SYLLABUS

THE FORMATION OF THE ISLAMIC NEAR EAST

The course will focus on the rise of Islam and the transformation of the Near East into an Islamic society. We shall discuss the founding of Islam, the preaching of the Prophet, the establishment of a Muslim Empire, and its disintegration due to internal pressures and foreign invasion. From this historical process Islam emerged as a religion, a culture, and a distinctive system of political and religious institutions.

Mondays and Wednesdays will be devoted to lectures (with some time for questions), while Fridays will be reserved for class discussions, especially of the original sources. In addition to the secondary texts available for purchase at the bookstore, you will be expected to become familiar with the collection of primary sources that will form the foundation of the course. Your grade will be determined by three short quizzes (15%), participation in class discussions (10%), a midterm (10%), final (25%), and two short papers (40%).

I. Week of August 30.
   a) Introduction: Orientalism, Islamics, and History.

   Readings: M. Hodgson, The Venture of Islam, I, pp. 22-69, 103-45;
   Sources, nos. 1-5.

II. Week of Sept. 6.
   a) Pre-Islamic Arabia.
   b) The Life of Muhammad.

   Readings: Hodgson, I, pp. 146-86;
   F. Rahman, Islam, pp. 11-29;
   Sources, nos. 6-7.

III. Week of Sept. 13.
   a) The Appeal of Early Islam.
   b) The Qur’ân.

   Readings: Rahman, Islam, pp. 30-42;
   Sources, nos. 8-12.

IV. Week of Sept. 20.
   a) Discussion of Qur’ân and of First Paper.
   b) The Arab Conquests.

   Shaban, Islamic History, pp. 1-78;
   Sources, nos. 13-17.
V. Week of Sept. 27.

Paper 1 due on Monday, Sept. 27

a) Organization of New Territories and Resistance.
b) The Caliphate.

Quiz on Friday, Oct. 1.

Readings: Hodgson, I, pp. 233-79;
Shaban, pp. 79-126;
Sources, nos. 18-29.

VI. Week of Oct. 4.

a) The Abbasid Revolution.
b) Discussion

Midterm on Friday, Oct. 8.

Readings: Shaban, 127-89;

VII. Week of Oct. 18.

b) Urban Islam: Scripturalism and Law.

Rahman, pp. 68-94, 100-116;
Sources, nos. 30-34.

VIII. Week of Oct. 25.

a) Dissolution of the Abbasid Caliphate.
b) Slave States, Regional Courts, and International Commerce.

Sources, nos. 35-41.

IX. Week of Nov. 1.

a) Attempts to Reestablish Unity: Fatimid Egypt and the Seljuk Empire.
b) Muslim Communities: Sunni Internationalism and Shi'a Sectarianism.

Readings: Hodgson, II, pp. 21-61;
Sources, nos. 44-46.

X. Week of Nov. 8

Quiz on Monday, Nov. 8.

a) Sufism and the Sufi Orders.

Readings: Hodgson, I, pp. 392-409, II, pp. 175-92, 201-54;
Rahman, pp. 94-99, 128-40;
Sources, nos. 47-49.
XI. Week of Nov. 15.
   Paper 2 due on Monday, Nov. 19
   a) The Crusades and the Islamic Reaction.
   b) The Mongol Eruption and its Aftermath.

   Readings: Hodgson, II, pp. 255-68, 286-419
   Sources, nos. 50-56.

XII. Week of Nov 22.

   a) A Slave Regime in Full Flower: Mamluk Egypt.

   Readings: B. Lewis, Race and Slavery in the Middle East, pp. 3-71.

XIII. Week of Nov. 29.
   Quiz on Mon., Nov. 26.
   a) Kernels of Stability: Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages.
   b) Conclusion: Unity in Diversity in Islamic Civilization.

   Readings: Hodgson, II, pp. 437-55, 476-84;
   Sources, no. 57;

XIV. Week of Dec. 6.
   a) Wrap-up.

   Readings: Hodgson, II, pp. 329-68;