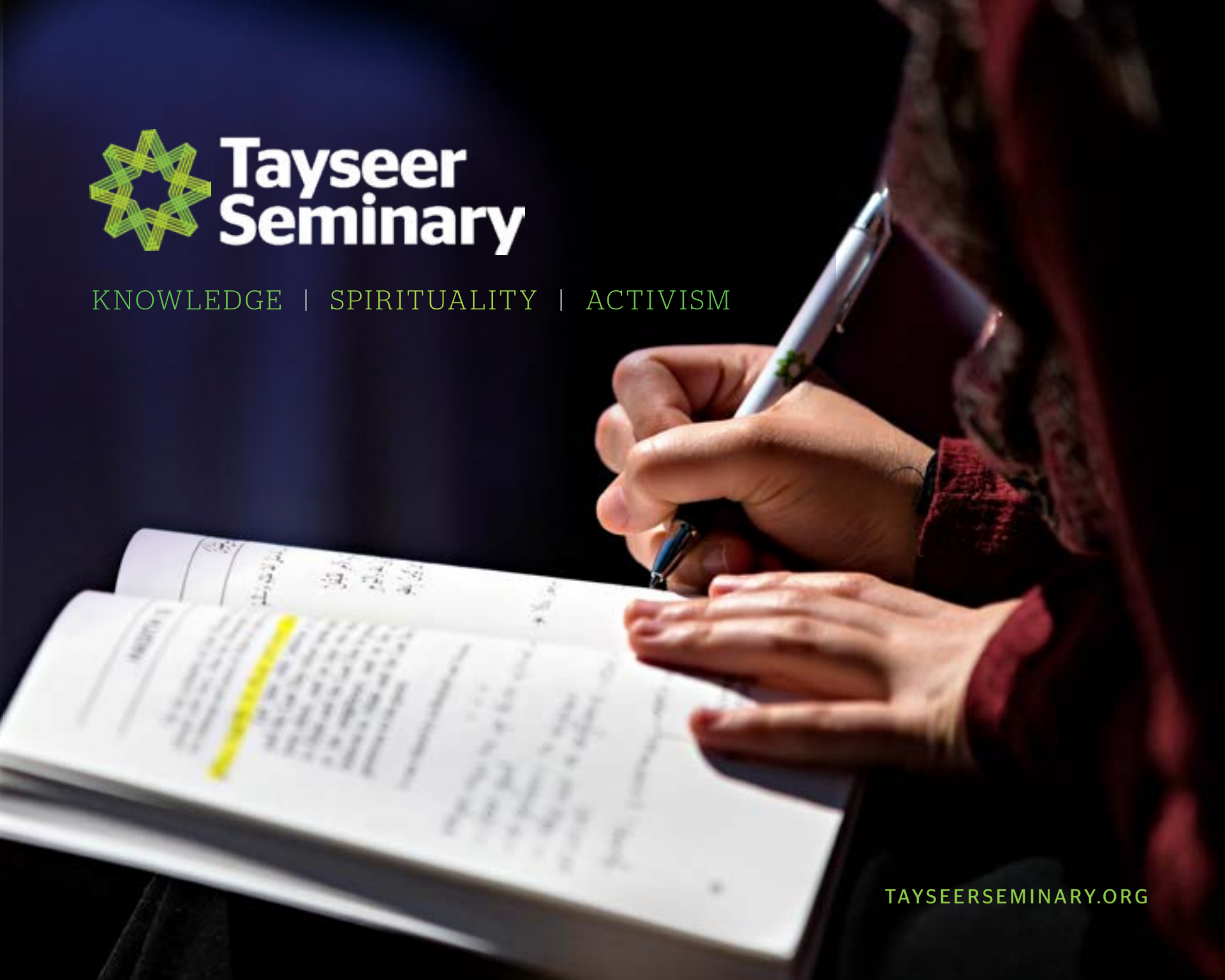




KNOWLEDGE | SPIRITUALITY | ACTIVISM



TAYSEERSEMINARY.ORG

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VISION & MISSION

“Whoever seeks a path to obtain knowledge,
Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى will facilitate for him or her
a path to Paradise.”
– The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

Tayseer Seminary aims to cultivate minds through the enlightened and relevant study of Sacred Knowledge and through Spiritual Immersion.

تيسير

TAY • SEER

| 'tey - sīr |

verb [with object] means to facilitate.

In recognition of the growing demand in the American Muslim community for relevant scholarship and educational opportunities, Tayseer Foundation has established Tayseer Seminary — a full-time Islamic theological seminary in Knoxville, TN.



INTRODUCTION

When the Prophet ﷺ established his community in Madina, he based it on Divine commandments from revelation and on the spiritual fervor of his Companions, the fruits of which were a robust society with knowledge at its core. Tayseer Seminary aims to revive the Prophetic model—the one true universal model—on an individual and communal level.

To this end, Tayseer Seminary is built on three pillars: **Knowledge, Spirituality, and Activism.**

In a time in which materialist philosophies and ways of life increasingly dominate our culture, it has never been more important for Muslims to embark on the transformative journey of seeking knowledge of Revelation and the Divine. The Prophet ﷺ described the virtues of taking a path to sacred knowledge with intentionality, a path whereby God makes easy for the seeker the way to Paradise. He walked this path, peace be upon him, and his Companions, may God be pleased with them, walked it with him, and each subsequent generation of Muslims has traveled this path in a manner that was relevant and responsive to changing contexts.

Tayseer provides an in-depth introduction to the foundational Islamic sciences that enables students to become insightful and effective servants of God in the context they occupy. They will dive into the meaning of Allah’s words, and learn to instantiate, or read the Qur’ān as a living text that directly addresses our realities.

Spirituality is the element that binds together the components of the entire institution, standing at the center of Tayseer’s mission. We do not just treat spirituality as theory or talk—we strive to achieve it through daily practices and rhythms. Students are encouraged to adhere as much as they can to Tayseer’s *‘Day and Night of the Believer’*, a daily worship regimen that covers most of the important areas of spiritual refinement based on the practice of the Prophet ﷺ. The goal is to inculcate a profound and everlasting relationship with the Divine.

The Prophetic model is one of justice and this lies at the core of Tayseer’s approach to the Islamic sciences. Tayseer offers a class on community building and development that grounds students

in an understanding of the nature and mechanisms of effective activism. In addition, the seminary facilitates opportunities for students to practice their skills by developing close relationships with the various Islamic institutions and activists in the Knoxville area.

Tayseer offers a balanced approach to transforming students both spiritually and intellectually while renewing their commitment to the Prophetic community with the ultimate goal of inculcating a profound and everlasting relationship with the Divine and gaining God’s pleasure on the path to Paradise.



THE PROGRAMS

ONE-YEAR ISLAMIC STUDIES

This program presents a comprehensive curriculum that combines serious learning, enlightening spirituality, and effective activism. The goal is to provide students with the opportunity to delve into the foundational Islamic sciences without losing sight of their American reality. This will create a learning community that is forward-thinking, responsive to the challenges facing the post-modern Muslim world, and interacting meaningfully with the larger religious and intellectual American milieu.

TWO-YEAR ARABIC & ISLAMIC STUDIES

This program provides a solid foundation for the lifelong pursuit of Islamic knowledge. The first year consists of an intensive study of Arabic, Qur'ān memorization and spiritual cultivation. In the second year, students will continue their study of Arabic while engaging in a broad-based study of the Islamic sciences in Arabic and English. By the end of the second year, students will have gained a thorough introduction to the tradition of Islamic scholarship, acquiring an advanced level of proficiency in Arabic, a solid grounding in memorization of the Qur'ān, and a strong foundation in all major Islamic sciences.



ONE-YEAR ARABIC INTENSIVE

The Arabic Intensive is designed for students to gain an advanced level of proficiency in one academic year. Areas of focus are: fluency in verbal and written expression, grammar and morphology, and reading the Qur'ān and classical texts. At the conclusion of the program, students will have the ability to understand the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* in Arabic and to pursue further specialized study of the Islamic sciences.

CURRICULUM
KNOWLEDGE



Methodology of
Religious Knowledge

Students will embark in an in-depth study of the Book of Knowledge from the *Ihya ulum-al-Din* of Imam al-Ghazali. The class promotes the importance of seeking knowledge in a methodological and meaningful way that ultimately leads to personal and communal growth.

Ulum ul-Qur’ān
and Tafsir (Exegesis)

Starting with an introduction to the Qur’ānic sciences, students learn the spiritual, linguistic, and sociological aspects of the Qur’ān, eventually ending the semester with a holistic analysis of at least one full *Surah* in the Qur’ān.

Tawhid
(Theology)

Knowing one’s creed is the most important component of our faith. After a thorough survey of Islamic intellectual history and the environment that led to the study and formalization of Islamic theology, students will learn about God, the Unseen, and the Afterlife based on the celebrated Creed of Imam al-Tahawi.

Seerah
(Prophetic Biography)

A journey through the Prophet Muhammad’s ﷺ and his companions’ lives emphasizing relevant lessons for individuals, families, and communities today.

Hadith
Studies

An in-depth study of the basic terminology and sources of *Hadith*, along with extensive commentary on some of the most influential short compendia of *Hadith*.

Fiqh
(Jurisprudence)

A detailed study of the *fiqh* of worship, including purification, prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and *zakat*. While consideration will be given to comparative approaches, emphasis will be placed on one of the four schools of Sacred Law.



CURRICULUM

SPIRITUALITY

Suluk

Often described by students as a mirror to their soul, *Suluk* class, under the guidance of qualified instructors, explores strategies for spiritual refinement as they are laid out in some of the most influential works in the field. Moreover, the instructor will address the intellectual and practical issues that students may have in applying spiritual solutions to their different and shifting realities.

CURRICULUM

ACTIVISM

Tajdid (Activism)

Revival of communal commitment to the Qur'an and *Sunnah* is essential in any effort to establish a Prophetic Community. Students will understand issues preventing our communities from reaching their full potential and how to overcome those challenges. They will also explore the Qur'anic concept of stewardship through governance and policy.

Islam and Modernity

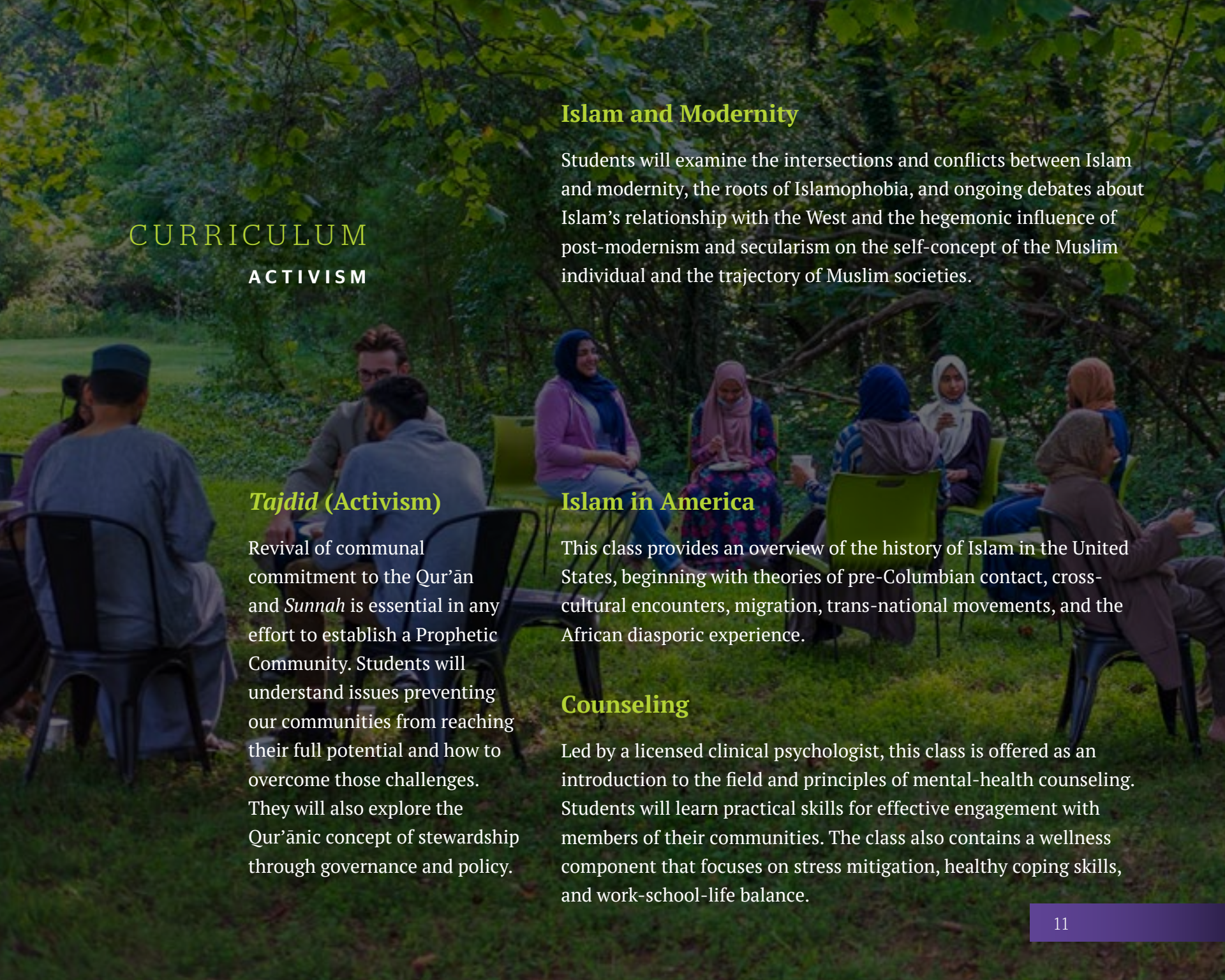
Students will examine the intersections and conflicts between Islam and modernity, the roots of Islamophobia, and ongoing debates about Islam's relationship with the West and the hegemonic influence of post-modernism and secularism on the self-concept of the Muslim individual and the trajectory of Muslim societies.

Islam in America

This class provides an overview of the history of Islam in the United States, beginning with theories of pre-Columbian contact, cross-cultural encounters, migration, trans-national movements, and the African diasporic experience.

Counseling

Led by a licensed clinical psychologist, this class is offered as an introduction to the field and principles of mental-health counseling. Students will learn practical skills for effective engagement with members of their communities. The class also contains a wellness component that focuses on stress mitigation, healthy coping skills, and work-school-life balance.



STUDENT LIFE

An integral component of the Tayseer experience is growing through companionship with fellow seekers. Students share in learning, worship, breaking bread together, outdoor activities, spiritual retreats, and so much more.

DAILY ROUTINE

DHIKR:

For students of Sacred Knowledge, a daily litany (*wird*) from the Qur'ān and Prophetic invocations is a must. It cleanses the heart, reminds us of our true purpose, and initiates the day with blessings. Students begin every day with a session of *dhikr*.

TAJWID:

Students practice their Qur'ānic recitation with a teacher once a week.

MEMORIZATION:

Time is allotted for students to memorize Qur'ān daily and they are encouraged to memorize foundational Islamic texts.

COMMUNITY SERVICE:

Tayseer is fully committed to an educational process that consists of and leads to meaningful service of the Muslim community. In accordance with their individual backgrounds, students frequently contribute to Tayseer and the Muslim Community of Knoxville in a variety of different capacities.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

SHAMĀ'IL WEEK:

As an annual event often held in *Rabī' al-Awwal*, students read along with Dr. Hassan Lachheb the entirety of *Ash-Shamail al-Muhammadiyya — A Portrait of the Prophet ﷺ* compiled by Imam al-Tirmidhi. Students and community members truly live with the Prophet ﷺ as they immerse themselves in his beautiful attributes and daily life, learning about all the small details that define his character and make him our Beloved ﷺ.

RIBĀT:

The Ribāt is the defining experience of the Tayseer academic year. The Ribāt is an intensive spiritual retreat, akin to *I'tikaf*, led by Dr. Hassan Lachheb and other faculty at the end of Fall and Spring Semesters. The Ribat serves as a capstone to the spiritual experience at Tayseer and is a requirement for all students to graduate. In addition to currently enrolled students, alumni and community members are frequent participants in Tayseer Ribāts.

COMMUNITY EVENTS:

Tayseer hosts several events throughout the year honoring occasions such as Black History Month, as well as workshops on topics such as marriage and how to give a *khutbah*.

TAYSEER ONLINE:

Tayseer offers a wide variety of online classes, ranging from core subjects in Qur'ān, *Hadith*, *Fiqh* and *Seerah* to specialized topics such as 'Intro to Islamic Investing', 'Raising Muslim Children', and the idea of a Muslim Economic Union. Tayseer also offers online Arabic courses at the beginning, intermediate and advanced levels.

SUMMER ARABIC INTENSIVE:

Every summer, Tayseer offers intensive courses for Arabic learners of all levels. With more than a semester's worth of content offered in a short period, our students make rapid progress whether they are first-time language learners or have been studying Arabic for many years.



TRAVEL & TRIPS

TAYSEER UMRAH TOURS:

Tayseer faculty lead annual trips to the holy cities of Mecca and Madina for members of the local Knoxville community and the American Muslim community at large. Immersing themselves in the blessed environments of the two Sacred Mosques and other sacred sites, participants renew and strengthen their relationship with Allah and His Prophet ﷺ and build lasting bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood.



LEADERSHIP EXPEDITION:

Tayseer now offers backcountry camping and backpacking trips across the country led by *Ustadh* Nadeem Siddiqi. These expeditions combine the experience of nature with spiritual immersion, good companionship, and a rigorous outdoor leadership curriculum.



FACULTY

DR. HASSAN LACHHEB

Founder and president of Tayseer Seminary, he holds a Ph.D in Religious Studies from the University of Indiana, Bloomington, with a focus on theory of religion and Islamic studies. His research is focused on the intellectual history and religiosity of the Muslims in the Maghreb and Andalus.

Dr. Lachheb completed his M.A. in Islamic Theology, Islamic Legal Theory, and Maliki Jurisprudence at Dar al-Hadith al-Hassaniyyah for Higher Islamic Studies in Rabat, Morocco with honors in 2000. In addition, he completed his B.A. with distinction in Arabic Language and Literature at Mohamed V University in Rabat.

He also attended the Madrasa of Shaykh Abdullah al-Talidi in Tangier, Morocco where he extensively studied several disciplines including Principles of Jurisprudence (Usul al-Fiqh), Arabic Grammar, Philology, and Literature. He has also received many *ijazaat* (licenses to teach) from prominent scholars in *Hadith*, Comparative Jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and the Sciences of Qur'an. He has studied under several of the foremost Islamic scholars in Morocco.

Dr. Lachheb is a resident scholar of the Muslim Community of Knoxville.

USTADHA ZAYNAB ANSARI

She has served as a full-time faculty member of Tayseer Seminary since its founding in 2014 when she joined the Muslim community of Knoxville in the pioneering role of women's scholar-in-residence, one of the first women to serve in such a capacity in an Islamic institution in North America. With over 20 years of experience as a public speaker, facilitator of interfaith dialogue, youth mentor, and an instructor of the Islamic Sciences, she is committed to reviving the Prophetic model of community and training the next generation of Muslim leaders, workers, and activists.

Ustadha Zaynab considers herself a lifelong student of traditional Islam and she was blessed to spend her formative years studying in Damascus, Syria with both male and female scholars of the Qur'an, Islamic law, theology, and spirituality. Prior to settling in Knoxville, she was based in Atlanta, where she earned degrees in World History and Middle Eastern Studies from Georgia State University, and dedicated her free time to volunteering with the award-winning Islamic Speakers Bureau of Atlanta.

In addition to her work inside the classroom at Tayseer Seminary, *Ustadha* Zaynab is active with several nonprofit organizations and teaches online classes on a number of topics, including Qur'anic Sciences, *Hadith*, and Women in Islam.





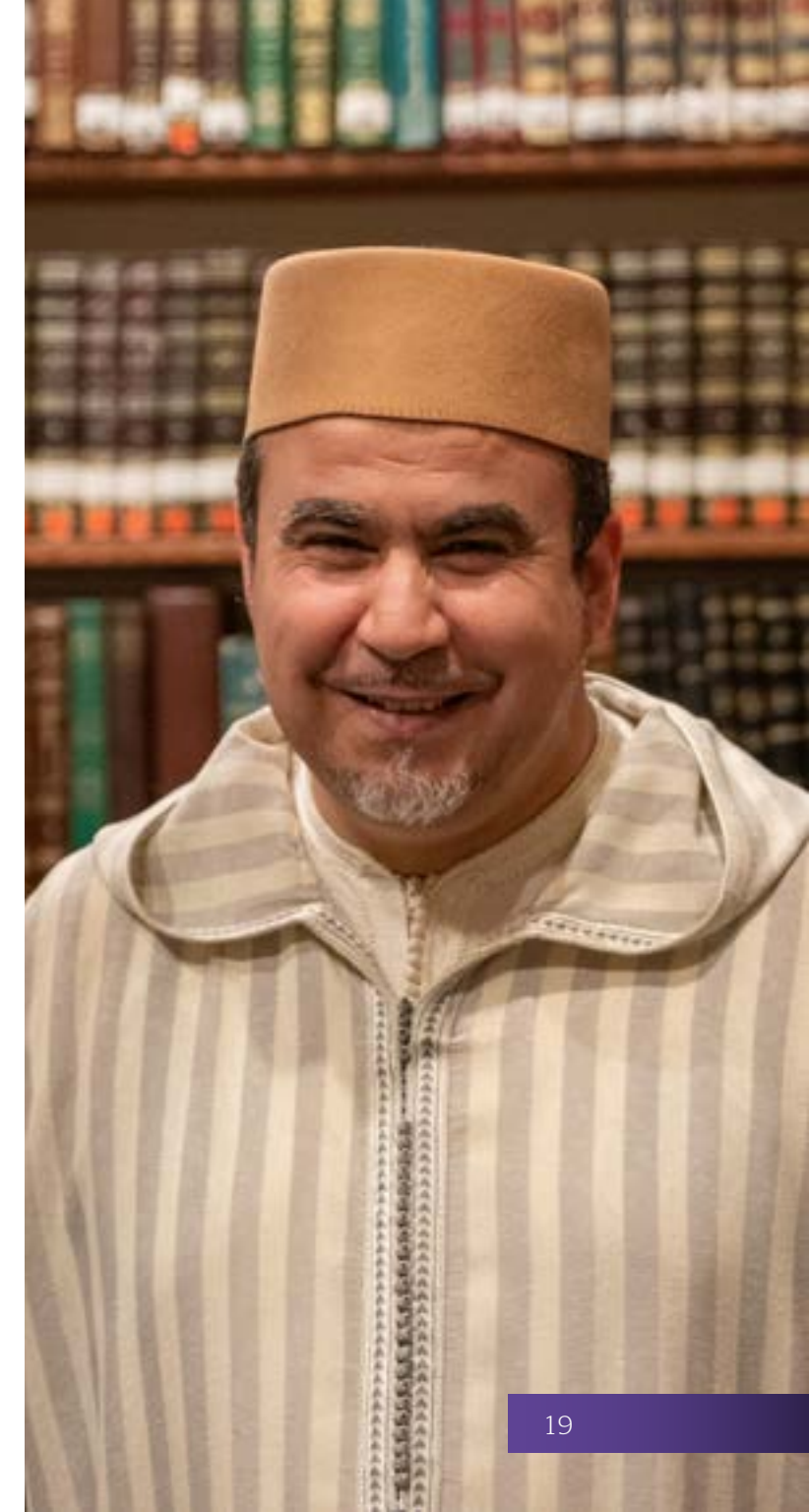
DR. MICHAEL ABDULLAH DANN

Earning his Ph.D. in Religion at Princeton University in 2015, and his B.A. in Arabic and Islamic Studies from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor in 2006, he later joined the faculty at Tayseer in 2020.

Dr. Dann studied the traditional Islamic sciences in Egypt with scholars from Al-Azhar University and in Morocco at Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdellah University. Prior to joining the faculty at Tayseer, he served as an Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

He also served as an Instructor of Arabic at Fawakih Institute and of the Islamic sciences at Nakhla Institute in Trenton, NJ.

He has translated and edited several works of Imam Abdessalam Yassine and portions of the *tafsir* of Shaykh al-Sha'rawi. His academic research and publications are focused on *hadith* and the early history of the *Sunni-Shi'i* divide.



DR. KHALID SHAHU

Dr. Shahu has a decade of experience teaching Arabic. He has served as a Teaching Assistant Professor of Arabic with the Asian Studies Department at UNC-Chapel Hill (2011-2020). He also helped establish the Apex Mosque in North Carolina, for which he served as an *Imam* for a decade.

Dr. Shahu has a Ph.D. in Sociology of Language, with a concentration on Language Policy & Planning in Post-Colonial North African Countries (2014), from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (GC-CUNY). He also has an M.A. in Arabo-Hispanic Linguistics from Mohamed V University, Rabat, Morocco (1995) and another M.A. in Philosophy of Language (2011).

He currently serves as the *Imam* of the Muslim Community of Knoxville (Masjid Annoor). Inspired by the teachings of his teacher, *Imam* Abdessalam Yassine, he hopes to make the Muslim community in Knoxville spiritually oriented, well-organized, closely united and civically engaged in the American Society.



USTADH NADEEM SIDDIQI

Growing up in Knoxville, where he has lived since 1977, he graduated from the University of Tennessee with a degree in Economics in 2002 and from Tayseer Seminary in 2016 in its first class. He serves on the Board of Directors for the Muslim Community of Knoxville, Annoor Academy of Knoxville, Tayseer Seminary, and the Association of Muslim Chaplains. He serves as adjunct faculty for Tayseer Seminary where he teaches a course in community activism.

Ustadh Nadeem serves as a Muslim Chaplain in the local prisons and at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville for the Muslim Student Association.



DR. SALMAAN TOOR

Dr. Toor is a licensed clinical psychologist practicing in Knoxville. He has been working as a licensed professional with individuals and families to improve their lives since 2009. He is the founder of The Family Center of Knoxville (TFCknoxville), where he serves the local community. TFCknoxville provides individual therapy, couples therapy, play therapy, family therapy, and parental guidance.

Dr. Toor previously served on the MCK Shura Board of Directors and currently serves on the Annoor Academy of Knoxville board. He also serves as adjunct faculty with the Tayseer Seminary where he teaches a course on counseling.

THE COMMUNITY

Knoxville has a steadily growing Muslim community of approximately 5,000 people. The community is a united and diverse one with only one main mosque built in 1989.

Muslim Community of Knoxville (MCK), is located in the downtown area of Knoxville. Annoor Academy, a private Islamic school in West Knoxville, strives to instill a religious foundation in students that enables them to grow in character. The school has its own dedicated building with over 200 students from pre-kindergarten through high school grade levels. These locations hold weekly events that bring together a vibrant, tight-knit, service-oriented community centered around the Qur'an and *Sunnah*.

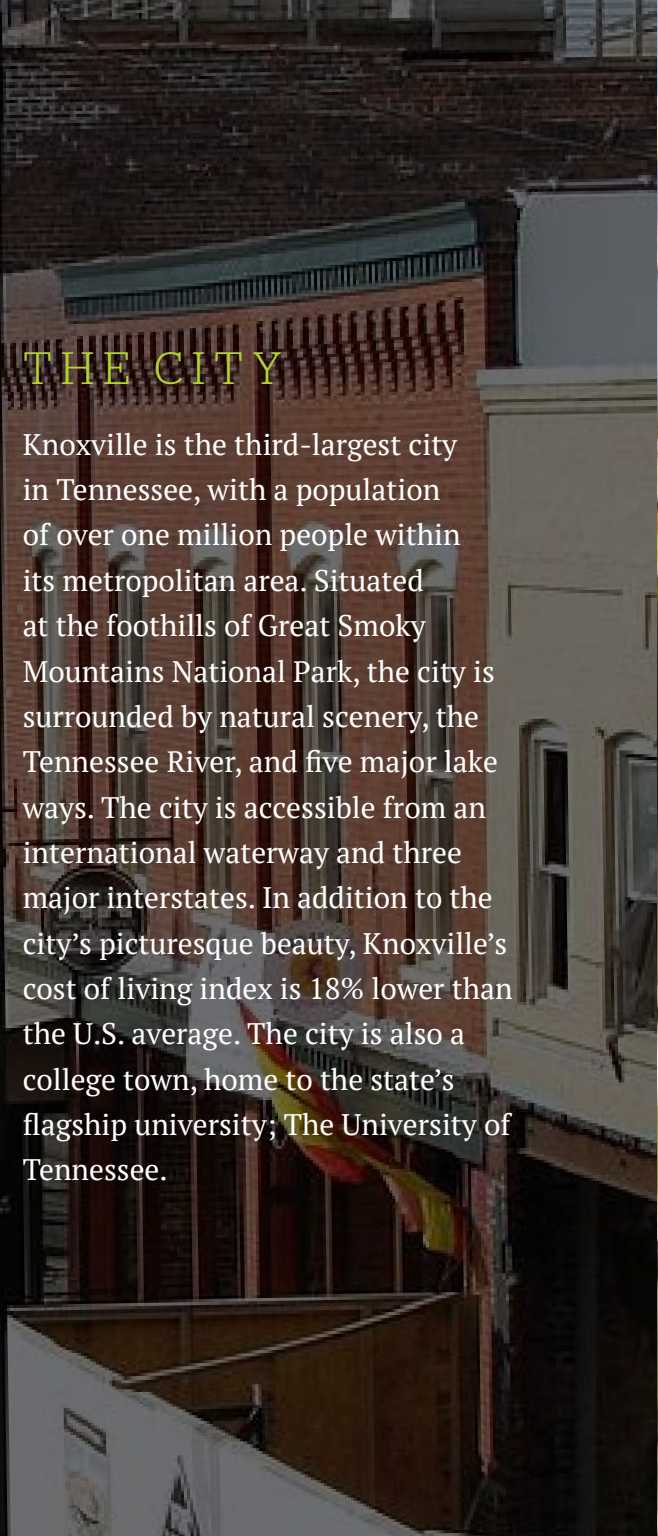
Additionally, the University of Tennessee has an active Muslim Student Association, which is widely known for founding the first-ever Fast-a-thon in 2001.





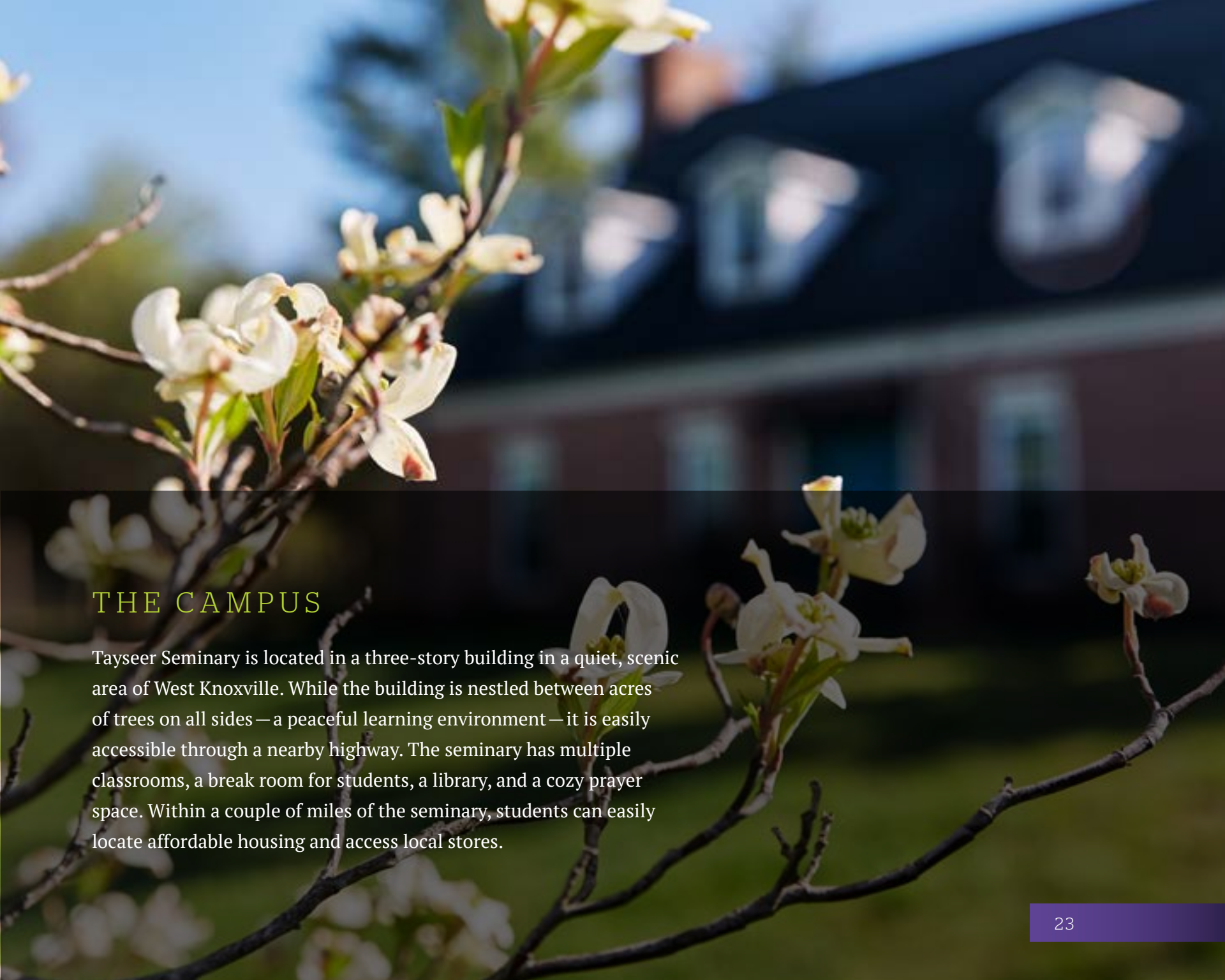
THE CITY

Knoxville is the third-largest city in Tennessee, with a population of over one million people within its metropolitan area. Situated at the foothills of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the city is surrounded by natural scenery, the Tennessee River, and five major lake ways. The city is accessible from an international waterway and three major interstates. In addition to the city's picturesque beauty, Knoxville's cost of living index is 18% lower than the U.S. average. The city is also a college town, home to the state's flagship university; The University of Tennessee.



THE CAMPUS

Tayseer Seminary is located in a three-story building in a quiet, scenic area of West Knoxville. While the building is nestled between acres of trees on all sides — a peaceful learning environment — it is easily accessible through a nearby highway. The seminary has multiple classrooms, a break room for students, a library, and a cozy prayer space. Within a couple of miles of the seminary, students can easily locate affordable housing and access local stores.





FAQ

Fees

(FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS)

What is the annual tuition for the Seminary program?

Full-time tuition is \$6,100 including materials and fees. The required payments may be divided into installments of up to 10 months. Payments will be due at the beginning of each month.

Financial aid is available based upon need and merit. If you would like to inquire about your eligibility, please email us at:
Admissions@TayseerSeminary.org

Qualifications

What are the minimum qualifications?

We are looking for academically gifted students who are committed to a rigorous program. Students should ideally be at least 18 years of age; however, maturity and a track record of achievement and service will be most important. A reasonable grasp of Arabic is also preferred.

Certification

Can I get into a four-year college or university with my coursework?

At this time, Tayseer Seminary is not accredited. While we are happy to provide academic transcripts for coursework completed, we cannot make any assurances as to whether courses will be accepted and/or accredited by other institutions.

Can I get an Ijazah?

Yes, students will receive an *Ijazah* that attests to their having heard specific texts with the teacher, thus incorporating them into the blessed chains of the righteous and the scholarly predecessors. Students will also receive a certificate of completion and transcripts at the end of the program.

Applying

When does the program begin?

The academic year begins in September and concludes with graduation in May.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis contingent on when they are received relative to the academic year.

Can I schedule a campus visit?

Yes! Please contact us in advance so we can welcome you on campus.

Housing

Does Tayseer provide student housing and transportation?

Tayseer Seminary does NOT offer student housing at this time. Students will be responsible for securing their own living arrangements and expenses including meals and transportation around Knoxville.

As a mid-sized city, the cost of living in Knoxville is quite reasonable and distances are short — for example, the commute from Tayseer Seminary to downtown Knoxville is only twenty minutes.

TESTIMONIALS

“Our daughters need to see that our teachers are virtuous and knowledgeable men and women, and our sons need to see the same.”

“Ustadha Zaynab Ansari is a gem in our national community and Tayseer Seminary is blessed to have her not only for her wisdom and knowledge, but also because of the light she carries.”

– Shaykha Dr. Tamara Gray

“We’re raised thinking about productivity culture, hustle culture, and thinking that our worth is defined by how much we’re getting done. This year has helped me learn how to truly block out time for worshipping and remembering Allah. Building spiritual blocks in your day can transform productivity culture and how we approach spending our time.”

– Sumrah Iqbal, Grad of 2022

“Tayseer taught me what it truly means to strive for Ihsan, communally and spiritually. We learned what it means to lead prophetic lives, and to be an embodiment of Ihsan for ourselves and those around us.”

– Sabriyya Shaw, Grad of 2022

“Tayseer Seminary is occupying a tremendous role in our community because it’s introducing students to the fullness and richness of our religion.

The signature one-year program is not just focusing on intensive study and knowledge as an important foundation [...] but it also involves introducing students to Islamic spirituality, providing an atmosphere that’s spiritually nurturing, and coupling that with community service.”

– Imam Zaid Shakir

“Tayseer is just the right companionship environment that the Muslim Community of Knoxville and every Muslim community in the U.S. need. Tayseer not only prepares students of knowledge spiritually and intellectually, but it also make of them leaders who can serve the community wherever they are.”

– Imam Khalid Shahu

“Talk less, worship more. It’s something so simple but I had found it profoundly difficult to do before Tayseer. Secular education encourages discourse on every topic regardless of its importance and I had felt that religion is the same. It took me a year to realize that love for Allah is best demonstrated by His worship, not discussions.”

– Zain Abidin, Grad of 2021

“My experience at Tayseer taught me how crucial it is to surround myself with good company, and to better myself to be that good company for others. Suhbah salihah, or righteous companionship is one of the greatest treasures in life and its effects impact our next life. Through my time at Tayseer, I gained suhbah with which I am still connected with today, and I was blessed to continue to seek out good company in the places Allah took me after Tayseer, Alhamdulillah.”

– Ayah Bany-Mohammed, Grad of 2017



**Tayseer
Seminary**

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