of Arabic words and definitions in handout)

10/16Introduction: part II

Assignment: read the handout on Misconceptions and Stereotypes.

Write down your own comments as journal entries.

10/21Discussion: Muslim Women Writers: an introduction

Assignment : 1) Read the instructor’s text of the narrative

2) Write two pages on the development of feminist movements in West Virginia/Appalachian region.

3) Read the introduction in Opening the Gates, p.xiv-xxxiii

10/22 Sharing views a) on the definition of Western feminism and its use in Islamic context, and b) on the Palestinian Women of Gaza and the West Bank

(See handout: interview with Sahar Khalifeh, feminist novelist, about her books,

the role of women during the “intifada,” etc., and an analysis by Suha Sabbaghof the

Declaration of Principles on Palestinian Women’s Rights.

10/28Assignment: Read and type your comments (min. 2 pages)

1. Etel Adnan (Lebanon): Growing Up to Be a Woman Writer in Lebanon, pp. 5-20

2. Warda al-Yaziji (Syrian): Warda al-Turk (poem), pp. 21-22

3. Nadia Tueni (Lebanon): Who are you, Claire Gebeyli, pp. 23-25

4. Hanan Ashrawi (Palestinian): The Gold Snake & A Pair of Shoes. (handout)

10/30Discussion: Veiling

Assignment: Read and type your comments on selected poems (handout).

11/4 Discussion: Honor crimes

Assignment: Read and type your comments (min. 2 pages)

1. Fadwa Tuqan (Palestinian): Difficult Journey, pp. 26-40

2. Huda Shaarawi (Palestinian): Farewell, Betrothal, Wedding, pp. 41-48

3. Noha Radwan (Egyptian): The Silk Bands, p. 119

11/6-11/11Discussion: public lecture by Afghan speaker

Assignment: Read and type your comments (min. 2 pages)

1. Shirley Saad (Lebanese): Amina, pp. 49-53

2. Samira Azzam (Palestinian): The Protected One, pp. 54-56

3. Ulfa Idelbi (Syrian): Seventy Years Later, pp. 57-62

4. Alifa Rifaat (Egyptian): Who will be the Man? and Honour, pp. 72-83

11/13 Mid-term assignment: The Current Status of Muslim Women in the Middle East

(see handout). Min. 3, max. 5 pages typed, use double space, 10-12 font size.

11/18 Discussion: The traditional Bedouin marriage ceremony as painted and

described by Saudi Arabian artist Safeya Binzagr.

Assignment: Read and type your comments (min. 2 pages)

5. Khairiya Saqqaf (Saudi Arabia): I Saw Her and That’s Enough.

In a Contemporary House, pp. 84-91

6. Nadia Guendouz (Algeria): People, pp. 102-103

7. Marie-Aimée Helie-Lucas (Algerian): Women, Nationalism and Religion in the

Algerian Struggle, pp. 104-114

11/20Discussion: The use of poetry by Egyptian Bedouins. (handout)

Assignment: Read and type your comments (min. 2 pages)

1. Nawal al-Saadawi: Eyes, p. 203-212

2. Hind Nawfal: The Dawn of the Arabic Women’s Press, p. 215-219

3. Zainab Fawwaz: Fair and Equal Treatment, p. 220-226

12/2Discussion:

Assignment: Read and type your comments (min. 2 pages)

1. Bahithat al-Badiya: A Lecture in the Club of the Umma Party, p. 227-238

2. Continue reading up to p. 256

12/4Discussion

Assignment: Read and type your comments on the following articles: 1) Islamic and Western Values by Ali A. Mazrui; 2) Islamic Fundamentalism: A Transitory Threat by David G. Kibble

12/9 Discussion: Wrap-up session

Final take home essay: to be discussed.

Instructor will approve individual topics of interest (min. 2 -max. 4 typed pages)

Due date: Monday, December 15, 2003 to be submitted no later than 3:00 p.m.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

TEXT: Badran, Margot and Cooke, Miriam (editors). Opening the Gates: A Century of Arab Feminist Writing. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990.

OTHER READINGS

1. Boosahda, Elizabeth. Arab-American Faces and Voices. The Origins of an Immigrant Community. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003.

(Suggested article by Frédéric Volpi. Democratization and Its Enemies. The Algerian Transition to Authoritarianism:
1988-2001)

2. Cawthra, Gavin and Robin Luckham. Governing Insecurity. London: Zed Books, 2003

3. Cooke, Miriam. Women claim Islam. Creating Islamic Feminism through Literature. N.Y.: Routledge, 2001.

4. Djebar, Assia. A Sister to Scheherazade. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1993.

5. Fernea, Elizabeth Warnook. In Search of Islamic Feminism. N.Y.: Doubleday, 1998.

6. Goldschmidt Jr, Arthur J. A Concise History of the Middle East. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1991.

7. Gordon, Matthew S. Islam. N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2002.

8. Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck and John L. Esposito, eds. Islam, Gender, and Social
Change.

Muslims on the Americanization Path. N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2000.

9. Meriwether, Margaret L. and Judith E. Tucker, eds. Women and Gender in the Middle East. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999.

10. Lewis, Bernard. What Went Wrong? Harperperennial Library, 2003. The Crisis of Islam. Modern Library, 2002.

11. Mernissi, Fatima. The Veil and the Male Elite. Perseus Books Publishers, 1991.

12. Meriwether, Margaret L. and Judith E. Tucker. Women and Gender in the Middle East. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999.

13. Pickthall, Mohammad Marmadouk. The Meaning of the Glorious Qur’an. Delhi, India: Adam Publishers, 1996.

14. Reed, Betsy, ed. Nothing Sacred. Women respond to Religious Fundamentalism and Terror. N.Y.: Thunder’s Mouth Press/Nation Books, 2002.

(Suggested article by Charlotte Bunch. Women’s Human Rights and Security in the Age of Terror)

15. Sabbagh, Suha, ed. Palestinian Women of Gaza and the West Bank. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003

16. Stowasser, Barbara F. Women in the Qur’an, Traditions and Interpretations. N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1994

II. RECOMMENDED VIDEOS AVAILABLE THRU FACDIS

1. Battle of Algiers. Dir. Gillo Pontecorvo. Videorecording. Axon, 1988.

2. Still Ready: Three Women From the Moroccan Resistance. Dir. Hakim Belabbles. Videorecording. Baker, 1998

3. Islamic Wave. Films for the Humanities & Sciences. 2000: Examines the sociopolitical landscape of Islamic hot spots in the Middle East, and Elsewhere. Also discussed are Islam’s increasing popularity and the use of violence by Muslim extremists to attain their goals.

4. Why the Hate? America, from a Muslim point of view. 2002

5. Stories of Honor and Shame: First Run/Icarus Films. 1996. 58 min. The Gaza Strip endured 27 years of Israeli occupation and a prolonged Palestinian uprising under the administration of the Palestinian National Authority. This behind the scenes film reveals the hidden lives of the Palestinian women who live there. Fifteen women reveal their roles in a patriarchal Islamic society where men dictate most aspects of life. It shows the resilience and courage of women who, despite very difficult circumstances, all speak with enormous dignity and grace.

6. Under One Sky: Arab Women in North America talk about the Hijab. Films for the Humanities. 1999. 44 min. A discussion of the hijab or veil worn by Arab Muslim women living in the United States and Canada who describe the ideologies behind the veil and tear away the labels imposed by both East and West.

7. Women serving religion. Films for the Humanities & Sciences. 1995. 29 min. This program traces women’s roles in religious tradition and what it means to be a woman in the three monotheistic religions today- Christianity, Judaism and Islam. It also explores the cultural influences of feminism upon religious traditions and the beliefs regarding the ordination of women.

8. Islam and Christianity. Films for the Humanities & Sciences. 1994. 30 min. Examines the historical relations between Islam and Christianity, and the long history of conflict between them. Iran’s ambassador to the Vatican, Mohammad Masjed Jame’l, explains the basic differences and similarities between Islam and Christianity.

9. Islam: Empire of Faith. PBS Home Video. 2000. 180 min. Documents the history, rise, and growth of Islam throughout the world. Discusses the impact of Islamic civilizations on world history and culture.

10. Islam Rising. (Hajj) The Pilgrimage. Films for the Humanities & Sciences. 2000. 52 min.. This film describes the daily events of a pilgrimage to Makkah, including the ritual of tawaf, the performance of wuquf on Mt. Rahmah, the overnight stay at Muzdalifah, the symbolic stoning of the Devil, and the festival of sacrifice. A detailed historical background on Islam and its prophet, Muhammad, is included.

11. The Silences of the Palace. Directed by Moufida Tlatli. Tunis. 1994. Depicts daily life for women in the palace of the Beys in Tunisia in the 1950s.

III. USEFUL WEBSITES

1. <http://www.brookings.edu/>: go to index for analysis and commentary on the Middle East at the Center for Studies on the Middle East at the Brookings Institution in D.C.

2. The University of Georgia has an excellent website on Islamic Studies:[http://www.islam.uga.edu](http://www.islam.uga.edu/) contains links to numerous sources for Islam, Islamic law, Sufism, Muslim women, art, etc.

3. <http://www.albany.edu/jmmh> : click on “past issues”, then Vol. 1, 1998 to access
Corinne Blake’s article on “Teaching Islamic Civilization with Information”

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR DISCUSSION ON VARIOUS TOPICS

1. The traditional wedding preparations, dowry, contract, ceremony

2. The diwaniyah system which uses the poetic tradition as a vehicle for discussing

how to balance women’s present needs for more openness and more public status

with the restrictive traditions of the older, established members of the Muslim society.

3.Feminism is about women’s rights and freedoms; an issue of universal suffrage.

What needs to be done?

a) Educate people at local, regional and national levels about the role, rights and

personal status of women

b) Launch projects aiming at changing the attitudes of men towards women,

especially in the media. Elizabeth W. Fernea, the cultural anthropologist and author

of “In Search of Feminism” suggests making this endeavor a community

enterprise, one with high standards, that reflects the professional skills and integrity

of women journalists/editors who do the creative work and marketing operations

themselves integrating the international labor standards.

c) Launch a creative writing in schools for young people to express their opinions and

hopes for a better future for women (no longer restricted by the curfews imposed

by men and mullahs, and for the benefit of the society as a whole.

d) How can Muslim women embark on a journey into the unfamiliar as they emigrate

to Western countries?

It takes courage, persistence, patience, awareness of cultural differences, discipline.

It is impossible to truly observe a culture in and of itself without reevaluating and

redefining one’s own culture. Empathetic participation is synonymous with

detached self-scrutiny which can be attained through journal writing, simulations

and case studies. We need, however, be aware of the fact that our own deep-

seated biased views on a issue are linked to where we are in time and space; who

we are, what our historical and cultural heritage is; how we define our intellectual

and natural environments? Are there any hidden ethical dilemmas to be explored?

One must understand the culture of the so-called mainstream individualism versus

the collectivism and interdependence.

Study the regional literary forms such pas poetry, song, folkloric art, which reveal

the aesthetic value of the arts and the human side of the creators.

TRIVIA SHEET AND NOTES

(Note: Many of the definitions/explanations included in these notes have been collected from a variety of sources, published and unpublished, and may have been reproduced below verbatim, paraphrased, or modified/abridged, etc. However, effort has been made not to lose the original sense/meaning of the definition/ concept, etc.)

Ablution : Acts of washing and cleanliness performed in a specified manner, as done by the Prophet, before offering any formal prayer.

Allah : Arabic word for God Almighty. The One Supreme God.

Angels : Only some of them are named in the Qur’an (Gabriel, Michael, Israfeel, and Izraeel), but there are many others about whom we have no knowledge.

Articles of Faith (Basic Beliefs) : To believe in the oneness of Allah; ...in all His Angels; ...in all His revealed Books; ...in all His Prophets; ...in the Day of Resurrection and Judgement; ...all actions proceed from Allah, but we are responsible for our actions.

Azan (Adhan) : A call for the prayers. Only the prescribed words are used for the call.

Daily prayers: Five times; each prayer has obligatory and non-obligatory parts and are offered in the morning (before sunrise), early afternoon, late afternoon, after sunset, and at night. There are prescribed ways of performing these prayers. Special religious occasions and matters of life and death require different prayers.

Forbidden (“unlaw”) Foods and Drinks : These include alcohol, flesh or byproducts of swine, dead meat, blood, meat of animals killed by strangling or by a violent blow, or a headlong fall, by being gored to death, partly eaten by a wild animal, or an animal that has been offered or sacrificed in the name of anyone other than God Almighty, etc. Also prescribed are the types of animals whose meat is lawful or unlawful.

Fundamental Principles of Islam: The declaration that there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Prophet; observance of the obligatory prayers five times a day; pay the Zakat (Islamic alms, at 2 ½ per cent of one’s possessions held for a complete year) to the “deserving” people and causes—- per prescribed qualifications; observance of fasting in the month of Ramadhan; and the performance of Hajj (Pilgrimage) to Makkah, at least once in a lifetime, if circumstances permit.

Hadith (Hadeeth): Reliably transmitted reports of the sayings, actions, or approval of actions/decisions and judgments, etc. given by the Prophet. The reported actions/sayings, etc. were authenticated by following agreed upon methods and procedures laid out by religious scholars and researchers.

injunctions: Certain specified situations allow exemption from fasting, or in extreme cases of breaking the fast, remedies (e.g. charitable actions, etc.) are prescribed.

Insha Allah : God willing

Islam : Submission, and peace.

Jihad : Literally, it means to strive, struggle, and exert effort against evil/ suffering, etc. It includes struggle in the battlefield for self-defense, or struggle against tyranny/ oppression.

Mecca (Makkah): The Saudi Arabian city where Islam’s holiest mosque, in the shape of a cube (the Ka’bah), is located. It is the site where Prophet Abraham, with the help of prophet Ismael (Ishmael), was asked to build a house of worship. All Muslims must face in the direction of this mosque when performing prayers.

People of the Book : Jews, Christians, and Muslims. The Books are: Torah, the Old Testament to Moses; Zaboor, the Psalms to David; Injeel (the New Testament) to Jesus, and the Qur’an to Muhammad.

Prophets : Of all the prophets who were sent to every people throughout the ages, the Qur’an names about twenty-five. They include names such as: Adam, Noah, Hood, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Lot, Jonah, David, Solomon, Elijah, Zacharia, John the Baptist, Jesus, and Muhammad. Followers of Islam recognize and revere all of them as the Messengers (Prophets) from the past, and maintain that Muhammad is the last one in this long line of Prophets.

Qur’an (Kor’an) : Consists of all the revelations to Prophet Muhammad which he received during his lifetime, starting at age forty. Angel Gabriel would convey the message to him, which he would recite and ask his followers to write down as he himself was not literate. The Qur’an consists of 114 chapters(Surahs), of very unequal size, with 6288 verses (Ayahs), or about 80 thousand words. The usual way of reference is by chapter and verse, e.g. S…: V…. The whole Text is traditionally divided into thirty equal parts.

Ramzan (Ramadhan) : The prescribed month of the Islamic calendar for fasting and purification of soul. This is also the month in which the first revelations were received by the Prophet. Fasting from dawn to dusk during the month is prescribed and the observant is required to desist from partaking any food or liquid, and to observe all other religious restrictions and exceptions allowed while fasting.

Shari’ah : Contains a precise body of law, based on the Qur’an and the Prophet’s traditions, encompassing all spheres of human life: spiritual, physical, individual, social, economic, and political. There is room left for temporal legislation to cover the areas deliberately left untouched by the Qur’an or by the Sunnah.

Sunnah : Reports about the statements, behavior, and the life of the Prophet. They are considered the second source of Islamic law. The Sunnah is comprised of hadiths.