

Course Syllabus

Course Title: Tafsir – Analytical Studies on Tafsir Texts

Study Program: Theology

Number of ECTS Credits: 6

Course Status: O (Obligatory)

Course Code: 302

Contact Hours: 2+2 (2 lecture hours + 2 practice sessions per week)

Academic Year: 2026/2027

Semester: V

Instructor: Prof. Assoc. Dr. Lulzim Esati

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Course Objective

In the Tafsir III course – specifically: Analytical Studies on Tafsir Texts – FSI students are given the opportunity to become closely acquainted with the original texts of Qur’anic exegesis. Due to the impossibility of covering all tafsir works, which exceed 150 in number, three of the most well-known mufassirs who commented on and interpreted the text of the Noble Qur’an have been selected. Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, who lived in the 6th century AH, approached interpretation with a strong philosophical background. Al-Qurtubi, who lived in the 7th century AH, had a strong background in fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence). Ibn Kathir, who lived in the 8th century AH, followed the traditional method in commenting on the text of the Noble Qur’an.

The student is equipped with solid knowledge of the original texts of the commentators of the Noble Qur’an, without external interference. The student becomes familiar with the differences among these leading scholars of tafsir and with their respective methodologies in approaching the interpretation of the Book of Allah (SWT). The course also provides students with the opportunity to engage critically, encouraging debate and discussion, and to remain as objective as possible when utilizing classical tafsir literature.

The development of skills and competencies to analyze various issues related to the Book of Allah, based on proper reference to tafsir sources, to accurately communicate their messages, and to avoid misinterpretation of their exegetical texts.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

After completing the course, the student will be able to:

- To describe the stages of development of tafsir throughout history.
- To compare the texts of different interpreters studied during the course.
- To discuss the differences among these texts based on the arguments of each interpreter, remaining as objective as possible in their presentation.
- To defend the positions of each interpreter as understood by their followers.
- To present a critical perspective on each interpreter, outlining the arguments of each tafsir school.
- To be able to apply the acquired knowledge when addressing various interfaith topics and issues.

Teaching Methodology:

The course will be conducted using a comparative and analytical study methodology.

Course Content:

Week 1: Introduction, review of the syllabus, methodology, organization, requirements, and evaluation. Introduction to analytical and comparative studies of original tafsir texts across different historical stages. Contributions of early Islamic scholars to tafsir and their methods in the science of Qur’anic commentary and interpretation.

Literature:

- Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, 1209/606 AH
- Al-Qurtubiasat Risalah, Beirut, 2006
- Ibn Kathir

Week 2: Opinions of the mufassirs – Qur’anic commentators – on the symbolic letters appearing at the beginning of surahs, according to Ibn Kathir’s tafsir.

Literature: Previously mentioned sources, pp. 30–34 (Ibn Kathir, 1st edition), pp. 154–155 (Al-Qurtubi, 1st edition).

Week 3: Use of symbolic letters by the Arab people in communication before the revelation of the Qur’an, according to Al-Qurtubi’s tafsir. Meaning of the word *al-Kitab*

in the Qur'anic context, as well as the pronoun *dhalika* according to Al-Qurtubi. Meanings and synonyms of the word *Rajb*.

Literature: pp. 155–161, Al-Qurtubi, 1st edition.

Week 4: Transmissions defining the concept of *al-Muttaqin* (the devout) in Ibn Kathir's tafsir, as well as the distinction of guidance specifically for the devout.

Literature: pp. 92–97, Ibn Kathir, 1st edition.

Week 5: Meaning of the word *al-Ghayb* – belief in the unseen – and its relation to *al-Taqwa* (piety). Explanation of the concept of *al-Huda* (guidance) according to Al-Qurtubi, and the types of guidance found in the Qur'anic text.

Literature: pp. 97–99, Ibn Kathir, 1st edition; pp. 161–163, Al-Qurtubi, 1st edition.

Week 6: Al-Qurtubi's position differs from that of Ibn Kathir regarding the latter's view that the Qur'an is guidance only for those who believe.

Literature: pp. 164–167, Al-Qurtubi, 1st edition.

Week 7: Use of the term *as-Salat* in the context of Qur'anic verses according to Al-Qurtubi.

Literature: pp. 169–175, Al-Qurtubi, 1st edition.

Week 8: Midterm Exam.

Week 9: Fakhr al-Din al-Razi presents 21 scholarly opinions on the interpretation of the symbolic letters, ultimately supporting the view that they are names of surahs (chapters) of the Qur'an. Explanation of the term *al-Kitab* in the Qur'an and 31 other names of the Book of Allah according to Razi.

Literature: pp. 1–20, Razi, 3rd edition.

Week 10: Razi emphasizes pausing at (*la rajba fih*) when reciting this Qur'anic verse and explains the meaning of the word *Rajb*. Razi's interpretation identifies who may be considered a believer (those who believe in the unseen) and presents the views of all Islamic sects regarding this issue.

Literature: pp. 22–31, Razi, 3rd edition.

Week 11: Debate between the Ahl al-Sunnah (Ash'arites & Maturidis) and the Mu'tazilites on whether *haram* is *rizq* (provision), according to Razi's tafsir. Meaning of the concept *yaqin* and explanation of the revelation (*wahy*).

Literature: pp. 33–37, Razi, 3rd edition.

Week 12: Meaning of *kufr* (disbelief) in Qur’anic terminology according to Razi, and also according to Al-Qurtubi.

Literature: pp. 42–44, Al-Qurtubi; pp. 183–185, Al-Qurtubi.

Week 13: Differences among expressions frequently repeated in the Qur’an that appear similar in meaning: *al-‘aql* (mind), *al-qalb* (heart), *al-fu’ad*, *as-sadr* (chest) according to Al-Qurtubi. The wisdom of ordering believers, non-believers, and finally hypocrites in Surah Al-Baqarah, along with their attributes.

Literature: pp. 189–196, Al-Qurtubi.

Week 14: Origins of *nifaq* (hypocrisy) and types of disturbances (*fasad*) caused by hypocrites according to Ibn Kathir. Example of fire and torrential rain accompanied by thunder, lightning, and rain, illustrating the unstable state of hypocrites in the Qur’an.

Literature: pp. 112–136, Ibn Kathir, 1st edition.

Week 15: Final Exam.

Literature: The Noble Qur’an, translated by Efendi Hasan Nahi, 1986 edition.

Additional References:

- Fakhr al-Din al-Razi 9/606 AH
- Al-Qurtubi, 2006
- Ibn Kathir Islamic Youth Foundation, Zurich, 2007
- Lisan al-‘Arab, Muhammad ibn Mukrim Ibn Mandhur, 711 AH / 1311, Dar Sadir, Beirut, 1990
- Al-Qamus al-Muhit, Muhammad ibn Ya‘qub Al-Fayruzabadi, 817 AH / 1414, Mu’assasat Risalah, Beirut, 1987

Assessment Criteria and Components:

- **Participation and engagement in lectures: 10%**
- **Seminar paper: 20%**
- **Midterm exam: 30%**
- **Final exam: 40%**
- **Total: 100%**

Required Literature:

1. Fakhr al-Din al-Razi/606 AH
2. Al-Qurtubi
3. Ibn Kathir

Supplementary Literature and Bibliography:

1. The Noble Qur'an, translated by Efendi Hasan Nahi, 1986 edition
2. *Kandili Ndriçues*, short version of Ibn Kathir's tafsir, translated by Bashkim Aliu, published by Islamic Youth Foundation, Zurich, 2007
3. Lisan al-'Arab, Muhammad Ibn Mukrim Ibn Mandhur, 711 AH / 1311, Dar Sadir, Beirut, 1990
4. Al-Qamus al-Muhit, Muhammad Ibn Ya'qub Al-Fayruzabadi, 817 AH / 1414, Mu'assasat Risalah, Beirut, 1987

Student Workload Contribution:

Activity	Hours	Days\Weeks	Total
Lectures	2	15	30
Theoretical exercises	2	15	30
Practical work	1	10	10
Consultations with instructor	1	15	15
Field exercises			
Colloquia, seminars, essays	1	10	10
Homework	1	10	10
Independent study (library or home)	1	15	15
Final exam preparation	5	3 days	15

Time spent on assessment (tests, essays, final exam)	3	5 days	15
Total	17	15 weeks	150