

History 2006
History of the Middle East
Fall 2009

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Office Hours: M-W-F 9:00-9:50
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 And by Appointment

(Note: Office hours may be cancelled due to campus meetings)

Texts: Arthur Goldschmidt, *A Concise History of the Middle East*, 8th edition
N. I. Matar, *Islam for Beginners*
Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: A Prophet for Our Time*

Introduction: Today the Middle East is probably the most politically volatile part of the world. A day does not go by without the region dominating the headlines. But how much do we really know about the Middle East and of Islam, the dominant religion of the region? Much of the media attention since September 11th has concentrated on suicide bombings, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and other acts of violence that color the entire region, and Islam, as violent and anti-Western. Is this a true image? This semester we will examine the history of the region from the rise of Islam in the 7th Century to the present. We will look at how Islamic civilization developed and spread. We will look at the background and origins of the issues, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the Sunni-Shi'ia divide that we are still trying to solve today. By the end of the semester, you will have a much broader understanding of the region, its people and its history.

Learning Objectives: By the end of the semester you should be able to:

1. Identify significant events, peoples, ideas, and historical trends that have shaped the Middle East, historically, socially, culturally, and politically.
2. Explain the main principles of the Islamic religion and its impact on all institutions, both secular and religious.
3. Discuss the significance of the Caliphates, the Ottoman Empire, and the Safavid Empire.
4. Explain the contributions of Islamic Civilization to art, science, and mathematics.
5. Describe the roots of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians and how this conflict affects the region and the rest of the world.
6. Describe the response of Islam to modernity and how it impacts on contemporary society.

Class Format: This course is basically designed around a lecture, reading, and discussion format with assigned readings in the text and regular written evaluations..

Grades: Your final grade will be based on the cumulative total of points earned on exams, quizzes, a map exercise, and your Articles Notebook. There will be 550 points available. Your final grade will be based on the standard 10% scale. There is no extra credit.

Exams and Quizzes: There will be three exams, including the final. Each exam will be worth 100 points. Each exam will consist of two parts: short answer-identification, and an essay. The exams are tentatively scheduled for: September 18th, October 30th, and December 11th. There will also be four quizzes, each worth 25 points. The quizzes will be a combination of short answer-identification, fill in and blank, and matching.

Article Notebook: Starting now you will be required to keep an "Articles Notebook." This will be a collection of clippings from reputable news sources. Such sources can include, but are not limited to: **Time, Newsweek, US News and World Report, The Economist, cnn.com, reuters.com, The Chicago Tribune, Washington Post, New York Times, Times of London** (<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/>), etc. If you are not sure if a source is acceptable, talk to me about it first. You must have two articles covering

different parts of the Mid East per week, for a total of 32 articles. Only one article per week may deal with Iraq. For each article you will write a brief summary that includes the date the article appeared and the source you used. These will be turned in weekly at the beginning of class on Mondays. This notebook will be worth 100 points.

Make-up Policy: My best advice is not to miss an exam or quiz. If you must miss one, you **must** notify me in advance in order to make it up. You must have a valid excuse to be granted a make-up. Excuses like family vacation, concerts, ball games, etc, are not acceptable excuses. Ultimately, I alone will determine if you will be allowed to make up a missed exam or quiz.

Class Attendance: The key to a good grade is regular attendance. Much of the information presented in class may not be covered in the textbooks. That being said, you are all adults and it is ultimately your decision if you attend class or not. I will be passing around an attendance sheet for administrative purposes only. Because of the possibility of a major flu epidemic this fall, please do not come to class if you feel ill. Although I do not give out my notes, talk to me about what you missed once you are better. There is no need for you to contact me if you miss class, unless there was a quiz or test on the day you missed. I reserve the right to withdraw students as non-attenders. Otherwise, if you want to withdraw from this class, you must contact me first. ***THE DEADLINE FOR WITHDRAWAL IS November 6th!***

Warning! This is not an easy class! For many of you this will be your first real exposure to the history and culture of the Middle East. If you are having trouble preparing for this course, come see me as soon as possible and we will work together in improving your study skills.

Basic Assumptions: This is a college class and I assume that all of you will read the text, know how to read the text for knowledge, know how to take notes in class, and how to study. If you do not know how to do these things, it is your responsibility to contact me to learn about options offered through the Academic Achievement Center in LRC-B. You are also expected to behave as adults during class. Cell phones are to be turned off, or, if you are an EMT or first responder, set on vibrate. Activities that disrupt the class should be avoided and constant disruptions will lead to your removal from the class. I am also assuming that you are familiar with the college's policies on Academic Honesty. If you cheat during the semester, I reserve the right to prosecute you to the hilt!

Syllabus

Part I: Antecedents

1. Class Introduction and the Geography of the Middle East
2. The Middle East before Muhammad

Part II: The Dawn of Islam

3. Life of Muhammad and the Origins of Islam
4. Islam
5. Islamic expansion and the origins of Shiism

Part III: Islam at Noon

6. The Abbasid Caliphate
7. The Mongols & the Gunpowder Empires

Part IV: Cross-Sections

8. Government and Law
9. Culture and the arts

Part V: The Middle East and the Modern World

10. Europe and the Middle East
11. Response and Reaction
12. Israel and the Mid East
13. War and the Quest for peace
14. The Reassertion of Islamic Power

Note: I reserve the right to fall behind and to modify this syllabus and test dates during the semester!