This course is thoroughly revised and updated with the sponsorship of the National Endowment for the Humanities Teaching Development Program

**Description:**

This course is an introduction to the role of the Middle East on the formation of the Islamic world, from the time of the Prophet Mohammed to the rise of the early modern Islamic bureaucratic empires. It covers the main developments in the core lands of the Near & Middle East (Syria, Egypt, Palestine, Iran, Iraq, Arabia) and their impact on Northern Africa, South-east and South-west Europe, Central Asia, and the Indian Ocean, which integrated that vast area in the socio-cultural amalgam of Islam. The basic premises of the course are that the time between the seventh and the seventeenth centuries was the formative age of a major civilization and hence it is indispensable for the understanding of the modern Islamic world; and that the formation of that world is to a large extent the product of a creative synthesis of the adaptation, acculturation, and assimilation of the Arab, Turkic, Hindu, Central Asian, North African, and South Asian Muslim cultures to a host of non-Muslim, indigenous local, regional, and globally-spread societies. The cultural agency thus created by Islam is, to no less an extent than other cultures, quite diverse and flexible, and informed by the accomplishments—mentalities, social arrangements, and political ideas and institutions—of several other traditions and religions. The course has three goals: 1/ informational, to provide you with the essential data about pre-modern Islamic societies; 2/ heuristic, to help you build the ability to define the set of questions that are to be asked whenever understanding of the Islamic world all over the globe is the issue; 3/ and cultural, allowing you to learn the strategies and tools for comprehending the continuities between the past and the present of Islamic culture. The course fulfills non-Western requirements of your curriculum.

The course has three modules. The first one will acquaint you with the “Arab Blueprint:” the principal ideas, institutions, and practices that the Arab Muslim society worked out after the adoption of Islam and its quick expansion in the Middle East in the aftermath of the conquests. The second offers a sample of how that Arab Muslim experience blended with local traditions in three areas incorporated in the nascent Islamic world in the course of the expansion, Northern Africa with Spain, Central Asia, and the western Indian
Ocean. The third module introduces the changes, challenges and responses that imperial Islam faced in its interaction with the non-Muslim world of the early modern era.

**Requirements:**

This is a 300 level course that will combine reading and class discussions. There will be midterm and final exams and one term paper. You are responsible for doing the weekly readings, being ready to discuss them in class, do all other special assignments, and presenting key readings when your turn comes. Your final grade will be based 25% on your class performance (assignments included), 50% on your in-class exams (25% each for midterm and final), and 25% on the take-home paper. The paper will be due on the date of your exam as specified by UWRF schedule. It should address some of the issues we have discussed, should be based on original sources, should show your familiarity with the scholarly literature on the subject, and should be about 2000 words (5-7 pages) long. The focus of the paper should be your own analysis of primary sources you have selected. Secondary works should be used as points of reference, to set the general background, and to orient you and the reader in the state of the scholarship on the issue. Instructions for the paper are attached at the end of this syllabus. Follow them!

Although no previous knowledge of the period and the region is required or expected please remember that familiarity with the readings and willingness to engage them with the conceptual tools and analytical skills you have built in your career as students will be the foundation of the class. Experience tells me that there may be times when you are lost. If you do get lost, it is not you: it is just the material that is probably quite foreign to you. Read the material. Come to my office hours to talk. And ask questions in class: chances are, if you are lost or confused about something, someone else is, too.

UWRF welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs, activities, and environment. Students who need academic adjustments (accommodations) for a disability should contact the Disability Services Office, 105 Davee Library, 715-425-3531. Before final decisions can be made to allow academic adjustments, students must provide clinical documentation that sufficiently describes the nature of their situation. See further information at [http://www.uwrf.edu/disabilityservices/ADA.html](http://www.uwrf.edu/disabilityservices/ADA.html)

**Required Readings:**

This course has three bundles of readings: 1/ the books listed below; 2/ several articles and book chapters available on D2L; all these readings are open for consultation beforehand; 3/ Internet-based readings and visual resources. You are responsible for consulting all these in due time and being able to discuss their contents in class.

Please note: all material on D2L is copyrighted and for your own private educational use. Unauthorized distribution of any of it is prohibited and punishable by federal law.

**Schedule:**

**MODULE ONE: THE ARAB BLUEPRINT**

**Week 1: Pre-Islamic Arabia: Environment, Society, and Culture**


*Web resource:* [http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/640hangedpoems.asp](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/640hangedpoems.asp) for Arabic poetry on the cultural values of pre-Islamic Arabia

*Assignment:* Log onto D2L to fill the roster charting the importance of environment (climate, landscape, geographic location) for the basic traits of traditional Arab societies in the region; use the readings and the web resource.

**Week 2: The Coming of Islam: Mohammed and the Quran:**

Assignment: Log onto D2L to upload your explanation of the reasons for varying attitudes to and perceptions of non-Muslims as outlined in the Quran

Week 3: Conquests and Revolution: Empire-building and co-opting the mawali

Assignment: Log onto D2L to view and respond to the question of the roles of the mawali in the formative age of the Arab empire-building

Week 4: Religion: Sunni, Sufi, Shia. Who’s Got the Truth?

Assignment: Log onto D2L to upload your 300-word argument on which of Islam’s branches can claim the pride of place in following the word of the Quran and the message of the Prophet

Week 5: Government, Law and Administration: The nature of Islamic rule and the Alien as Client

Assignment: Log onto D2L to complete the “state v/s the individual” assignment.
**Week 6:** Aliens within, Aliens Without: *dhimmi* and Franks in the Middle East

**Readings:**
- **Wednesday:** Lewis, *Islam*, vol. 2: 82-123;

**Assignment:**
Log onto D2L to make a comparative analysis of the Muslim Arab attitudes to *dhimmis* and Franks

**Week 7:** Cultural Crosscurrents: Art, Symbols, Objects, and Islamic Identity Between Indigenous and Foreign, East and West

**Readings:**
- **Friday:** Islamic art slideshow presentation & discussion (instructor’s image collection).

**Web resources:**
- [http://arthistoryresources.net/ARTHislamic.html](http://arthistoryresources.net/ARTHislamic.html) comprehensive illustrated guide to Islamic art, organized by periods, regions, and themes
- [http://www.lacma.org/islamic_art/intro.htm](http://www.lacma.org/islamic_art/intro.htm) thoughtful short introduction to Islamic art on the basis of the collection in the Los Angeles County Art Museum

**Assignments:**
Log onto D2L to view and upload your analysis of the artwork of the **Visual Puzzle** from the Los Angeles Islamic art collection. The assignment should be completed and uploaded before the Friday session!

**Week 8:** Midterm Review and Exam
MODULE TWO: REGIONAL EXPERIENCES

**Week 9: The Maghreb & Muslim Spain: Convivencia or Conveniencia?**


Web resources:

[http://www.pbs.org/programs/citiesoflight/](http://www.pbs.org/programs/citiesoflight/) PBC *Cities of Light: The Rise and Fall of Islamic Spain*

**Assignment:**

Log onto D2L to upload your comments on the concept and practice of *convivencia* in Muslim Spain as portrayed in the *Cities of Light*.

**Week 10: Turks and Mongols in Central Asia and Northwest India**


Web resources:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lCiUGb9f7hI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lCiUGb9f7hI) YouTube BBC video on Samarkand as a creation of Tamerlane’s ambition.

**Assignment:**

Log onto D2L to upload your evaluation of the socio-cultural blend of Islam that was formed in the Central Asian segment of the Silk Road.

**Week 11: Indian Ocean: Islam, Economy, and Multiculturalism**


Web resources:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monsoon on the monsoon patterns; see specifically South Asia
http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/200801/where.the.pepper.grows.htm on the allure of the principal trading commodity in the Indian Ocean

Assignment:
Log onto D2L to complete the blank chart of monsoon trade and the overlapping patterns of cultural and economic exchange.

MODULE THREE: THE NEW UNIVERSALISM, EARLY MODERN CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

Week 12: The Ottomans: Imperial Islam and Inclusiveness
Readings: Monday: Article in Britannica (online) and Çamal Kafadar, Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State (University of California Press, 1995), 118-51; Wednesday: Robert Dankoff, trans., The Intimate Life of an Ottoman Statesman: Melek Ahmed Pasha (1588-1662) as Portrayed in Evliya Celebi’s “Book of Travels (Albany, SUNY Press, 1991), 61-96; Friday: selected sources on Ottoman policies toward the non-Muslim population, translation by the instructor (uploaded on D2L, see samples appended).

Web resources:
http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/434996/Ottoman-Empire

Assignments:
Log onto D2L to discuss the implications of the institution of the Janissaries for the Ottoman military, government, and society at large.

Week 13: The Safavids & Persian Exceptionalism

Web resources:
Assignment:
Log onto D2L to view and complete the assignment on the principal traits of Persian Shiite branches.

Week 14: The Mughals & Modernization: Models for Everyone

Web resources:
http://www.mughalindia.co.uk/room.html an excellent resource for teaching Mughal India to high school students interactively
http://www.art-and-archaeology.com/timelines/india/mughal.html and http://www.vam.ac.uk/page/m/mughal-empire/ good collections of a variety of sources on Mughal India with a stress on material culture, art, and architecture

Assignment:
Log onto D2L to assess whether the Western interaction with Mughals can be considered a factor in the turning of the latter into an “open society”

Week 15: Final Review and Exam
END OF COURSE

Paper Topics & Guidelines
Here you are with a list of suggested topics for you term paper. You may select one of them or come up with a topic of your own choice. In the latter case your topic should be of the same scope and depth as the topics I offer below, and you should discuss your choice with me before you start writing. Feel free to talk to me in my office hours. Do not put the paper off until the last moment—practice shows the results are disastrous.
Papers should be word-processed and should be the equivalent of 5-7 pages in Times New Roman, double spaced, 12 points. Put your name, number the pages and staple them together. The paper should be your own analysis of minimum five (5) substantial primary sources or several short excerpts that capture the essence of the source as a whole. Most importantly: your paper should be an argumentative essay, based on your own, original, and critical analysis and interpretation of primary sources, with a thesis capturing your findings. Re-telling the sources’ stories and rehashing secondary works—that is, works written by modern scholars on the subject—does not count as critical analysis. Pay attention to the guidelines below. Papers must be submitted in BOTH paper and electronic format on or before the due date, last day of classes. Late papers will not be accepted. Failure to submit the paper will result in F grade for the course.

**Suggested topics:**

- Discuss the potential of the Middle East to change/modernize, using as an argument the medieval practices and ideas as per sources from the period. Forget we live in the 21st Century and ignore the interference of any developments later than 1700. Make sure you do not ignore differing sources or positions—the reader should be made aware of the differences but you should have a position nonetheless and it should be convincing.
- Write an essay discussing the impact of the Middle East on the wider Islamic world during any coherent time period covered in the course. Would you say that the Middle East was more influential in shaping the cultures that adopted Islam than they native traditions; or would you argue that the Arabic brand of Islam and all culture that went with it took second place to native cultures?
- Discuss the value system of the medieval Islamic Middle East as reflected in sources of the period. Compare your findings with the statements of Hodgson and Lindholm. Do your findings agree or disagree with their theses and on what counts?
- Write an essay discussing the implications of *asabiyya* for the social and political life in the medieval Islamic Middle East.
- What is the role of renegades, converts, and apostates in the formulation of Muslim identity; do positions, attitudes, and perceptions of such people change?
- Analyze medieval Islamic attitudes to the state and legitimate authority and discuss the viability and implications of having a stable Middle Eastern state living under the Islamic law, Sharia.
- Write an essay explaining the relationships between individual and society in the medieval Islamic Middle East.
- Explore the meaning of the dichotomy “continuity & change” in any sphere of life in the Middle East during the period 500-1500. Was radical change possible and what conditioned fundamental changes?
- Write a paper exploring the conflict between the Middle East and Western/Christian societies and states during the period. To what extent was that conflict framed and directed by the postulates of the Koran and the *sunna* and to what extent was the conflict conditioned by other circumstances?
• Write an essay discussing the role of the non-Muslims (dhimmi and others) in the formation of the administrative and governance structures of the Arab Muslim and other Islamic states.
• Write an essay assessing the implications of the presence of vast majorities of non-Muslims in Muslim-governed and controlled areas.
• Discuss the importance of the mawali in the formation of Middle Eastern culture in the first two centuries after the death of the Prophet.
• Compare and contrast the methods of treating the non-Muslim populations developed by the Arabs and that of the Ottomans.
• Write an essay analyzing localism and universalism in the constitutions of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal societies.
• Discuss the meanings of the concepts of “acculturation” “assimilation” “co-option” and “integration” in Arab Muslim as compared to Ottoman, or Safavid, and/or Mughal contexts.
• Identify and analyze the stereotypes built upon the premise of the “we-they” relationships between Muslim and non-Muslim within the Islamic Middle East. Can you draw a connection between that and the stereotypes you can detect in the wider Islamic world outside the Middle East? What conclusions can you derive about the self-perception of the Islamic societies?
• Write an essay exploring the problem of religious tolerance in medieval Islam.
• Write an essay exploring the problem of race in medieval Islam.

Guidelines:

The term paper will be a serious attempt to deal with a historical problem. Therefore it must be an argumentative piece and you must organize it around a thesis statement. What is a thesis? A thesis statement (the word means "idea") is NOT:
• A statement of the topic (e.g. "This paper is about Mohammed’s way to God");
• A statement of intention (e.g. "I will look at the issue of Al-Tabari’s view of the Abbasid revolution");
• A statement of a blindingly obvious truth (e.g. "The Arab Conquests succeeded partly because the local population was discontent with their present masters").
• Rather, a thesis statement seeks to summarize in one or two sentences the argument you will make in your paper. Think of yourself as a lawyer who has a case and has to prove it. Your paper would then consist of arguments to defend this thesis and to refute objections—your sources will provide plenty of both.

To sum up: you have a thesis, the thesis is backed up by a number of arguments, the arguments are supported by facts, the facts, especially important ones, are reinforced by citations and notes. The thesis should be clearly stated at the beginning of the paper, preferably in the first paragraph.

Notes should be indicated in the text by superscripted numbers, like this - 1. Notes should be numbered consecutively from the beginning to the end of the paper rather than being separately numbered on each page. Even though the text of your paper is double-spaced,
footnotes should be single spaced. Leave a line between each footnote. The first line of a footnote should be indented one tab stroke. You may use either footnotes or endnotes.

The first mention of a source in the footnote or endnote should contain the following information in the order given here:

BOOK: i) Name of author(s); ii) Title of book (italicized); iii); The edition used (not necessary for first edition); vi) City of publication; vii) Publisher; vi) Year of publication; viii) page references. JOURNAL ARTICLE: i) Name of author(s); ii) "Title of Article" (in quotation marks); iii) Name of journal (italicized); iv) Number of Journal; v) Year of publication (in parentheses); vi) page references. ARTICLE IN A COLLECTION: i) Name of author(s) of article; ii) "Title of article" (in quotation marks); iii) the word "in;" iv) Title of collection (italicized); v) The edition used (not necessary for first edition); vi) Name of editor(s) of collection; vii) City of publication; viii) Publisher; ix) Year of publication; x) page references.

Here is an example for a book (with a single author):


A textbook with multiple authors would look the following way:


An article from a journal would be:


An article from a collection would be:


Note especially the use of punctuation in these references. Note also that the place of publication is always a city, never a state or country. If the place of publication is not one of the major publishing centers [i.e., New York, London, Boston, Paris, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago], indicate the city and the state. Finally with publishers names do not include words such as "Limited," "Inc." or "Publishing Company."

Later references to the same author can just give his or her last name and the page number. Do not use "p" or "pg." Here are two ways to do it right:
Cobban, Modern France, 26.
Monter, “Protestant Wives,” 204.

More information on footnotes can be found quickly in Webster's Tenth New Collegiate Dictionary, (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 1993).

At the end of the essay you should include a bibliography. Your bibliography should list all the books, articles, and primary sources you have consulted in writing your paper. It is not necessary to have quoted the book in order to include it. The bibliography should contain the same information as your first citation in a footnote but in a slightly different order. For example:


Some DOs and DON’Ts:

- Do not end sentences with prepositions.
- Avoid clichés.
- Employ the vernacular.
- Eschew abbreviations.
- Parenthetical remarks are unnecessary.
- It is wrong to split an infinitive.
- Contractions are not necessary.
- Do not use foreign words and phrases.
- Do not generalize. Be specific.
- Eliminate quotations or keep them to the absolute minimum. Quotes illustrate, they do not prove.
- Do not be redundant.
- Do not narrate—particularly sources. There is a good chance that I know what the texts say. What I do not know and want to know is what you make of it.
- Do not use jargon and long sentences. Stick to the rule of the three Cs: “clear, concise, and convincing.” The golden rule is thirteen words in a sentence.
- Do not lift up sentences and paragraphs from secondary or primary works without a note identifying the place you took them from or putting them in quotation marks. Not identifying your source, primary or secondary, is called plagiarism. This institution has a policy on plagiarism and I will uphold it.