

Department of History
St. Lawrence University
Spring 2012



His/GS 160: The Islamic World

Instructor: Howard Eissenstat

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Class times: MW 8 – 9:30

Office Hours: MW 9:45 – 10:45 and by appointment

Office: Piskor 205

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Class Room: Richardson 202

Class Description:

This course is designed as an introduction to the history of the Middle East and to some of the ways in which historians have approached that history. No previous knowledge or background in Islam or Middle Eastern history is required or expected.

The semester will be divided into three distinct sections, each of which will culminate in a short (five page) take home exam. In the first section, we will address the development of “Classical Islam” and its basic institutions. In the second section, we will consider the nature of the Middle East during the “Early Modern Era” and the relation of the Middle East to “global history.” In the third and final section, we will examine “the crisis of modernity” (and post-modernity) in the Middle East since 1800 and consider the ways in which Middle Eastern societies have re-evaluated basic concepts within Islam to address new challenges.

Required Texts

Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*

Vernon O. Egger, *A History of the Muslim World to 1405*

The New York Times

Optional Text

James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East* (selections will be available as PDF, but it may be more convenient to purchase the book on your own).

Please note that we will only be reading selections from these works. Additional materials including films, primary source readings, and academic articles as indicated in class or on the syllabus

Basic reading expectations: On average you can expect to have approximately one hundred pages of reading assigned per week. Some weeks will be less; others will be more. It is incumbent upon you to have read, thought about, and be prepared to intelligently discuss these readings in advance of class.

A special note on studying the history of other cultures:

I am well aware that the study of foreign cultures can initially be very intimidating: new vocabulary, difficult to remember names, a historical narrative filled with events that leave you few handles to grab onto as you learn new content. Some of you may come with considerably more background than others. I recognize that this is a challenge and so should you. But it is also a process that can be worked through and you can expect to become increasingly comfortable as the semester continues. Don't be afraid to ask or challenge: it is when you take charge of your education that the real university experience begins.

Grading Breakdown:

Map Quiz:	5%	First Take Home	20%
Participation and attendance:	15%	Second Take Home	20%
Current events journal:	10%	Third Take Home	20%
Short assignments:	10%		

Participation and attendance:

As you will note from the grading breakdown, participation is a large component of your final grade for the class. It is not an automatic A. Participation does not mean the same thing as attendance, though, obviously, you must attend in order to participate. To guarantee yourself a good grade in this portion of the class, you must come to class on a regular basis. You need to come prepared, having read – and thought about – the class assignment. You should listen actively, take notes where appropriate, ask questions and be prepared to challenge both other students and the professor. Not incidentally, doing these things is also the basis to a successful classroom experience.

You are expected to miss no more than three class sessions over the course of the semester. These three absences include medical and personal emergencies (deaths in the family, colds, flu, etc.). If you miss more than **three** class sessions, your participation grade will be penalized .25 for every additional day that you miss (i.e., a 4.0 would become a 3.75 after one additional absence, a 3.5 after two, etc.).

Current Events Journal

In both my scholarship and my teaching, I make an effort to understand current events through my understanding of history. I assume that many of you, in taking this class, hope to do the same. For this class, you are expected to read the Middle-East related news in the *New York Times* every weekday (the *New York Times* is distributed for free on campus). The journal is the only assignment for this class that need not be type-written. In your journal, I would like you to write at least once a week about what you have read and ways in which it relates to issues that we have discussed in class. Some weeks, particularly early in the semester, I will raise questions for you to consider in your journal entries. I will be collecting your journals periodically over the semester. You are welcome to address any issues – and raise any questions – that you wish in your journal. I will grade them on the following basis:

- Evidence of following the news consistently.
- Evidence of working to consolidate issues raised in class with current events.
- Quality of analysis

Short assignments: Throughout the semester, we will have a number of short assignments aimed at building skills or examining texts. These assignments will seldom be longer than a paragraph or two. In general, I will not accept these assignments late.

Late assignments:

Unless noted elsewhere, late papers will receive a .5 penalty for every day they are late. Thus, a 4.0 will receive a 3.5 if turned in one day late, a 3.0 if turned in two days late, etc.

Written work: All writing for this class will be in 12 point Times New Roman Font, double-spaced, with no right justification, and 1” margins. Citations will be in Chicago Manual of Style Format. The three essays will include title pages and bibliographies. Pages will be numbered and stapled. Failure to adhere to these formatting guidelines will result in **grade penalization** for the assignment. Rampolla gives you models for citation or you can find them online at <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>.

Make-ups of in-class Exams or Quizzes

Make-ups exams or quizzes will only be offered in the case of documented medical or personal emergencies and at the professor’s discretion. Please note that family holidays and wanting to leave campus early are not considered “emergencies.” Make your travel plans accordingly.

A note on PowerPoint: For many classes, I use PowerPoint presentations to accompany the lecture and to facilitate discussion. For a variety of reasons, I do not post these presentations to Angel. If you find that I am going too quickly for you to take down all information, please feel free to either ask me to slow down or ask me to reshew the slide at the end of class. I am always happy to do so. However, I will not post PowerPoints nor will I e-mail them to you.

Extra credit: Each semester, St. Lawrence University holds events or hosts guest speakers related to the Middle East or Islam. As a rule, I allow students to attend these events and present their findings to the class for a (very) small amount of extra credit.

Academic Honesty:

I take issues of academic honesty seriously. Plagiarism undermines the very core of scholarly work and the intellectual integrity of the university. I further suspect that plagiarism is very bad for your karma.

In my experience, such cases occur when the student is overwhelmed with the assignment or does not know the proper conventions for citation. These are problems that can – and should – be addressed in advance. Regardless, if I find evidence of academic dishonesty, I will pursue the case to the full extent outlined in the University and departmental guidelines, which can be found at this link: <http://www.stlawu.edu/academics/programs/history/page/243>.

Accommodation:

If you have a disability and need accommodation, and have already contacted the Office for Special Needs (<http://web.stlawu.edu/needs/index.html>), please see me in private to discuss the accommodation needed. We should have this discussion as soon as possible in the semester. I would also like to know at least ten days before a quiz or exam whether any accommodation is needed.

Contacting Me

In addition to my regularly scheduled office hours, I often work in my office, so it is generally easy to schedule a mutually convenient time to meet and discuss questions you might be having in class. Outside of the office, it is easiest to contact me by e-mail, which I check often. Unless I am travelling or expect to respond to a question in class, I will always respond to e-mails within twenty-four hours of receiving them. I seldom check my voice mail and so this is a less effective way of contacting me. Should you decide to leave a voice mail, please follow up with an e-mail to make sure I get the message.

Cell phones and laptops:

Cell phones: I hate them. Be sure you turn yours off before class begins.

Laptops are not allowed in class. Please turn yours off before class begins.

This syllabus:

Every semester turns out a little differently than planned. This syllabus will likely be revised over the course of the semester. Changes will be announced in class and a revised syllabus may be posted to Angel.

A final word on work-load:

Yes, it is a lot of work. Welcome to university.

Class Schedule

Section I: The Classical Islamic Tradition

Monday, January 23	Introductions and Orientations
Wednesday, January 25	Geography and History: The Middle East on the Eve of the Islamic Era Egger, 1 – 20. Rampolla, 6 -14. *Primary Source: Khansa, “A Sister’s Grief”
Monday, January 30	Muhammad, the Quran, and their Context Egger, 20 – 31. *Malise Ruthven, <i>Islam: A Very Short Introduction</i> , (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997): 20 – 28.
Wednesday, February 1	Reading Secondary Sources *Rampolla, 6 – 23. *Leila Ahmad, “Women and the Advent of Islam,” Signs, vol 11 (4) (Summer, 1986), 665 – 691. Short writing assignment due at beginning of class
Monday, February 6	The Establishment of the Islamic State and the Roots of the Shiite – Sunni Split Egger, 33 – 68. MAP QUIZ Submit Journals
Wednesday, February 8	Historicizing and Understanding Shiite and Sunni visions of Islam Egger, 69 – 84. *Zeevi, “The Present Sunni – Shia Divide”
Monday, February 13	A World Civilization I: Economics Egger, 104 – 112. *Janet L. Abu-Lughod, Before European Hegemony, The World System, A.D. 1250 – 1350, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 185 – 211.

- Wednesday, February 15** **A World Civilization II: Islamic Law and Theology**
 Egger, 114 – 122.
 *Metropolitan Museum Web information on Islamic Art
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/orna/hd_orna.htm
 (And associated hyperlinks)
 *Lena Salaymeh, “The Politics of Inaccuracy and a Case for ‘Islamic Law,’” *The Immanent Frame*
<http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2011/07/07/the-politics-of-inaccuracy-and-a-case-for-islamic-law/>
Short writing assignment due at the beginning of class
- Monday, February 20** **A World Civilization III: Sufism and Science**
 Egger, 123- 138; 199 – 227.
- Wednesday, February 22** **Medieval Islam: Invasions, Challenges, and New Structures**
 Egger, 139 – 198.
 *Usâma, “Memoirs,” *Ibn al-Athîr, “From Great History,” in McNeill and Waldman, 184 – 206; 248 – 272.
Submit Journals
- Monday, February 27** **Thinking about Jihad**
 Paul L. Heck, “‘Jihad’ Revisited,” *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, vol. 32, no. 1, (Spring, 2004), 95 – 128.
 Zayed Yasin, “My American Jihad”
Submit Journals
- Wednesday, February 29** **The Islamic World after the Mongols**
 Egger, 229 – 316.
 *Ibn Batûta, “From Travels” in McNeill and Waldman, 273 – 308.
- Section II: The Middle East and the Early Modern World**
- Monday, March 5** **The Rise of the Ottomans**
 *Eissenstat, “The Question of Ottoman Survival”
First Take Home Exam Due
- Wednesday, March 7** **Gunpowder Empires**
 *Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*, 3rd ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 25 – 32.

March 9 – March 18

SPRING BREAK

Monday, March 19

Why the West? Gunpowder in Comparative Perspective

*William H. McNeil, “The Age of Gunpowder Empires, 1450 – 1850,” in Michael Adas, ed., *Islamic and European Expansion: The Forging of a Global Order*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 103 – 139.

Wednesday, March 21

The Middle East and the Modern World System

*Gelvin, 33 – 44.

*Şevket Pamuk, “Institutional Change and Longevity of the Ottoman Empire,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol 35(2) (Autumn 2004): 225 – 247.

Monday, March 26

From Microhistory to Macrohistory: the Ottomans and Global Competition

*Giancarlo Casale "Global Politics in the 1580s: One Canal, Twenty Thousand Cannibals, and an Ottoman Plot to Rule the World," *Journal of World History* 18 (2007): 267-296.

Short writing assignment due at the beginning of class

Wednesday, March 28

The Middle East on the Defensive

*Gelvin, 45 – 57.

Section III: The Middle East and the Late Modern: Key Issues

April 1 – 3

Professor at Conference

*Ahmad Dallal, *Islam, Science, and the Challenge of History*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 149 – 176.

*Film: *Sufi Soul*

Alternate Assignments for Journals

Friday, April 6

Second Take Home Exam Due by 5 PM

Monday, April 9

An Islamic Renaissance in the 18th and 19th Centuries?

*Ali Suavi, “Democracy: Government by the People, Equality” and Namık Kemal, “And Seek Their Counsel in the Matter [Qur’an, Sura 3, Verse 159],” in Charles Kurzman, ed., *Modernist Islam: A Sourcebook*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002): 138 – 148.

Wednesday, April 11

State Modernization in the 19th Century Middle East

*Gelvin, 69 – 99.

