

HISTORY OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION I
(up to 1500 C.E.)

Fall 2017
(510:287:01)

Monday, Wednesday, 10:00-11:20 a.m.
HILL HALL, 106

Dr. Nükhet Varlık
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Office Hour: Monday 1:00-2:30 pm
Office: Conklin Hall, 327

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. (Second edition; 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 fifteenth 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 Oct. 2**). The second paper will be longer (6-7 pages, **due Dec. 18**). 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 (and two response papers)
- 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

- o 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. 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 6 | Introduction; discussion of the syllabus and course policies |
| Sept 11 | What do we mean by Islamic civilization? 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. 19-48; Primary sources (*The Book of Idols & Jahiliyya poetry* --see Blackboard).

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| Sep 13 | Pre-Islamic Near East: The Byzantine and Sassanian Empires |
| Sept 18 | Pre-Islamic Arabia; discussion of primary sources |
| Sept 20 | Discussion. At home watch film: <i>The Message</i> , dir. Moustapha Akkad (1977) [2-page response paper due next class]
http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2ewzp3 |

The Rise and Expansion of Islam

READ: Egger, pp. 20-32; Brown, pp. 51-63, 69-82.

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| Sept 25 | Muhammad; The Qur'an; <i>Hadith</i> |
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The Age of Conquests / Early Islam

READ: Egger, pp. 33-44; Brown, pp. 105-128; Lindsay, pp. 60-70; Primary sources (*Baladhuri on the Arab Conquests & The Constitution of Medina* --see Blackboard).

Sept 27 The Caliphate; *Ridda* and Conquest; discussion of primary sources

Oct 2 The First Civil War (36-40 / 656-661); The Second Civil War (64-76 / 680-692)

****** First paper due (bring hard copy to class and submit electronic copy using *Turn-it-in* within 24 hours) ******

The Umayyad Caliphate & Sectarianism

READ: Egger, pp. 44-84.

Oct 4 ‘Abd al-Malik and the Later Umayyads

Oct 9 Discussion. At home watch PBS documentary: *Islam: Empire of Faith, Part 1 & 2* [2-page response paper due next class]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PF6VPZsHDZQ>(part 1)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PoHEOut6lfY>(part 2)

The Abbasid Caliphate

READ: Egger, pp. 85-93; Brown, pp. 129-134; Primary sources (*A Shu‘ubi Poem & A Tale from the Thousand and One Nights & Book of Kings* --see Blackboard).

Oct 11 The ‘Abbasid Revolution

Oct 16 The ‘Abbasid Caliphate; Discussion of primary sources

The Center Cannot Hold Three Caliphates

READ: Egger, pp. 94-113; Lindsay, pp. 70-81; ‘Fatimids’ (online access):

<http://nelc.uchicago.edu/sites/nelc.uchicago.edu/files/Fatimids.pdf>; Primary sources

(*Founding the Fatimid State; Declaration of an Andalusí Caliphate; ‘On Forgetting a Beloved’* --see Blackboard).

Oct 18 Crisis in the ‘Abbasid Caliphate; The Fatimid Caliphate

Oct 23 The Umayyads of al-Andalus [Guest lecture by Prof. Green-Mercado]

Oct 25 Shi'ite identities

Oct 30 Test #1

Filling the Power Vacuum, 950-1100

READ: Egger, pp. 142-171.

Nov 1 The Buyid Sultanate; The Ghaznavids

Nov 6 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 8 The Crusades; Discussion of primary sources

Synthesis and Creativity

READ: Egger, pp. 114-138; Brown, pp. 147-171; 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 13 Law and Legitimacy in Early Islam

Nov 15 Science and Medicine

Nov 20 Sufism; Discussion of primary sources

Nov 22 **NO CLASS** (Thanksgiving holiday)

The Consolidation of Traditions & The Muslim Commonwealth

READ: Egger, pp. 194-256, 269-73; Lindsay, pp. 87-137; Primary sources (*The Mongols; On the History of the Mamluk State; Facing the Black Death*—see Blackboard).

Nov 27 Mongol Conquests

Nov 29 Mamluks

Dec 4 Environment, Climate, Agriculture, and Urban Life

Dec 6

Test #2

Dec 11

Discussion for second paper

Dec 13

Mongol Successor States and post-Mongol Islamicate world

Dec 18

*****Second paper due (submit electronic copy using
Turn-it-in by 2:45 pm)*****