This course is a survey of medieval and early modern Middle East history. A thematic approach aims to help students navigate the complexity entailed by studying a region stretching from Spain to Afghanistan over twelve centuries (CE 600-1800) in a single course. Together, we will explore the rise of Islam and Islamic Empires along with three thematic modules: religious minorities, women and gender, and disease, public health, and public morality.

Each week students will either write a short analytical paper that engages with the themes of the week’s readings or take a reading quiz. They will also write a book review and present on a scholarly book of their choosing and take a final exam (take-home).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
The goal of this course is to equip and empower students to sharpen their analytic reasoning, historical thinking, and writing skills by engaging deeply in questions and themes drawn from Middle East History. Students will:

1) Gain broad and deep knowledge about the Middle East and its history.
2) Improve their critical thinking and writing by composing short essays that distill scholarly knowledge into an accessible format.
3) Explain historical development by identifying multiple direct and indirect causes and their short- and long-term effects.
4) Listen actively and respectfully in class discussions while engaging with their classmates’ viewpoints
5) Cultivate historical imagination and empathy—ie, the ability to conjure up an informed picture of a past situation or society for the purpose of engaging in better analysis.

ASSIGNMENTS:
Students will:

1) Read the assigned material and take bi-weekly reading quizzes
2) Write two analytical essays synthesizing the week’s readings
3) Write a scholarly book review and give a presentation on a book of their choice
4) Take a final exam (take home)
5) Participate actively and thoughtfully in class

GRADING:
Participation (including reading quizzes): 30 %
Analytical Essays: 20%
Quizzes: 20%
Book Presentation: 10%
Book Review: 10%
Final Exam: 10%
REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:


*The below represents a tentative schedule of assignments and readings and is subject to change:*

**WEEK 1: THE RISE OF ISLAM**

Mon June 5: Introduction

Tues June 6: Watch: PBS Documentary “Empire of Faith,” Episodes 1,2. [youtube]


Thurs June 8: Quiz; Read: Ibn Ishaq, Selections


**WEEK 2: ISLAMIC EMPIRES**


Mon June 12: Discussion: The Sunni Consensus/Fragmentation


Wed June 14: Lecture: A Reappraisal of the Islamic Expansion.

-Read: Nizam al-Mulk, *Siyasatnama*

Thurs June 15: Guest Lecture: The formation of Islamic law

Fri June 16: **Papers Due at 3:15 PM**

**WEEK 3: MINORITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST**


Tues June 20: Menocal, *Ornament of the World*, 1-78.

- Lecture: Umayyad Legacies


Thurs June 22: Lecture

- Short Video. Jews of Egypt.

**WEEK 4: WOMEN, GENDER, AND SEX IN THE MIDDLE EAST**


Thurs June 29: **Papers Due at 3:15 PM**

Fri July 30: **Book Review Presentations**

**WEEK 5: DISEASE, PUBLIC HEALTH, AND PUBLIC MORALITY**

Mon July 3: **Book Review Due at 3:15 PM.** Ahmed Ragab, *The Medieval Islamic Hospital: Medicine, Religion, and Charity*, selections

Tues July 4: No Class

Wed July 5: Nukhet Varlik, “Conquest, Urbanization, and the Plague Networks in the Ottoman Empire, 1453-1600”


Fri July 7: **Final Exam Due at 5 PM**