

History 6A
Prof. Bensch
Fall 2017

Office Hours (Tr 204):
W: 1:00-2:00; F: 10:30-11:20
and by appointment

SYLLABUS

THE FORMATION OF THE ISLAMIC NEAR EAST

The course will focus on the rise of Islam and the transformation of the Near East into an Islamic society. We shall discuss the founding of Islam, the preaching of the Prophet, the establishment of a Muslim Empire, and its disintegration due to internal pressures and foreign invasion. From this historical process Islam emerged as a religion, a civilization, and a distinctive power system.

The course will be divided between lecture and discussion in each session; in order to engage in discussion profitably, you should have completed the reading for that week. In addition to the secondary texts available for purchase at the bookstore, you will be expected to become familiar with the collection of primary sources that will form the foundation of the course. Your grade will be determined by three short quizzes (15%), participation in class discussions (10%), a midterm (10%), final (25%), and two short papers (40%).

In accordance with History Department guidelines, more than three unexcused absences may result in a No Credit for the course. History 6A will be a DIGITAL FREE CLASSROOM; no laptops, smart phones, I-pads or other digital devices will be permitted in the classroom unless there are special circumstances.

I. Week of Sept. 4.

- a) Introduction: Orientalism, Islamics, and History.
- b) The Near East Before Islam: Society, Empire, and Religion.

Readings: M. Hodgson, The Venture of Islam, I, pp. 22-69, 103-45;
Sources, nos. 1-5.

II. Week of Sept. 11.

- a) Pre-Islamic Arabia.
- b) The Life of Muhammad.

Readings: Hodgson, I, pp. 146-86;
F. Rahman, Islam, pp. 11-29;
Sources, nos. 6-7.

III. Week of Sept. 18.

- a) The Appeal of Early Islam.
- b) The Qur'ân.

Readings: Rahman, Islam, pp. 30-42;
Sources, nos. 8-12.

IV. Week of Sept. 25.

- a) Discussion of Qur'ân and of First Paper.
- b) The Arab Conquests.

Readings: Hodgson, I, pp. 187-230;
Shaban, Islamic History, pp. 1-78;
Sources, nos. 13-17.

V. Week of Oct. 2.

Paper 1 due on Monday, Oct. 2.

- a) Organization of New Territories and Resistance.
- b) The Caliphate.

Quiz on Friday, Oct. 6.

Readings: Hodgson, I, pp. 233-79;
Shaban, pp. 79-126;
Sources, nos. 18-29.

VI. Week of Oct. 9.

- a) The Abbasid Revolution.
- b) **Midterm Friday, Oct. 13.**

Readings: Shaban, 127-89;
Hodgson, I, pp. 280-314;

VII. Week of Oct. 23.

- a) Cosmopolitan Islam: The Incorporation of Hellenic and Persian Culture.
- b) Urban Islam: Scripturalism and Law.

Readings: Hodgson, I, pp. 314-340, 384-92;
Rahman, pp. 68-94, 100-116;
Sources, nos. 30-34.

VIII. Week of Oct. 30.

- a) Dissolution of the Abbasid Caliphate.
- b) Slave States, Regional Courts, and International Commerce.

Readings: Hodgson, I, pp. 473-95, II, pp. 1-21; 135-51;
Sources, nos. 35-41.

IX. Week of Nov. 6.

- a) Attempts to Reestablish Unity: Fatimid Egypt and the Seljuk Empire.
- b) Muslim Communities: Sunni Internationalism and Shi'a Sectarianism.

Quiz on Friday, Nov. 10.

Readings: Hodgson, II, pp. 21-61;
Sources, nos. 44-45.

X. Week of Nov. 13.

- a) Sufism and the Sufi Orders.
- b) A Balance of Individual and Community: Al-Ghazali.

Readings: Hodgson, I, pp. 392-409, II, pp. 175-92, 201-54;
Rahman, pp. 94-99, 128-40;
Sources, nos. 46-49.

XI. Week of Nov. 20.

- a) The Crusades and the Islamic Reaction.

Readings: Hodgson, II, pp. 255-68;
Sources, nos. 50-53.

XII. Week of Nov 27.

- a) The Mongol Eruption and its Aftermath.
b) A Slave Regime in Full Flower: Mamluk Egypt.

Readings: Hodgson, II, pp. 286-315;
Sources, nos. 54-56.
B. Lewis, Race and Slavery in the Middle East, pp. 3-71.

XIII. Week of Dec. 4.

- a) Reflections on the Islamic Past: Ibn Khaldûn.
b) Conclusion: Unity in Diversity in Islamic Civilization

Quiz on Friday, Dec. 8.

Readings: Hodgson, II, pp. 437-55, 476-84;
Ibn Khaldûn, The Muqqadimah, pp. 11-69, 91-115, 138-71, 256-309

XIV. Week of Dec. 11.

Paper 2 due on Monday, Dec. 11.

- a) Wrap-up.

Readings: Hodgson, II, pp. 329-68;
Rahman, pp. 235-65.