

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

Topics in Pre-Modern World History

Fall 2014

HIS 207-01, Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00-3:15 PM, SOEB 217

HIS 207-02, Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30-1:45 PM, SOEB 226

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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:

1. Students will be able to define a suite of political, religious, and social characteristics that characterize the period after 600 C.E. as “Islamic.” Some of these include tribally based political structures, religio-social legal codes, and pluralism and hybridity in culture and economy.
2. Students will be able to identify and explain historical duration, succession, and change in terms of human agency and larger systems or structures in a wide variety of places and periods within Islamic history until 1200 C.E. by using diverse types of primary and secondary sources available for interpretation.

3. Students will utilize historical thinking to contextualize and analyze primary and secondary sources representing different points of view for 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.

4. Students will 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.

5. Finally, students will be able to recognize and evaluate salient features of primary source. These features include authorial subjectivity as shaped by social and geographic considerations, differences in generic structures and expectations (that is, formal characteristics of genres), and interpretive value as compared to other comparable sources.

Requirements:

There will be two 75 minute classes per week. Each class will consist of lecture with class discussion, class activities and in-class assignments, and questions throughout the period. Please read the assigned materials for that day, ready to listen to the lecture, and come armed to classes with questions and observations about readings and lectures. 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. **You must bring Primary Source readings and your textbook to class for discussion purposes. Failure to do so will result in a low class participation grade for that day.**

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 every lecture 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.

Reading Advice

Because most of the original sources (and much of the content) will be totally unfamiliar to you and include foreign names and terms, I recommend taking notes on them as you read. It is also useful to write a brief summary (2-3 sentences) of each document/source so that you can remember the basic gist of it for class discussion. It's much easier to note down important points as you read than it is to go back and find those points again once you've finished reading. Finally, I recommend reading each document more than once. Sometimes it will take two readings for something to make sense to you. Because the amount of reading for our course is fairly small, you'll have plenty of time for re-reading.

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. You will be allowed to consult sources to fill this map in, either an internet source (such as Google Earth or Google Maps), or a paper source (such as an atlas or encyclopedia).

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. To do well on the quizzes you must attend have read and understood the assigned readings. You may **not** make these up.

Examinations: There will be three examinations for the course. These will consist of a number of brief identifications, short answer, and essay questions. The first two sections are not cumulative for any exam, however, the essay question should be. The brief identifications will be names, foreign terms (in Arabic, Persian, or Turkish), places, events, and dates. 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). It is important to learn about other cultures through their own terminology and vocabulary, which is not always easily translated and loses inherent concepts when it is. Although challenging, learning foreign terms will be useful as the course will emphasize linguistic connections across time and place as a marker of cultural durability. Short answers will require that you are able to explain the characteristics, nature, and qualities of mid-range topics that are fairly specific in nature and often limited to one historical event or single primary source. Answers should be complete and refer to lecture and readings. The essay question on an exam is synthetic and comprehensive calling on you to combine information throughout the duration of the course from lectures, readings, and in class discussions to think about larger themes

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 translated texts by Islamic geographers from the 9th and 10th centuries as a starting point, you will research a

specific region including its cities, resources, topography, people and customs, art and architecture, and related historical events. The purpose of the assignment is to: 1) read, integrate, and evaluate primary sources (in translation), 2) implement research skills and access resources to discover relevant secondary sources, and 3) to develop an ability to communicate in written and verbal forms and collaborate by working in groups and giving 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 first day of the presentations** that is between 3-5 pages (800-1500 words, double spaced) and include at least three non-Internet references.

Grading

The weight of the final course grade represented by each of the various assignments is indicated as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Class Participation | 10% |
| Map Assignment | 10% |
| Quizzes | 10% |
| Exam 1: | 15% |
| Exam 2: | 15% |
| Exam 3: | 15% |
| Group Project/Final Paper | 25% |

Grading Scale:

| | |
|--------------|------------|
| 100-97% = A+ | 89-87 = B+ |
| 96-93 = A | 86-83 = B |
| 92-90 = A- | 82-80 = B- |
| 79-77 = C+ | 69-67 = D+ |
| 76-73 = C | 66-63 = D |
| 70-72 = C- | 60-62 = D- |

59 or lower = F

Attendance Policy

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.

Tardiness: Please do not come late to class as it disrupts the class for both your fellow classmates and for me. If you are significantly late (more than 10 minutes) or chronically late, you will be marked as absent for that day.

BLACKBOARD SITE

All materials for the course (except for the required book) will be posted on the Blackboard site for the course. This is particularly important for announcements and E-Reserves. It is a good idea to check the Blackboard site regularly. You can get to our Blackboard here: <https://blackboard.uncg.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>

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. I can communicate with you only by your UNCG email account (that is the email linked to Blackboard, for instance); make sure you check your UNCG email regularly.

Laptops in the Classroom: Laptops may *not* be used in the classroom.

Phones: Cellular phones *must* be silenced or turned off in the classroom. If your phone rings during class, you will be counted as absent for that class period. If I detect that you are using your phone to text (or surf) you will also be counted as absent for that day. Subsequent offenses will be treated with increasing severity.

Academic Integrity Policy

Enrollment in this course and submission of each written assignment constitute students' acceptance of UNCG's Academic Integrity Policy. Make sure you read and understand the policy, which is available at: <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>
If you have any questions about any aspect of this policy, including what constitutes plagiarism, please consult the professor.

UNCG's Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as "representing the words of another, as one's own in any academic exercise" (<http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>). Plagiarism includes both 1) failure to cite sources for ideas and words you use; and 2) submitting all of parts of someone else's work as your own. Be sure to cite fully all material you use, whether you are paraphrasing or using a direct quote.

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.

Additional Requirements and Advice

1. In case later consultation should prove necessary, students should keep copies of all graded assignments until the end of the semester (at least).
2. All course requirements must be completed to receive a grade for the class.
3. Late Work: Assignments are due on the date and at the time listed on the syllabus; if a crisis (such as illness) arises, it is **your responsibility** to contact me. If you do not contact me, the work (when eventually received) will be penalized, usually at the rate of 1/3 of a letter grade per day. .
4. Consultation of websites not assigned on the syllabus: many students feel that they can obtain the "answer" (or even a good interpretation) concerning a historical problem by simply looking it up on the web. While the web has many uses, this is almost invariably a

fatal strategy. Looking up someone else's ideas is no substitute for your own analysis. Some observations from the instructor's point of view: 1) use of a web-site without citing it is plagiarism, which, if detected, can result in serious academic penalties (see above); 2) instructors can often detect uncited use of a website when either the writing style of the student's paper changes drastically, or when facts/ideas/dates/people not discussed in class or in any of the assigned readings appear in an assignment. Again, I don't want to discourage you from gaining more perspectives by using the web. What I'm saying is that ultimately you are being evaluated on **your** analysis of the **assigned** readings, not on your ability to plug the ideas of some website into your essay.

Lecture and Reading Schedule:

I. THE RISE AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ISLAMIC STATE (7-10TH CENT.)

Week 1: Introduction (Lectures 1 and 2)

Aug. 19. Class Organization, Introduction to the Middle East/Geographic Overview

Aug. 21. The World Before Islam: The Byzantine and the Sasanian Empires

Primary Source: Jahiliya Poetry (course document)

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

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

Week 2: The Pre-Islamic Near East and The Rise of Islam (Lectures 3 and 4)

Aug. 26. Pre-Islamic Arabia, The Prophet Muhammad, The Qur'an

Screening of Part I of "Islam: Empire of Faith" documentary (PBS)

Primary Source: The Constitution of Madina (course document)

[map assignment due]

Egger, Ch. 1: 20-32

Denny, W. "Ummah in the Constitution of Madinah," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 36.1 (1977): 39-47. **READ pp. 40-42.**

Aug. 28. The Age of Conquests and the Rashidun Caliphs, The First Civil War

Primary Sources: Accounts of the Conquest of Egypt (course document)

Egger, Ch. 2: 33-44, Ch. 3: 62-69

Week 3: The Umayyad Caliphate (Lectures 5 and 6)

Sept. 2. The Umayyads, The Second Civil War

Primary Sources: Tax Rescript of 'Umar II (course document)

Umayyad Coins (in class)

Egger, Ch. 2: 44-61

Gibb, H. A. R., "The Fiscal Rescript of Umar II," *Arabica* 2 (1955), 1-16.

READ pp. 2-7.

Sept. 4. Umayyad Art and Architecture: Religious Buildings and Desert Castles

Primary Source: Dome of the Rock, Great Mosque of Damascus (in class)

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 (Lectures 7 and 8)

Sept. 9. The Early Abbasids, The Third and Fourth Civil Wars, and Baghdad

Screening of first segment of Part II "Islam: Empire of Faith" documentary (PBS)

Primary Sources: Accounts of Baghdad (course document)

Baghdad (in class)

Egger, Ch. 3: 69-72, Ch. 4: 85-89

Sept. 11. Al-Andalus and the Islamic-Christian Frontier

Primary Source: The Conquest of Spain and Battle of Poitiers (course document)

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 second segment of Part II of "Islam: Empire of Faith" documentary (PBS)

II. THE FLOWERING OF ISLAMIC CULTURE (8-10TH CENT.)
AND THE SHI'ITE CENTURY

Week 5: EXAM and Islamic Frontiers (Lecture 9)

Sept. 16. **EXAM 1** (covering Lectures 1-8)

Sept. 18. The Byzantine-Islamic Frontier and the Concept of Holy War

Primary Source: Shaybanī's Siyar (course documents)

various archaeological surveys and excavations (in class)

Egger, Ch. 229-238

Al-Shaybanī, Muḥammad, ibn al-Hasan. *The Islamic Law of Nations:*

Shaybanī's Siyar. Trans. by Majid Khadduri. Baltimore: The Johns

Hopkins Press, 1966. 75-83, 85, 87-102, 142-148, 150-151, 154-

160,

195-197, 203, 205, 208, 216-218, 225-226.

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 (Lectures 10 and 11)

Sept. 23. Administration, Taxation, Legitimacy, and Law

Primary Source: Political Debates (course documents)

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

Sept. 25. 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.

Week 7: Islamic Geography and Urbanism (Lectures 12 and 13)

Sept 30. Geographical Accounts and Cartography [**group assignments given**]

Primary Source: Idrisī World Map (in class)

Geographical accounts (in class)

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

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

Oct. 2. The Islamic City

Primary Source: various Cities (in class)

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: Economy, Cairo, and the Fatimids (Lectures 14 and 15)

Oct. 7. Trade, Agriculture, and Rural Settlement

Primary Source: Cairo Geniza letter (course document)

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.

Oct. 9. The Fatimids and al-Qahira

Primary Source: Cairo (in class)

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).

III. THE REPOSITIONING OF THE ISLAMIC EMPIRE (10-12TH CENT.)

Week 9: EXAM and NO CLASS

Oct. 14. NO CLASS-FALL BREAK

Oct. 16. **EXAM 2** (covering Lectures 9-15)

Week 10: North Africa and Spain (Lectures 16 and 17)

Oct. 21. Almoravids and Almohads

Primary Sources: Madinat al-Zahra' (in class)
Alhambra (in class)
Epic and Romantic Poetry (course document)
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. 23. Mediterranean Connections: Coastal Fortified Settlements & Inland Slave Trade

Primary Sources: Accounts of Africans, Gold, and Slavery (course documents)
Sijilmasa, Monastir (in class)
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 (Lectures 18 and 19)

Oct. 28. The Later Abbasids and Samarra

Primary Source: Samarra (in Class)
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.

Oct. 30 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 (Lectures 20 and 21)

Nov. 4. The Eastern Provinces, The Buyids, Provincial Autonomy Movements

Primary Source: 1001 Nights- Sixth Voyage of Sindbad (course documents)
Egger, Ch. 6: 142-144

Nov. 6. Ghaznavids, the Saljuq Migration, and Anatolian Civilization

Primary Source: Mu'tamar 'Ulamā' Baghdād
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 (Lecture 22) **and PAPER WORKSHOP**

Nov. 11. Crusaders, Zangids, and Ayyubids; Castles and Military Architecture

Primary Sources: Christians and Muslims View Each Other (course document)
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.

Screening of third segment of Part II of “Islam: Empire of Faith” documentary (PBS)

Nov. 13. Paper Writing Day - Workshop

Week 14: FILM and EXAM

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

Nov. 20. **EXAM 3** (covering Lectures 16-22 and Film)

Week 15: Thanksgiving Break - NO CLASS [Work on Group Assignments/Final Papers]

Nov. 25. THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS

Nov. 27. THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS

Week 16: Group Assignment Presentations

Dec. 2: Group Presentations Group I (on Reading Day)

[All Final Papers due, Groups I and II]

Dec. 4: Group Presentations Group II (on Final Exam day)