

## COURSE SYLLABUS



**History 119: Arab-Islamic Civilizations**  
**Department of History, Moravian College**  
**Instructor: Dr. Akbar Keshodkar**  
**Spring 2015**

*Office Hours:* Wednesdays, 10 am – 1 pm, or by appointment

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The arrival of Islam in the seventh century marked a significant shift in Near Eastern History. This course is a survey of the early history of Arabic and Islamic civilizations, between the sixth and fourteenth centuries. In the course, we will examine socio-economic, cultural and religious developments that shaped the interactions between Muslim and non-Muslim societies in the Middle and Near East region. Through examination of a variety of primary sources and class discussions, students will have the opportunity to gain first hand understanding of the complexities and controversies that shaped the history of different Muslim societies. The course will also cover themes as mysticism, law and philosophy, as they took shape in Arab-Islamic civilizations.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

By the end of the course, students should have improved their ability in:

- Developing an understanding of the diversity in the history of Islamic societies
- Identifying major events and themes in early Arab-Islamic History
- Engaging in exploring different types of historical evidence and how they shape historical analysis
- Critically evaluating and interpreting a variety of primary sources and acquiring an awareness of the issues involved in interpreting primary sources
- Developing writing conventions appropriate to the discipline of History

## **COURSE MATERIALS:**

### Required reading:

The following book is available for purchase at the college bookstore:

Egger, Vernon. 2004. *A History of the Muslim World to 1405: The making of a Civilization*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall (ISBN: 9780130983893)

Hazleton, Lesley. 2010. *After the Prophet: The Epic Story of the Sunni-Shia Split in Islam*. New York: Random House (ISBN: 9780385523943)

Additional articles and primary source documents required for the course can be accessed through the college library electronic journal database or will be posted on blackboard.

### Supplementary Reading:

Arkoun, Mohammed. 1994. *Rethinking Islam: Common Questions, Uncommon Answers*.

Translated by Robert Lee. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press

Black, Anthony. 2011. *The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present*.

Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press

Coulson, N.J. 2011. *A History of Islamic Law*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press

Esposito, John. 2005. *Islam – The Straight Path*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Hodgson, Marshall. 1977. *The Ventures of Islam: The Classical Age of Islam*. Volume 1. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Kamrava, Mehran (ed.). 2007. *The New Voices of Islam: Rethinking Politics and Modernity – A Reader*. Berkeley: University of California Press  
Lapidus, Ira. 2002. *A History of Muslim Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press  
Nasr, Seyyed Housin. 2002. *Islam: Religion, History, Civilization*. New York: HarperOne

#### Relevant Websites:

Islamic History Internet Sourcebook: <http://legacy.fordham.edu/Halsall/islam/islamsbook.asp>

Muslim Heritage: <http://www.muslimheritage.com/>

Islamic History resources at University of Georgia: <http://islam.uga.edu/history.html>

BBC link on Islam: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/>

Metropolitan Museum of Art – Art of the Islamic World: <http://www.metmuseum.org/learn/for-educators/publications-for-educators/art-of-the-islamic-world>

#### Videos:

Islam: Empire of Faith <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHhbSvOcz4g>

The Message: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWmUAPi6pJU>

Science and Islam: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qL41gX0fJng>

The Golden Age of Islam:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QEfJk98x7GU&list=PLyAur61WEaIyd1pySxf1uXVqyQRzZUaJ2>

What did the Ancients do for Us - Islamic Civilization

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMon04ie2pE>

#### **COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS:**

1. *Attendance and Participation:* Students are required to *attend* class regularly and *participate* in discussions. Questions, feedback, and student interaction are an integral part of the learning process, and will supplement lectures and films. Students should come prepared, having read the assigned materials prior to coming to class and having course materials accessible during class. Chronic absences, tardiness and leaving early will adversely affect your grade. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class on random days and tardiness or absences on those occasions will result in a deduction of 5 points per infraction from the class participation grade. Absences due to illness or emergencies must be communicated to the instructor prior to the class.
2. *Basic classroom rules:* While in class, students are expected to use appropriate language with the instructor as well with each other, have their cell phones on silent and not be involved in personal conversations with each other or any activities which would disrupt the classroom environment. Infraction of these rules will result in a deduction of 20 points from the class participation grade and the student being asked to leave the classroom.
3. *Plagiarism:* I take plagiarism, copying someone else's work and representing it as your own, very seriously. This applies to all work submitted for the course. Students will be required to submitted all work done outside of the classroom on Safe Assign, through Blackboard.

**Plagiarism, academic dishonesty, or cheating will result in an automatic grade of F for the course.** If a student's work is suspected of plagiarism, the student as well the Dean's office will be notified of the offence and it will be the student's responsibility to demonstrate evidence reflecting the originality of the work, such as all notes and other materials utilized in developing the submitted work. Students should refer to the college's academic handbook for more information about plagiarism.

4. *Blackboard:* All assignments, additional reading materials, announcements and information related to the course will be posted on Blackboard. It is the students' responsibility to check Blackboard and their Moravian College email on a regular basis throughout the semester.
5. *Accommodating disabilities:* Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Academic and Disability Support, located in the lower level of Monocacy Hall, or by calling [610-861-1401](tel:610-861-1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.
6. *Quizzes:* Starting week 2, there will be short, weekly quizzes on reading materials every Thursday. The quizzes will commence at the beginning of the class and students will have 10 minutes to complete them. Students should note that no makeups will be offered and those arriving late would not receive extra time to complete the quizzes. Students will also be allowed to drop the lowest quiz grade.
7. *Novel Essay:* Students will read the Hazleton novel and subsequently write a 1500 word essay answering a specific question for which directions will be posted on Blackboard. The essay should be submitted typed, doubled spaced, in Times New Roman font, Type 12, with standard one-inch margins and with proper citations and bibliography. Students may only use academic journals and published books for acquiring materials. Under no circumstances are online sites that are not academic journals, considered acceptable for citation on papers. Students must also ensure to use correct grammar, as that will account for 10% of the grade on each paper. No late papers will be accepted.
8. *Midterm and Final Exam:* The midterm and final exam will cover material from lectures, discussions, films, and reading, consisting of objective questions (e.g. short answer questions), primary source documents and/or essay questions. Questions will be primarily based on the assigned readings and supplementary materials. Make-up exams will be given only in emergency situations, and you should contact me before the scheduled exam if possible.
9. *Explanation and Breakdown of Grades:*

Attendance and Class Participation	10%
Novel Essay	20%
Weekly Quizzes	25%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	20%

Grade Equivalence		
A	4.0	93 – 100
A-	3.7	90 – 92.9%
B+	3.3	87 – 89.9%
B	3.0	83 – 86.9%
B-	2.7	80 – 82.9%
C+	2.3	77 – 79.9%
C	2.0	73 – 76.9%
C-	1.7	70 – 72.9%
D+	1.3	67 – 69.9%
D	1.0	63 – 66.9%
D-	0.7	60 – 62.9%
F	0	59.9% and below

- A/A-: Excellent; performance was outstanding and surpassed all expectations set forth in the course; consistently displayed superior grasp of course materials in assessments and through participation in class activities
- B+/B: Above average; fulfilled all requirements set forth in the course with a very good grasp of course materials in assessments and through class participation
- B-/C+/C: Average; adequately fulfilled course requirements, average performance on assessments, participation in class activities was satisfactory
- C-/D+/D/D-: Below average; performance minimally acceptable to pass the course, consistently displaying inadequate understanding of course materials on assessments and not sufficiently participating in class activities
- F: Failure to demonstrate basic understanding of course materials, consistently underperforming on assessments and not adequately participating in class activities

10. *Withdrawals/Incompletes*: Under no circumstances will a student receive an academic incomplete if they are failing the course or if they have done little or no work. In circumstances that an Incomplete is given, it will be the responsibility of the student to ensure that the work is submitted on time and meets the requirements of the course. If work is not submitted by the deadline given, the student will automatically receive an “F”.

## COURSE OUTLINE/SCHEDULE

The course will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:10 pm – 2:20 pm. Students are required to come prepared for each class, having completed the reading assignments beforehand. Unless indicated, all the required readings listed below are from Vernon Egger (VE). Other required reading materials will be posted on Blackboard and can also be accessed through the college library's electronic Journal collection (BB). Primary sources can be accessed either through the indicated links or from the VE book.

### Week 1:

20 Jan 2015 Introduction to the course - Discussion of course expectations and requirements

22 Jan 2015 Ch. 1, Southwestern Asia in the Seventh Century, pg. 4-20 (VE)  
Primary source: Procopius of Caesarea, *History of the Wars*, c. 550 CE  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/arabia1.asp#Procopius>

### Week 2:

27 Jan 2015 The emergence of Islam  
Ch. 1, "The rise of Islam," pg. 20-30 (VE)  
Primary source: "The Constitution of Medina", 622 CE  
[http://www.constitution.org/cons/medina/con\\_medina.htm](http://www.constitution.org/cons/medina/con_medina.htm)

29 Jan 2015 Video – The Empire of Faith (Part 1)

### Week 3:

3 Feb 2015 The Tenets of Islam  
Primary source: Excerpts from the Quran, Chapters 1 and 47  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/koran-sel.asp>

5 Feb 2015 Primary source: Hadiths of Muhammad (read only first 20)  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/misc-hadith.asp>  
Primary source: The Sunnah of Muhammad (read until on "Dumb Animals")  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/sunnah-horne.asp>

### Week 4:

10 Feb 2015 Islamic Expansion outside Arabia  
Ch. 2, "Arab Imperialism," pg. 33-59

12 Feb 2015 Primary source: The Pact of Omar (d. 644)  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/pact-umar.asp>  
Primary source: *The History of The Patriarchs of Alexandria*, 642 CE  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/642Egypt-conq2.asp#The%20History%20of%20The%20Patriarchs%20of%20Alexandria>  
Primary source: "The arrival of al-Hajjaj in Kufa," pg. 57 (VE)

### Week 5:

17 Feb 2015 The Break up of the Muslim Community  
Ch. 3, "The Development of Sectarianism," pg. 62-84 (VE)

- 19 Feb 2015 Primary Source: "The Right Caliph: The Shi'ite Version," p. 76 (VE)  
Video: Sunni-Shia Divide  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNK\\_Uk0fw5A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNK_Uk0fw5A)
- Week 6:  
24 Feb 2015 Rise of New Caliphates  
Ch. 4, "The Center cannot hold: Three Caliphates," pg. 85-112 (VE)
- 26 Feb 2015 Primary source: "A commercial city in the Mediterranean," p. 107 (VE)  
Primary source: Yakut, "Baghdad under the Abbasids," c. 1000 CE  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1000baghdad.asp>  
Primary source: Arabs, Franks, and the Battle of Tours, 732: Three Accounts  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/732tours.asp>
- Week 7:  
3 Mar 2015 **Midterm Exam**
- 5 Mar 2015 Class discussion of the Hazleton novel
- Week 8:  
10 Mar 2015: NO CLASS (Spring Break)  
12 Mar 2015: NO CLASS (Spring Break)
- Week 9:  
17 Mar 2015 Rise of Other Islamic States  
NO in class meeting (students should work on papers)
- 19 Mar 2015 Ch. 6, "Filling the Power Vacuum, 950-1100," pg. 142-170 (VE)
- Week 10:  
24 Mar 2015 Approaches to Reason, Tradition and Mysticism  
Ch. 5, "Synthesis and Creativity," pg. 114-138 (VE)
- 26 Mar 2015 **Hazleton Papers Due**  
Primary source: Sayings of Mansur Al-Hallaj  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/all-hallaj-quotations.asp>  
Primary source: Ibn Rushd, *Religion and Philosophy: Problem Fifth – The Day of Judgment*, c. 1190  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1190averroes.asp#Problem%20Fifth:%20The%20Day%20of%20Judgment>  
Primary Source: Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, "The Remembrance of Death and the Afterlife," from *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, (d. 1111)  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/alghazali.asp>
- Week 11:  
31 Mar 2015 Conflicts with Christians  
Ch. 7, "Barbarians at the Gate, 1100-1260," pg. 172-198 (VE)

- 2 Apr 2015 Primary source: Fulk of Chartres: The Capture of Jerusalem, 1099  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/fulk2.asp>  
Primary source: “Franks through Muslim Eyes,” p. 177 (VE)
- Week 12:  
7 Apr 2015 Constructing Muslim Ideologies  
Ch. 8, “The Consolidation of Traditions,” pg. 199-227 (VE)
- 9 Apr 2015 Primary source: “A Handbook for Sufi Novices,” p. 208 (VE)  
Primary source: Ibn Sina, “On Medicine” c. 1020  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1020Avicenna-Medicine.asp>
- Week 13:  
14 Apr 2015 The Fall of the Islamic Center  
Ch. 10, “The Great Transformation,” pg. 260-288 (VE)
- 16 Apr 2015 Primary source: “In the presence of Timur,” pg. 286 (VE)  
Primary source: Ibn Al-Athir, “On the Tartars,” c. 1221  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1220al-Athir-mongols.asp>
- Week 14:  
21 Apr 2015 Islamic Diversity in post-Mongol Era  
Ch. 11, “Unity and Diversity in Islamic Traditions,” pg. 290-317 (VE)
- 23 Apr 2015: Primary sources: “The People’s Poet,” pg. 300 (VE)
- Week 15:  
28 Apr 2015 The Challenges in defining the Muslim community  
Ch. 9, “The Muslim Commonwealth,” pg. 229-255 (VE)
- 30 Apr 2015 Primary source: “Jihad in the Sharia,” pg. 235 (VE)
- FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, 5 May, 8:30 am**



**Writing Assessment Rubric for the Course:**

Criteria	Comments	Percentage			
<p><b><u>Content Analysis (70%)</u></b>                      How well does the student respond to the Question/prompt? Are the arguments relevant, sufficient, explained clearly, persuasive?                      Is the synthesis of information adequate, and can the student differentiate between objective and subjective analysis? Is the thesis well developed? Is there both a specific and broader dimension to the argument? Is the evidence sufficient and adequately explained in relevance to the thesis?</p>		Strong	Good	Adequate	Weak
		63-70	54-62	49-53	48 >
		/ 70%			
<p><b><u>Information Literacy (10%)</u></b>                      Has the student chosen appropriate sources? Has the student utilized sufficient number of sources? Is quoted material used effectively? Are sources acknowledge and cited correctly (in-text and bibliography)? Are citations missing?</p>		Strong	Good	Adequate	Weak
		9-10	8	7	6 >
		/ 10%			
<p><b><u>Organization &amp; Style (10%)</u></b>                      Is the essay well-organized, with an introduction and conclusion? Is supporting evidence presented logically within each paragraph? Are there clear and appropriate links between the paragraphs?                      Does the student use an academic writing style, with a variety of well-structured simple, compound and complex sentences? Is the vocabulary sufficiently academic and accurate?</p>		Strong	Good	Adequate	Weak
		9-10	8	7	6 >
		/ 10%			
<p><b><u>Correctness / Accuracy (10%)</u></b>                      Are commas and full-stops used accurately? Are capital letters used correctly? Is spelling sufficiently accurate? Are verb forms (tense and agreement) used appropriately and accurately?</p>		Strong	Good	Adequate	Weak
		9-10	8	7	6 >
		/ 10%			
Total Percentage		/ 100%			

#### A paper (90-100)

- The student responds well to the prompt, using relevant, logical arguments with strong understanding of the evidence.
- Sources are appropriate for the topic, and quoted material is used effectively. All sources are correctly cited.
- The essay is well-organized, with a clear thesis, evidence is presented clearly, and the ideas and paragraphs are well-linked; good use of academic writing style, with a variety of sentence types, and academic vocabulary use is varied and appropriate for the topic.
- Language use is accurate, with correct punctuations and spelling. Occasional errors with prepositions and articles.

#### B paper (80-89)

- Student responds relatively well, and most arguments and evidence are relevant, with clear understanding of the evidence.
- Most sources are appropriate for the topic, and quoted material is used effectively most of the time. Only occasional inaccuracies of logic or citation.
- The essay is mostly well-organized, with a clear thesis, some evidence is presented clearly, and the ideas are well-linked. The student uses an academic writing style, with a variety of sentence types that are mostly well-structured. Academic vocabulary use is varied and mostly appropriate for the topic.
- Language use is mostly accurate, punctuation is generally well-controlled, some spelling errors in less common words. May be several errors with prepositions and articles.

#### C paper (70-79)

- The student responds adequately to the prompt, with some arguments and evidence that are relevant and with partial understanding of the evidence.
- Most sources are appropriate for the topic, and quoted material is used effectively some of the time. More frequent inaccuracies of logic and citation.
- Attempts to organize the essay, with a thesis, and attempts to organize ideas within paragraphs, but with only limited success. Some evidence is presented clearly, and some ideas are well-linked. The student attempts to use an academic writing style, with a variety of simple and compound sentence that are mostly well-structured, and some complex sentences. Academic vocabulary is attempted.
- Language use is varied, attempts at accurate punctuation, but more frequent errors, frequent spelling mistakes in less common words. Errors with prepositions and articles may be frequent, but do not impede meaning.

#### D paper (60-69)

- The student responds minimally to the prompt, with limited arguments and evidence that are relevant and with little understanding of the evidence.
- Some sources are relevant to topic, but quoted material is ineffective, inappropriate. Frequent inaccuracies of logic and citation.
- Limited attempt to organize the essay, thesis is unclear, and limited attempts to organize ideas within paragraphs. Evidence and ideas are not presented clearly or logically linked. The student has limited control of academic writing style, sentences are poorly-structured, and complex sentences are rarely attempted. Vocabulary use is rather basic.
- Language use is varied, punctuation is often inaccurate, spelling mistakes even in common words. Errors with prepositions, articles, verb forms may be frequent and sometimes impede meaning.

#### Failing paper (below 60)

- Failure to respond to the prompt, with irrelevant information and little or no understanding of the evidence.
- Sources are not relevant, and quoted material, if any, is ineffective or inappropriate. No attempt at citation.
- Very little attempt to organize the essay, no thesis is presented, and information within paragraphs is not organized. Evidence and ideas are unclear. Academic writing style is not attempted, and even basic sentences are poorly -structured. Vocabulary use is inadequate.
- Little control of language, with inaccurate punctuation and frequent spelling mistakes in common words. Errors with prepositions, articles, verb forms are frequent and cause difficulty for the reader.