

**Introduction to Islamic History and Civilization,  
600-1200 C.E.**

**Topics in Pre-Modern World History**

**Fall 2010**

**HIS 207-05**, Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30-1:45 PM, MHRA 1215

**HIS 207-06**, Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:30-4:45 PM, MHRA 1215

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**Description:**

In the middle of the seventh century, Arab tribes coalesced and emerged from the Arabian Peninsula, conquering an enormous expanse of territory that reached from the shores of the Atlantic Ocean to the deserts of India in less than one hundred years. In the following centuries, Islamic civilization took shape, a dynamic process framed by Islamic ideals yet influenced by the many cultures this civilization embraced. The products of this civilization included magnificent monuments, extensive works of literature and science, far-flung trade routes that connected to east Asia, and new agricultural and technological innovations. This course will familiarize students with the history of the rise and spread of Islamic civilization as a complex and interdependent process that occurred throughout the Near East, North Africa, Spain, and Central Asia. We contextualize this process in the world before Islam and the rise of the Prophet Muhammad at the start of the seventh century and continue until the time of the Crusaders at the end of twelfth century. Our approach will be interdisciplinary. We will look at the history, art and architecture, archaeology, environment, literature, and religion of Islamic civilization.

**Student Learning Objectives:**

Students will be able to identify the major periods, events, terms, and facts of Islamic history until 1200 C.E. They will express understanding of some key concepts and theories that contributed to the formation of Islam: they will be able to describe the historical, geographic, aesthetic, and religious contexts for the rise of Islam and explain various motivations for the conquests and spread of Islam. Students will also be able to trace the developments of Islamic civilization through various examples of cultural and social production. By developing an informed historical perspective and by reflecting on the dynamic between Western and non-Western experience, students will be able to challenge and historicize current ideas and stereotypes of Islam.

## **Requirements:**

There will be two 75 minute classes per week. Each class will consist of approximately a 60 minute lecture followed by 15 minutes for class discussion and questions. Please read the assigned materials during the week assigned and come to classes prepared with questions and observations. Attendance is required, as lectures will frequently include material not covered in the assigned readings, for which you will also be responsible for on exams.

No prerequisite is required to take this course.

## **Readings:**

Readings for each week are given on the attached syllabus. Readings listed under the lecture mean you will have read those *in advance* for that lecture day. Weekly assignments consist of readings from selected works. Please come prepared and able to comment on the readings in class. In addition to the assigned readings, additional readings have been placed on reserve and will be useful for those wishing to explore subjects (particularly for papers) in detail.

Lecture handouts will accompany most lectures and will provide an outline and, especially, terms and dates referred to in the lecture. These terms may also appear on your exams. Use these handouts as review sheets for exams.

Study aids, though not a requirement for the course, might be useful in preparing for exams, researching the group assignment, and providing useful basic reference information for Islamic history and civilization. They include:

*The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (First Edition (EI1), 1913-1942, New (Second) Edition (EI2), 1954 (1960)-2004, Third Edition, continuing). Jackson Library stacks Tower 8 DS37.E523, vols. 1-12.  
*The Cambridge History of Islam*. Jackson Library stacks Tower 8 DS35.6.C3, vols. 1-2  
Bosworth, C. E., *The Islamic Dynasties*. Jackson Library stacks Tower 8 D199.3.I8 No. 5

Required text: (used and new copies available from bookstore)

Egger, Vernon O. *A History of the Muslim World to 1405: The Making of a Civilization*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall: 2004.

## **Assignments:**

Map Assignment: There will also be a map assignment at the beginning of the course designed to introduce you to the geography of the Islamic world. It consists of a blank map and an attached list of geographic features (countries, cities, bodies of water, mountains, and other features) given out in class for you to take home and label.

Quizzes: There will be three pop quizzes based on the readings due for that day. They will take up the first ten minutes of class. You will have the option of dropping the lowest grade of these at the end of the course.

Examinations: There will be three examinations for the course. These will consist of a number of brief identifications, short answer, and essay questions. Most lectures will be accompanied by a handout providing an outline and including terms that occur in the literature and you may not be familiar with. These terms will be useful to keep for review for the identification tests. You should also consult the glossary in your textbook (Egger, p. 319-326).

**Group Assignment:** A group research assignment will be given halfway through the semester. Your job is to become specialists in a region in the Islamic world. Using the Islamic geographers as a starting point, you will research your region including its cities, resources, roads, and anything else that you consider relevant (history, art, archaeology). The purpose of the assignment is for you to: 1) read primary sources (in translation), 2) implement research skills and access resources, and 3) to develop your ability to communicate in written and verbal forms and collaborate by having you work in groups and give a public (in-class) presentation. You will be in groups of 3-5 and present your regions at the end of the semester. A final paper will be turned in on the day of the presentation that is between 3-5 pages (800-1500 words, double spaced) and includes non-Internet references.

**Grading** will be as follows: Attendance and class participation (10%), map assignment and quizzes (10%), 2 exams (25% each), and group assignment (25%). Attendance is mandatory and I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. You may miss three classes during the semester, after which your class participation grade will be docked 3 points for each absence. If you miss more than six classes I will drop your final grade by three points and /or reserve the right to drop you from the course. All assignments must be turned in on time; those turned in late will not receive credit. If you must miss an exam you must let me know in writing *before* the date and there will be a make-up exam, otherwise you will receive a zero.

### **Class Rules:**

Please do not come late to class as it disrupts the class for both your fellow classmates and for me. Cellular phones *must* be silenced or turned off in the classroom. If you disrupt class by talking on the phone or text messaging, you will be asked to leave. Laptops may *not* be used in the classroom. Please note that plagiarism (this includes copying internet text for papers), cheating, and other violations of academic integrity are serious offences and will not be tolerated in the class or anywhere else in the University.

The best way to contact me is by email. Please note that I will only check and respond to emails Monday through Friday during the work day; i.e. don't expect me to respond to an email at 2 am on a Saturday.

### **Lecture and Reading Schedule:**

#### **I. THE RISE AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ISLAMIC STATE (7-10<sup>TH</sup> CENT.)**

##### **Week 1: The Near East Before Islam**

Aug. 24. Class Organization, Introduction to the Middle East/Geographic Overview

Aug. 26. The World Before Islam: The Byzantine and the Sasanian Empires

Egger, Preface: xi-xii, xv, Ch. 1: 1-20

A. Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity*, 152-96

##### **Week 2: The Rise of Islam**

Aug. 31. Pre-Islamic Arabia, The Prophet Muhammad, The Qur'an

Screening of a segment of "Islam: Empire of Faith" documentary (PBS), I.2-3

**[map assignment due]**

Egger, Ch. 1: 20-32

Sept. 2. The Age of Conquests and the Rashidun Caliphs, The First Civil War  
Egger, Ch. 2: 33-44, Ch. 3: 62-69

### **Week 3: The Umayyad Caliphate**

Sept. 7. The Umayyads, The Second Civil War  
Egger, Ch. 2: 44-61

Sept. 9. Umayyad Art and Architecture: Religious Buildings and Desert Castles

PICK ONE:

Bacharach, J. "Marwanid Umayyad Building Activities" *Muqarnas* 13 (1996): 27-44.

Genequand, D. "Umayyad Castles: the shift from Late Antique Military Architecture to early Islamic Palatial Building." in H. Kennedy (ed.) *Muslim Military Architecture in Greater Syria*, 3-25

Grabar, O. "Umayyad 'Palace' and the 'Abbasid 'Revolution'," in *Early Islamic Art, 650-1100*, Volume I, *Constructing the Study of Islamic Art* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005). First published in *Studia Islamica* 18 (1963): 5-18.

### **Week 4: The Abbasid Caliphate and Umayyad Caliphate of Spain**

Sept. 14. The Early Abbasids, The Third and Fourth Civil Wars, and Baghdad  
Screening of a segment of "Islam: Empire of Faith" documentary (PBS)  
Egger, Ch. 3: 69-72, Ch. 4: 85-89

Lassner, J. "Notes on the Topography of Baghdad" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 83.4 (1963), 458-469.

Sept. 16. Al-Andalus and the Islamic-Christian Frontier

Egger, Ch. 4: 98-104

Watt, M. and P. Cachia, *A History of Islamic Spain* (Piscataway, NJ: Aldine Transaction, 2008 [orig. printing 1965]), 1-51.

Screening of a segment of "Islam: Empire of Faith" documentary (PBS), II.2

## **II. THE FLOWERING OF ISLAMIC CULTURE (8-10<sup>TH</sup> CENT.) AND THE SHI'ITE CENTURY**

### **Week 5: Islamic Frontiers**

Sept. 21. **EXAM 1**

Sept. 23. The Byzantine-Islamic Frontier and the Concept of Holy War

Egger, Ch. 229-238

PICK ONE:

Dennis, G.T. "Defenders of the Christian People: Holy War in Byzantium." *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*. Ed. Angeliki E. Laiou and R.P. Mottahadeh. Washington, D.C. 2001, 31-39.

Donner, F. "The Sources of Islamic Conceptions of War," in J. Kelsay and J. T. Johnson (eds.) *Just War and Jihad: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on War and Peace in Western and Islamic Traditions* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991): 31-69.

Hillenbrand, C. *The Crusades: an Islamic Perspective* (1999), 94-97.

### **Week 6: Islamic Law and Legitimacy**

Sept. 28. The Rise of Sectarianism, Sunnism, Shi'ism

Egger, Ch. 3: 72-84, Ch. 5: 123-127, Ch. 6: 154-160

Hodgson, M. "How did the Early Shi'a Become Sectarian?" *JAOS* 75 (1955): 1-13.

Sept. 30. Administration, Taxation, Legitimacy, and Law

Egger, Ch. 5: 114-122, Ch. 9: 248-256

Schacht, J. *An Introduction to Islamic Law*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1-5.

Sharon, M. "The Development of the Debate Around the Legitimacy of Authority in Early Islam," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 5 (1984): 121-41

### **Week 7: Islamic Geography and Urbanism**

Oct. 5. Geographical Accounts and Cartography [group assignments given]

Maqbul Ahmad, S. "Djughrāfiyā" *Encyclopedia of Islam*. New Edition, Volume 2, 575-587.

Al-Muqqadasī, *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions (Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm fī Ma'rifat al-Aqālīm)*, transl. by Basil Collins. (Reading, UK: Garnet Publishing, 2001), pp. 1-8.

Oct. 7. The Islamic City

Egger, Ch. 9: 241-246

Kennedy, H. "From *Polis* to *Madina*: Urban Change in Late Antique and Early Islamic Syria," *Past and Present* 106 (1985): 3-27.

Abu-Lughod, J. "The Islamic City – Historic Myth, Islamic Essence, and Contemporary Relevance," *IJMES* 19.2 (1987): 155-76.

Whitcomb, D. "An Urban Structure for the Early Islamic City" *Cities in The Pre-Modern Islamic World* (2007), 15-26

### **Week 8: Islamic Agriculture and Trade**

Oct. 12. No Class (FALL BREAK)

Oct. 14. Trade, Agriculture, and Rural Settlement

Egger, Ch. 4: 104-113, Ch 9: 246-248

Stillman, N. A. "The Eleventh Century Merchant House of Ibn 'Awkal (A Geniza Study)" *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 16 (1973): 15-88.

Watson. Green Revolution

## **III. THE REPOSITIONING OF THE ISLAMIC EMPIRE (10-12<sup>TH</sup> CENT.)**

### **Week 9: The Fatimids**

Oct. 19. EXAM 2

Oct. 21. The Fatimids and al-Qahira

Egger, Ch. 4: 94-98

Walker, P. *Caliph of Cairo: al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah 996-1021*. Cairo: American

University in Cairo Press, 2010. (Read Ch 1: 3-12).

**Week 10: North Africa and Spain**

Oct. 26. Almoravids and Almohads

Egger, Ch. 5: 127-138, Ch. 6: 162-171, Ch. 7: 182-188, Ch. 8: 199-228  
Watt and Cachia, *History of Islamic Spain*, 82-126.

Oct. 28. Mediterranean Connections: Coastal Fortified Settlements & Inland Slave Trade

Egger, Ch. 9: 238-241

El'Ad, A. "The Coastal Cities of Palestine During the Early Middle Ages," *The Jerusalem Cathedra* 2 (1982): 146-67.

Miller, J. A. "Trading through Islam: The Interconnections of Sijilmasa, Ghana and the Almoravid Movement," in J. Clancy-Smith (ed.), *North Africa, Islam and the Mediterranean World* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2001), 29-58.

**Week 11: Local Autonomies and Crisis of the Caliphate**

Nov. 2. The Later Abbasids and Samarra

Egger, Ch. 4: 89-93, Ch. 6: 139-141

Kennett, D. "The Form of the Military Cantonments at Samarra. The Organisation of the Abbasid Army," in *A Medieval Islamic City Reconsidered: an interdisciplinary approach to Samarra*, ed. by Chase F. Robins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 157-182.

Nov. 4 Nomads and Settlers: the Bedouin Dynasties

Rice, D. "Medieval Harran: Studies on its Topography and Monuments, I." *Anatolian Studies* 2 (1952): 36-84 (read 74-84)

**Week 12: The East and the Arrival of the Turks**

Nov. 9. The Eastern Provinces, The Buyids, Provincial Autonomy Movements

Egger, Ch. 6: 142-144

Nov. 11. Ghaznavids, the Saljuq Migration, and Anatolian Civilization

Kennedy, Ch. 6: 145-154, Ch. 6: 160-162, Ch. 7: 188-198

Morgan, D. *Medieval Persia 1040-1797* (NY: Longman, 1988) 25-40.

**Week 13: The Crusades and Islamic Responses**

Nov. 18. Kingdom of Heaven (Ridley Scott, 2005)

Nov. 20. Crusaders, Zangids, and Ayyubids; Castles and Military Architecture

Egger, Ch. 7: 172-182, Egger

Michaudel, B. "The Development of Islamic Military Architecture during the Ayyubid And Mamluk Reconquests of Frankish Syria," in *Muslim Military Architecture in Greater Syria*, 106-121

Tabbaa, Y. "Defending Ayyubid Aleppo" *Muslim Military Architecture in Greater Syria*, 176-183.

**Week 14: NO CLASS (Work on Group Assignments)**

Nov. 23. **EXAM 3**

Nov. 25. THANKSGIVING - NO CLASS

**Week 15: Group Assignment Presentations**

Nov. 30. Group Presentations I

Dec. 2. Group Presentations II