ISLAMIC HISTORY I (HI-624)

This course explores the history of Islamic societies and civilization from its beginnings in seventh century Arabia until the fall of Granada in 1492. Attention will be given to the expansion process of the Dār al-Islām, the changing nature of the caliphate and the development of regional powers, as well as to socio-economic realities, ideological evolutions and significant cultural achievements. Students will read and discuss selections of important primary sources available in English translation, such as Ṭabarî’s History, Ibn Munqidh’s Memoirs, Ghazâlî’s Book of Counsel for Kings, Abū Dulf’s Qasīda sāsāniyya, Ibn Baṭṭūta’s Travels, and Ibn Khaldūn’s Muqaddima.

Class will meet twice a week for 12 weeks: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:30-8:15 p.m., beginning Tuesday 8 September 2015. Each of these twelve classes will be divided in two sessions: A) Lecture; B) Discussion of the required readings.

Course Objectives
1) Students should be able to find their way around in the major reference works on Islamic history and civilization.
2) They are expected to gain an acquaintance with the most important political and civilizational developments in Islam up to the end of the 15th century.
3) They should also be able to have an informed opinion on major ideological debates concerning Islamic societies during these centuries.
4) They should be able to benefit from the methodological approaches adopted in these classes and apply them for their own studies and/or research projects.

Course Requirements
1) It is strongly recommended that the student arrive at the first class already having a general knowledge about the religion of Islam, as well as about the geography and ancient history of Europe and the Middle East.
2) Attendance in class is required. If you know you will be unable to attend a session please inform the professor in advance. Missing two sessions will result in an automatic lowering of your final grade by 30%. Missing three or more sessions will result in automatic failure of the course.
3) For each session A of weeks 2-12, students shall submit a summary of the reading assignments and be ready to speak about them in class. Each student can skip any two weeks during that time for a total of 10 submissions. Here are the guidelines for these summaries:
   - Approximately 2 pages (3 pages maximum)
   - One modern study must be used in each summary
- Students must make copies of their summaries for all students in the class

4) A final handwritten examination, as described below.

The final grade will be based upon the following:

1) Weekly summaries (25%) and class participation (25%).

2) During the week of the last class, on Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2015, a final two hour long handwritten examination consisting of fifteen multiple choice questions (30%) and a short essay on a question (to be chosen among three) relating to the content of the course (20%).

* All written work is to conform to the seminary writing guidelines, which can be found online at: http://www.hartsem.edu/student/forms/researchpaperguide.pdf. It must use the transliteration system given in class I. It must be run through a grammar and spell-check program or read by the writing tutor if necessary before submission. The Hartford Seminary Grading Guidelines will be the standard of evaluation for work in the course.

IMPORTANT: Plagiarism, the failure to give proper credit for the words and ideas of another person, whether published or unpublished, is strictly prohibited. All written material submitted by students must be their own original work; where the words and ideas of others are used they must be acknowledged. Credit will not be given for work containing plagiarism, and plagiarism will lead to failure of a course. Please see the Hartford Seminary Catalogue for the full plagiarism policy.

General references

ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF ISLAM, INDEX ISLAMICUS…


MERNISSI, Fatima, & LAKELAND, Mary Jo, The Forgotten Queens of Islam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993)


Class Schedule

Class I. A: Sept. 8. B: Sept. 10. 632

Topics: Introduction to the course. Historiography. Pre-Islamic Arabia. The world in the time of the Prophet.

General references:


Reading Assignments:


Topics: Succession. Expansion. *Fitna*.

General references:


Reading Assignments:


Topics: The Arab Dynasty. From the Indus Valley to France. A revolution.

General references:


Reading Assignments:


[DS36.855 .L48 1974]

[D17 .T1113]


Topics: Baghdād. Caliphs, ulema.

General references:

[DS38.6 .K463 2006]


Reading Assignments:

[DS35.63 .L37 1988]

[DS36.855 .L48 1974]


Topics: Regional powers. The Shi‘ite century. The Turkish normalisation.

General references:


Reading Assignments:

[DS35.63 .L37 1988]


[DS38.6 .E25 1920]


General references:


Reading Assignments:


Topics: Barbarian invasions. The Latin states. Saladin and the Ayyubids. After the fall of Akko.

General references:


Reading Assignments:


Class VIII. A: Nov. 3. B: Nov. 5. *The 'Abbāsids. IV: The Mongol World Order (13th-15th c.)*

Topics: Genghis Khān. The fall of Baghdād. The conversion of Ghāzān. Tamerlane. India’s sultanates

General references:


Reading Assignments:


Class IX. A: Nov. 10. B: Nov. 12. *Northern Africa, Spain, Sicily (710-1492)*


General references:


Reading Assignments:


Topics: From the barracks to the throne. The “Champions of Islam”. The Muslim civil society. Black plague and starvation.

General references:


Reading Assignments:


General references:


Reading Assignments:


Class XII. A: Dec. 8. B: Dec 10. The Early Ottomans (1300–1453)


General references:


Reading Assignments:


c. HERRIN, Judith, Byzantium. — Ch. 27: Better the Turkish Turban… & Ch. 28: The Siege of 1453 (p. 299–320).

WRITTEN EXAMINATION. Tuesday, December 15