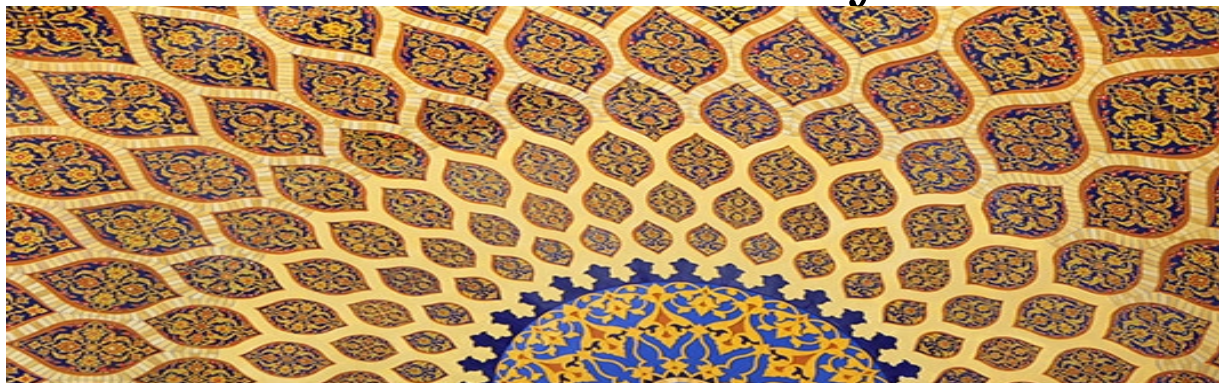


Histories of Classical Islam: Peoples, Traditions, Institutions

Hartford Seminary



Course #: HI-624

Time: TBD

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Course Outline:

This course explores historical formations of major Muslim beliefs, practices, and traditions in the context of socio-political institutions. It engages narratives on the development of Islam which have come forth from various perspectives. Topics range from the emergence of the community of faith around the Prophet to established orders under different polities. Chronologically, this course covers from the 7th to the 17th century CE, from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period. Geographically, coverage extends from what is presently called the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) to southern Spain (Al-Andalus), as well as Asia Minor, the Caucasus, Central Asia, India, and the Malay Peninsula. Throughout the course, the effect of ritual practice, rites of passage, geographical localization, etc. will be discussed. Presenting a bird's eye view of the Late Antique context, the course focuses on the life and prophetic mission of the of Prophet Muḥammad in Mecca and Medina. After that, the rise and development of the caliphate is discussed, highlighting the diversity in its meaning: beginning with the Rashidun caliphs and proceeding to dynastic reformulation of the caliphate. The development of early genres of writing, notably *sīra*, *tafsīr*, and ḥadīth will be reviewed. The evolution of various ideational positions in theology and philosophy will be discussed alongside the consolidation of standard legal communities (*mazḥabs*, sometimes called schools of law). The theme of religiously defined identities in Muslim societies stands at the center of this course: Sunnis, Shias, Sufis, in their historically and regionally variegated forms. The main thrust of the course is to emphasize the lived experiences of Muslims, as reflected in such diverse registers as property ownership, resource allocation, and the arts.

Pedagogy:

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This course is based on reading and in-depth discussion: Primary and secondary sources are read and discussed in light of contemporary views on history. The combination of primary sources with contemporary studies makes the material relevant and engaging to the students.

The main reference text is Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge University Press, 3rd edition 2014). Additional reading materials– both primary and secondary sources– will be made available throughout the semester.

Prerequisites: This course does not assume prior familiarity with Islam or its historical development.

Outcome:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will have acquired familiarity with the richness of Muslim history.

Required Work & Evaluation:

On the average, 70-150 pages of readings are assigned per week.

Students should prepare for class by reading all assigned texts for each session.

Students are expected to respond to assigned readings online, before each class session.

In-class participation & Attendance:

Attendance, keeping up with assigned readings and active participations are important in this class.

Note: More than two unexcused absences result in a failing grade.

Book Presentation:

As of the third week of the semester, each student will be required to make a book presentation in class. Students are expected to meet with the instructor prior to making their presentation.

Writing assignments:

- 1) A written book report, ca. 1000 words, due after in-class presentation of the book.
- 2) Mid-term paper, ca. 1200 words
- 3) Final paper, ca. 2000 words

Paper topics will be assigned in class. (Progress to be assessed beginning the fifth week of the semester).

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Note: Late submissions are *not* accepted.

Attendance and participation in class discussion is strictly **required** and enforced. Students are expected to post on the discussion thread on CANVAS, commenting on assigned readings.

There will be a final examination (date to be determined).

Grading Breakdown:

Regular Attendance, In-class & Online Participation (20%) + Oral Presentation & Book Report (20%) + Mid-term paper (20%) + Final Exam (20%) + Final Paper (20%)

Note: This syllabus is subject to revision. For updates, visit CANVAS.

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Week I: General Introduction to the Course, The Late Antique Background

Week II: The Life of the Prophet, 7th Century CE

Principal narratives of the beginnings of Islam in Mecca and Medina: The tribal background; Revelation; Early Rituals; *Hijra* (migration); The Constitution of Medina; *Qibla*; The Mosque; The Qur'ān.

Week III: Succession to the Prophet: The Caliphate, 7th Century CE

The Wars of Apostasy (*ridda*); The Early Conquests (*Futūh*); The Rightly Guided Caliphs (Rāšidūn caliphs); Collection and collation of the Qur'ān.

Week IV: Dynastic Caliphs: From the Umayyads of Damascus to the Early Abbasids in Baghdad, 8th Century CE

Rival caliphs; Processes of Arabization, territorial extension, and the consolidation of Umayyad rule; The Murjīs (*al-murjī'a*); “Messianic” Rebellions; The Abbasid Revolution; Conversion and Urbanization from the Greater Khorasan to Egypt; The meanings and purviews of Sunna; Early theological debates on the meaning of faith (*īmān*); Early *kalam*.

Week V: Beyond the Caliphs' Circle, 9th Century CE

Conflict Between the Caliph and the “Community” (*ahl al-sunna wa 'l-jamā'a*): The *miḥna*; The Case of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal; From *Kalām* to *Falsafa*; Early Sufis and other pietists; Karrāmīs; Malāmatīs; Sober vs. Intoxicated mystics; Canonization of Sunni Ḥadīth; Ḥabalīs in Isfahan and Baghdad; Varieties of Shias; Imāmī and Zaydi Shias in Baghdad; Imāmī Shias in Qom and Ray; Ismaili Shias in Yemen; The Fatimid caliphate based in Cairo; The Maliki Caliphate in Cordova; The consolidation of Imāmī identity; ...

Week VI: The View from the Edge, 10th & 11th Centuries CE

The View from the Edge; The *Shu'ūbī* Movement; The Fatimid Caliphate: from North Africa to Yemen, India, and Beyond.

Week VII: 10th March 2020: 11th & 12th Centuries CE

Seljuk Turks and the Sunni Revival; Nizām al-Mulk and the Spread of Madrasas; The Ghazali brothers and the consolidation of Sufism; The Rise and Fall of Al-Andalus: from 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dākhil (8th century CE) to the Muwahḥidūn (Almohads, 12th century).

Week VIII: The Age of Redefinitions 13th & 14th Centuries

Ibn Taymiyya vs. al-Ḥillī; The formation and spread of Sufi brotherhoods (*turuq*), from Baghdad to India; Islam after the Mongols; migrant '*ulamā'*'; Sufis in Iraq, Anatolia, and India; Islam in Continental Africa; Islamic learning in continental Africa, the case of Timbuktu; The Mamlūks: A political idea from Egypt to India.

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Week IX: The Early Ottomans, 14th to 16th Centuries CE

Osman's Dream; Ibn Khaldun and Timur; Heterodox movements (*hurūfīs*, and others).

Week X: The Ottoman Expansion, 16th to 17th Centuries CE

The Ottoman bureaucracy; The Janissaries; Reformulating Islam; Suleiman the magnificent; Kadizadeli Movement; Ottoman Balkans.

Weeks XI: The Safavid Achievement, 16th Century CE

Militant Sufi Brotherhoods; The Qizilbāsh and Shāh Ismā'īl; Migrants from Jabal 'Āmil; Sectarian policies; Reshaping Twelver Shia Islam; Parī Khanom and Her Tribulations.

Week XII: Isfahan Is Half the World, 17th Century CE

Shah Abbas the Great; Recovering Ancient Wisdom in Philosophy; Catholic Missionaries & Reformation from the Edge.

Week XIII: Islam & India: 10th-15th Centuries CE

Bīrūnī's India; The Delhi Sultanate; Syncretism through translation.

Week XIV: Mughal India, Babur to Shāh Walī-Allāh of Delhi: 1509-1762

Unifying India; Varieties of Sufism in India; The Merging of Two Oceans (*maraj al-baḥrayn*) King Akbar; Ahmad Sirhindi against Ibn Arabi in India; Shah Walī-Allāh of Delhi's Renewal and his legacy;