

George Mason University
HIST 387-005
Islam in World History
Fall 2009

Class: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30-11:45 am
Classroom: Robinson Hall A248

Instructor: Dr. Cemil Aydin
Office Hours: Mondays or Tuesdays 2.00-3:30
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Course Description

This course will examine the role of Muslims in World History. The Islamic faith tradition has connected people from Sub-Saharan Africa to Eastern Europe, to Central Asia, China and South East Asia, shaping their religious, social, cultural and economic lives in a multitude of ways. Due to the shared rituals and practices of Islam, such as the pilgrimage, and the spread of Arabic language based Islamic education, Muslims from distant parts of the world have exchanged ideas, cultures and knowledge, while living with or in close proximity to non-Muslims over centuries, thus contributing to the emergence of the modern world in many unrecognized ways. By the end of the course, students should be able to answer the following questions: How did Islam foster global encounters, the exchange of ideas, processes, formations and upheavals? What is the role of Islam in terms of continuity and change in World History? While answering these questions, the course will focus on case studies such as the history of Islamic science, practices of Muslim empires, and social-cultural achievements. In addition to the textbook, students will read important primary texts illustrating the roles played by Muslims in European, African and Asian histories.

Course Goals and Objectives

The course offers students the opportunity to

- gain knowledge about the global connections facilitated by Muslim societies
- think about issues of world history
- recognize the diverse manifestations of Islam throughout history and across different regions
- familiarize themselves with a selected group of primary text on Islamic history and world history

- approach literature on the history, politics and the social life of Muslims critically and with an informed historical perspective
- develop discussion, argumentation and writing skills

Policies:

1. Any university’s student honor code prohibits cheating, fabrication or falsification of information, multiple submissions of academic work, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials, and complicity in academic dishonesty. Any special requirements or permission regarding academic integrity in this course include a judgment that the student’s work is free from academic dishonesty of any type; and grades in this course therefore should be and will be adversely affected by academic dishonesty . Students who violate the code can be expelled from the university.
2. I strive for a class environment in which everybody regardless their age, gender, background, orientation, preferences, or personal circumstance, feels included and free to express themselves; i.e. an optimal learning experience for all. I look forward to your contributions towards this goal.
3. If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.
4. Please note the following important deadlines: a) Last Day to Add (Full-Semester Course): September 15, 2009 b) Last Day to Drop (Full-Semester Course): October 2, 2009 c) Selective Withdrawal Period (Full-Semester Course): October 5 – October 30, 2009

Course Requirements

There are no prerequisites for this course. Students are responsible for all materials, lectures, discussions, and readings. This syllabus and any study aids supplied to the students in this course are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Any further instructions regarding course requirements given verbally by the instructor are as binding as written instructions.

If you have questions regarding this course, do not hesitate to contact me by phone or email or before class sessions.

The final grade for the course is divided as follows:

Class Attendance & Professionalism	15%
Two Short Papers (Midterm)	30%
Two Quizzes	10%

Map Quiz	5%
Final exam	40%

Short Paper Rule

All short papers have to be submitted in hard copy. No e-mail attachments will be accepted. Late papers will be graded down by one letter grade for each day they are late. No paper will be accepted three days after the deadline.

Two in class quizzes about the assigned articles (5% for each, 10% total)

There will be two in-class quizzes. These will be about specific articles assigned for that week. You will be asked a brief question about the article and you will need to respond in 10 minutes. If you do not complete the readings, you will not be able to answer these quiz questions.

Map quiz (5%)

There will be one map assignment, due the third week of the course. To familiarize students with the geography of the Muslim World students will be asked to fill in features on an outline map.

Two short papers in lieu of MIDTERM (15% each for a total of 30%)

Your mid-term will be composed of two short papers, to be submitted on October 1st and October 22nd. These short paper questions are indicated in the syllabus below. Answers must be typed, double spaced, and delivered as hard copy at the time of class.

Final Examination (40%)

The final exam will be in class on DECEMBER 16, WEDNESDAY, 10.30-1:15. Students will be given a set of study questions to prepare for this final exam two weeks before the exam time.

READING MATERIALS

Textbook

1. *The Oxford History of Islam*, Ed. by, John L. Esposito, (Oxford University Press, 2000)
2. *Leo Africanus*, by Amin Maalouf, (New Amsterdam Books, 1998)

Additional readings:

All additional required readings will be posted at the course blackboard site.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 (September 1 and 3): World History and Islamic History

- a) Issues and themes in the study of Islamic history
- b) The religions of Late Antiquity

Readings:

1. Carl Ernst, "Avoiding Prejudice in Approaching Islam," from *Following Muhammad*, (UNC Press 2003), p. 28-36.
 2. *OHI*-Ch.1: Fred M. Donner, "Muhammad and the Caliphate: Political History of the Islamic Empire up to the Mongol Conquest," 1-62.
 3. David Wanes, "Excurses on Islamic Origins," in *An Introduction to Islam* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 298-312.
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Week 2 (September 8-10): Islam and Abrahamic Religious Tradition

- a) Religious and political biography of the Prophet
- b) Evolution of the Early Muslim community

Readings:

1. Andrew Braddock, Review of Khalidi's *Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature*
 2. Ghada Osman, "Pre-Islamic Arab Converts to Christianity in Mecca and Medina: An Investigation into the Arabic Sources," *The Muslim World*, Volume 95, (January 2005), pp: 67-80.
 3. *OHI*-Ch.7: Jane I. Smith, "Islam and Christendom: Historical, Cultural, and Religious Interaction from the Seventh to the Fifteenth Century," 301-346.
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Week 3 (September 15-17): Emergence of a Knowledge Based World Religion

- a) Development of Muslim scholarship on sacred texts
- b) Question of Reason and Revelation

Readings:

1. *OHI*-Ch.2: Vincent Cornell, "Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge: The Relationship between Faith and Practice in Islam," 63-105.
2. *OHI*-Ch.3: Mohammad Hashim Kamali, "Law and Society: The Interplay of Revelation and Reason in the Shariah," 107-153.

Map Quiz at the beginning of the class on Tuesday

Discussion Question: How can we understand and explain the rapid expansion of the early Islamic rule and the spread of Islamic faith in its first two centuries?

Week 4 (September 22-24): Golden Age of Science in Islam? Science and Global Connections

- a) World historical significance of Islamic Science

Reading Assignments:

1. Watch the BBC documentary on *Islam and Science* by Jim Khalili (at youtube.com or google videos)
2. *OHI*-Ch.4: Ahmad Dallal, “Science, Medicine, and Technology: The Making of a Scientific Culture,” 155-214.

Journalist and Sociologist Jonathan Lyons

When: Thu, September 24, 10:30am – 11:30am

Where: M&T Bank Tent, Outside the Johnson Center, George Mason University, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030

Description: A 20-year-veteran of Reuters, Lyons — having served as an editor and foreign correspondent primarily in the Muslim World — discusses his new book *House of Wisdom: How the Arabs Transformed Western Civilization*.

Jonathan Lyons is the author of *The House of Wisdom: How the Arabs Transformed Western Civilization*. He served as an editor and foreign correspondent — mostly in the Muslim world — for Reuters for more than 20 years and is currently completing his doctorate in the sociology of religion at George Mason University. For more information, visit his website at www.jonathanlyonsportfolio.com.

Week 5 (September 29- October 1st): Philosophy and Theology

- a) Hellenistic Legacy and Islam
- b) Was there a conflict between Religion and Reason?

Reading:

1. *OHI*-Ch.6: Majid Fakhry, “Philosophy and Theology: From the Eighth Century to the Present,” 269-304.

Discussion Question: What is the world historical significance of scientific and philosophical activities of Muslims in the period from the 9th to 13th centuries? Was there any conflict between the philosophy & science tradition and mainstream Muslim beliefs?

First Short Paper Due on October 1st (3-5 Pages- 15%- Counts as half of the mid-term): Based on your readings of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan, write a 3-4 pages paper on the following question: What are the religious and philosophical messages of Ibn Tufail in writing this story?

Reading for the Paper: *The History of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* by Abu Bakr Ibn Tufail

Week 6 (October 6-8): Abbasid Empire or Empire of Faith

- a) Empire and Universalism
- b) The Question of Unity and Diversity

Reading Assignments:

1. Edmund Burke III, "Islam at the Center: Technological Complexes and the Roots of Modernity," *Journal of World History*, Vol: 20, No: 2 (2009) p: 165-186.
 2. Hayrettin Yucesoy, "Ancient Imperial Heritage and Islamic Universal Historiography: Al-Dinawari's Secular Perspective," *Journal of Global History* (2007) 2, pp: 135-155.
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Weeks 7 (October 15- No Tuesday Class): Crusaders, Mongols and Muslims: Can We See a Clash of Civilization in Medieval Times?

- a) Twin Assault: Mongol Empire and Crusades
- b) The Question of Decline

Recommended Online Video: Journal of Ibn Battuta (BBC) by Tim Mackintosh-Smith, available at Youtube.com in eight segments.

Discussion Question: What can we learn from the travels of Ibn Battuta about the world during the 13th and 14th centuries?

Selections from Ross Dunn, *Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the Fourteenth Century*

2. Ibn Battuta's Travels

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1354-ibnbattuta.html>

Week 8 (October 20-22) Post-Mongolian Islamic World

- a) Impact of Mongol invasion
- b) Islam and the Medieval era globalization

Readings:

1. John Obert Voll, "Islam as a Special World System," *Journal of World History*, Vol.5, No. 2 (Fall, 1994), pp. 213-226.
2. *OHI*-Ch.5: Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, "Art and Architecture: Themes and Variations," 215-268.

October 22: Second Short Paper Due at Class (3-5 pages): Based on your readings, did the intellectual creativity, cultural life or political power of Muslim societies decline during the 13th century? Why or why not? What do you learn from the novel "Leo the African" and excerpts from Ibn Battuta's travel account about the broad issue of decline?

Week 9 (October 27-29): Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Empires

- a) Gunpowder Empires: Ottomans, Safavids, Mughals
- b) Vitality and diversity of the Islamic civilization

Readings:

1. Cemal Kafadar, "A History of Coffee,"
2. Rudi Matthee, "Coffee in Safavid Iran: Commerce and Consumption," in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (1994), pp. 1-32.
3. *OHI*-Ch.8: Ira M. Lapidus, "Sultanates and Gunpowder Empires: The Middle East," 347-394.
4. *OHI*-Ch.9: Bruce Lawrance, "The Eastward Journey of Muslim Kingship: Islam in South and Southeast Asia," 395-432.

First In-Class Quiz: On Cemal Kafadar's "A History of Coffee" and Rudi Matthee's "Coffee in Safavid Iran,"

Discussion Question: Was there a clash of civilizations between Medieval Islam and Christianity? Why or why not?

Week 10 (November 3-5): The History of Islam in Central Asia, China, South East Asia, Africa and Latin America

- a) Islam in China and Central Asia
- b) Islam in Africa and Latin America

Readings:

Reading Assignments:

1. *OHI*-Ch.10: Dru Gladney, "Central Asia and China: Transnationalization, Islamization and Ethnicization," 433-474.
2. *OHI*-Ch. 11: Nehemia Letzcion, "Islam in Africa to 1800: Merchants, Chiefs, and Saints," 475-508.

Discussion Question: How can we compare Muslim minority societies to Muslim majority societies in terms of their religious and cultural life?

Week 11 (November 10-12): Early Modern Era Islam and the Rise of the West

- a) What went wrong?: Understanding Muslim literature on decline, reform and renewal during the 17th and 18th centuries
- b) Beyond Wahhabism vs. Sufism: Reform and renewal in the early modern period

Readings:

1. Karen Barkey, "Islam and Toleration: Studying the Ottoman Imperial Model," *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 19 (2005): 5-19.
 2. *OHI-Ch.12*: John Obert Voll, "Foundations for Renewal and Reform: Islamic Movements in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries", 509-548.
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Week 12 (November 17-19): Islam in the Age of Colonialism and Nationalism

- a) Colonialism, anti-colonialism and nationalism
- b) Islam and modernity

Readings: 1. *OHI-Ch.13*: S. V. R. Nasr, "European Colonialism and the Emergence of Modern Muslim States," 549-600.

2. Ernest Renan, "Islam and Science," and response to Ernest Renan by Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, "Religion versus Science"
3. Cemil Aydin, "Orientalism and Civilizational Paradigm in Pan-Islamic Thought," in *Mapping Difference: Asia, Europe and the Dialectic of Modernity*, Thierry Blanca, Sucheta Mazumdar and Vasant Kaiwar, eds. (Routledge, forthcoming 2009).

Discussion Question: What has been the impact of Western colonialism on the Muslim world?

Week 13 (November 24- No Thursday Class due to Thanksgiving Recess) Islamic Identity During the Era of Decolonization and Cold War

- a) Emergence of a modern global Muslim identity
 - b) Islam in an age of nation-states
1. *OHI-Ch.15*: John L Esposito, "Comtemporary Islam: Reformation and Revolution," 643-690.
 2. Matthew Connelly, "Taking off the Cold War Lens: Visions of North-South Conflict during the Algerian War for Independence," *The American Historical Review*
 3. Richard Wright, *The Color Curtain: A Report on the Bandung Conference* (Banner Books-University Press of Mississippi 1994), 127-245.
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Week 14 (December 1-3): Globalization of Modern Islam & Islam in the West

- a) Globalization in modern Muslim societies & Muslims in the West

b) The Question of Islamophobia in the West and Anti-Westernism in the Muslim world

Readings:

1. Neil Macmaster, "Torture: From Algiers to Abu Ghraib," in *Race & Class*, 46 (2) (2004): 1-21
2. Saba Mahmood and Charles Hirschkind, "Feminism, the Taliban and Politics of Counter-Insurgency" in *Anthropological Quarterly* 75:2 (2002): 339-354.
3. Saba Mahmood, "Secularism, Hermeneutics, Empire: The Politics of Islamic Reformation," *Public Culture* 18(2): 323-247

Second In Class Quiz: On Saba Mahmood's Articles

Week 15: (December 8-10): Contemporary Issues in Islamic History

a) Political Islam

b) Issues of the post-September 11 world

1. *OHI*-Ch.14: Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, "The Globalization of Islam: The Return of Muslims to the West," 601-642.
2. Mahmood Mamdani, "Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: A Political Perspective on Culture and Terrorism," *American Anthropologist*, **104:3** (September 2002): 766-775.

Discussion Question: When and why did radical fundamentalist groups emerge in the Muslim world? How can we interpret the diversity of ideas and actions among the radical groups in the Muslim world?

IN CLASS FINAL EXAM: DECEMBER 16, WEDNESDAY, 10.30-1:15