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

Topics in Pre-Modern World History II (HIS 209-01/IGS 223-04)  
Spring 2011

Lecture: Tuesday and Thursday 12:30-1:45 PM  
MHRA Building 1214

Instructor:  
Dr. A. Asa Eger  
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Office: MHRA Building, Room 2113  
Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00-3:00 PM and Thursday 2:00-3:00 PM by appointment only  
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Description:  
By the tenth and eleventh centuries, Islamic civilization from Spain to Central Asia had reached its peak with a system of elaborate cities, expansive trade networks, and profound achievements in arts and architecture, science, literature, law, political and religious thought. However, by the twelfth century, contact with western European world with the onset of the Crusades and with the eastern world with the advent of Turkic nomads fundamentally transformed the course of Islamic civilization. In this course we will examine how these changes reverberated through medieval and modern Islamic history in two parts. The first part will familiarize students with the dynamic history and changes in Islamic cultural process from time of the Crusaders through the legacy of the Mongols. The second part will explore the transition of the medieval to modern Islamic world, focusing on the formation of the “gunpowder” Ottoman, Safavid, and Moghul Indian empires and the effects of nationalism in shaping the modern Middle East. Throughout the course we will focus on themes of tradition and change in Islamic society with the assimilation, influence, and conflict of non-Arab and non-Muslim cultures. We will also focus on the relationships of nomadic and tribal groups and the state. A third theme will be on how successive ruling groups appropriated and legitimized their power. 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 since 1200 C.E.
- Students will express understanding of some key concepts and theories that contributed to the expansion of Islam: they will be able to describe the historical, geographic, aesthetic, and religious contexts of the pluralistic Islamic world and explain various motivations for the 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:


Bosworth, C. E., *The Islamic Dynasties*. Jackson Library stacks Tower 8 D199.3.I8 No. 5

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. Late maps will be penalized one letter grade.

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 essential to keep for review for the identification tests. You should also consult the glossary in your textbook (Egger, p. 511-517).

Response Paper: A final response paper will be turned in on the day of the third exam that is between 3-5 pages (800-1500 words, double spaced). The paper will be uploaded using SafeAssign on Blackboard to the course folder. The paper will respond to a question that synthesizes many of the themes learned during the semester. This is not a research paper and no outside reading is required. You will draw from your readings, lectures, and discussion sections. Grading will be on your ability to construct a clear and persuasive argument. Late papers will be penalized one letter grade.

Grading will be as follows: Attendance and class participation (15%), map assignment (10%) and quizzes (10%), 3 exams (15% each), and final response paper (20%).

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, whether excused or unexcused, 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.
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.

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 MIDDLE ISLAMIC PERIOD: CRUSADERS, MAMLUKS, AND MONGOLS (12-14th CENTURIES)

Week 1: Geography and Early Islamic History
T January 11th:
Course Introduction and Geography of the Middle East

R January 13th
Overview of Early Islamic History until 1200
Readings:
· Eggers, p. xviii-xxiv
· Cleveland, “The Rise and Expansion of Islam,” p. 5-35

Week 2: Crusaders and Mamluks
T January 18th
The Crusades and the Turks
PBS Documentary: Islam, Empire of Faith
Map Assignment due

R January 20th
The Mamluk Regime in Egypt and Syria
Discussion of Readings
Readings:
· Eggers, xxiv-xxx
· Eggers, 13-17
· “The Tale of Ma’ruf the Cobbler.” *A Thousand and One Nights ( alf Layla wa Layla)*.

**Week 3: The Mongols**
T January 25th
Chinggis Khan and the Mongol Conquests
Discussion of Readings
Readings:
· Eggers, 1-13

**Week 4: Politics and Society in the Middle Islamic Period**
T February 1st
Pastoralism and Politics in the Middle Periods
Discussion of Ibn Khaldun
Readings

R February 3rd
Religion and Society in the Middle Periods
Readings
· Eggers, 34-61

**Week 5: The Mongol Successors**
T February 8th
Film: *Grass: A Nation’s Battle For Life* (1925)

R February 10th
Mongol Successors: Timur and his Conquests and The Later Timurids and their Legacy
Discussion of Readings
Readings:
· Eggers, 26-33, 102-107, 143-153

**II. THE LATE ISLAMIC PERIOD:**
**OTTOMANS, SAFAVIDS, AND MUGHALS (15-17TH CENTURIES)**

**Week 6: The Ottoman Empire**
T February 15th
TEST 1

R February 17th
The Rise of the Ottoman Empire
Reading:
· Eggers, 21-25, 63-65

**Week 7: The Ottoman Empire II**
T February 22nd
Ottoman Empire at its Height, Decentralization and Fragmentation
Reading:

R February 24th
Early Ottoman Capitals and Architecture
Discussion of Readings
PBS Documentary: Islam, Empire of Faith
Readings:
· Eggers, 67-101
· Robert Ousterhout, “The East, the West, and the Appropriation of the Past in Early Ottoman Architecture,” *Gesta* 43.2 (2004): 165-176

**Week 8: The Safavids**
T March 1st
The Safavids: Religious Order to Empire

R March 3rd
Safavid Rule in Iran
Discussion of Readings
Readings:
· Eggers, 153-180


**Week 9: SPRING BREAK**
T March 8th and R March 10th
NO CLASS

**Week 10: The Delhi Sultanate**
T March 15th
Islam in India and the Mughal Dynasty
Readings:
• Eggers, 17-20, 181-219
• Cambridge History of Islam, Vol. 2: 30-34; 35-64

R March 17th
TEST 2

**III. THE MODERN PERIOD:**
**ISLAM AND THE WEST, IMPERIALISM, AND NATIONALISM**
(18-21st CENTURIES)

**Week 11: West and East**
T March 22nd
Islam and the West: Spain, North Africa, and Mediterranean/Trans-Saharan Trade
Readings:
• Egger, 108-142

R March 24th
Islam and the East: Africa, East Asia, and the Indian Ocean Trade
Readings:
• Egger, 220-255

**Week 12:**
T March 29th
Decline and Expansion of the Middle Periods
Readings:
TBA
R March 31st
Discussion of Final Paper Assignment

**Week 13: The Loss of Sovereignty**

T April 5th
Reform and Renewal 1750-1875: Ottoman Empire and Egypt
**Readings**
- Eggers, 257-314

R April 7th
The Loss of Imperialism 1875-1920: Islamic Modernism, Despotism, and Imperialism
**Readings**
- Eggers, 315-368

**Week 14: The Emergence of States and Nationalism**

T April 12th
World War One and The Emergence of Modern States

R April 14th
The Development of States and Nationalism
**Reading**
- Eggers, 369-403, 412-457

**Week 15: Topics in Modern Islam: Gender, and Sexuality**

T April 19th
Gender and Sexuality
**Reading**
- Eggers, 403-411

R April 21st
**TEST 3**
**RESPONSE PAPERS DUE** by 10 AM