Cross and Crescent: 
Christian-Muslim Relations in Historical Perspective

Both Islam and Christianity derive from the same strand of Near Eastern monotheism and have overlapped geographically and culturally for fourteen centuries. The seminar will explore the interaction of Muslims and Christians in a number of historical settings and will focus on two themes: first, the way each group constructed its understanding of the other religion and its evolving civilization; second, the minority status each group formed within the dominant civilization of the other and how they interacted, challenged, and rejected each other. You will be expected to complete the general readings each week in order to engage actively in seminar discussions. In addition, you will make two oral presentations based on two more extensive reading assignments devoted to historiographical issues (listed under special topics); this material will serve as the basis for two papers (7-10 pages; 2,000-3,000 words).

The seminar is also designated as a writing intensive course in order to develop expository, analytic writing skills. With the help of a writing associate, the seminar will concentrate on developing, organizing, revising, and editing your papers. The writing assignments will require that you identify a thesis, develop an argument, and analyze evidence to support your thesis. There will be three writing assignments: the first will be a short essay (2-3 pages, 900-1200 words) due on Monday of the third week of class in order develop skills in identifying a thesis precisely and developing it systematically. The readings for the “special topics” which you will choose provide the basis for the two longer writing assignments. Your oral presentation in the seminar should be accompanied by an outline (no more than one page), which you will distribute to the rest of the seminar during your presentations on Wednesday. You will receive feedback on your outline both from other members of the seminar and myself to help sharpen your argument; you will then submit a first draft to me the following Monday for suggestions and comments. Once the draft is returned to you, you will then revise the paper in order to improve the mechanics of writing. Your grade will be determined by the following: Discussion and seminar participation (30%); first paper (10%); two historiographical essays (30% each).

Students are required to attend all classes for the successful completion of the course. Unexcused absences will result in a lower grade. BUT DO NOT ATTEND CLASS IF EXPERIENCING A FEVER OR OTHER FLU SYMPTOMS.


III. Power and Perspective: Orientalism. Feb. 5.


IV. Looking Harder at the Orient. Feb. 12

Said, Orientalism, pp. 113-123, 255-328

Special Topics:

A. Thrust and Parry


B. New Directions


Special Topics:
A. Islamic and Christian Identities.


Document: Eulogius account of the martyrs of Cordoba.

Special Topics:
A. Conversion and Resistance
B. Resistance and Fanaticism: The Martyrs of Cordoba.
VII. Communicating with the Enemy: Structures of Knowledge and Exchange. March 5.


Special Topics:

A. Islam in the Western Imagination.

B. Movement of Ideas and Techniques: Translation and Adaptation.


**Special Topics:**

A. War and Salvation.

B. Instruments of Conversion.

IX. Muslim Counteroffensive: Attempts to Reshape the Holy Land. March 26.


Selected Muslim and Christian Accounts of the Crusades.

**Special Topics:**

A. Jihad.

B. Patterns of Settlement and Exchange in the Holy Land.
X. The Spanish Cauldron: April 2.


**Special Topics**

A. Shaping Iberia’s First Colonies: al-Andalus.


B. Technology and Exchange


**Special Topics:**

A. Collaboration: A Loss of Identity?


B. Slavery and Religious Boundaries.


XII. Frenchmen in the House of Islam. April 16.


**Special Topics**

A. Transforming Spaces


B. Transforming Identities


XIII. Islamic Identity in the Contemporary West. April 23.

*Gilles Kepel, *Allah in the West*, tr. S. Kepel (Stanford, 1997), pp. 1-6, 81-238.

**Special Topics**

A. Les Pieds Noirs: Algerian Decolonization and its Aftermath in Post-War France


B. Les Beurs: “French” Muslims?

