# Introduction to the Middle East: Religious, Cultural, Historical Foundations, 570-1453

**HIS 306K (39105), MES 301K (41675), RS 314 (43695)**
**Fall 2012**

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5:00-6:30

Office:
Office hours:
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## Course Description and Goals

This course surveys the history of the Middle East from the rise of Islam to the end of the fifteenth century. Students will be introduced to basic aspects of the political, social, and cultural dimensions of Islamic civilization from Spain to Iran as they changed over time.

In the midst of mapping this broad view, we will focus our attention on how specific historical figures and events contributed to definitions of Islamic identity, community, and authority. Central themes include the emergence of Sunni and Shi`i identities, the relationship of Muslims and non-Muslims, and the unique material and intellectual contributions of Islamic civilization to world history and other societies.

An overarching goal of this course is to focus attention on the history of the Middle East in this formative phase as a fascinating, complicated, and enriching study in its own right. In order to do this, students will be expected to master key terms and concepts of the period. The intent of all essay exams is to hone analytical skills and written expression.

## Course Rules: In Class

**No computers or electronic devices (including tablets) may be used to take notes, record the class, or visit online sites. (Please inform the instructor immediately if issues of disability provide an exception, and see Services for Students with Disabilities Guidelines below).**

**During class, no recording devices: Ipads, Iphones or cell phones may be used. You may not reproduce for publication class notes verbatim or in any other format.**

**Out of Class:** I am available during office hours and by appointment. The Teaching Assistant will also hold office hours.

I will attempt to make this an informative and enjoyable class, but your participation is essential to complete your own intellectual development. I do not require your attendance in class (freewill in adults is a beautiful thing), but

unexcused absences will *not* result in the recapitulation of a lecture by the instructor or teaching assistant. Exam appearance is required.
*Religious observances are always understood as excused absences, but the instructor must be informed 14 days prior, as per UT policy.
*Services for Students with Disabilities 471-6259
http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/ should be contacted along with the instructor directly if special arrangements are necessary.
*The UT Honor Code is enforced: http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html
*Class handouts and assignment sheets due to any absence will always be supplied; they will also be posted on the class Blackboard site.

*Attendance will be taken at all exams.

**There will be no make-up exams without prior consent of the instructor.** (Only medical emergencies or true catastrophic events will warrant consideration on a case-by-case basis.) Emails simply alerting me to your absence without prior discussion or documentation are not acceptable.

In order to succeed in this class, you will need to learn all the reading material assigned on the syllabus, delivered in lectures, and discussed in class. All exams are stipulated on the syllabus.

**Course Requirements**:
4 exams @ 25% each = 100%. **There is no final exam during Final Exam Period.**

**Class Assignment Schedule:**
**First Exam: Thursday, 20 September**
**Second Exam: Thursday, 18 October**
**Third Exam: Thursday, 15 November**
**Last Exam (in class): Thursday, 6 December**

**Required Books and Readings:**
1. Jonathan A.C. Brown, ***Muhammad: A Very Short Introduction***
2. Ira Lapidus, ***A History of Islamic Societies*** (2002 edition only)
3. D. A. Spellberg, ***Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past: The Legacy of 'A'isha bint Abi Bakr***
4. John Alden Williams, ed. and trans., **The Word of Islam**
5. Xerox packet of primary documents and articles

Books available for purchase at the University Co-op, but cheaper online. Xerox course packet available for purchase at Speedway (Dobie Mall). Everything is on reserve at the Perry Castaneda Library Reserves.

## Part One:
## Religion and Politics

**I. 30 August**
**Course Objectives**
Readings: Lapidus, xviii-17.

**II. 4, 6 September**
**The Pre-Islamic Middle East and the Advent of Islam**
Readings: Lapidus, 18-27.
Williams, 1-35 (Qur'an).

**III.11, 13 September**
**Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman**
Readings:
Brown, all.
Lapidus, 27-30
Spellberg, 1-99.
Williams, 36-53 (Life of the Prophet).
Course Packet: A. Guillaume, *Life of Muhammad*, "Sending down of the Qur'an;" "Khadija Accepts Islam;" "Ali b. Abi Talib . . .;" "The Covenant between the Muslims and the Medinans and with the Jews."

**IV. 18, *20 September [First Exam, 20 September]**
**The Rightly Guided Caliphs: Succession and Conquest**
Readings: Lapidus, 31-47.
Spellberg, 101-195.
Williams, 53- 65 (Hadith).
Course packet, "`A'isha bint Abi Bakr."

**V. 25, 27 September**
**The First Islamic Empire: The Umayyad Dynasty at Damascus**
Readings: Lapidus, 47-51.
Course packet, in *The Jews of Arab Lands,* "The Pact of Umar;" "How the *Jizya* Is To Be Collected;" "Rebellion in North Africa (740-1)."

## Part Two:
## Social Change and the Rise of Islamic Culture

**VI. 2, 4, October**
**Cosmopolitan Islam and Conversion: The Abbasid Empire at Baghdad**
Readings: Lapidus, 51-66.
Williams, 66-108 (Shari`a).
Course packet: in *The History of* al-Tabari, "The Story of Adam."

**VII. 9, 11 October**
**The Separation of Mosque and State**
Readings: Lapidus, 67-111; 133-149.
Course packet, In *The Meadows of Gold,* "Fall of the Barmakids," "Amin and Ma'mun as Children," "The Succession," "Zubaida's Opinion," "Rashid's Pilgrimage" and "Amin's Head."

**VIII. 16, **18 October [Second Exam, 18 October]**

**Philosophy and Mysticism**
Readings: Lapidus, 156-193.
Williams, 109-169 (Sufism, Theology).
Packet, "New Capital of Samarra."

**IX. 23 [NO CLASS the 23rd] 25 October [class resumes]**
**Abbasid Decline: Buyid Shi`i and Saljuk Sunni Dynasties at Baghdad**
Readings: Lapidus, 112-132; 149-155.
Course packet, From *The Book of Government* by Nizam al-Mulk, "On the Subject of Those Who Wear the Veil."

**X. 30 October, 1 November**
**Abbasid Fragmentation: Shi`ism in Egypt and the Impact of the Crusades**
Readings: Lapidus, 94-98 (repeat); 283-294.
Course Packet, From P. Hitti, trans., *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the Crusades*, Usamah ibn Munqidh, "An Appreciation of the Frankish Character," Sicily (973)."

**XI. 6, 8 November**
**The Mongol Destruction of Baghdad**
Readings: Lapidus, 226-234.
Course packet, "The Coming of the Mongols," "The Last Caliph of Baghdad," "The Fall of Baghdad (1258)," "The Battle of `Ayn Jalut," "Timur and His Historian;" "Capture of Aleppo by Timur."

## Part Three:
## New Empires and Contacts with the West

**XII. 13, ***15 November [Third Exam, 15 November]**
**Islamic Spain**
Readings: Lapidus, 299-336.

**XIII. 20 November [NO CLASS 22 November – Thanksgiving holiday]**
**The Conversion of Iran to Shi`ism**
Readings: Lapidus, 234-247.
Williams, 170-end (Shi`ism).

**XIV. 27, 29 November**
**The Sunni Ottoman Empire**
Readings: Lapidus, 197-225; 248-282; 294-298.

**XV. 4, 6 December – Last Class [****In class Fourth Exam, 6 December]**
**Islam in Early American Thought**
Course packet, Kevin J. Hayes, "How Thomas Jefferson Read the Qur'an;" Sebastian Prange, "Thomas Jefferson's Qur'an."