



History 604.1: Islamic World I: The Near East 500-1700 C.E.

Instructor: Dr. Maziar Behrooz

Fall 2007: TU 4:10-6:55, HSS 153

Office Hours: Science 223, W 5-6 & TH 10-11 or by appointment.

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Course Description: This is a study of Islamic civilization, culture and history from 500 to 1700 CE. The course assumes no prior knowledge of Islam or Middle Eastern history. The course emphasizes on a core region of the Islamic world (the area between Nile and Oxus rivers). The first part of the course begins with an investigation of the pre-Islamic world and goes on to survey the rise of Islam as a religion and an empire. Next, the golden age of Islamic civilization, covering the Umayyad Empire (centered in Damascus) and the Abbasid Empire (centered in Baghdad), will be covered. The second half of the course will examine the Islamic civilization from the decline of the Abbasid Empire (950 CE) through the establishment of regional empires, the Crusades, the Mongol invasion and the emergence of the "gun-powder empires." The course will pay special attention to cultural and religious development in the Islamic world, as well as political changes. Students will be able to discuss and analyze the rise of Islam both as religion and civilization. Students will examine ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversities of the Islamic civilization.

Course Outline:

Week 1: August 28

Introduction: geographic setting and the people of the Near East; the world before Islam: Sasanian Empire; Byzantine Empire; Arabia before Islam.

Reading: Lapidus, 1-21; Aslan, 3-23; e-reserve: "Sasanian Iran."

Week 2: September 4

Islam the formative years: the life of the Prophet; Islam under Prophet Muhammad (570-632); early Islamic state.

Reading: Lapidus, 21-37; Aslan, 23-50; e-reserve: Ibn Ishaq: From Biography of the Messenger of God

Week 3: September 11

No Class: We will meet at Science 270 (3-5 PM) for forum on September 11.

Week 4: September 18

Message of Islam: the Holy Qur'an

Reading: Aslan, 50-107; e-reserve: "Selections from the Qur'an" and "Prophet, Quran, and Companions."

Islam After Muhammad: the Rashidun Caliphs (632-661); beginning of Sunni-

Shi'a dispute; early Moslem expansions; the first fitna.

Reading: Lapidus, 37-58; Aslan, 107-140; e-reserve: "Crisis and Compromise" and "A'isha and the Battle of Camel."

Week 5: September 25

The Umayyad Caliphate (661-750): Sufyanids; second fitna; Marwanids; state and society under the Umayyads; Umayyad's downfall.

Reading: Lapidus, 58-67 and e-reserve: "The jawari or Revolution in the Harem"

Week 6: October 2

Mid-term exam I: Tuesday October 2 (Beginning of class)

Abbasid Revolution: High Caliphate (750-950); state and society under the Abbasids; Muslim civilization and sciences.

Reading: Lapidus, 67-98; e-reserve: "Kayzuran,"

Week 7: October 9

Development of Shari'a and Muslim theology; Islamic branches and their religious laws: Sunnis; Shi'as; Sufis.

Reading: Lapidus, 98-126; Aslan, 140-220; e-reserve: "Shi'ism and Sunnism

Week 8: October 16

Abbasid Decline; Turkic Slave Army; Agricultural Decline; The Iqta' land System.

Reading: Lapidus, 126-137; e-reserve: "Ulama."

Week 9: October 23

New Eastern State System: The Shi'a Century; culture and civilization of: Tahirids; Saffarids; Buyyads; Samanids; Assassins; Ghaznavids; Turkic migrations; Saljuqs.

Reading: Lapidus, 137-239

Week 10: October 30

Mid-term Exam II: Tuesday October 30 (beginning of class)

New Western State System: culture and civilization of: Tulanids; Fatimids; Ayyubids; Mamluks.

Reading: Lapidus 344-359

Week 11: November 6

Interaction between Islamic and the Christian worlds: Crusades; Moslem reaction; cultural interaction.

Reading: Lapidus, 239-276

Week 12: November 13

The Mongol Invasion: short-term results; long-term results; successor states: Ilkhanids; Timurids.

Reading: Lapidus, 276-287; e-reserve: "Nomadic Invasions".

Week 13: November 20 (Thanksgiving recess)

Week 14: November 27

Emergence of the Ottoman Empire: Transformation of Anatolia; European Conquests; Early Ottoman State.

Reading: Lapidus, 303-333

Week 15: December 4

Ottoman state and civilization at its height: state establishment; Ottoman military; religious establishment.

Reading: Lewis, Istanbul

Week 16: December 11

Emergence of the Safavid Empire: Shi'ism as State Religion in Iran; Early Safavid State and Civilization.

Reading: Lapidus, 287-303; e-reserve: "The Safavid Empire," "The Consolidation of Safavid power in Persia."

Books:

Aslan, Reza. *No God but God*

Lapidus, Ira. *A History of Islamic Societies*

Lewis, Bernard. *Istanbul and the Civilization of the Ottoman Empire*

Maalouf, Amin. *Samarkand* (optional)

Electronic Reserve: There are a number of articles on e-reserve which are also available as print copies in the reserve section of the library. You can access these reading assignments by: 1) Go to www.library.sfsu.edu, 2) Click on electronic reserves, 3) Punch-in instructor's name or course number, 4) Punch-in password: To be Provided in Class

There will be two mid-term exams (25% each) and a final exam (50%). The mid-term exams will be taken in class, will be essay questions, and students will have options. **The final exam will be take-home and has to be 10 to 15 pages long, typed and double space.** Your exams will be based on the required readings and class lectures. Note that the two cover different aspects of the subject, therefore, class attendance is essential in receiving the desired grade in this course. **Final exams are due in my office by noon Wednesday December 20.**

Extra Credit: You may write a review of *Samarkand* (1000 words, typed, double space) for ten points credit toward your final grade.

Questions to consider:

How would you characterize the state of Sasanian and Byzantine empires at the turn of the seventh century?

Do you recognize any elements of the situation in the sixth century that might have contributed to the rise of Islam?

Do you think Prophet Muhammad intended in 610 to do what he had accomplished by 632? If not, why did things turn out the way they did?

What elements of existing religious rituals were adopted by Moslems and why?

How were contemporary issues addressed by the doctrine and social regulations of the Qur'an?

Arabia of the sixth century is a society based on kinship; was there any stratification? what happens when such society becomes stratified?

What were the main causes and consequences of Islamic expansions?

How would you characterize the roots of Shi'a-Sunni dispute?

What was the purpose of administration in early Islamic state?

How did the problems and issues created by the early conquests lead to the murder of Uthman?

What were the causes and consequences of the first fitna?

What was the connection between Islamic doctrinal issues and political conflicts in the first century of Islam?

How would you evaluate the claim that Islam was the product of its time?

The Umayyad Caliphate was an empire run by Arabs for Arabs while the Abbasid Caliphate was a multi-cultural empire. Do you agree with this statement? Support your view with at least four specific examples from the lectures and/or your readings.

Describe the Umayyad Empire at its height (its institutions, ethnic base, economy, etc.) And explain the reasons behind its fall in 749 C.E.

Discuss the causes and consequences of the second Fitna. Who were the major players?

How is the fall of the Umayyad Caliphate, in 750, to be explained and what significance did it have for early Islamic history?

In what ways did the Abbasid dynasty break radically with the practices and institutions of the Umayyads? What institutions were kept by the early Abbasids?

Why did the different systems of law develop among the Moslems?

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Some scholars refer to the Islamic civilization, during 750-950 C.E., as the "High Caliphate," others call it the "Golden Age" of Moslem civilization. This is the height of the Abbasid period. Describe and analyze this period. Why were the Abbasids so successful? How successful were they? Give examples.

How did the way the Abbasids come to power create problems for them?

Why did the different systems of law develop among the Moslems?

Why was the Fourth Fitna significant?

What criteria would you use to determine when the decentralization of the Islamic empire began?

How was the sectarian fragmentation in the 9th century different from factional conflicts of the 7th century? What did they have in common?

Why did the disintegration of the Islamic empire in the 10th century prove to be irreversible?

What were the most important causes and consequences of the political and sectarian fragmentation of the Islamic empire and the Moslem population?

What were the new rulers of territorial Islamic states like and how did the conditions in the tenth century contribute to their emergence?

How important are natural disasters as an explanation for historical change?

How would you explain the militarization of Islamic states in the 10th and 11th centuries?

Why did political power shift from Shi'i to Sunni Moslems during the 11th century?

How had the nature of political legitimacy among Moslems changed by the 11th century?

What did Salah al-Din accomplish?

What were the main consequences of the crusades for western Asia in the 12th and 13th centuries?

What were the main consequences of the Mongol invasion?

What was the long term impact of the Mongol invasion on Islamic western Asia?

Considering the nature of the political crisis in the 14th century, how would you explain the success of Timur?

Why were the Ottoman Turks successful?

What were the consequences of the battle of Chalderan in 1514 and Ridaniyya in 1517?

What determined the limits of Ottoman expansion?

How have the structural changes in the Ottoman Empire in the 16th and 17th centuries been explained? What were their consequences?

How had Shi'ism been institutionalized in Safavid Iran by the 17th century?

How did the structure of the Safavid state differ from that of the Ottoman state? Were there any similarities?

What were the consequences of the reform of Shah Abbas?