At the beginning of the 7th century, a new religion, Islam, appeared in Arabia and by the end of the century, Muslims had defeated the Byzantines and Persians and created an empire that stretched from Spain to India. For the next millennium, Islam glittered. Its caliphs, courts, and capitals were grander, more powerful, and more sophisticated than those of any medieval king, duke or prince. In this course, we will trace the emergence and development of Islamic civilization from the birth of Muhammad ca. 570 to the Mongol sack of Baghdad in 1258. We will read the Qur’an and listen to its recitation; examine the career of the Prophet Muhammad; follow the course of the Arab conquests; explore the nature of the conflict between Sunnis and Shi’is; learn about the five pillars of Islam, law, theology, and Sufism; and assess the achievements of Muslim intellectuals in literature, art, science, and philosophy. 30 minutes at the end of each class will be devoted to the analysis of primary sources in English translation. No previous knowledge required.

The learning outcomes for this course are as follows:

- Identify major concepts related to Islamic Civilization.
- Understand the historical development, major debates, and manifestations of Islamic Civilization.
- Become familiar with the key moments and developments of Islamic Civilization.

Course Components

Papers, Exams, Grades

10%: One-page essays for either Monday or Wednesday primary source analysis period: Each paper is worth one point; you must submit 10 papers during the semester to receive the full 10 points. The purpose of the papers is to make sure that you have read the assignment and thought about it. Papers will NOT be graded.

10%: Section participation

20%: Midterm I

20%: Midterm II

40%: Final exam
Grading Criteria and Scale

There are 100 total points available in this class, distributed as follows:

- Classroom participation (15%)
- Section participation (15%)
- Reading responses (10%)
- Midterm Exam (25%)
- Final Exam (35%)

This course is graded on an A, AB, B, BC, C, D, F scale:

- A = 93-100
- AB = 88-92
- B = 82-87
- BC = 77-81
- C = 72-76
- D = 67-71
- F = 66 or below.

Required Texts

History = Vernon Egger, A History of the Muslim World to 1405: The Making of a Civilization (Prentice-Hall), $86.00 (new); $50.25 (used; also available electronically)

Learning Objectives

This course has one central goal: to teach you about the emergence of Islamic Civilization over the course of roughly six hundred years. Students who take the course will learn how to synthesize facts into historical narratives, and how to integrate primary sources into secondary readings. As you progress through the course, you will be expected to trace continuities and ruptures in the history of Islamic Civilization and to analyze the ways in which this civilizational project was shaped by religious and non-religious factors.

Credit Hours

This 3-credit course meets as a group in person for 3 hours per week (according to UW-Madison's credit hour policy, each lecture counts as 1.5 hours). The course also carries the expectation that you will spend an average of at least 2 hours outside of class for every hour in the classroom. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of at least 6 hours per week for reading, writing, preparing for discussions, and/or studying for quizzes and exams for this course.

Digital Devices

You are permitted to use a computer or tablet to take notes on my lectures or to record key points of class discussions. That said, the primary source analysis portion of this course depends on your active participation, whether listening to your classmates’ ideas or offering your own. Given this, I will frequently request that all digital devices be put
away. To reduce our dependence on computers in class, I expect you to arrive having printed out and marked up the text and any notes on which you wish to draw.

If this digital device policy will pose an unnecessary hardship for you, financial or learning-related, please let me know. We will find a solution that meets your needs and my pedagogical goals.

**Accommodations**

I welcome open communication regarding your learning needs. If you intend to request accommodations in this course, please contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center as soon as possible in order to register. I work according to the University’s policy, as articulated by the Committee on Access and Accommodation in Instruction:

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student’s educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

**Academic Integrity**

My expectation is that you will adhere to the university’s policies on academic integrity, available at [https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/](https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/). While we will address particular questions that pertain to academic integrity in class – such as correct citation, how to paraphrase an argument – you are responsible prior to addressing these particular questions. Broadly speaking, the guidelines are simple: A) when in doubt, cite B) cite not only language, but also ideas and c) when paraphrasing, change the language.

**Late Policy**

If an assignment for this course coincides with assignments in other courses, students may request an extension **no less than one week in advance**. Extensions will not be granted beyond this point, and late assignments lose one letter grade/day. In other words, the onus is on you to structure your time so that you can successfully complete the assignments by the due date.

**How to Succeed in This Course**

- **Reading preparation**: Lectures will not replicate the readings; if I’ve assigned you a text, I will not go over that information in any significant detail. It is thus
incumbent upon you to come having read carefully and to come prepared with questions.

- **Prior knowledge:** In this course, prior knowledge of leading events, figures and topics in Islamic and Middle Eastern history will be useful, yet they are hardly necessary to succeed. The last time I taught this course, a significant number of my most successful students had no prior background in the study of Islam or the Middle East. What they did all have in common, however, was a commitment to working their tails off.

- **Lecture style:** My lecture style is concise and geared towards helping you understand basic conceptual issues. Put differently, I take no great joy in minutia; what I seek to do is to teach you how to think about Islam and politics.

- **In class:** while part of the class will be taken up with lecture, this is not a unidirectional learning exercise. The success of this course depends on your engagement with our classroom discussion; you should come out of our class feeling a bit fatigued!

- **Reading responses:** You will complete six reading responses over the course of the semester, which must be submitted to your TA on Monday prior to class. The reading response should engage with the secondary source for the week, thinking critically about its argument and how it relates to our discussions and readings from previous weeks.

**Attendance and Participation Rubric**

This class will succeed or fail based on each person's individual attendance and participation. This is why attendance and active participation in this class constitute an important component of overall learning outcomes.

Beyond attending class, you must also participate. I find it helpful to consider that your participation grade at the beginning of the semester is zero, and that you have the entire semester to accumulate the available points by posing questions, offering answers, and making other relevant interventions into our classroom discussions. Below is a more complete rubric through which I assess contributions (the same rubric will apply to your TA sections as well):

- **Outstanding Contributor:** Contributions in class reflect exceptional preparation. Ideas offered are always substantive, provide one or more major insights as well as direction for the class. Challenges are well substantiated and persuasively presented. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished markedly.

- **Good Contributor:** Contributions in class reflect thorough preparation. Ideas offered are usually substantive, provide good insights and sometimes direction for the class. Challenges are well substantiated and often persuasive. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished.

- **Adequate Contributor:** Contributions in class reflect satisfactory preparation. Ideas offered are sometimes substantive, provide generally useful insights but seldom offer a new direction for the discussion. Challenges are sometimes presented, fairly well substantiated, and sometimes persuasive. If this person were
not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished somewhat.

- Inadequate Contributor: This person says little or nothing in class, or offers ideas that are not relevant to the material under discussion. Hence, there is not an adequate basis for evaluation. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would not be changed.

**Usage of Audio Recorded Lectures Statement**

Lecture materials and recordings for History 201 are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor’s express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university’s policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

**Email etiquette**

Universities are strange places with sometimes odd-seeming titles. Here’s a quick overview: If somehow has a Ph.D. (also known as a Doctorate), they are addressed as “Dr.” If they have a Ph.D. and are employed as a Professor, then “Professor” takes precedence. Accordingly, appropriate ways to address me (whether in person or by email) include Professor Rock-Singer, though Dr. Rock-Singer is fine, too. Inappropriate forms (these are all real examples!) include “Hi Aaron,” “Mr. Aaron” and “Professor Aaron.”

**Weekly Schedule**

**Week 1 (January 26) Introductory lecture**

January 26: The Mountain Arena/Introduction to Islam

**Week 2 (January 31, February 2) The Near East and Arabia Before Islam**

January 31: The Near East in Late Antiquity
- Secondary: History, 1-15

February 2: Arabia Before Islam
- Primary: Pre-Islamic Poetry Mu’allaga of Labid, 35-44, 77-78; available online at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=crDPbeRIopI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=crDPbeRIopI)
Week 3 (February 7, 9) Muhammad and the Arab Conquests
February 7: Muhammad from Mecca to Medina
  - Primary: Constitution of Medina

February 9: The Arab Conquests
  - Secondary: History, 33-44.
  - Primary: Islam, 331-7.

Week 4 (February 14, 16) Umayyads and Abbasids
February 14: The Umayyads
  - Secondary: History, 44-61

February 16th: The Abbasid takeover and the early Caliphate
  - Primary: The History of al-Tabari, 32:198-204.

Week 5 (February 21, 23)
February 21: Midterm review

February 23: Midterm

Week 6 (February 28, March 2) Islamic Law and Education
February 28: Islamic Law
  - Secondary: History, 114-22
  - Primary: The Muwatta of Imam Muhammad, 51-2, 408-11, 422-3

March 2: Islamic Education

Week 7 (March 7, 9) Hadith and Translation
March 7: Hadith Transmission and Recitation
  - Primary: Islam, 174-5.

March 9: Translation movement
  - Secondary: History, 85-89 (review)
Spring Break (March 12-20)
Enjoy!

Week 8 (March 21, 23) Arab Science and Theology
March 21: Arab Science
  - Secondary: *History*, 199-204, 295-7

March 23: Theology (guest lecture by Dr. Daniel Lav on Zoom)
  - Primary: *Islam*, 227-32.

Week 9 (March 28, 30) Philosophy and Prose
March 28: Philosophy
  - Secondary: *History*, 127-32;

March 30: Prose
  - Primary: *Sinbad the Sailor*, 97-138 (begin)

Week 10 (April 4, 6) Poetry and Sufism
April 4: Poetry
  - Secondary: *Sinbad the Sailor* (finish)

April 6: Sufism
  - Secondary: *History*, 123-7; 205-14, 308-17.
  - Primary: *History*, 208.

Week 11 (April 11, 13)
April 11: Midterm review

April 13: Second midterm

Week 12 (April 18, 20) Assassins and Crusaders
April 18: Fatimids and Assassins
  - Secondary: *History*, 154-62

April 20: Crusades
  - Secondary: *History*, 171-82; *Islam*, 348-53
  - Primary: *History*, 177.
Week 13 (April 25, 27) Mongols and Ottomans
April 25: Mongols

April 27: The Ottoman Empire, 1299-1922 (Guest Lecture: Prof. Dan Stolz)

Week 14 (May 2, 4) Concluding Thoughts
May 2: Six Hundred Years of Islamic Civilization: An Assessment

May 4: Salafism Between Early Islam and the 20th Century
   - In the Shade of the Sunna: Salafi Piety in the 20th Century Middle East (excerpt)

Final Exam
10:05 AM-12:05 PM, 5/12/2022

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the university’s policies on academic integrity. Available at https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work.