

COURSE TITLE: Hist-160 Middle East Civilization I

Dates: May 23–June 17

Time: MTWRF: 10:45 am – 12:45 pm (ET)

Location: ICC 204

Professor: Gábor Ágoston

Contact Information: agostong@georgetown.edu

Office Hours: TR: 1:00–2:00 pm or by appointment (in person and via Zoom)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Through short lectures, readings, class discussion, podcasts, and videos, this course examines the history of the Middle East from the rise of Islam through c. 1800. Lectures focus on broader topics, such as the emergence of Islam, the history of Middle Eastern empires, changing geostrategic and cultural conditions, and the evolution and functioning of state and religious institutions. Class discussions and activities will help students engage with the assigned primary sources and secondary literature. Discussion sessions and activities are designed to enable students to deepen their knowledge regarding issues such as Islamic law, governance, science, and culture; the life of non-Muslims under various Islamic polities; competition, coexistence as well as material and intellectual interactions between the Islamic Middle East and non-Muslim polities and societies.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At all levels of our undergraduate programs, the History Department's mission is twofold: to introduce students to the breadth and depth of the human experience by a comparative study of past and contemporary societies and cultures, and to develop their ability to conduct research, analyze and assess evidence, and articulate sound conclusions both orally and in writing. All our students thus acquire knowledge and skills that help them develop as informed, engaged, and thoughtful citizens. The study of history plays a distinctive and central role in any strong liberal arts curriculum. History majors, in particular, will be prepared to pursue successful careers as teachers, academics, lawyers, civil servants, journalists, and of course, historians in private or public agencies. To fulfill this mission, we emphasize discussion and engagement with both primary sources and the interpretations of varied scholars. From our general education courses

through advanced seminars, regular opportunities for small-group discussions are a prominent feature of almost all our courses. Students who engage with history during their undergraduate years are equipped to become more involved with the complex world they live in, and to maintain throughout their lives a spirit of inquiry and curiosity that can not only make them more active in their communities but also provide them with personal enrichment and enjoyment.

COURSE READINGS

Most readings are available in Canvas (under Files and the day-by-day schedule). You can access the readings, videos, and podcasts by clicking on the link in the day-by-day schedule in the Canvas Home Page. You have to read the assigned readings and watch the videos and listen to the podcasts at home before the class unless otherwise instructed. However, you are required to purchase the following two books:

Lindsay, James E., *Daily Life in the Medieval Islamic World*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publ. Co., 2008

Ansary, Tamim. *Destiny Disrupted: A History of the World Through Islamic Eyes*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2010.

Orhan Pamuk, *The White Castle*. Translated by Victoria Holbrook. Faber and Faber, 2001.

Suggested books for purchase for the second part of the course

Gábor Ágoston, *The Last Muslim Conquest. The Ottoman Empire and Its Wars in Europe*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021 [Also available as an E-book via JSTOR/Lauinger Library]

Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650. The Structure of Power*. 3rd edition. London: Macmillan and Red Globe Press, 2019 [1st edition is available as an E-book via Lauinger Library]

Course Requirements

- 1) **Class Attendance** is required. Absences and tardiness will negatively affect your grade. Two unexcused absences or instances of tardiness (over 10 minutes) will reduce your participation grade by one step (from A to A- and so on), and three absences will reduce the participation grade by two steps (from A to B+ and so on). If you miss five classes, your participation grade will be F. If you miss eight classes, you fail the class (your final grade is F). If circumstances beyond your control will prevent you from attending the classes, please inform me in advance when possible. You may need to drop the course if the number of such absences cannot be accommodated.
- 2) **Participation**: You must complete the reading, video, and podcast assignments before each class and participate in class discussions based on the assigned readings, videos, and podcasts. Note that your participation grade is based not only on attendance but on consistent and active contribution to the class.

- 3) **Presentation:** Each student will give one short oral presentation on a topic chosen from among those covered in the discussions. Your presentation is supposed to last 10 minutes. When you get to 12 minutes, I'll need to cut you off. You can sign-up for the presentation on the Presentation Schedule sign-up sheet published in Collaborations on our Canvas site on a first-come, first-serve basis. Presentations should summarize the reading(s)/videos assigned for a particular discussion session and include questions that will help start the discussion.
- 4) **Four short quizzes** will be given every Friday.
- 5) **Four map quizzes** will be given every Friday.
- 6) Students will write **four short response papers (one per week)** on questions posted on Canvas (on the day-by-day schedule). The response papers should be 350 words in length and review, compare, and contrast at least two of the assigned readings, podcasts, or documentaries around the posted questions. Students may choose which topics of the week to write their papers. Papers are due by **8 pm the day before the respective discussion** and should be submitted via Canvas. **All response papers must include your name, question (copy and paste the question!), date, and word count.** You might be asked to summarize it to your peers during our discussion.
- 7) A **final take-home open-book essay exam** is scheduled for **Friday, June 17.**

Grading

Participation in discussions: 20%

Short presentation: 10 %

Open-book quizzes 20% (5% each)

Open-book map quizzes: 10 % (2.5% each)

Response papers: 20% (5% each)

Final essay/open-book exam 20%

Grading Scheme

94 - 100 % = A

90 - 93 % = A-

87 - 89 % = B+

83 - 86 % = B

80 - 82 % = B-

77 - 79 % = C+

73 - 76 % = C

70 - 72 % = C

67 - 69 % = D+

60 - 66 % = D

Below 60 % = F

COURSE SCHEDULE

Below is an outline describing the course structure. To access all the assigned readings, videos, and podcasts and to see the questions for discussions and response papers please use our Canvas HomePage.

Week One – May 23 (M)

Introduction: History, Historians, and the Middle East

Read at home before class

Lindsay, *Daily Life*, “Preface,” and pp. 1-8.

Ansary, *Destiny Disrupted*, “Introduction,” (pp. xiii-xxii.)

The Emergence of Islam: Sources and Interpretations

Read at home before class

Ansary, *Destiny Disrupted*, chapters 1-2

Lindsay, *Daily Life*, pp. 8-17, 246-8.

Watch at home before class

Tom Holland “Islam: The Untold Story” 4UK Documentary

Week One – May 24 (T)

Caliphate and Schism

Read at home before class

Ansary, *Destiny Disrupted*, chapters 3-4

Watch and discuss in class:

Muhammad and The Caliphs/Useful Charts

Activity: The Life of the Rashidun-group interviews/presentations

Week One – May 25 (W)

The Umayyads in Damascus and Spain

Read before class

Ansary, *Destiny Disrupted*, chapter 5

Scholars and Sufis

Read before class

Ansary, *Destiny Disrupted*, chapter 7

Lindsay, *Daily Life*, pp. 21-28.

Watch at home before class

BBC Science and Islam 1/3: The Language of Science

Watch and discuss in class

1001 Inventions and the Library of Secrets

Week One – May 26 (R)

The Abbasids

Read before class

Ansary, *Destiny Disrupted*, chapter 6

Government and Warfare

Read before class

Lindsay, *Daily Life*, chapter 3

Read and discuss in class/primary sources

Nizam al-Mulk, *Siyasatnama* (chapters 3-5)

Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddima* (read all 17 pages uploaded)

Week One – May 27 (F)

Filling the Vacuum: Buyids, Fatimids, Seljuks, and Assassins

Read before class

Ansary, *Destiny Disrupted*, chapter 8

Watch and discuss in class:

Seljuk Family Tree/Useful Charts

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFSZCY0cvZI>

Seljuk Art at the MET (3 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yf3vJmGAs10&list=PLf7e2xOg9wdCICcUILcIXZJzd6JCM9Dg&index=10>

Quiz # 1 and Map Quiz #1

Week Two – May 30 (M)

Memorial Day – No Class

Week Two – May 31 (T)

Havoc: The Crusades & the Mongol Invasion

Read before class

Ansary, *Destiny Disrupted*, chapter 9

Watch the two documentaries on the Crusades (linked on Canvas) before class.

Week Two – June 1 (W)

Faith, Worship, and Pilgrimage

Read before class

Lindsay, *Daily Life*, chapter 5

Nizam al-Mulk, *Siyasatnama* chapter 8

The Muslim Commonwealth and Daily Life

Read before class

Lindsay, *Daily Life*, chapter 6

Week Two – June 2 (R)

The Mamluks of Syria and Egypt

Listen before class

BBC 4 In our time- Podcast- The Mamluks

Read before class

Dunn, *Ibn Battuta*, chapter 3 *The Mamluks*

Week Two – June 3 (F)

Cities, Merchants, and Travel in the Medieval Islamic World

Read before class

Lindsay, *Daily Life*, chapter 4.

Nizam al-Mulk, *Siyasatnama* (relevant pages on tax collectors and market inspectors)

Intellectual Life

Read before class

Egger, “Intellectual Life”

Dunn, *Ibn Battuta*, Preface and chapter 14. (The Rihla)

Quiz # 2 and Map Quiz #2

Week Three – June 6 (M)

The Emergence of the Ottomans

Read before class

Ágoston, *The Last Muslim Conquest*, pp. 17–28, 35–46, 73-102, 119-138

Watch before class

Discovery: History of the Ottoman Empire (up to the conquest of Constantinople-first 42 minutes)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1oean5l_Cc

Week Three – June 7 (T)

Strategies of Ottoman Conquest and Rule

Read before class

İnalçık, “Ottoman Methods of Conquest”

Ágoston, *The Last Muslim Conquest*, pp. 46-53.

Ágoston, “A Flexible Empire”

Mustafa Ali's Counsel for Sultans of 1581 (selections)

Week Three – June 8 (W)

Dynasty, Household, and the Palace

Read before class

Imber, *The Ottoman Empire*, chapters 2, 4.

Week Three – June 9 (R)

Safavid Persia

Read before class

Newman, *Safavid Iran*, chapter 4

Matthee, “Was Safavid Iran an Empire?”

Listen before class

BBC 4 In Our Time- Podcast-The Safavid Dynasty

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBOMwJnk-1U&t=955s>

Watch and discuss in class

Matthee The Safavids and Modern Iranian Identity (13 minutes)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_JBMyHhEHo4

Week Three – June 10 (F)

Sinews of Empire: Resources and Military Might

Read before class

Dale, *Muslim Empires*, chapter 4, pp. 106–26.

Darling, “Public finances,”

Ágoston, *The Last Muslim Conquest*, pp. 265–98.

Primary source

Mihailović, *Memoirs of a Janissary* (selections)

Quiz # 3 and Map Quiz #3

Week Four – June 13 (M)

Imperial Rivalries

Read before class

Ágoston, *The Last Muslim Conquest*, pp. 151–70; 188–217.

Week Four – June 14 (T)

Ottoman Soft Power: Lawfare and Diplomacy

Read before class

Ágoston, *The Last Muslim Conquest*, chapters 10-11

Week Four – June 15 (W)

Ottoman Provinces and Frontier Defense

Read before class

Ágoston, *The Last Muslim Conquest*, chapters 12-13

Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire*, chapter 2

Week Four – June 16 (R)

Peoples, Faiths, and Daily Life

Read Zarinebaf and two selected readings

Zarinebaf, *Crime and Punishment in Istanbul*, chapter 5.

An Ottoman Traveller: Selections from the Book of Travels of Evliya Çelebi

Chardin, *Travels in Persia*, (selections)

Moreen, V.B. “The Status of Religious Minorities in Safavid Iran”

Herzig, Edmund. “The Rise of the Julfa Merchants in the Late Sixteenth

The Ottoman Past Remembered: Pamuk’s White Castle (D)

Read before class

Pamuk, *The White Castle*

Quiz # 4 and Map Quiz #4

Week Four – June 17 (F)

Final Exam (open-book essay)

INFORMATION ABOUT TOOLS AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Computer Requirements

- You will need access to a computer and adequate Internet service to complete this course.

The minimum requirements needed to use Canvas can be found in this [Canvas guide](#).

COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Student Expectations

You are expected to complete all readings, assignments, and activities on time. Participation is essential to your success in this class. You are expected to actively participate in discussions with your peers. In order to get full credit for participation, you will have to complete all of your module assignments and quizzes on time.

Time Expectations

Our summer classes are designed to meet the same academic standards as our regular courses. Students should plan on spending approximately **2 to 4 hours per day to prepare for classes**.

Communication Expectations

Please feel free to email me with your questions, concerns, and/or to schedule a time to meet. When sending emails please remember to follow the guidelines outlined below.

If you have general questions about assignments and course materials please post these questions in the General Question Discussion Board Forum, which you can access by clicking Discussions in the course navigation menu. This is an open forum, and you are encouraged to give answers and help each other.

- *Check the syllabus.* Before sending your email or message, be sure that your question has not already been addressed in the syllabus or announcements.
- *Be patient.* If you have a concern and send me a message, you can expect a response within one business day. Please allow two to three business days for assessment submission feedback.
- *Specify subject.* Subject line should include the topic of the message and class title.
- *Greet & Close.* E-mails should begin with a formal greeting and end with you signing your name in all messages/emails.
- *Check writing.* Proofread (i.e. grammar and spelling) your message before sending.

Netiquette Guidelines

To promote the highest degree of education possible, we ask each student to respect the opinions and thoughts of other students and be courteous in the way that you choose to express yourself. Students should be respectful and considerate of all opinions.

In order for us to have meaningful discussions, we must learn to genuinely try to understand what others are saying and be open-minded about others' opinions. If you want to persuade someone to see things differently, it is much more effective to do so in a polite, non-threatening way rather than to do so antagonistically. Everyone has insights to offer based on his/her experiences, and we can all learn from each other. Civility is essential.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with Disabilities

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with disabilities have the right to specific accommodations that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the course. Some accommodations might include note takers, books on tape, extended time on assignments, and interpreter services among others. Students are responsible for communicating their needs to the [Academic Resource Center](#), the office that oversees disability support services, (202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu; <https://academicsupport.georgetown.edu/disability/>) before the start of classes to allow time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. The University is not responsible for making special accommodations for students who have not declared their disabilities and have not requested an accommodation in a timely manner. Also, the University need not modify course or degree requirements considered to be an essential requirement of the program of instruction. For the most current and up-to-date policy information, please refer to the [Georgetown University Academic Resource Center website](#). Students are highly encouraged to discuss the documentation and accommodation process with an Academic Resource Center administrator.

Accessibility and Inclusion

One of the central tenets of Georgetown's educational mission is *cura personalis*, a Latin phrase meaning "care of the whole person." Georgetown is committed to showing care and concern for each student by creating an inclusive and accessible learning environment that follows universal design principles to meet the needs of its diverse student body.

I am committed to creating a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.). If your name or pronoun needs to be corrected, please let me know early in the semester so that I can make the appropriate changes to my records.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students at Georgetown University are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity. Although most Georgetown students conduct themselves in accordance

with these standards, occasionally, there are students who violate the code of conduct. Cheating harms the University community in many ways. For example, honest students are frustrated by the unfairness of cheating that goes undetected and students who cheat can skew the grading curve in a class, resulting in lower grades for students who worked hard and did their own work.

Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense, and students found in violation are subject to academic penalties that include, but are not limited to failure of the course, termination from the program, and revocation of degrees already conferred. All students are expected to fully adhere to the policies and procedures of [Georgetown's Honor System](#) and to take the Honor Code Pledge.

Honor Code Pledge

In pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life I commit myself to respect and to uphold the Georgetown University honor system; to live out a commitment to integrity in all my words and actions; to be honest in every academic endeavor; and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community as we live and work together; to live out the ideals of Georgetown University I commit myself to be a person for others in my daily life, respectful of difference and disagreement; To care for this venerable campus and all of those with whom I share it; and to fulfill in all ways the trust placed in me to carry on the Georgetown tradition.

Plagiarism

Stealing someone else's work is a terminal offense in the workplace, and it will wreck your career in academia, too. Students are expected to work with integrity and honesty in all their assignments. The Georgetown University Honor System defines plagiarism as "the act of passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of another." More guidance is available through the [Gervase Programs](#). If you have any doubts about plagiarism, paraphrasing, and the need to credit, check out [Plagiarism.org](#).

All submissions must be your original work. Any submission suspected of plagiarism will be immediately referred to the Honor Council for investigation and possible adjudication. All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. If you have not done so, please read the honor code material located online at the [Honor Council website](#).

SUPPORT SERVICES

Georgetown recognizes that COVID-19 has a significant impact on everyone in the Georgetown community. Georgetown offers a variety of support services for students that can be accessed online and has put together [this newsletter](#) which aims to provide you with information about well-being resources and virtual meetings that can connect you with mental health professionals on and off campus during this time. Below are some resources available to you:

- [Academic Resource Center](#)
202-687-8354 | arc@georgetown.edu
- [Counseling and Psychiatric Services](#)
202-687-6985
- [Institutional Diversity, Equity & Affirmative Action \(IDEAA\)](#)
(202) 687-4798

Sexual Misconduct

Georgetown University prohibits sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, and stalking. Discrimination based on sex, including sexual misconduct and discrimination based on pregnancy or parenting status, subverts the University's mission and threatens permanent damage to the educational experience, careers, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff. Please know that as a faculty member I am committed to supporting survivors of sexual misconduct, including relationship violence and sexual assault.

Please also note that University policy also requires faculty to report any disclosures about sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator, whose role is to coordinate the University's response to sexual misconduct. Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources who can provide support and assistance to survivors of sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct. These resources include:

- Jen Schweer, MA, LPC, Associate Director of Health Education Services for Sexual Assault Response and Prevention (202) 687-0323 | jls242@georgetown.edu
- Erica Shirley, Trauma Specialist, Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS), (202) 687-6985 | els54@georgetown.edu

More information about campus resources and reporting sexual misconduct are available on [this](#) website.

Pregnancy and Parenting Accommodations

Georgetown University is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive environment for pregnant and parenting students. Students may request adjustments based on general pregnancy needs or accommodations based on a pregnancy-related complication. Specific adjustments will be handled on a case by case basis and will depend on medical needs and academic requirements. Students seeking a pregnancy adjustment or accommodation should follow the process laid out on the [Title IX website](#).

Georgetown Library

If you have a question for a librarian you can go to their [“Ask Us”](#) page where you will have the option to chat online, send an email, or schedule a Zoom appointment to discuss a research topic,

develop a search strategy, or examine resources for projects and papers. Librarians offer an overview of and in-depth assistance with important resources for senior or master's theses, dissertations, papers and other types of research. This service is available to currently enrolled students who need assistance with Georgetown-assigned projects and papers. Please review the [Services & Resources Guide for Online Students](#) for additional information.

eResources

Students enrolled in courses have access to the University Library System's eResources, including 500+ research databases, 1.5+ million ebooks, and thousands of periodicals and other multimedia files (films, webinars, music, and images). You can access these resources through the [Library's Homepage](#) by using your NetID and password.

Learning Resources

Georgetown offers a host of [learning resources](#) to its students. Two that you might find particularly helpful in this course are the [Writing Center](#) and [Refworks](#).

- [The Writing Center](#) offers peer tutoring by trained graduate and undergraduate students who can assist you at any point in the writing process. They help at any stage of your writing process, from brainstorming to revision. Tutors can offer advice on thesis development, use of evidence, organization, flow, sentence structure, grammar, and more. The Writing Center will not proofread or edit papers; rather, they will help to improve your proofreading and editing skills to become a better writer. Appointments can be booked online through their website.
- [Refworks](#) is an online research management tool that aids in organizing, storing, and presenting citation sources for papers and projects.

Technical Support

All students have 24/7 access to Canvas technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including live chat and a support hotline at 855-338-2770. Use the 'Help' icon in the lower left of your Canvas window to view all available support and feedback options. If you're looking for help on a specific feature, check out the [Canvas Student Guide](#).