

HIST 120: THE FOUNDATIONS OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION

Near Eastern History and Society, ca. 600-1500 CE

This course explores the history of the Near East from ca. 600-1500 CE, spanning three macro-sections of Islamic history: 1) the end of 'Late Antiquity' and the origins of Islam (600-750); 2) the efflorescence of the caliphate (750-1000); and the maturation of Islamicate civilization in Middle Period (1000-1500). In addition to lectures and secondary background readings, students read and discuss samples of key primary sources, including literary texts and artifacts of material culture, all with a view to exploring Islamic civilization through the direct voices of the people who witnessed its birth and participated in its creation. All readings are in English translation. No prior background in the subject is required.

INSTRUCTOR: SEAN W. ANTHONY, Assistant Professor of History

Office: 309 McKenzie Hall

Office Hours: Tues, 9-11am, 1-3pm; or by appointment

Email: swanthon@uoregon.edu

Course Website. Please consult the course website regularly for announcements. The website is accessible via UofO's *Blackboard* system (see <http://blackboard.uoregon.edu>). The site contains general course information, reading assignments, research guides, lecture handouts, study questions for discussion, paper assignments, visual images, links to other sites, etc.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

The course consists of three 50 minute meetings per week; normally, Monday and Wednesday will be dedicated to lectures, with Friday set aside for discussions (some weeks may vary). Please read the assigned materials during the week they are assigned, and come to discussions prepared with questions and observations on the readings.

Readings: Assigned readings for each week are indicated on the attached schedule of lectures. All *books* on the syllabus been placed on reserve at the library; all *articles* and *primary readings* can be found online at the library website via *e-reserve*. There is also a link to these e-reserves on blackboard. Reading assignments given by author only on the syllabus (e.g., "Berkey, 1-25") refer to the books listed below, which are available for purchase from the university bookstore.

Required:

Berkey, Jonathan P. *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600-1800*.

Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002.

Donner, Fred M. *Muhammad and the Believers*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2010.

Recommended (for a more detailed historical narrative):

Kennedy, Hugh. *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 2nd ed. Harlow: Pearson, 2004.

In addition to the assigned readings, a number of other works have been placed on reserve in the library. Some of these may be of assistance to you if you wish to explore particular subjects in more detail.

Discussions and class participation: On discussion day you are required to turn in a minimum of 3 questions on the assigned readings *prior to the beginning of class*. Your class participation grade is directly dependent on your turning in these questions and your *vocal* participation in class discussions.

Map assignment: Assigned during the first week, this assignment simply requires you to locate various geographical and topographical items essential to understanding the events of Islamic history.

Papers: One short, mid-term paper on an assigned topic and one 'longish', final term paper on a topic of your choice will be required. The purpose of these papers is two-fold: 1) to stimulate you to think more carefully about certain questions covered in the course and to formulate your ideas on them; 2) to exercise your skills in writing an historical essay. The term paper is intended be your own research in secondary sources as well as the product of your attempt to interpret and synthesize the data you find. Emphasis in grading will be placed on clarity of thought, clarity of expression, written polish, and effective support of your arguments with available evidence. For full criteria see the **grading rubric** document on the course website under the 'Assignments' folder.

Papers must be handed in punctually. Papers may be submitted until 5:00pm on the days indicated on the syllabus below. Please submit to me an electronic copy of your paper, as a Word (.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) file, by emailing it to Islamic.history.papers@gmail.com by 5:00pm Pacific Standard Time on the due date. (This is an address to which only I have access to and utilize to keep my Oregon mailbox from getting too cluttered.) Delays are unacceptable; they not only complicate grading but are unfair to others who have striven to submit their essays on time. For this reason, *penalties will be assessed for lateness*. Please do not ask for extensions: if you have sports or work commitments or requirements for other courses, you are expected to plan ahead and manage your time effectively so that the assignment can be submitted on time. If you have legitimate concerns, please contact me well in advance (at least 2 weeks).

Examinations and Tests: There will be no long-essay examinations; there will be two short-essay Mid-Terms consisting of a number of brief identifications, plus the two papers described above.

Final Grade Tally: Course grades will be computed as follows: Map Assignment 5%; Short Mid-Term Paper, 10%; Class Participation, 10%; Mid-Term, 25%; Final Term Paper, 25%; Final 25%.

REFERENCE WORKS

A selection of basic reference dealing with Islamic history and civilization be found at the Knight Library and accessed via the library's online resources. Below is a list of the most authoritative and useful:

- *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition ; the gold standard of Islamic studies and abbreviated as *EI*: <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.libproxy.uoregon.edu/>. Sometimes finding an entry can be quirky, since the letter 'j' in Arabic words, as in *hijra* or *jihād*, is always written as '*dj*'. Hence, one should look up *hijra* and *jihād* under *hidjra* and *djihād*, respectively.

- *Encyclopaedia of Islam THREE*; the third edition of *EI²* is underway but still in its infancy, mostly including articles falling under the letter ‘A’.
- *Encyclopedia Iranica* (<http://www.iranicaonline.org>); an undertaking even more massive than *EI²*, *EIr* covers the entirety of Iranian history and culture. Although its printed version has only reached the initial parts of ‘K’, a great deal of important articles to appear in print in the future can still be accessed online for free, as it’s open source. Its transliteration system is almost completely impenetrable to non-specialists, unfortunately, so it can be difficult to find entries alphabetically. Using the search function on the website, however, usually works wonder.
- *Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān*, ed. J. D. MacAuliffe. Brill: Leiden, 2001-2006.
- *New Cambridge History of Islam*, 6 vols., ed. Chase Robinson, e.a. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010
- *Cambridge History of Egypt*
- *Cambridge History of Iran*
- JSTOR (<http://www.jstor.org>): useful for essentially any class you’ll take here at Oregon, by logging into jstor.org via Oregon’s proxy server and/or at the library, you have access to a wealth of scholarly articles on Islamic history and civilization. If you’re looking for a place to find sources on the Internet, this should be one of your first stops. (Alas, Wikipedia, while sometimes dependable for dates, tends to be VERY unreliable and/or ideological for Islamic history.)

On the **course website** I have also provided two introductory guides on the conventions of Islamic history that you will likely find essential;

- Arabic Names: A primer for beginners (or, why is everyone called ‘Abū So-and-so’ and ‘Ibn So-and-so’)
- Transliteration in Islamic Studies (a guide to the arcane science of deciphering the different methods used by scholars for writing Arabic, Persian and Turkish in the Latin alphabet-- something that will prove very useful when attempting to use the encyclopedias to research your term papers)

LECTURE & READING SCHEDULE

I. The Near (Middle) East Before Islam

Week 1 (Donner, ch. 1; Berkey, 1-37)

1.a. (Jan 6) Course Organization; Introduction to Islamic History, or, What makes Islamic history 'Islamic'?

1.b. (Jan 8) The World of 'Late Antiquity' before Islam

1.c. Reading Discussion

- Excerpts from *The Doctrine of Jacob the Recently Baptized*

- Pseudo-Sebeos on the advent of Islam, tr. R. W. Thomson

- The Emperor Heraclius and Muḥammad, from Ma‘mar ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, tr. S.W. Anthony

II. The Emergence of Islam, 600-750

Week 2 (Donner, ch. 2; Berkey, 39-69)

2.a. (Jan 13) Muḥammad's Arabia: Methods and Challenges for Modern Scholarship

2.b. (Jan 15: **Map Assignment Due**) Muḥammad's Message and Community: Qur'ān and *Umma*

2.c. Reading Discussion

- Muḥammad's Call, from Ma‘mar ibn Rāshid, trans. S.W. Anthony

- Excerpts from the Qur'ān

- The *Umma* Document, tr. F. M. Donner

- Patricia Crone, "What do we actually know about Muḥammad?"

Online: http://www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe_islam/mohammed_3866.jsp

Week 3 (Donner, chs. 3, 4; Berkey, 70-75, 83-91)

3.a. (Jan 20: **Short essay assigned**) The Caliphate and the Islamic Conquests

3.b. (Jan 22) The Origins of Sectarianism

3.c. Reading Discussion

- Theophilus of Edessa on the Islamic Conquests, tr. Robert Hoyland
- The Dispute of 'Alī and Mu'āwiya, from Ma'mar ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*, tr. S.W. Anthony
- Wilferd Madelung, "Shi'ism in the Time of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs," in L. Clarke, ed., *Shi'ite Heritage* (New York 2001), 9-18

Week 4 (P. Cobb, "The Empire in Syria, 705-763," *NCHI*, 1: 226-68 and E. Daniel, "Abbasid Revolution," *EP*³)

- 4.a. (Jan 27) The Umayyads: Islam and the Rhetoric of Empire
- 4.b. (Jan 29: **Short essay due**) The *mawālī* and the 'Abbāsid Revolution
- 4.c. Reading Discussion

- al-Walīd II on the caliphate, tr. P. Crone and M. Hinds
- The execution of Ghaylān of Damascus, tr. S. Anthony
- Excerpt from *The Book of Sulaym ibn Qays*, tr. P. Crone
- Inscriptions from the Dome of Rock, tr. F. Donner

III. The Consolidation of Islam, 750-1000

Week 5 (Berkey, 111-129)

- 5.a. (Feb 3) The Abbasid Caliphate: From Empire to Commonwealth
- 5.b. (Feb 5) **MID-TERM**
- 5.c. Readings Discussion

- An Anti-Arab Lampoon, by Bashshār ibn Burd, tr. G.J. van Gelder
- Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawhīdī on the superiority of the Arabs, tr. van Gelder

Week 6 (Berkey, 130-175)

- 6.a. (Feb 10) Two Visions: The Formation Shi'ite and Sunni Orthodoxy
- 6.b. (Feb 12) From Asceticism to Mysticism: The Emergence of Sufism
- 6.c. Reading Discussion

- Excerpt from al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance from Error*, tr. W. M. Watt

- Excerpt from al-Hakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Khātam al-awliyā*, tr. M. Cooperson
- Excerpt from al-Hallāj, *Tā’Sīn*, tr. Michael Sells

Week 7 (S. Brentjes and R. G. Morrison, “The Sciences in Islamic Societies (750-1800),” *NCHI* 4: 564-369; M. Marín, “Women, gender, and Sexuality,” *NCHI* 4:355-80)

7.a. (**Feb 17**) What is good? What is True? The Efflorescence of Islamicate Science and Philosophy

7.b. (**Feb 19**) The Good Life: The Pursuit of Love and Pleasure

7.c. Reading Discussion

- Abu Sahl b. Nowbakht on the Origins of Arabic Science, trans. Kevin van Bladel
- al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī on the nightlife of Baghdad, tr. E. Selove
- Abū Nuwās on Love and Wine, tr. Ph. Kennedy
- Jāḥīz, *The Epistle of on Singing Girls*, tr. A.F.L. Beeston

Part IV - The Transformation Islam in the Middle Period, 1000-1500

Week 8 (Berkey, 177-202)

8.a. (**Feb 24**) From Slaves on Horses The Turks and the Saljuqs

Read also: D.G. Tor, “The Mamluks in the Military of Pre-Seljuq Persianate Dynasties,” *IJBIPS* 46 (2008), 213-25 or D.G. Tor, “Sovereign and Religious’: The Religious Life of the Great Seljuq Sultans,” in C. Lange and S. Mecit, eds., *The Seljuqs: Politics, Society and Culture* (Edinburgh 2011), 39-62.

8.b. (**Feb 26**) ... to the Mongol Hordes: The Fall of the ‘Abbāsid caliphate and the Chinggisids

Read also: Michel Biran, “The Chinggisid Legacy in Muslim World,” from: *Chinggis Khan* (London 2007), ch. 4.

8.c. Reading Discussion

- Jāḥīz, *The Virtues of the Turks*
- *Hudūd al-‘ālam* on the lands of the Turks
- Rashīd al-Dīn on Hülegü and the last ‘Abbāsid Caliph, tr. W. Thackston

Week 9 (Berkey, 203-248; also A. Bennison, *The Great Caliphs* (New Haven, Conn., 2010), chs. 3-4)

9.a. (**Mar 3**) Patterns of Social Organization: Merchants, Farmers and Pilgrims

9.b. (**Mar 5**) The Institutionalization of Knowledge: The Madrasa and Khanaqah

9.c. Reading Discussion

- Excerpts from Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima*, tr. F. Rosenthal

- Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī burns his books, tr. W. al-Qādī

Week 10 (Berkey, 259-69)

10.a. (**Mar 10**) Islamic History and the Modern World

10.b. (**Mar 12**) Reading discussion

-Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 73.3 (Summer 1993): 22-49.

-Osama bin Laden, "To the Americans," in: Bruce Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama bin Laden*, trans. James Howarth (London: Verso, 2005)

-Roy Mottahedeh, "The Clash of Civilizations: An Islamicist's Critique," *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 2 (1996): 1-26.

10.b. Review for final