THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
Department of History

Semester Fall  Year 1981

COURSE NO.  COURSE TITLE  INSTRUCTOR
137  Introduction to the History and Society of the Eastern Mediterranean and Muslim Worlds, 475-1258  Mr. Humphreys

COURSE DESCRIPTION
A survey, in a historical framework, of the main problems and concerns of Islamic civilization during its formative and middle periods. We shall deal with the following topics: (1) the human geography of the Central Islamic Lands (i.e., North Africa, eastern Arab countries, Turkey, Iran); (2) Muhammad and the Qur’an; (3) the political aspirations and concepts of traditional Islamic thought; (4) the social and human ideals expressed in representative works of Arabic, Persian, and early Turkish literature; (5) religious orientations in traditional Islam—law, mysticism, theology, philosophy. The course does not attempt to present a single, objectively "true" perspective on these subjects. Rather, its principal object is to develop a familiarity with and understanding of the ways in which medieval Muslims tried to describe and interpret their own society.

LECTURES
No special discussion sections unless the size of the class demands them. Typically, two class sessions are devoted to any given subject; of these one will be a lecture and the other a discussion. Where visual materials can add an important dimension to a subject, I will use slides and films. Such illustrated lectures are not a diversion but an essential part of the course.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS and EXAMINATIONS
One mid-term examination, one final examination.
Two essays, 3-5 pp. each, on a choice of four or five assigned problems. These are not research papers, and can be done quite adequately on the basis of the assigned readings and class notes.
One map assignment, due at the end of the second week.

GRADING SYSTEM
Mid-term, 20%; Final, 30%; each paper, 20%; Map, 10%. Some flexibility according to the quality of a student’s classroom participation.

Fazlur Rahman, Islam (pb., Univ. of Chicago)
A. J. Arberry, transl., The Koran Interpreted (pb. Macmillan)
Roger Le Tourneau, Fez in the Age of the Marinids (pb., Univ. of Oklahoma)
Martin Lings, What is Sufism? (pb., Univ. of California)