History 439: Islamic History
Spring, 2005
Time: 2:25 MWF. Place: 1121 Humanities
Instructor: Michael Chamberlain

This course is about the formation of Islamic civilization and its historical development until the early modern era. The course is divided into three parts. In part one we examine the physical environment and human ecology of the region, the long-term social and political continuities of the ancient Middle East, the foundation of Islam, and the establishment of the early Islamic empire. In part two we cover the political collapse of the empire, its replacement by regional courts, and the development of medieval Islamic political, social, and cultural institutions and practices. In part three we will examine the place of the medieval Middle East within the wider history of Eurasia and ask how Middle Eastern peoples reacted to an increasing European influence in the region.

Grading is based on a map quiz (10%), section participation (15%), mid-term (25%), paper (25%) and final (25%). If you want an A be prepared to put a consistently high level of effort into the course.

Grading policy: I recognize that the subject matter of this course is difficult and unfamiliar to most of you, and feel strongly that students should not be discouraged from taking difficult courses by a strict grading policy. If you do the work you should get a B, although an A will be difficult to obtain without dedication. A = excellent work in all respects. B = work that is excellent in parts and faulty in others or that is of a generally good quality. C = work that while acceptable lacks clarity, organization, or evidence of sustained research. If you are doing D work I hope you will drop the course to spare me the pain of giving you the humiliation of receiving a D or worse. In general I will not give grades such as AB or BC on tests or papers, and will use these grades only to average out grades. You and I both should be able to discern the difference between an A and a B paper. I am always happy to discuss a grade and willing to argue with you over one. If you think a grade should be changed come to my office with a written argument and we will make an appointment to discuss your case in depth. All work must be completed on time.

Office hours are 11:00—1:00 Wednesdays, in 4111 Humanities, and by appointment. My office telephone number is 265-2673.

Important Dates: Map Quiz: Feb 14; Midterm: March 11; Paper due: April 15. Take-Home Final Exam due by 5:00 p.m. May 13. Do not take this course if you cannot meet these deadlines!

Texts:

Required:

You will also receive pdf files of articles, book chapters, and translations throughout the term.

The textbooks are, available at the University Bookstore. The books required for the paper and for outside reading are on three-hour reserve at Helen C. White. If you are unable to find something, ask me before you give up.

Also buy a map of the Middle East at the bookstore for the map quiz.

Course Outline and Reading List:

Jan. 19: Introduction

I. Human Geography and the Rise of Empires in the Ancient Middle East.

Jan 21: Physical and Human Geography of the Middle East; the Agrarian Empire
Jan 24: Empires and imperial cultures from Sumeria to Late Antiquity
Jan 26 The Middle East in Late Antiquity
Jan 28: Arabia in Late Antiquity
Reading (full references are in the resources section below).

Cook, Michael, *The Qur’an (a Very Short Introduction)*

Recommended:

Bagnall, Roger S., *Egypt in Late Antiquity*
Fowden, Garth, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, pp. 12-36; 138-75.
McNeill, W. M., *The Rise of the West*, pp. 64-84; 110-144.
Shahid, I., “Pre-Islamic Arabia,” in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. I.
Shahid, I., *Rome and the Arabs*
Hoyland, R.G., *Arabia and the Arabs from the Bronze age to the Coming of Islam*

II. The Early Islamic State and the Formation of Islam

Jan 31: The career of the Prophet I: Prophecy and community in a “tribal” society.
Feb 2: The career of the Prophet II: The formation of the early Islamic state
Feb 4: The Arab conquests
Feb 7: The early conquest state
Feb 9: Conquest state and society to the Second Civil War:

Reading:

Cook, *The Qur’an*

Recommended:

Bell, R., *Introduction to the Quran*
Crone, P., *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*
Gibb, H. A. R., *Arab Conquest of Central Asia*
Grabar, O., *The Formation of Islamic Art*
Ibn Hisham, *The Life of Muhammad*
Izutsu, T., *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Quran*
Madelung, W., *The Succession to Muhammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate*
Morony, M., *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*
Pederson, E. L., *Ali and Mu’awiya in Early Arabic Tradition*
Rodinson, M., *Muhammad*
Watt, W. M., *Muhammad at Mecca*
Watt, W. M., *Muhammad at Medina*
Watt, W. M., *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman*

III. The Islamic Empire

Feb 11: Cult, ritual, and basic doctrines of Islam
Feb 14: Map Quiz and review
Feb 16: The Marwanid Caliphate, 692-750
Feb 18: The ’Abbasid Revolt.
Feb 21: The ’Abbasid Caliphate, 750-820
Feb 23: Imperial culture, architecture,
Feb 25: The impact of Hellenistic learning
Feb 28: Trade from Late Antiquity through the `Abbasid Period
Mar 2: The Formation of Islamic Law
Mar 4: Shi`ism
Mar 7: Collapse of empire

Reading:
Lapidus, I., A History of Islamic Societies, pp. 54-125.

Recommended:
Umayyads:
Dennet, D. B., Conversion and the Poll-Tax in Early Islam.
Juynboll, G. H. A., Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society
Kennedy, Hugh, The Prophet and the Age of the Crusades; the Islamic Near East, from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century, pp. 51-123.
Sharon, M., Black Banners from the East
South, E., al-Riddah and the Muslim Conquest of Arabia.
Wellhausen, J., The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall.
Wellhausen, J., The Religio-Political Factions in Early Islam.

`Abbasids:
Crone, P., Slaves on Horseback.
Donner, F., Narratives of Islamic Origins.
Kennedy, H., The Early `Abbasid Caliphate: a Political History.
Kennedy, H., The Prophet and the Age of the Crusades: the Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century, pp. 124-211.
Lapidus, I. M., "The Evolution of Muslim Urban Society."
Lassner, J., The Topography of Baghdad in the Early Middle Ages.
Melchert, C., The Formation of the Sunni Schools of Law, 9th and 10th Centuries
Zaman, M.Q., Religion and Politics under the Early `Abbasids: the Emergence of the Proto-Sunni Elite
Mar 9: Midterm review
Mar 11: Midterm

IV. Successor States: Collapse of Empire and the Transformation of Ancient Society

Mar 14: Successor states and regional courts, 945-1092
Mar 16: The Fatimids

Recommended:
Bosworth, C. E., Sistan under the Arabs: from the Arab Conquest to the Rise of the Saffarids.
Bulliet, R., The Patricians of Nishapur.
Mottahehdeh, R., Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society

Mar 21, 23. 25 Spring break
V. The Middle Period.

Mar 28: Crusades and counter-crusades
Mar 30: Mongol invasions and the integration of Eurasia.
Apr 1: Klingons and Vanusians: myth or reality?
Apr 4: Mamluks and the Mamluk Sultanate
Apr 6: Institutions of the military patronage state: iqta’
Apr 8: Waqf
Apr 11: The ‘Ulama/
Apr 13: Medieval Islamic education
Apr 15: Medicine, science and technology
Apr 18: Political theory
Apr 20: Ibn Khaldun
Apr 22: Non-Muslim communities
Apr 25: Sufism
Apr 27: Cities
Apr 29: Marginality, criminality, resistance, and revolt
May 2: Changing relations with Europe, 1350-1600
May 4: The formation of the Ottoman and Safavid empires
May 6: Review

Reading:
Lapidus, I., A History of Islamic Societies, 126-161, 241-267; 344-358.

Recommended:
Abu Lughod, J., Cairo: 1000 Years of the City Victorious.
Bagley, F. R. C., al-Ghazali’s Book of Counsel for Kings.
Berkey, J., The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo:: A Social History of Islamic Education.
Bulliet, R., Islam: The View from the Edge
The Cambridge History of Islamic Egypt
The Cambridge History of Iran, vol. 4
Coulson, N. J., A History of Islamic Law
Coulson, N. J., Conflicts and Tensions in Islamic Jurisprudence.
Ephrat, Daphna, A Learned Society in Transition: The Sunni Ulama of Eleventh-Century Baghdad
Goldziher, I., Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law.
Goldziher, I., Muslim Studies, 2 vols.
Humphreys, R.S., From Saladin to the Mongols: the Ayyubids of Damascus
Hillenbrand, Carole, The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives.
Hodgson, M. G. S., The Order of Assassins.
Kafarád, C., Between Two Worlds: the Construction of the Ottoman State.
Lapidus, I., Middle Eastern Cities.
Morgan, D., The Mongols.
Morgan, D., Medieval Persia, 1040-1797.
Petry, C., The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages Schacht, J., Introduction to Islamic Law.
Paper Topics:

Papers are due Friday, April 15, in class.

1. "The career of the prophet Muhammad can only be understood as a response to the social and economic transformation of Mecca caused by changing patterns of world trade." Comment.

2. Were the Arab conquests directed from Medina as a deliberate policy, or were they haphazard and unplanned? Account for the classical Muslim view, and for disputes among modern scholars. What does this issue tell us about the nature of the early Islamic state?

3. "The Arab conquests wrought a revolutionary transformation of the social, political, cultural, and economic structures of the ancient Middle East." Do you agree or disagree?
   Fowden, Garth, Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity (Princeton, 1993),

4. "As the Arabs conquered the settled peoples of the Middle East, they were in turn conquered by them." Comment.

5. How did the military elites who dominated the Middle East in the Middle Period exploit the societies they ruled? Were states administered by formal bureaucratic structures and hierarchies? If not, what accounts for the success of ruling groups in administering large and complex societies over time?
   Lapidus, I., Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages (Cambridge, MA, 1967).
   Chamberlain, M., Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350 (Cambridge, UK, 1994).

6. "Medieval Muslim cities were not governed by city councils or bureaucratic administrations. Civilian elites had none of the landholdings, charters, or military training that guaranteed the autonomy of urban notables elsewhere. Artisans and craftsmen were without guilds or trade organizations to defend their interests." How did these societies hold together as complex human communities?
   Lapidus, I., Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages (Cambridge, MA, 1967).

8. To what extent was the Jewish community of Cairo culturally, politically, and economically integrated into the larger society of Egypt? To what extent can the well-documented social and economic life of this community be taken as representative of Egyptian society at large.
   Goitein, S. D., A Mediterranean Society: the Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza, 4 vols and index., (Berkeley, 1967-78).
Resources in English:

Campus web-sites:

Library and Research Resources: www.library.wisc.edu/guides/MidEast
Middle East Studies Program: www.mesp.wisc.edu

I. General:

Encyclopedia of Islam. The major reference work for the field. Thousands of entries with bibliographies. The first edition, 4 vols and supplement, Leiden 1913-1942, is complete but dated. The second edition, Leiden, 1954-, has reached the further reaches of the letter U. Entries are alphabetical, most under their Arabic, Turkish, or Persian word, so if you are looking for Cairo you will be directed to al-Qahira. Ignore the Arabic definite article al-.

Cahen, C., Sauvaget's Introduction to the History of the Muslim East A useful guide to the literature, methods, and materials of the field.

The Cambridge History of Iran, IV, The Period from the Arab Invasions to the Saljuks, R. N. Frye ed. (Cambridge, 1975);

The Cambridge History of Iran, V, The Saljuk and Mongol Periods, J. A. Boyle ed. (Cambridge, 1968)


Roolvink, R., Historical Atlas of the Muslim Peoples (Amsterdam, 1957).

II. Economic History.


Byrne, E. H., Genoese Shipping in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries (Cambridge, MA, 1930).


III. The Prophet Muhammad and Late Antique and Early Islamic Arabia


Bagnall, Roger S., Egypt in Late Antiquity (Princeton, 1993).

Bell, R., An Introduction to the Qur’an (Edinburgh, 1953).


Brown, P., Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity (Berkeley, 1982).


Cook, M., Muhammad (Oxford, 1983).


Fowden, Garth, Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity (Princeton, 1993), 12-36, 138-75


Hoyland, R.G., Arabia and the Arabs from the Bronze age to the Coming of Islam (London, 2001)


Trimingham, J., Christianity and the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times, 243-286.

**IV. The Arab Conquests and the Conquest State.**


**V. The Umayyads and Umayyad Opposition Movements.**

Because of the unreliability of the written sources for this period, many of the best studies on the Umayyad period are treatments of non-narrative evidence, such as law, dogma, art, and architecture.

Wellhausen, J., *The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall* (Calcutta, 1927).

**VI. ‘Abbāsid Empire.**

Zaman, M.Q., Religion and Politics under the Early `Abbasids: the Emergence of the Proto-Sunni Elite (Leiden, 1997).

VII. Middle Period Politics, Society, Culture.

Goitein, S. D., A Mediterranean Society: the Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza, 4 vols., (Berkeley, 1967-78).
Humphreys, R. S., From Saladin to the Mongols: the Ayyubids of Damascus (Albany, 1977).
Kafardar, C., Between Two Worlds: the Construction of the Ottoman State (Salt Lake City, 1994).
Karamustafa, A., God’s Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Later Middle Period, 1200-1500 (Salt Lake City, 1994).
Lapidus, I., Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages (Cambridge, 1984)
Mottahedeh, R., Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society (Princeton, 1980)
Vryonis, S., Jr., The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor (Berkeley, 1971).