

**HISTORY OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION I**  
**(up to 1258 C.E.)**

**Fall 2015**  
**(510:287:01)**

**Monday, Wednesday, 4:00-5:20 p.m.**  
**HILL HALL, 105**

Dr. Nükhet Varlık  
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Office Hour: By appointment only  
Office: Conklin Hall, 310

**TEXTBOOKS:**

- Vernon O. Egger, *A History of the Muslim World to 1405: The Making of a Civilization*, 2004. (Required)
- James E. Lindsay, *Daily life in the Medieval Islamic World*, 2005. (Recommended)
- Daniel Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam*, 2004. (Recommended)
- Additional primary source readings will be posted on Blackboard.
- Also see: *Internet Islamic History Sourcebook* (compiled by Paul Halsall)  
<<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/islam/islamsbook.html>>

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is a survey of the history of Islamic civilization. In this course, we will study social, economic, and cultural aspects of the history of the Middle and Near East region, between the sixth and thirteenth centuries. The treatment of the subject will be roughly chronological, though themes such as law, science, and philosophy will recur throughout the course.

In addition to lectures, the course will heavily draw upon discussion sessions, which will give students a hands-on approach to history. In these sessions, we will discuss in detail various historical problems presented in the text and lectures. We will also see different types of historical evidence and learn how they can be used for historical analysis.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- name and identify individuals, events, themes, and issues of major importance in the history of Islamic civilization,
- demonstrate a basic level of competence in differentiating the major periods of the history of Islamic civilization and the significance of historical context,
- recognize the importance of cause and effect in history, and discuss the significance of change and continuity over time,
- develop an understanding toward the use of historical evidence by historians and display some familiarity toward different types of evidence,
- critically analyze historical evidence and articulate a synthesis with a thesis.

### ASSIGNMENTS:

You are expected to write two papers for this class. The first paper will be a short paper (3-4 pages; **due Sept. 28**). The second paper will be longer (6-7 pages, **due Dec. 16**). Detailed information regarding the papers will be announced in class AND posted on Blackboard. LATE PAPERS AND/OR EMAILED PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

### EXAMS:

There will be two mid-term exams for this course. In these tests, the emphasis will be placed on specific information such as important dates, names, and terms. The second test will only cover the material covered after the first.

### GRADING:

- 10 % First paper
- 30 % Second paper
- 30 % First test
- 30 % Second test

### GRADING STANDARDS:

- 90-100 % A (a genuinely outstanding achievement)
- 80-89 % B (above average achievement)
- 70-79 % C (comprehension of the subject at an appropriate university level)
- 60-69 % D (unsatisfactory performance, barely passing)
- Below 60% F (failure)

## COURSE POLICIES:

- Attendance at all regularly scheduled meetings of this class is expected. Rutgers catalog states that “the recognized grounds for absence are illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions.” Four UNEXCUSED absences will lower your final grade by one letter grade. More than four UNEXCUSED absences will automatically result in your failure. It is your responsibility to come to class and see that you are marked present for the classes you attend. In the event that you have a medical, legal, or family-related problem that might lead to an extended absence, you need to meet me in person and bring necessary documentation as evidence for your problem. Only then, we can discuss whether your absence can be excused or not. An email message explaining your problem will NOT be considered as an excuse of your absence. Ultimately, it will be the instructor’s judgment to decide whether an absence can be excused or not. If you miss a class due to a reason that you cannot document, please do not contact me to explain your case. Instead, consider it as one of your unexcused absences. Please remember that any student who misses eight or more sessions through any combination of EXCUSED and UNEXCUSED absences will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw to avoid getting an F.
- You are expected to come to class having done the assigned readings and participate in class discussions. We will be using our main textbook (Egger) frequently in class; therefore, please bring it to each meeting. On discussion days, make sure to bring a copy of the assigned reading with you. Any student who does not have the textbook (Egger) or the primary source(s) may be asked to leave the classroom and marked absent for the class.
- The use of laptops or other electronic devices in this class requires the consent of the instructor. If you have a condition that necessitates the use of a laptop during class for the purpose of taking notes or accessing readings, please bring it to my attention along with a letter from The Office of Disability Services. Those students will be asked to sit in the front row of chairs in the classroom. Otherwise, the use of portable electronic devices, such as cell phones during class in a manner not compliant with classroom conduct (phone conversation, texting, and others) will not be tolerated. Students may be warned for such behavior initially. If repeated, they may be asked to leave the classroom and marked absent for the day.
- Punctuality and courtesy at all times are expected.
- Academic dishonesty of *any sort* will not be tolerated. It is your responsibility to comply with the university's policy on academic integrity. To review the policies go to [http://history.newark.rutgers.edu/index.php?content=rn\\_integrity](http://history.newark.rutgers.edu/index.php?content=rn_integrity). All students are required to include the Rutgers honor pledge on all major course assignments submitted for grading: “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment).”

- If you have questions or concerns about this class, come and talk to me in my office hours. *Please do not send email inquiries related to your absence or class materials.* It is your responsibility to find out about the subjects covered in your absence and study them.
- If for any family or medical reason you find it absolutely necessary to miss an examination, you must contact me before the exam and have my consent to your absence. Failure to do so will result in a zero for the assignment. With the exception of extreme cases there will be no early or make-up exams! As with all other exams, you must contact me in advance should an extreme emergency arise.
- Rutgers abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments (ADAA) of 2008, and Sections 504 and 508 which mandate reasonable accommodations be provided for qualified students with disabilities and the accessibility of online information. If you have a disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodation, please contact me early in the semester so that I can provide or facilitate in providing accommodations you may need. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with the Office of Disability Services, the designated office on campus to provide services and administer exams with accommodations for students with disabilities. The Office of Disability Services is located in the Robeson Student Center. I look forward to talking with you soon to learn how I may be helpful in supporting your academic success in this course. For more information on disability services at Rutgers, go to <http://disabilityservices-uw.rutgers.edu/>

NOTE: This syllabus is subject to amendment or change at the discretion of the instructor.

### **Introduction**

READ: Lindsay, pp. 1-31, 173-203.

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| Sept 2 | Introduction; discussion of the syllabus and course policies   |
| Sept 8 | Why do we study the history of Islamic civilization?<br>Geography, Languages, Sources, and Periodization |

### **The Near Eastern Context of the Rise of Islam**

READ: Egger, pp. 1-20; Lindsay, pp. 33-55; Brown, pp. 10-34; Primary sources (*The Book of Idols & Jahiliyya poetry* --see Blackboard).

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| Sep 9   | The Byzantine and Sassanian Empires                  |
| Sept 14 | The Arabian Peninsula; discussion of primary sources |



### **The Center Cannot Hold Three Caliphates**

READ: Egger, pp. 94-113; Lindsay, pp. 70-81.

Oct 26 The Crisis of the 'Abbasid Caliphate; The Fatimid Caliphate;  
The Umayyad Caliphate of Cordoba

Oct 28 Shi'ite identities

### **Synthesis and Creativity**

READ: Egger, pp. 114-138; Brown, pp. 116-174; Primary sources (*Shaybani on War and Peace* & *Malik: the Medinan School* & *Shafi'i on the Sources of Law* & *Hallaj: Anecdotes, the Sufi Martyr* -- see Blackboard).

Nov 2 Law and Legitimacy in Early Islam

Nov 4 Science and Medicine

Nov 9 Sufism

Nov 11 Discussion of primary sources

### **Filling the Vacuum of Power, 950-1100**

READ: Egger, pp. 142-171; Brown, pp. 177-183.

Nov 16 The Buyid Sultanate; The Ghaznavids

Nov 18 The Saljuqs and Migrations of the Oghuz

### **Barbarians at the Gates, 1100-1260**

READ: Egger, pp. 172-198; Primary sources (*Two Faces of "Holy War": Christians and Muslims (1095-1270)*; *Jahiz on the Turks, Singing-girls, and Landlords* & *Books* --see Blackboard).

Nov 23 The Crusades

Nov 25 **NO CLASS (Thanksgiving holiday)**

Nov 30 Discussion of primary sources

**The Consolidation of Traditions & The Muslim Commonwealth**

READ: Egger, pp. 199-256; Lindsay, pp. 87-137.

Dec 2 Intellectual Life, Agriculture and Urban Life

Dec 7 **Review for test**

Dec 9 **Test #2**

Dec 16 **\*\*\*Second paper due (submit electronic copy using  
*Turn-it-in* by 5:59 p.m.)\*\*\***