

The Making Of The Islamic World: The Middle East, 500-1500

Hist 205/RLST 205

Aaron Rock-Singer, Ph.D.

rocksinger@wisc.edu

Class: M-W: 2:30-3:45

Humanities 1217

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Office Hours: by appointment (Zoom)

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 assigned material and thought about it. Papers will NOT be graded.

10% Section participation

20%: Midterm I

20%: Midterm II

40%: Final exam

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)

You can find it here: https://www.amazon.com/History-Muslim-World-1405-Civilization/dp/0130983896/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=%2C+A+History+of+the+Muslim+World+to+1405%3A+The+Making+of+a+Civilization&qid=1674148380&sr=8-1

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/>. 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 **10** reading responses over the course of the semester, which must be submitted to me on Monday prior to class. The reading response should engage with the primary and/or 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 someone 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 25) Introductory lecture (recorded, asynchronous)

January 25: The Mountain Arena/Introduction to Islam

Week 2 (January 30, February 1) The Near East and Arabia Before Islam

January 31: The Near East in Late Antiquity

- Secondary: *History*, 1-15
- Primary: *The History of al-Tabari*, 4:126-7.

February 2: Arabia Before Islam

- Secondary: *History*, 16-20.
- Primary: Pre-Islamic Poetry *Mu`allaqa of Labid*, 35-44, 77-78; available online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=crDPbeRIopI>

Week 3 (February 6,8) Muhammad and the Arab Conquests

February 6: Muhammad from Mecca to Medina

- Secondary: *History*, 20-32.
- Primary: Constitution of Medina

February 8: The Arab Conquests (recorded, asynchronous)

- Secondary: *History*, 33-44.
- Primary: *Al 'Imran*, focus on 34-42.

Week 4 (February 13,15) Umayyads and Abbasids

February 13: The Umayyads

- Secondary: *History*, 44-61
- Primary: P. Crone and M. Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 129-32.

February 15: The Abbasid takeover and the early Caliphate

- *History*, 69-73, 85-93.
- Primary: *The History of al-Tabari*, 32:198-204.

Week 5 (February 20, 22)

February 20: Midterm review

February 22: Midterm

Week 6 (February 27, March 1) Islamic Law and Education

February 27: Islamic Law

- Secondary: *History*, 114-22
- Primary: *The Muwatta of Imam Muhammad*, 51-2, 408-11, 422-3

March 1: Islamic Education

- Secondary: Jonathan Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo*, 21-43.
- Primary: Burhan al-Din Zarnuji, *Instruction of the Student- the Method of Learning* trans. G.E. Von Grunebaum and Theodora M. Abel, 19-20, 38-45.

Week 7 (March 6, 8) Hadith and Translation

March 6: Hadith Transmission and Recitation

- Secondary: Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Modern World*, 15-40.
- Primary: *Islam*, 174-5.

March 8: Translation movement

- Secondary: *History*, 85-89 (review)
- Primary source: "Hunayn ibn Ishaq," in Dwight F. Reynolds (Ed.), *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*, 107-19.

Spring Break (March 11-19)

Enjoy!

Week 8 (March 20, 22) Arab Science and Theology

March 20: Arab Science

- Secondary: *History*, 199-204, 295-7
- Primary: Ibn Ridwan's Treatise "On the Prevention of Bodily Ills in Egypt," in Michael W. Dols, *Medieval Islamic Medicine*, 104-11.

March 22: Theology

- Secondary: Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*, 172-94
- Primary: *Islam*, 227-32.

Week 9 (March 27, 29) Philosophy and Prose

March 27: Philosophy

- Secondary: *History*, 127-32;
- Primary: *Islam*, 256-65.

March 29: Prose

- Secondary: *Islam*, 480-1
- Primary: *Sinbad the Sailor*, 97-138 (begin)

Week 10 (April 3, 5) Poetry and Sufism

April 3: Poetry

- Primary: *Cambridge Illustr. Hist.*, 250-3, 255-7, 263-5.
- Secondary: *Sinbad the Sailor* (finish)

April 5: Sufism

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

Week 11 (April 10, 12)

April 10: Midterm review

April 12: Second midterm

Week 12 (April 17, 19) Assassins and Crusaders

April 17: Fatimids and Assassins

- Secondary: *History*, 154-62
- Primary: Fyzee, *Fatimid Law*, 146-9.

April 19: Crusades

- Secondary: *History*, 171-82; *Islam*, 348-53
- Primary: *History*, 177.

Week 13 (April 24, 26) Mongols and Ottomans

April 24: Mongols

- Secondary: *History*, 194-98, 260-9.
- Primary: Mizra Muhammad Qazvini, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*, 97-109.

April 26: The Ottoman Empire, 1299-1922 (Guest Lecture: Prof. Dan Stolz)

Week 14 (May 1, 3) Concluding Thoughts and Review

May 1: Six Hundred Years of Islamic Civilization: An Assessment

- William A. Graham, "Traditionalism in Islam: An Essay in Interpretation,"
Journal of Interdisciplinary History XXIII:3 (Winter 1993), 495-522.

May 3: Review Session

Final Exam

5/8/2023, 2:45-4:45 PM.

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