Oberlin College
MENA Program and Department of History
HIST-121, Fall 2009
History of the Middle East and North Africa (I):
From the Rise of Islam to 1800

Professor Zeinab Abul-Magd
MWF 11:00-11:50am
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Office hours: Monday 12-1, Tuesday 3-4, and by appointment

Course Description
This course examines the history of the Middle East from the rise of Islam until 1800. Moving between primary sources and secondary readings, the course studies crucial moments in Islamic history and addresses many questions that are still relevant to issues in the MENA region and the world at large today. It covers the formation of Islam as a religion and civilization; Islamic governments, sciences, law, theology, philosophy, and literature; women and gender in Islamic text and context; Jewish and Christian minorities in Islamic text and context; and encounters between East and West and the question of Jihad.

The course begins with looking at the foundations of Islam in Near Eastern civilizations and religions, especially Judaism and Christianity. Then it covers the message and life of Muhammad, looking at the Qur’an and Hadith and reading through the biographies of Muhammad’s companions and wives. It looks at the period that followed Muhammad’s death, which witnessed the expansion of the Islamic empire and the rise of caliphates and dynasties. This period also witnessed the beginning of sectarianism, or the emergence of shi’i and sunni religious and political factions. The course then studies different Islamic systems of government in both Sunni and Shi’i states. Islamic medicine, sciences, mysticism, shari’a law, theology, philosophy, and literature all flourished under the patronage of these states, and the Islamic city became the global center of trade and learning. After that, the course looks closely at the Crusades, a moment in which the West encountered the East, and Islamic Jihad took up a new shape. Then the course puts special emphasis on issues of Jewish and Christian minorities in Islamic states, as well as issues of women and gender in Islamic societies. Finally, the course looks at another moment of encounter between the East and the West: the Napoleonic campaign in Egypt, which invoked Islamic Jihad anew.

Course Requirements and Grading
(1) Class attendance and participation (20%)
(2) Two reflection papers on readings (1-2 pages) (10%, 5% each)
(On the readings of any two sessions in weeks 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 due to be posted on Blackboard one hour before class)
(3) Mid-term exam (20%) (in class, October 14th)
(4) Map quiz (10%) (Nov. 16th)
(5) Book review (20%) (4-5 pages) (Dec. 2nd)
   (Juan Cole, Napoleon's Egypt)
(6) Final Paper (20%) (Dec. 15th at 11:00am- NO extensions)
   (Choose a topic and discuss it with Zeinab for approval and sources)

Required Texts
- Chris Lowney, A Vanished World: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Medieval Spain (Oxford University Press, 2006)
- Laila Ahmad, Women and Gender in Islam (Yale University Press, 1993)
- Amin Maalouf, Samarqand (Interlink Publishing Group, 1998)

Course Schedule

WEEK 1
M August 31
   Introduction

W Sept 2
L Pre-Islamic Empires, Civilizations, and Religions
   Fisher, ch. 2
   Berkeley, "the Religions of Late Antiquity", pp. 10-38 (electronic reserve)

F Sept 4
L Prophet Muhammad: Life and Message
   Fisher, ch. 3, 7

WEEK 2
M Sept 7
L Happy Labor Day (No Class)

W Sept 9
L Early Caliphas, Umayyads, and Expansion
   Fisher, ch. 4, 5
   Fred Donner, "The Islamic Conquests," pp. 28-47 (electronic reserve)

F Sept 11
D Biographies of Prophet's Companions and Wives
   The "Rightly Guided Caliphs":
   http://www.msawest.net/islam/politics/firstfourcaliphs.html
\textbf{'Aisha Bint Abi Bakr:}\hfill
\url{http://www.msawest.net/islam/history/biographies/sahaabah/bio.AISHAH_BINT_ABI_BAKR.html}

Fatima bint Muhammad:  
\url{http://www.msawest.net/islam/history/biographies/sahaabah/bio.FATIMAH_BINT_MUHAMMAD.html}

\textbf{WEEK 3}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{M} Sept 14
  \item \textbf{L} Beginnings of Sectarianism
    \begin{itemize}
      \item Robert Gleave, "Shi'ism," pp. 87-103 (electronic reserve)
    \end{itemize}
  \end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{W} Sept 16
  \item \textbf{L} The Abbasid Caliphate
    \begin{itemize}
      \item Fisher, ch. 6
    \end{itemize}
  \end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{F} Sept 18
  \item \textbf{D} Hugh Kennedy, \textit{When Baghdad Ruled the Muslim World}, ch. 1, 3, 5, 7 (electronic reserve)
\end{itemize}

\textbf{WEEK 4}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{M} Sept 21
  \item \textbf{L} Islamic Governments: Sunni and Shi'i States
    \begin{itemize}
      \item Fisher, ch. 11, 12
    \end{itemize}
  \end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{W} Sept 23
  \item \textbf{L} Islamic Governments: Sunni and Shi'i States
    \begin{itemize}
      \item Fisher, 16, 17, 19
    \end{itemize}
  \end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{F} Sept 25
  \item \textbf{D} Amin Ma'luf, \textit{Samarkand} (Book 1,2 pp. 1-152)
\end{itemize}

\textbf{WEEK 5}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{M} Sep 28
    \begin{itemize}
      \item \textbf{Happy Yom Kippur (No Class)}
    \end{itemize}
  \end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{W} Sept 30
  \item \textbf{L} Islamic Theology, Rationalism, and Rebellion
    \begin{itemize}
      \item Ann Lambton, "Kharijis, and Zaydis: Murijs, Qaditis, and Mu'tazalis" (electronic reserve)
    \end{itemize}
  \end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{F} Oct 2
  \item \textbf{D} Islamic Philosophy and Secularism
    \begin{itemize}
      \item Ibn Rushd (Averroës), \textit{Religion & Philosophy}
      \item \url{http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1190averroes.html}
    \end{itemize}
  \end{itemize}
WEEK 6
M  Oct 5
L  Sufism: Male and Female Mystics
   Fisher, pp. 88-90
   http://www.islamicedfoundation.com/poetry/rabia.htm
   http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/all-hallaj-quotations.html
   http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1270rumi-poems1.html

W  Oct 7
D  Islamic Literature: Poetry, Stories, Biographies, Autobiographies, and Mirrors of Princes
   http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/arabianpoets1.html
   http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/1100Hariri.html
   http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/masoudi.html
   http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/med/1001.html

F  Oct 9
L  Islamic Medicine and Sciences
   Fisher, pp. 97-102
   (NO discussion Sessions this Friday)

WEEK 7
M  Oct 12
   Review Session

W  Oct 14
   Midterm exam

F  Oct 16
L  Islamic Architecture
   Documentary Video
      Paradise Found: Discovering Islamic Art

WEEK 8
Enjoy the Fall Break!

WEEK 9
M  Oct 26
L  Islamic Law: Theory, Courts, and Muftis
   Fisher, ch.8, pp. 86-88
   Albert Hourani, "The Culture of Ulama", pp. 158-165 (electronic reserve)
   Texts of Fatwas (distributed in class)
W Oct 28
D Shari’a Courts
   Leslie Pierce, Morality Tales: Law and Gender in the Ottoman Court of Aintab,
   (Selected Chapters On Blackboard)

F Oct 30
D The Travels of Ibn Battuta
   Russ Dunn, The Adventures of Ibn Battuta (Selected chapters on Blackboard)

WEEK 10
M Nov 2
L Islamic City: Trade and Learning
   Andre Raymond, “Urban Life and Middle Eastern Cities,” pp. 207-223
   (electronic reserve)

W Nov 4
L Waqf, Economy, and Politics
   Oded Peri, “Waqf and Ottoman Welfare Policy. The Poor Kitchen of Hasseki Sultan in
   Eighteenth-Century Jerusalem,”
   Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3632408

F Nov 6
D Arab Philosophy of History
   Ibn Khaldun, The Muqaddimah (electronic reserve)

WEEK 11
M Nov 9
L East Encounters West: The Crusades and Islamic Jihad
   Carole Hillenbrand, The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives (electronic reserve)

W Nov 11
L East Encounters West: The Ottoman Empire and Europe
   Jerry Brotton, The Renaissance Bazaar (electronic reserve)

F Nov 13
D East Encounters West: The Crusades and Islamic Jihad
   Usama Ibn Munqidh, An Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the
   Crusades, pp. 3-17, pp. 143-170 (electronic reserve)

WEEK 12
M Nov 16
L Jewish Quiz
L Jewish and Christian Minorities
   In Qur’an, Hadith, Fiqh, and Early Practices
   The Pact of ‘Umar

**W** Nov 18  
**D** Jewish and Christian Minorities  
*Chris Lowney, A Vanished World: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Medieval Spain (selections)*

**F** Nov 20  
**D** Women and Gender in Text and Context  
*Laila Ahmad, Women and Gender in Islam, ch. 2, 3*

**WEEK 13**  
**M** Nov 23  
*Class Cancelled (will be at MESA Conference)*

**W** Nov 25  
**L** Women and Gender in Text and Context  
*Laila Ahmad, Women and Gender in Islam, ch. 4, 5*

**F** Nov 27  
*Happy Thanksgiving!*

**WEEK 14**  
**M** Nov 30  
**D** Imperialism and Modernity  
*Juan Cole, Napoleon’s Egypt (Selected Chapters on Blackboard)*

**W** Dec 2  
*Book Review Due (Juan Cole, Napoleon’s Egypt)*  
**D** Imperialism and Modernity  
*Al-Jabarti’s Chronicle of the First Seven Months of the French Occupation, pp. 17-119 (electronic reserve)*

**F** Dec 4  
*Film Screening  
Edward Said: On Orientalism*

**WEEK 15**  
**M** Dec 7  
**D** Imperialism and Orientalism  
*Edward Said, Orientalism (Selected Chapters on Blackboard)*
W  Dec 9
D  Media, History, and Orientalism
   Edward Said, Orientalism (Selected Chapters on Blackboard)

F  Dec 11
   Conclusion