

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
Department of History
Semester I, 1983-84

<u>COURSE NO.</u>	<u>COURSE TITLE</u>	<u>INSTRUCTOR</u>
137	The Traditional Middle East: Society, Politics, and Culture	Humphreys

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we survey the development of society, culture, and political institutions in the Middle East and North Africa from the emergence of Islam down to early modern times (ca. 600-1500 A.D.). In order to locate Islamic culture and society in time and space, we will survey, in a very general manner, the sequence of states and rulers in the area during this long period. However, the course will focus on four topics: (1) basic patterns of political organization and ideology produced within traditional Islamic society; (2) religious orientations -- in particular law and mysticism -- within Islam; (3) the ideals of human conduct produced within Islamic culture; (4) the character of everyday life, in city, village, and nomadic tribes, and the varying relations between town and countryside.

There is no one textbook for the course. As far as possible, readings will be drawn from original texts in translation, and their significance will be developed through class discussions and written exercises. Where appropriate, films and slides will be used.

The course is open to all undergraduates. It is intended to stand as a useful presentation of the material in its own right; however, it is also an appropriate introduction to further coursework in this field.

LECTURES

Lectures meet Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30 - 10:45. The class format will vary: some two-thirds of our meetings will be lectures, the rest discussion groups. THE LECTURES DO NOT REPEAT THE READINGS: YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL MATERIALS ASSIGNED AND DISCUSSED IN THE COURSE.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS

One map exercise.

Three essays (3-5 pp. each), each one based on your choice out of several assigned topics or problems. These are not research papers, but essays relating to the regular assigned readings.

Final Examination (as in Timetable)

GRADING SYSTEM

Map: 10%

Essays: 20% each

Final Exam: 30%

REQUIRED READINGS (Assignments will average about 75 pp./week)

The Koran, trans. N.J. Dawood (Penguin Classics)
 J.J. Saunders, History of Medieval Islam (Routledge and Kegan Paul)
 Richard Critchfield, Shahhat, an Egyptian (Avon)
 Numerous class handouts

LIST OF READINGS DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS

Alois Musil, "The Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouin."
 C.J. Lyall, Translations of Ancient Arabian Poetry.
 Muhammad b. Ishaq, Life of Muhammad (transl. A. Guillaume).
 Wali al-Din al-Tibrizi, Mishkat al-Masabih (transl. J. Robson).
 Tabari and Ibn Ishaq, "The Election of Abu Bakr" (transl. Bernard Lewis, A. Guillaume).
 Wali al-Din al-Tibrizi, "Offices of Commander and of the Qadi" (Ch. 17, Mishkat al-Masabih, tr. J. Robson).
Caliph and Dictator (al-Mawardi, "Contract of the Caliphate," tr. Boyd Johnson).
 Qudi Nu'man, The Book of Faith (tr. A.A.A. Fyzee).
 Abu'l-Fazl Bayhaqi, "Gibbeting of the Minister Hasanak" (tr. J.E. Woods).
 Nizam al-Mulk, The Book of Government (tr. H. Darke).
 Malik ibn Anas, al-Muwatta (on funeral practices), tr. J.A. Williams.
 Hujwiri, Kashf al-Mahjub (trans. R.A. Nicholson).
 al-Ghazali, "Deliverance from Error" (in W.M. Watt, The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazali).
 'Amr ibn Bahr, called al-Jahiz, "Selected Essays and Anecdotes" (transl. ch. Pellat).
 Firdawsi, Shah-nameh (The Epic of the Kings), tr. R. Levy.
 Sa'di, Gulistan (tr. E. Rehatsek).
The Turks (inscriptions, poetry, and prose writings compiled and transl. by R. Dankoff).

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND CLASS SESSIONS

1. (Tues., Aug. 30) Introduction
2. (Thurs., Sept. 1) Geography and Ethnography of the Central Islamic Lands: an overview
3. (Tues., Sept. 6) The societies of the Middle East on the eve of Islam (6th cen. A.D.)
4. (Thurs., Sept. 8) Nomadism in ancient Arabia: Social values and cultural expression

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND CLASS SESSIONS, continued.

Readings, sessions 3-4:

Saunders, 1-18
Musil, "Manners and Customs of the Rwala
Bedouin" (handout)
Lyall, "Ancient Arabian Poetry" (handout)

5. (Tues., Sept. 13) The Koran: storm and structure
6. (Thurs., Sept. 15) The Koran: teachings and themes

Readings, sessions 5-6:

The Koran (Dawood transl.), 15-38, 214-220,
246-264, 386-407.

7. (Tues., Sept. 20) Muhammad as prophet and teacher
8. (Thurs., Sept. 22) Muhammad as statesman

Readings, sessions 7-8:

Saunders, 18-38
Ibn Ishaq, "Life of Muhammad" (handout)
Tibrizi, Mishkat al-Masabih (handout)

9. (Tues., Sept. 27) The Arab conquests and the creation of an
Islamic empire
10. (Thurs., Sept. 29) The Primitive Caliphate and its downfall, 632-692

Readings, sessions 9-10:

Saunders, 39-76
Tabari and Ibn Ishaq, "The Election of Abu
Bakr" (handout)

11. (Tues., Oct. 4) The High Caliphate, 692-945

Readings, session 11:

Saunders, 77-124

12. (Thurs., Oct. 6) The Sunni ideology of the Caliphate

Readings, session 12:

Wali al-Din al-Tibrizi, "Offices of Commander
and of Qadi" (handout)
Caliph and Dictator (handout)

13. (Tues., Oct. 11) The Shi'a and its political concepts
Readings, session 13:
Saunders, 125-140
Qadi Nu'man, "Book of Faith" (handout)
14. (Thurs., Oct. 13) Military government, 945-1500: amirs, sultans, and padshahs.
15. (Tues., Oct. 18) Military government: ethos and ideology
Readings, sessions 14-15:
Saunders, 141-186
Bayhaqi, "Gibbeting of the Minister Hasanak" (handout)
Nizam al-Mulk, Book of government (handout)
16. (Thurs., Oct. 27) Religion as a code of conduct: the shari'a
17. (Tues., Oct. 25) The shari'a in practice: justice and education in medieval Islam
Readings, sessions 16-17:
Malik ibn Anas, "al-Muwatta" (handout)
Shaybani, "Islamic Law of Nations" (handout)
Reread: Tibrizi, Mishkat al-Masabih
18. (Thurs., Oct. 27) Sufism: mystical interpretations of Islam
Readings, session 18:
Hujwiri, Kashf al-Mahjub (handout)
19. (Tues., Nov. 1) Shari'a, sufism, and rational speculation -- the synthesis of al-Ghazali
Readings, session 19:
Ghazali, "Deliverance from Error" (handout)

20. (Thurs., Nov. 3) Human ideals in Islamic culture (I): Arabic Humanism.
Readings, session 20:
Jahiz, selected writings (handout)
21. (Tues., Nov. 8) Human ideals in Islamic culture (II): Persian epic
Readings, session 21:
Firdawsi, Shah-nameh (handout)
22. (Thurs., Nov. 10) Human ideals in Islamic culture (III): Persian didactic satire
Readings, session 22:
Sa'di, Gulistan (handout)
23. (Tues., Nov. 15) Human ideals in Islamic culture (IV): Turkish inscriptions and tales
Readings, session 23:
"The Turks" (handout)
24. (Thurs., Nov. 17) Town and countryside in the traditional Middle East
25. (Tues., Nov. 22) Topography of the Islamic city
26. (Tues., Nov. 29) Politics and society of the Islamic city.
Readings, sessions 24-26:
English, City and Village in Iran (handout)
27. (Tues., Dec. 6) The Egyptian Peasant
Readings, session 27:
Critchfield, Shahhat: An Egyptian (all)
28. (Thurs., Dec. 8) Recapitulation and Review