

History 6A
Mr. Bensch
Spring 2010

Office Hours (Tr 204):
T 11:15 - 1:00
and by appointment

SYLLABUS

THE FORMATION OF THE ISLAMIC NEAR EAST

The course will focus on the rise of Islam and the transformation of the Near East into an Islamic society. We shall discuss the founding of Islam, the preaching of the Prophet, the establishment of a Muslim Empire, and its disintegration due to internal pressures and foreign invasion. From this historical process Islam emerged as a religion, a civilization, and a distinctive power system.

The course will be divided between lecture and discussion in each session; in order to engage in discussion profitably, you should have completed the reading for that week. In addition to the secondary texts available for purchase at the bookstore, you will be expected to become familiar with the collection of primary sources that will form the foundation of the course. Your grade will be determined by three short quizzes (15%), participation in class discussions (10%), a midterm (10%), final (25%), and two short papers (40%).

I. Week of Jan. 19.

- a) Introduction: Orientalism, Islamics, and History.
- b) The Near East Before Islam: Society, Empire, and Religion.

Readings: M. Hodgson, The Venture of Islam, I, pp. 22-69, 103-45;
Sources, nos. 1-5.

II. Week of Jan. 26.

- a) Pre-Islamic Arabia.
- b) The Life of Muhammad.

Readings: Hodgson, I, pp. 146-86;
F. Rahman, Islam, pp. 11-29;
Sources, nos. 6-7.

III. Week of Feb. 2.

- a) The Appeal of Early Islam.
- b) The Qur'ân.

Readings: Rahman, Islam, pp. 30-42;
Sources, nos. 8-12.

IV. Week of Feb. 9.

- a) Discussion of Qur'ân and of First Paper.
- b) The Arab Conquests.

Readings: Hodgson, I, pp. 187-230;
Shaban, Islamic History, pp. 1-78;
Sources, nos. 13-17.

V. Week of Feb. 16.

Paper 1 due on Tuesday, Feb. 16

- a) Organization of New Territories and Resistance.
- b) The Caliphate.

Readings: Hodgson, I, pp. 233-79;
Shaban, pp. 79-126;
Sources, nos. 18-29.

VI. Week of Feb. 23.

Quiz on Tuesday, Feb. 23.

- a) The Abbasid Revolution.
- b) Cosmopolitan Islam: The Incorporation of Hellenic and Persian Culture.

Readings: Shaban, 127-89;
Hodgson, I, pp. 280-314;

VII. Week of March 2.

- a) Urban Islam: Scripturalism and Law.
- b) **Midterm Thursday, March 4.**

Readings: Hodgson, I, pp. 280-340, 384-92;
Rahman, pp. 68-94, 100-116;
Sources, nos. 30-34.

VIII. Week of March 16.

- a) Dissolution of the Abbasid Caliphate.
- b) Slave States, Regional Courts, and International Commerce.

Readings: Hodgson, I, pp. 473-95, II, pp. 1-21; 135-51;
Sources, nos. 35-41.

IX. Week of March 23.

- a) Islam on the Edge: al-Andalus.
- b) Attempts to Reestablish Unity: Fatimid Egypt and the Seljuk Empire.

Readings: Hodgson, II, pp. 21-135;
Sources, nos. 42-45.

X. Week of March 30.

Quiz on Tuesday, March 30.

- a) Muslim Communities: Sunni Internationalism and Shi'a Sectarianism.
- b) Sufism and the Sufi Orders.

Readings: Hodgson, I, pp. 392-409, II, pp. 201-54;
Rahman, pp. 128-40, 181-92;
Sources, nos. 46-48.

XI. Week of April 6.

- a) A Balance of Individual and Community: Al-Ghazali.
- b) The Crusades and the Islamic Reaction.

Readings: Hodgson, II, pp. 175-92, 255-68;
Sources, nos. 49-53.

XII. Week of April 13.

- a) The Mongol Eruption and its Aftermath.
- b) A Slave Regime in Full Flower: Mamluk Egypt.

Readings: Hodgson, II, pp. 286-315;
Sources, nos. 54-56.
B. Lewis, Race and Slavery in the Middle East, pp. 3-71.

XIII. Week of April 20

Quiz on Tuesday, April 20.

- a) Reflections on the Islamic Past: Ibn Khaldûn.
- b) Discussion of Muqqadimah.

Readings: Hodgson, II, pp. 437-55, 476-84;
Ibn Khaldûn, The Muqqadimah, pp. 11-69, 91-115, 138-71, 256-309

XIV. Week of April 27.

Paper 2 due on Thursday, April 29

- a) Conclusion: Unity in Diversity in Islamic Civilization
- b) Wrap-up.

Readings: Hodgson, II, pp. 329-68;
Rahman, pp. 235-65.