

Course Schedule

This course is heavily based on reading and discussing the assigned texts. In a nutshell: while there are no mid-term or final exams, there is a tremendous amount of in-class discussion and writing assignments. Please be prepared prior to class with the readings and/or preparation questions.

Download a PDF copy of our syllabus, [here](#).

(Week1)

8/22 Introduction

Syllabus

- Submit 1 question about the syllabus
- Tell me 3 areas of interest (in regard to the Middle East)

The Middle East Myths and Stereotypes

Watch [?What do you believe? Arabs, Muslims, and Stereotypes?](#) (TED Talk)

- What three words or images do you associate with Arabs or Muslims?

- Please record your responses to today's questions [here](#).]

(Week 2)

8/27 Middle East Geography

A Concise History of the Middle East ? Chapter 1

- Answer: How has physical geography affected the distribution of peoples and evolution of societies in the Middle East?
- Please record your responses to today's questions [here](#).]

[Gilgamesh](#) (WP)]

- Answer [these questions](#) and bring hard copy to next class for [Epic of Gilgamesh](#)]

8/29 Middle Eastern Civilization

Before Class:

A Concise History of the Middle East ? Chapter 2

Lockman, Zachary. [?In the Beginning.?](#) In Contending Visions of the Middle East (WP)

- What are the characteristics that are common among early Mesopotamian religion, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam?
- Is Islam merely a Judeo-Christian heresy or a distinct monotheist religion? Why?

In Class Discussion:

- ?It is the process of selective borrowing and creative recycling, which goes on even today, that makes delving into early images and attitudes useful for understanding how Islam and the Middle East would come to be understood and portrayed even in the modern era.?

- Explain the origins of the notions of East and West, and the persistence of this polarity.
- Did the Greeks see themselves as Europeans?
- How did the development of European Christianity and then Islam affect these notions?
- Discuss Europe's Arab-Muslim heritage

(Week 3)

9/3 **Labor Day ? No Class**

9/5 **Origins of Islam in Arabia and the Prophet Muhammad**

Before Class:

A Concise History of the Middle East, Chapter 3
About ritual life and Abrahamic tradition and the [Quran](#)

(Week 4)

9/10 **The Rise of Islam**

Before Class:

A Concise History of the Middle East, Chapter 4
[Muhammad's last sermon](#) (WP)]

In-Class Discussion:

- The Prophet ruled in the name of Islam. Did his successors?

9/12 The Islamic Empire

Before Class:

A Concise History of the Middle East, Chapter 5

[The Pact of ?Umar\]](#)

[Anon Arab Chronicler: The Battle of Poitiers, 732 \(WP\)\]](#)

[Yakut: Baghdad under the ?Abbasids \(WP\)\]](#)

In-Class Discussion:

- If Umayyad rule resulted in an Islamic revolution, what was the result of `Abbasid rule?

(Week 5)

9/17 Islamic Art

No new reading. [In class exercise.](#)

9/19 Museum Assignment

(Week 6)

9/24 Museum Assignment, continued

9/26 From Caliphate to Military State

Before Class:

A Concise History of the Middle East, Chapter 6

[Ussama b. al-Munqidh on the Franks \(WP\)\]](#)

[A Christian/Muslim debate of the 12th century \(WP\)\]](#)

- Ibn al-Athir:[On The Tatars, 1220-1221CE \(WP\)\]](#)

- [?The Merits of the Turks? ? Jahiz, Life and Works \(WP\)\]](#)

In-Class Discussion:

[Sources for Islamic Expansion](#)

- ?The Turks ? are the bedouin of the non-Arabs,? said Jahiz. Explain.
- What kind of accounts did these sources provide? (enumerate and identify authors and sources as extensively and precisely as possible)
- Describe the political situation of the Eastern Mediterranean at the arrival of the crusaders.
- ? What were the motives of the Mongols for conquest and what attitude/interactions did they have toward/with the population?namely, toward Jews, Christians, and Muslims?

(Week 8)

10/1 **Expansion continued**

10/3 **Intellectual Life in the Islamic World**

Before Class:

A Concise History of the Middle East, Chapter 7

[Al-Hallaj's sayings](#) (WP)]

[Nizam al-Mulk](#) on courtiers and familiars of kings (WP)]

[Hadith on fasting, collected by al-Bukhari](#) (WP) optional]

- Francis Robinson, [?Knowledge, its Transmission, and the Making of Muslim Societies?](#) (WP)]

Historical Assignment #1 due

(Week 8)

10/8 **No Class ? Fall Break**

10/10 **Europe and the Middle East: A Shared Renaissance**

Museum Assignment due

Before Class:

[Jerry Brotton, ?A Global Renaissance.?](#) The Renaissance Bazaar: From the Silk Road to Michelangelo (2002): 33-61. (WP)]

(Week 9)

10/15 **The Rise of Gunpowder Empires**

Before Class:

A Concise History of the Middle East, Chapter 8

10/17 **The Rise of Gunpowder Empires, cont.**

Before Class (optional):

- Chris Bayly, [?Political and Social Change in the Muslim Empires,?](#) in C.A. Bayly, Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780-1830 (London and New York: Longman, 1989), 16-34 (WP)

- Stephen Blake, 'Safavid, Ottoman, and Mughal Empires,' in Stephen Blake, *Time in Early Modern Islam: Calendar, Ceremony, and Chronology in the Safavid, Mughal, and Ottoman Empires* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 21-47. (WP)

(Week 10)

10/22 Empire in Iran: The Safavids

Before Class:

- Kathryn Babayan, 'The Safavids in Iranian History (1501-1722),' in Touraj Daryaee, *The Oxford Handbook of Iranian History*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 285-305 (WP)
- Andrew Newman, 'Monumental Challenges and Monumental Responses: The Reign of Abbas I (1587-1629),' in Andrew Newman, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 50-73

[al-Athir on the Tatars, 1220-21](#) (WP)]

[William of Rubrick's account of the Mongols](#) (?religious debate at the khan's court? & ?final audience with the khan?) (WP)]

Recommended Reading: Rudi Matthee, 'Was Safavid Iran an Empire?' *Journal of the Social and Economic History of the Orient* 52 (2009): 840-873 (WP)

10/24 Mughals and the Splendor of Imperial Capitals

Historical Assignment #2 due

Before Class:

- Catherine B. Asher and Cynthia Talbot, *India Before Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 25-52, 115-152 (WP)
- John F. Richards, 'The Economy, Societal Change, and International Trade,' in John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 185-204 (WP)
- François Bernier: [An Account of India and the Great Moghul, 1655 CE](#)]

[The Great Moghul Aurangzeb: Farewell, 1707 CE](#) (WP)]

Recommended Reading: Stephen Blake, 'Comparison and Conclusion,' in Stephen Blake, *Shahjahanabad: The Imperial City in Mughal India, 1639-1739* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 183-211. (WP)

(Week 11)

10/29 Empire in Europe and the Arab World: The Ottomans

Before Class:

- Ira M. Lapidus, 'Sultanates and Gunpowder Empires: The Middle East,' 347-394. (WP)
- Robert Irwin, 'The Emergence of the Islamic World System 1000-1500 (WP)

[The tribute of children, 1493](#) (WP)]

[Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq: The Turkish Letters, 1555-1562](#) (WP)]

[The Status of Jews and Christians in Muslim Lands, 1772 CE](#) (WP)]

In-class discussion:

- ?No distinction is attached to birth among the Turks?,? which according to de Busbecq was the reason for Ottoman success. Do you agree? Why?

10/31 Empire in Europe and the Arab World: The Ottomans, continued

Movie Suleyman the Magificent or in-class exercise

(Week 12)

11/5 Imperial Crisis and the West

Before Class:

A Concise History of the Middle East, Chapter 9

- David Ayalon, ?The Historian al-Jabart? and his Background,? in Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol. 23, No. 2. (1960): 217-249 (WP)
- Al-Jabarti, selection (13 pages). (WP)
- ?The Frankish Character? ? Usama b. Munqidh, Arab-Syrian Gentleman (WP)

In-class discussion:

- Was the breakdown of the ?circle of equity? a symptom or the cause of Ottoman decline?

11/7 Imperial Crisis and the West, continued

Movie : Youssef Chahine, Adieu, Bonaparte! (Egypt/France, 1985?113 min.)?selection or in-class exercise

(Week 13)

11/12 The Middle East in the Age of Colonialism and Nationalism

Before Class:

A Concise History of the Middle East, Chapter 11

- V. R. Nasr, ?European Colonialism and the Emergence of Modern Muslim States,? 549-600. (WP)
- Eric Hobsbawm, ?Introduction: Inventing Traditions,? in The Invention of Tradition, eds. E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (1983): 1-14. (WP)
- Susan Bayly, ?Racial Readings of Empire: Britain, France, and Colonial Modernity in the Mediterranean and Asia,? in Modernity & Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, eds. Leila T. Fawaz and C.A. Bayly (2002): 285-313. (WP)
- Recommended Reading: Ch.13:. OHI Stephen Dale, ?The Islamic World in the Age of European Expansion 1500-1800,? in

CHIW Sarah Ansar (WP)

11/14 **The Middle East in the Age of Colonialism and Nationalism, continued**

Historical Assignment #3 due

Movie: Annie Coombes, *The Colonial Encounter* (2002, 25 min.).

(Week 14)

11/19 **Islam and the Middle East in European Thought**

Before Class:

Albert Hourani, *Islam in European Thought*, *Islam in European Thought* (1991): 32-60 [sections 6 to 11]. (WP)

Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1978): 1-9, 31-49. (WP)

- Abdel Malek, *Contemporary Arab Political Thought* ?Ziya Gokalp?
- *Encyclopedia of Islam* ?Discourse of the Veil? (WP)
- Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam* (WP)

In-Class:

- Are national identity and gender identity cultural or natural? Why?

11/21 **Islam and the Middle East in European Thought, continued**

Before Class:

Selections from *Arabian Nights* (WP)

- In-Class Exercise on Orientalism

(Week 15)

11/26 **The First World War and the Middle East States**

Before Class:

A Concise History of the Middle East, Chapters 13 and 14

Gettleman and Schar, *The Middle East and Islamic World Reader*, 113-118, 125-127, 170-171 (WP)

11/28 **The First World War and the Middle East States, continued**

In-class discussion: Who were more important in shaping the Middle East after WWI, imperialists or nationalists?

(Week 16)

12/3 From Resistance to Independence

Before Class:

- ?The Drive for Independence: The Twentieth Century,? The Venture of Islam, Vol.III, pp. 357-409. (WP)
- Sarah Ansari, ?The Islamic World in the Era of Western Domination: 1800 to the Present? (WP)
- Jankowski, James. "Arab Nationalism in 'Nasserism' and Egyptian State Policy, 1952-1958." In Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East. Edited by J. Jankowski and I. Gershoni. (WP)

12/5 From Resistance to Independence, continued

Movie: Fadel, Mohamed. [Nasser 56](#). Egypt, 1996.

(Week 17)

12/10 Reserve for any schedule changes or to work on final projects

12/12 Final project due in class.