

Course Syllabus

Course Title: **Akaid – Islamic Sects and Schools**

Study Program: **Theology**

ECTS Credits: **7**

Course Type: **Compulsory**

Course Code: **308**

Contact Hours: **3+2 (Semester VI)**

Course Year: **2026/2027**

Instructor: **Assist. Prof. Dr. Zija Abdullahu**

Contact: **zabdullai@hotmail.com**

Course Objectives:

The course aims to equip students with foundational knowledge in the field of Islamic sects and schools through the study of the most significant sects throughout history as well as those currently present in the Islamic world. It seeks to develop students' analytical skills and competencies in examining data related to various sects included in the study program, enabling them to draw informed conclusions regarding both the shortcomings and achievements of these sects throughout history.

The course further aims to cultivate and enhance students' critical awareness in evaluating sectarian arguments based on relevant and sound Islamic evidence. Students will be trained to write academic essays and engage in discussions on these topics using a clear, coherent, and persuasive style of oral and written expression-key characteristics of an individual with a solid liberal academic education.

Through lectures in the field of Islamic sects and schools, it is expected that upon completion of the course, students will acquire extensive knowledge of sects throughout history and of those most dominant in the contemporary Islamic world. Particular emphasis is placed on sects present in the local context with which students coexist, enabling them to identify both commonalities and differences among them. Students will gain an understanding of the developmental processes of these sects from their formation to the present day.

The course provides students with the opportunity to critically engage in debates and to recognize that the shared elements which bring sects closer to one another are far more numerous than those that divide them. Students will also understand that the emergence and development of sects within

different religions-including Islam-is a natural phenomenon, which should contribute to fostering tolerance in society. Consequently, the study of sects should continue to develop and advance, as it serves the broader interests of coexistence and peace at both regional and global levels.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Describe the historical development of Islamic sects.
- Compare different Islamic sects and schools.
- Discuss sectarian arguments objectively.
- Defend sectarian positions as understood by their adherents.
- Critically evaluate sectarian views using sound Islamic arguments.
- Apply acquired knowledge in inter-sectarian relations.

Teaching Methodology:

Teaching will be conducted through lectures combined with the active stimulation of students to participate in interactive discussions, including questions and analytical engagement within the scope of the delivered lectures. In addition, seminars and various written assignments will be organized and presented both individually and in group formats, alongside assessment tests.

Furthermore, students will have the opportunity to contact the instructor during the course preparation period in order to receive guidance and academic support, with the aim of ensuring quality learning outcomes and overall student success..

Course Content:

Introduction: Familiarization with the syllabus, methodology, organization, requirements, and assessment.

General overview: Sects as a universal religious phenomenon across different religions. The contribution of early Islamic scholars to the study of Islamic sects and factions. Disagreement as a universal human phenomenon.

Terminology: faction, doctrine, sect, madhhab, and school. Interpersonal disagreements. Proposal of topics for seminar papers and essays.

Reading: Dr. Zija Abdullahu, Sektet dhe shkollat islame, pp. 3–11.

(This textbook will serve as the main course literature; therefore, only page numbers will be indicated in subsequent weeks.)

Week 2:

General causes of interpersonal disagreements: ambiguity of discussed topics; fanaticism toward inherited views; changes in cultures and research methodologies; ambitions and desires; love of power and status.

Specific causes of division among Muslims: tribal fanaticism; the issue of the Caliphate; conversion to Islam from other religions; Qur'anic verses with multiple interpretations (mutashabihat); translation of philosophical works; legendary narratives; differences among Islamic legal schools (fiqh).

Interactive discussion on the most significant and contemporary causes of division among Muslims.

Reading: pp. 12–19.

Week 3: Manifestations of division among Muslims. Political groups.

The position of the Qur'an and Sunnah on politics and the Caliphate: justice, consultative council (Shura), and respect for legitimate leadership.

Presentation and discussion of seminar papers and essays.

Reading: pp. 20–24.

Week 4: Practical manifestations of division among Muslims. Disputes over the Caliphate. Causes of rebellion during the period of Caliph 'Uthman.

Wars contributing to the emergence of sects: the Battle of the Camel and the Battle of Siffin. The appearance of sects on the social stage. Interactive discussion on the severe consequences of these divisions.

Reading: pp. 25–32.

Week 5: The Kharijites: origin, principles, and contemporary presence.

Shi'ism: core principles, historical circumstances of its formation, geographic distribution of Shi'a communities, and influencing factors.

Interactive discussion on the influence of historical and cultural legacies on Shi'ite thought.

Reading: pp. 33–40.

Week 6: Extreme Shi'ite groups. Extinct extremist Shi'ite sects: Saba'iyya, Ghurabiyya, Bayaniyya, Mughiriyya, and Kaysaniyya.

Presentation of seminar papers and essays, followed by discussion of previous lectures.

Reading: pp. 48–56.

Week 7: Moderate (mainstream) Shi‘ites.

Zaydis: origin, founder, principles, and current distribution. Imamiyya / Ithna ‘Ashariyya: origin, founder, principles, and current distribution. Debate on the proximity of Zaydi Shi‘ism to Ahl al-Sunnah. Proposal of new seminar and essay topics.

Reading: pp. 57–67.

Week 8: Midterm examinations (colloquia).

Week 9: Existing extremist Shi‘ite groups: Imamiyya and Isma‘ilis (Batiniyya).

The Druze: origin, founder, principles, and current distribution.

Interactive discussion on their political activity, particularly in Lebanon.

Reading: pp. 68–72.

Week 10: Nusayris / Alawites: origin, founder, principles, and current distribution.

Babism and Baha’ism: origin, founder, principles, and current distribution.

Analysis of test results through interactive discussion.

Reading: pp. 73–78.

Week 11: Ahmadiyya / Qadianis: origin, founder, principles, current distribution, and their activities in the local context.

Theoretical manifestations of division among Muslims: Murji‘ites, Jabrites, and Qadarites.

Interactive discussion comparing Qur’an translations into Albanian by the Ahmadiyya.

Reading: pp. 79–90.

Week 12: Mu‘tazilites: origin, founder, principles, and current presence.

Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama‘ah. Ash‘arites: origin, founder, principles, and current presence. Maturidites: origin, founder, principles, and current presence.

Interactive discussion on the decline of the Mu‘tazila and the rapid spread of Ash‘arism and Maturidism.

Reading: pp. 90–102.

Week 13: Salafism: origin, founder, principles, and current presence.

Sufism and Sufi orders in the local context: Bektashi, Halveti, Qadiri, Rifai, Melami, Mevlevi, and Naqshbandi orders.

Discussion on authentic Sufism and its contemporary representations in the region.

Week 14: The Islamic perspective on Sufi orders.

Discussion and review of topics covered in previous lectures.

Reading: pp. 103–120.

Assessment Criteria:

Participation and activity – 10 points

Seminar paper – **10 points**

Midterm test – **40 points**

Final examination – **40 points**

Grading Standards in FSI

Grade 10: 90% – 100% – Excellent

Demonstrates excellent knowledge with only minor and negligible errors.

Grade 9: 81% – 89% – Very Good

Performance above the average standard, with some noticeable errors.

Grade 8: 71% – 80% – Good

Generally good performance, with several identifiable errors.

Grade 7: 61% – 70% – Satisfactory

Adequate performance, though marked by a considerable number of errors.

Grade 6: 51% – 60% – Pass

Meets the minimum requirements of the course.

Grade 5: 0% – 50% – Fail

Insufficient performance; substantial additional work is required to earn course credit.

kredi.

Core Literature:

Prof. ass. Dr. Zija Abdullahu, *Sektet dhe shkollat islame* (Islamic Sects and Schools), course handout for third-year students (unpublished; for internal use only), Faculty of Islamic Studies.

Supplementary Literature:

- The Holy Qur'an.
- Murtezai, Dr. Ekrem, *Dictionary of Religions*, Prishtina, 2000.
- Topaloğlu, Dr. Bekir, *Introduction to Kalām*, translated by Mit'hat Hoxha, Prishtina, 2002.
- Tërnavë, Naim, *Factions in Islam*, Prishtina, 1997.
- Rexhepagiqi, Jashar, *Dervishes and Tekkes*, Peja, 2003.
- Group of Authors, *Beliefs of Muslim and Pagan Sects: Islamic Factions*, Gjiilan, 1997.
- Ahmeti, Bajrush, *A Cultural-Historical Overview of the Formation and Spread of Certain Factions in Islamic History*, Prishtina, 2007.
- Ibrahim, Nexhat, *The Development of Sects in the History of Islamic Thought*, Tetovo, 2007.
- Beheshti, Dr., and Bahonar, Dr., *Islamic Philosophy*, translated by Dr. Sokrat Ahmataj, Tirana, n.d.
- Izeti, Metin (MA), *The Bektashi Order*, Tetovo, 2001.
- Yılmaz, H. Kamil, *Introduction to Taşawwuf*, translated by Metin Izeti, Tetovo, 2002.
- Corbin, Henry, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, translated from Bosnian by Nexhat Ibrahim, Skopje, 1997.
- Ahmad, Mirza Ghulam, *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, translated by Muhammad Zakaria Khan, Tilford, England, 2000.
- Abu Zahra, Muhammad, *Tārīkh al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiyyah*, Cairo, 1989.
- Qurayshi, Dr. Omar Abdul Aziz, *Uşūl al-Firaq*, Cairo, 2005.

Academic Policies and Code of Conduct:

Students are required to attend lectures and practical sessions regularly (attendance records are maintained). All students are obliged to observe standards of academic conduct and classroom etiquette, including maintaining silence during lectures, switching off mobile phones, and arriving in the classroom on time.

Konsultimet:

Orët e konsultimeve mbahen në kabinet sipas orarit të dhënë dhe mund të shfrytëzohet për ndihmë për të gjitha çështjet që kanë të bëjnë me lëndën.

Student Workload Contribution *(Aligned with Student Learning Outcomes)*

Activity	Hours	Days / Weeks	Total Hours
Lectures	2	14 weeks	28
Theoretical exercises	1	14 weeks	14
Practical work	–	–	-
Contact hours with instructor / consultations	1	14 weeks	14
Field exercises	–	–	-
Colloquia, seminars, essays	2	2	4
Homework assignments	–	–	-
Independent student study (library or home)	2	14 weeks	28
Final exam preparation	3	2	6
Time spent in assessment (tests, essays, final exam)	2	2 days	4
Total	14	14 weeks	98