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, 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%). All work must be completed on time. If you want an A be prepared to put a consistently high level of effort into the course. I recognize that the subject matter of this course is difficult and unfamiliar to most of you. 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 and 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.

Important Dates: Map Quiz: Feb 18; Midterm: March 31; Paper due: April 24, in class or submitted to your TA and to me; you are not off the hook until you receive confirmation by email that your paper was received. Take-home Final due by May 13th at 4:00, though of course you may submit it earlier. Do not take this course if you cannot meet these deadlines!

A note on Wikipedia: I realize that many of you have come to rely on it. On some subjects the writers are fairly reliable, no doubt. But for Islamic history it is terrible: full of errors, replete with factional points of view of which the editors are unaware, and an arena for the endless struggle to define what True Islam is and who the heretics are. The editors must be aware of the problem, but scholars of the Islamic world gave up on the
site so long ago that no one who knows anything would ever write for them. In recent years, most students who failed their midterms admitted to relying on Wikipedia for definitions. Plagiarism cases have often – and easily - been detected through their reliance on it, easily detected these days. To conclude with a warning: it is easy to discern when students have relied on Wikipedia for an exam or a paper, at which point all confidence in them is lost.

Textbooks:

Required (and available at the University Book Store):

Lapidus, I., A History of Islamic Societies, 2nd ed (Cambridge, UK, 2002).

Please note that other required readings, maps, various charts and outlines, most of the sources for the paper topics, and other materials are available on the course learn@uw page.

Suggested paper topics with readings can be found below. If you wish to develop a topic on your own please consult with me early and often. The first thing to do is to define a topic and turn it into a question, then set out a plan for addressing it. Once you’ve done so come up with a list of sources and make an appointment to talk to me about the project. I do not want to discourage any of you from developing your own topics but there are many interesting questions for which there are neither primary sources nor secondary scholarship. So please consult with me and keep me up to date regularly on your project.

Course Outline and Reading List:

Jan. 21: Introduction to the course: content, expectations, introduction to your TA’s, and a chance to swap sections and take care of registration problems after the preliminaries are done/

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

Jan 23: Physical and human geography of the Middle East .
Jan 26: Physical and human geography, continued
Jan 28: Empires and imperial cultures from Sumeria to Late Antiquity.
Jan 30: The Middle East and Arabia in Late Antiquity.

Reading (full references are in the resources section below).

Lapidus, I. M., A History of Islamic Societies, pp. 3-10.
To get us going in section, herewith the reading for next week. Come prepared to discuss
1: the way of life and the ethical world of the pre-Islamic Arabs as seen in poetry and
ancient accounts of Arabia; and 2: Ibn Khaldun on pastoral nomads and state formation.
The readings are the first four in the Readings section in learn@uw:
Examples of pre-Islamic poetry
Ibn Khaldun: al-Muqaddima, two selections
Ancient accounts of Arabia

Recommended:
Bagnall, Roger S., Egypt in Late Antiquity.
Brown, P., The World of Late Antiquity, pp. 11-21; 96-112; 160-171.
Fowden, Garth, Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late
Antiquity, 12-36, 138-75.
Hodgson, M.G.S., The Venture of Islam, vol 1, introduction (learn@uw)
McNeill, W. M., The Rise of the West, pp. 64-84; 110-144.
Shahid, I., Rome and the Arabs.
Sherratt, A., articles on early agriculture and early history on learn@uw),
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

Feb 2: The “source-criticism” debate and the sources for early Islamic history; the career
of the Prophet I: prophecy and community in a “tribal” society.
Feb 4: The career of the Prophet II: The formation of the early Islamic state
Feb 6: The formation of the Caliphate and the Ridda Wars
Feb 9: The Arab Conquests
Feb 11: The consolidation of the Caliphate under `Umar and the early conquest state;
relations with conquered peoples
Feb 13: Continuing consolidation of caliphal authority under `Uthman; conflicts among
the Arabs
Feb 16: The murder of `Uthman and the first fitna; conflict between `Ali and Mu’awiya
and their followers
Feb 18: Map quiz; The first fitna as the foundation myth of Islamic sectarianism; critique
of the standard account of the “Sunni-Shi‘ite split”.
Feb 20-23: Mu’awiya and the early Umayyad (or Sufyanid) Caliphate; relations between
Damascus and the turbulent garrisons of Iraq.
Feb 25: The Second Fitna, the reestablishment of Umayyad (now “Marwanid”) authority
under `Abd al-Malik; centralization and systemization of a courtly but not yet fully
imperial caliphal state.

Feb 27: Review, housekeeping, or a slight chance that I’ll be out of town for the day. .
Readings (in rough order):

Ibn Ishaq, Biography of the Prophet, selections (learn@uw)
Lapidus, I., A History of Islamic Societies, pp. 11-53.
Donner, F., The Early Islamic Conquests, pp. 12-90. (learn@uw).
Tabari, selections from the conquest of Jerusalem to Ziyad ibn Abihi (learn@uw)

Highly Recommended:

Recommended readings on the Prophet and the Qur’an:

Bell. R., Introduction to the Quran.
Crone, P., Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam (learn@uw).
Gabrieli, F., Muhammad and the Conquests of Islam, pp. 103-104, 143, 184.
Grabar, O., The Formation of Islamic Art. (learn@uw)
Hodgson, M. G. S., The Venture of Islam, I, pp. 145-186 (learn@uw).
Ibn Hisham, The Life of Muhammad.
Morony, M., Iraq after the Muslim Conquest (learn@uw).
Rodinson, M., Muhammad.
Watt, W. M., Muhammad at Mecca (learn@uw).
Watt, W. M., Muhammad at Medina (learn@uw).
Watt, W. M., Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman.

Recommended readings on the Umayyad Caliphate:

“Umayyads, selections,” (learn@uw).
Dennet, D. B., Conversion and the Poll-Tax in Early Islam.
Juynboll, G. H. A., Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society
Sharon, M., Black Banners from the East
Shoufany, 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.

III. From Conquest State to Islamic Empire
Mar 2: Tensions between Arabs and non-Arab Muslims, between elites and the ‘Arabs of the garrisons, and anti-Umayyad movements in the 720’s—740’s
Mar 4: The ‘Abbasid revolt or da’wa
Mar 9: Imperial culture and court life, architecture, the impact of Hellenistic learning, adab
Mar 11: Shi‘ism through the ‘Abbasid Caliphate
Mar 13: no class
Mar 23: The formation of Islamic Law
Mar 25: Cult, ritual, and basic doctrines of Islam
Mar 27: Midterm
March 30: Collapse of the ‘Abbasid Empire and the formation of successor states

Reading (in rough order):

Lapidus, I., A History of Islamic Societies, pp. 54-125.
Translations of ‘Abbasid-period sources on learn@uw.

Recommended:

‘Abbasids:

Crone, P., Slaves on Horseback (learn@uw).
Donner, F., Narratives of Islamic Origins (learn@uw)
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

IV. Successor States: Collapse of Empire and the Transformation of Ancient Society
Apr 1, 3  6, 8, 10  13, 15, 17  20, 22, 24  27, 29

Apr 1: Successor states and regional courts, 945-1092, the Fatimid Dynasty, and the “Early Middle Period”
Apr 3: Commerce and trade through the Middle Period

Readings:
Mottahedeh, R., *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society* (learn@uw - it’s a short book)
Chamberlain, M., “Military Patronage States and the Political Economy of the Frontier, 1000-1250” (learn@uw)

**Highly recommended:** Saunders, P., “The Fatimid State, 969-1171” (learn@uw)

**Recommended:**

Bosworth, C. E., *Sistan under the Arabs: from the Arab Conquest to the Rise of the Saffarids.*
Bulliet, R., *The Patricians of Nishapur* (learn@uw)
Daftary, *The Isma`ilis: Their History and Doctrines.*

V. The Middle Period. (on each of these topics there is an abundance of material on learn@uw; take a look around or ask for suggestions)

Apr 6: No class, go to section prepared to discuss Mottahadeh.
Apr 8: The Saljuqs (Seljuks, Seljuks) and the movements of Turkic peoples
Apr 10: The ephemerality of the “Saljuq Empire” and the staying power of its institutions: “the military patronage state”
Apr 13: The `ulama and the social order, education and law
Apr 15: Sufism and sufis from the `Abbasids through the Middle Period
Apr 17: Crusades and counter-crusades
Apr 20: Salah al-Din ibn Ayyub (Saladin) and the Ayyubid dynasty; comparative medieval political-economy
Apr 22: The Mongol invasions and the integration of Eurasia
Apr 24: The Mamluk Sultanate
Apr 27: Political theory: what is a state for, who should run it?
Apr 29: al-Andalus and the Maghrib
May 1: Cities and urban life
May 4: The rise of the “Gunpowder Empires” and the evanescence of pastoralist military power.
May 6: The impact of Europe, 1450-1516
May 8: Review, preparation for the final

**Reading:** (Note that the reading is light in this part of the course. The reason is not to give you a chance to relax but to devote your energies to your papers. Attendance at lecture will be essential to success on the final).

Chamberlain, M., “The Crusader Era and the Ayyubid Dynasty” (learn@uw).
For section: Usamah Ibn Munqidh, *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period*
Highly 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.
- Chamberlain, M., Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus.
- Coulson, N. J., A History of Islamic Law.
- Coulson, N. J., Conflicts and Tensions in Islamic Jurisprudence.
- Goldziher, I., Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law.
- Humphreys, R. S., From Saladin to the Mongols: the Ayyubids of Damascus.
- Hodgson, M. G. S., The Order of Assassins.
- Kafardar, C., Between Two Worlds: the Construction of the Ottoman State.
- Lapidus, I., Middle Eastern Cities.
- 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 28, in class.
- Most sources for the paper can be found on learn@uw.

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. Ibn Khaldun was the first scholar to suggest that interactions among pastoralists, city people, and agriculturalists shaped the central dynamic in Middle Eastern state formation, in other words that political history cannot be understood without reference to human ecology. How has Ibn Khaldun influenced recent historians of the pre-modern Middle East?


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?

Morony, M., Iraq after the Muslim Conquests (Princeton, 1983).
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.

Morony, M., Iraq after the Muslim Conquest (Princeton, 1983).

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.


9. Military Slavery: The phenomenon of military slavery became nearly universal from Egypt to Central Asia in the medieval period. Many Europeans were shocked at the thought that the roles held by kings, nobility, and aristocracy were held by soldiers of such humble beginnings. What accounted for this phenomenon? Why did it become so widespread? Is it possible to speak of a “classic mamluk system” as some scholars have?

Ayalon, D., *Eunuchs, Caliphs, and Sultans*, Levanoni, Pipes,

10. Eunuchs: In the medieval Islamic world eunuchs played many different roles and could enjoy high status. Why did important institutions employ eunuchs in positions of high responsibility? Marmon, Ayalon, Patterson.

Resources in English:

Library and Research Resources: HYPERLINK
http://www.library.wisc.edu/guides/MidEast 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, published beginning in 1954-, has finally neared completion 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.
II. Economic History.


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

Bell, R., *An Introduction to the Qur'an* (Edinburgh, 1953).
Fowden, Garth, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, 1993), 12-36, 138-75.
Hawting, G.R., *The idal of Idolatry and the Formation of Islam: from Polemic to*
History (Cambridge, 1999).

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.

Kaegi, W, Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests (Cambridge, 1992),
Morony, M., Iraq after the Muslim Conquest (Princeton, 1983).
Pederson, E. L., `Ali and Mu'awiya in Early Arabic Tradition (Copenhagen, 1984).

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. `Abbâsid Empire**

Bowen, H., *The Life and Times of `Alî Ibn `Isâ, the Good Wazîr* (Cambridge, 1928).


**VII. Middle Period Politics, Society, Culture**.


Lapidus, I., *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1984)


Vryonis, S., Jr., *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor* (Berkeley, 1971).