

HISTORY 109
HISTORY OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD
Summer 2018

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REQUIRED TEXTS: (Available in the university bookstore)

Egger, Vernon. History of the Muslim World to 1405.

Esposito, John. Islam the Straight Path.

A number of articles and films may be added for discussion during the semester. They will be announced in the class, and will be made available ahead of time.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to introduce the students to the emergence and evolution of Islamic history and cultures from the seventh century to the modern era. It covers a wide variety of topics that include, among others, the birth and the spread of the Islamic faith, the rise and fall of Muslim Empires, religious and political institutions, Social and economic structures and their dynamics, scientific and cultural activities, the position of women, and religious diversity in Muslim societies throughout Islamic history - with particular emphasis on the Middle East. The last few days of the course will be dedicated to general discussions focusing on the shift of power centers from Arab countries to new ones in Central Asia and Persia. They include – among others - such topics as: the rise of the Ottomans and the Safavids, collision between the western world and the world of Islam, Western colonialism in the Muslim world, resistance to the colonial powers, the rise of the nation states in the Muslim countries, Islam and Muslims in the west, and other topics of interest to the students.

The students will be encouraged to think critically about all such issues and try to look at them in their proper historical and socio-political contexts.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES

- 1) Students are required to attend and participate in all classes and discussion sessions. (20%)
- 2) Seven to eight double-spaced page historiographical essay on any topic of the student's choice, pertaining to the time frame and subject matter of the course. (Due last day of classes) 40%) A Guideline is on the next page.
- 3) A take-home final exam. (40%)

(The instructor reserves the right to alter the syllabus and the grade distribution at any time.)

NOTE:

Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's Academic Integrity Code. You are obligated to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Code will not be tolerated. Violations include receiving inappropriate assistance on examinations or writing papers and plagiarism.

Students with special needs must discuss with me the best possible means of accommodating them.

GUIDELINE FOR THE TERM PAPER AND SOME SUGGESTED TOPICS:

The purpose of the term paper is to enable each student to familiarize him/herself with the scholarly material pertaining to a specific historiographical problem or question concerning an area of the student's interest related to a chosen aspect of the subject matter of this course. You will find a list of sample topic areas appended at the end of these guidelines. Please feel free to suggest other topics as long as you are sure that the available literature has enough breadth and diversity to justify your choice. Remember that the paper is not about the issue or topic per se, but about the different ways scholars in the field have tackled it.

The paper should be between Seven and eight double spaced pages. You should try to analyze a representative sample of the best available scholarship bearing upon the historical problem you have chosen. You can include both published monographic and article material, but it is not acceptable to use textbooks, or primary historical documents, e.g. letters, reports, memoirs, or speeches. Your final work must be submitted both in a hard copy and an electronic copy via email. The electronic copy must be in Microsoft Word format. The cover page must include your name, your class, the title of your paper, and the course title and number.

The paper should ideally be organized as follows:

1. A one to three paragraphs overview of the historical problem you are trying to present.
2. The main body of the paper should be between five and six pages, in which you discuss in a logical and organized style four or five authors&/or works dealing with the problem or question described above. Try to show how these works or authors' views contrast with one another, compare with one another, supplement each other, or duplicate one another. Keep in mind the historical context of the problem, the time period covered, the underlying premises, the methodology of research, the political and ideological bias of the authors, and a general assessment of the scholarly value of the texts you are dealing with.
3. A conclusion in two to three paragraphs in which you summarize your impression of the current state of literature dealing with the topic you have chosen. Assess the strengths and weaknesses, and, if appropriate, give some indication of what you think should be done next in the field of investigation.

SAMPLE TOPICS:

Why did the Arabs resist Prophet Muhammad's message, and how did he prevail?

What made the people of Medina more welcoming of the Prophet and his Muslim companions?

What were the sources of tension between Prophet Muhammad and the Jewish community in Medina?

ASSIGNMENTS

Note on the Assigned readings. Due to the manner in which the chapters in the main textbook are arranged, You will notice that the assigned readings overlap. Do not be confused if you see a particular chapter assigned more than once. Remember that the syllabus is not set in stone, some days we may be slightly ahead of the syllabus, and in other days we may be slightly behind, while at times we may deviate completely from it.

Mon. June 4 **Introduction.**

General remarks:

[A] **Studying other societies and cultures.**

[B] **Stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims in western societies.**

[C] **Muslim Apologists.**

The students are required to take notes in the class.

Tue. June 5. From pre-Islamic Arabia through the birth of Islam.

[A] **The social structures and political organization in pre-Islamic Arabia.**

[B] **pre-Islamic religions.**

[C] **Political and economic life in the context of sixth century world system.**

READINGS: Egger, Intro and Chapter 1.

Wed. June 6. Islam during the life of the prophet.

[A] The life of prophet Muhammad in Mecca.

[B] The first Muslim political community in Medina.

READINGS: Egger, Chapter 1. Esposito, Chapter 1.

Thu. June 7. The rightly-guided Caliphs, (The Rashidun)

[A] The first succession crisis.

[B] Islamic conquests.

[C] The second succession crisis.

[D] The first Muslim civil wars and the end of the Rashidun.

READINGS: Egger, Chapter 2. Esposito, Chapter 2.

Mon. June 11 and Tue. June 12. The Umayyad Empire.

[A] The Muslim political leadership; from Caliphs to Monarchs.

[B] Power base and political legitimacy.

[C] Social structures and sources of revenues.

[D] The continuing expansion of the world of Islam.

[E] The status of non-Muslims and non-Arab Muslims in the society.

[F] Political and religious opposition.

READINGS: Egger, Chapter 3. Esposito, Chapter 3.

Wed. June 13. The fall of the Umayyad Empire, and a general discussion of the first century of Islamic history.

Thu. June 14. The rise of the Abbasid Empire.

[A] The Abbasid revolution

[B] Power base and legitimacy.

[C] The economic foundations of the empire.

READINGS: Egger, Chapter 3. Esposito, chapter 3.

Mon. June 18, and Tue. June 19. Universal Islam and the flourishing of the Islamic civilization.

A] Islam and its universal message.

- [B] the cooptation of the religious elite.
- [C] Cultural and literary expressions.
- [D] Integration of non-Muslims and Non-Arab Muslims into the Muslim society.
- [E] the decentralizing forces within the empire and the rise of local dynasties.
- [F] The fragmentation of the Abbasid Empire.

READINGS Egger, **Chapter 4 and 5.**

Wed. June 20. Religion and Politics.

[A] Theological sciences.

[B] Law and Jurisprudence.

READINGS Egger, Chapter 5.

Thu. June 21, and Mon. June 25. Culture and society

[A] Islamic sciences and arts.

[B] Women and the family.

[C] Slavery in Islamic societies.

[D] Islamic Mysticism.

READINGS Egger, Chapters 5 and 6. plus selected readings (TBA).

Tue. June 26. Islam in North Africa and Spain.

READINGS The previous chapters.

Wed. June 27. Muslims under Siege:

[A] The rise of new political forces.

[B] The Crusades.

[C] The Mongols.

READINGS Egger, Chapters 6-7.

Thu. June 28. From the fall of the Abbasids to The rise of the Ottoman, Mamluk, and the Safavid Empires.

[A] The Middle East from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century.

[B] The rise of the Mamluks.

[C] the rise of the Ottomans.

[D] The rise of the Safavids.

The remainder of Egger's book and other material to be assigned.

Mon. July 1 and Tue. July 2. Western colonialism in the Muslim world and its effects on our perceptions of Muslim societies and cultures.

READINGS: Esposito, Chapters 4-5, and Class discussions.

Wed. July 3. General discussions of contemporary topics, and a take-home final exam.