Module Title: Ilm al-Tafsir (Exegeses)
Module Code: ILMTAF
Course Duration: 17 Weeks
Teaching Method: 2 units/week
Credits: 15

Overview:

This module is split in to two parts. Part one will examine the history and development of Tafsir in Muslim thought; outlining and critically discussing the nature and developments in Tafsir during the Prophetic and post-Prophetic Periods, early differences between different Muslim schools and their approaches to the Quran, the variety of approaches and important works in classical Tafsir, and orientalist approaches to this scholarship. Part two of the module will take a more thematic approach to examining key concepts and approaches in Tafsir. The focus here will be to understand and critically examine a range of approaches- cutting across classical, modern and emerging trends-making explicit the methodological issues and implications involved in each, and any, reading of the Quran.

Syllabus:

To study intensively:

- Origins, historical development and classical texts on ‘ilm al-tafsir
  o Tafsir at the time of the Prophet (p.b.u.h)
  o Tafsir at the time of the Companions and the followers
  o Infallible Shi’i Imams, their companions and Tafsir
  o Tafsir in Shi’i and Sunni minority sects; Zaydiya, Khawarij, Ismaili, Zahiri, Akhbariya
  o Orientalists and tafsir, (German school of Qur’anic studies, Theodor Nöldeke, and his followers; Pretzel, schwally, Bergstrasser; France School of Qur’anic studies etc…)

- Principles discussed in ‘ilm al-tafsir and methods, methodologies, and typologies discussed in ‘ilm al-tafsir:
  o Literary aspects of tafsir, the old and modern, Textualism and Contextualism,
  o Tavil and mystical approach to the Holy Qur’an
  o Rational and Philosophical Approach to the Holy Qur’an
  o Narrative approach to the Holy Qur’an
  o Fiqhi and Legal approach to the Qur’an
  o Aesthetical Approach to the Holy Qur’an(Qur’an and the story, Music of the Qur’anic verses etc…)
  o Orientalist’s methodology of studying Holy Qur’an

- Contemporary theories and emerging trends in the interpretation of the Qur’an

Learning outcomes:

On completion of this module, the student will:

- Know principles, typology, methods and methodologies discussed in ‘ilm al-tafsir.
- Discuss critically the origin, historical development, and major classical texts on ‘ilm al-tafsir.
- Identify major themes in the Qur’an and to engage in textual, linguistic, grammatical and critical analysis and interpretation of the text of the Qur’an.

- Have awareness of Modernist and emergent approaches to tafsir, being able to compare these with conventional tafsir theories in the interpretation of the text of the Qur’an.

- Critically evaluate arguments/positions of some of the classical and contemporary Muslim scholars of tafsir. In light of orientalist scholarship and contemporary Muslim concerns

**Assessment Weighting:**

- 100% Assignment

**Learning Materials:**

W. Montgomery Watt (Author), Richard Bell (Author), Introduction to the Qur'an (The New Edinburgh Islamic Surveys), 1995.


Jane Dammen McAuliffe, general editor, Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an (Leiden : Brill, 2001-). A major reference work organized by topic into articles both large and small.


An enlightening commentary into the light of the holy Qur’an, by a group of Muslim scholars; translated by Abbas Sadr-‘ameli; edited by Somaiyah Berrigan. Isfahan: Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali Library, 1994-. A recent Shi’i commentary from Iran. BP130.4 .E544 1994


Bell, Richard. A Commentary on the Qur’an, ed. C. Edmund Bosworth and M.E.J. Richardson (Manchester : University of Manchester, 1991). A critical reinterpretation that rearranges the surahs in accordance with Bell's understanding of their historical order.


Qutb, Sayyid. In the shade of the Qur’an, translated by M.A. Salahi, A.A. Shamis (London : MWH, 1979). Translation of Fi zilal al-Qur’an, the best-selling commentary by a major ideologue of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood.


Commentaries in Arabic


Wali Allah al-Dihlawi, 1702 or 3-1762 or 3. *al-Fauz ul-Kabir fi usul al-tafsir*. Delhi, [1963]. Library Service Center --- 297 W176F

*Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, John Wansbrough (Author), Andrew Rippin (Translator, Foreword)