

**HISTORY 281-001**  
**SURVEY OF MIDDLE EASTERN HISTORY**

Fall 2021

Prof. Hamdani

TR 10:30-11:45

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Krug Hall #7

HH 3145

This course will provide an understanding of the history of the Middle East and North Africa from the rise of Islam in the 7<sup>th</sup> century to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The course will cover Islam during the Prophet Muhammad's lifetime, its expansion and consolidation during the period of Arab hegemony, Turkish migration and resulting Turkic states like the Ottoman empire, and other events that form the background to the contemporary Middle East and North Africa.

Readings will include selections from three textbooks, as well as scanned excerpts from primary and secondary sources on specific topics. Students must complete readings for each lecture before class, and actively participate in class discussion. In addition to readings and lecture, the requirements of this course include a midterm exam, final exam, and two short papers.

This course satisfies Mason Core requirement in Global Understanding. The goal of Mason Core's Global Understanding is to help students see the world from multiple perspectives, reflect upon their positions in a global society, and be prepared for future engagement as global citizens. This course meets the following outcomes toward this goal:

1. Identify and articulate one's own values and how those values influence their interactions and relationships with others, both locally and globally.
2. Demonstrate understanding of how the patterns and processes of globalization make visible the interconnections and differences among and within contemporary global societies.
3. Demonstrate the development of intercultural competencies.
4. Explore individual and collective responsibilities within a global society through analytical, practical, or creative responses to problems or issues, using resources appropriate to the field.

By the conclusion of the course, students should be able to exhibit:

- a. Familiarity with the main themes in the history of the Middle East and North Africa.
- b. How those main themes and processes interact with global trends of the same time periods.
- c. Understanding of the differences of Middle East and North African history with regard to other global societies.
- d. And understanding of how those differences influence our own society.

READINGS: The following books are all required and available for purchase at the GMU bookstore.

Egger, V. *A History of the Muslim World to 1750*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Routledge, 2018.

Gelvin, J. *The Modern Middle East*. Oxford University Press, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. 2015.

Robinson, C. *Islamic Civilization in Thirty Lives*. University of California Press. 2017.

Hist 281 Scanned Readings - readings will be posted on Blackboard and/or emailed to students to their GMU email address. These readings are indicated by a # in the assignment schedule below

#### REQUIREMENTS AND GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

*Participation*– 10%. Poor participation will adversely affect a student's grade.

*Exams* – Midterm 25%, Final 35%. Each exam will involve identifications and essays. Exam dates are absolutely non-negotiable (so plan work, study, and vacations around them). Study guides will be provided for both exams beforehand.

*Papers* – 15% each. Papers will each be from 3-5 pages, on a weekly topic from before, and after, the midterm. Paper guide will be provided before due date.

Add/Drop Period: 8/23-8/30/2021

Selective Withdrawal Period Begins – 9/7/2021

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**

**Syllabus, scanned readings and study guides will be posted on Blackboard.**

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

## **GMU EMAIL ACCOUNTS**

Students must use their Mason email accounts to receive important University information, including messages related to this class.

## **OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES**

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

<http://ods.gmu.edu>

## **CAMPUS RESOURCES:**

WRITING CENTER: 114 Robinson A Hall; (703) 993-1200; <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES <http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>

How to use the library catalogue: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldyWYA-qH\\_I&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldyWYA-qH_I&feature=youtu.be)

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS): (703) 993-2380; <http://caps.gmu.edu>

## TENTATIVE LECTURE AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE:

Week 1	<p>Introduction</p> <p>T: Introduction to course</p> <p>R: <a href="http://teachmiddleeast.lib.uchicago.edu/foundations/geography/index.html">http://teachmiddleeast.lib.uchicago.edu/foundations/geography/index.html</a>  <a href="https://www-jstor-org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/25741178?seq=12#metadata_info_tab_contents">https://www-jstor-org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/25741178?seq=12#metadata_info_tab_contents</a></p> <p>#"Languages and Peoples", Cambridge Encyclopedia of the Middle East and North Africa</p> <p><i>Does physical geography affect the distribution of peoples and evolution of societies in the Middle East?</i></p>
Week 2	<p>Arabia and the Rise of Islam</p> <p>T: Egger, Pt. 1, ch. 1</p> <p>R: # Pre-Islamic poetry – selections; Robinson: "Muhammad"</p> <p><i>Why did Islam succeed in uniting the Arab tribes?</i></p>
Week 3	<p>Comparative Monotheisms</p> <p>T: #Berkey, Ch. 2; # "Gilgamesh" in Kirk, <i>Myth</i></p> <p>R: # Selections from Scriptures</p> <p><i>Is Islam merely a Judeo-Christian heresy or a distinct monotheist religion? Why?</i></p>
Week 4	<p>The Arab Empire</p> <p>T: Egger, chs. 2, 3.</p> <p>R: Robinson: "Abd al-Malik"; # "Tribe and State" in Crone, <i>States in History</i>; "The story of a tax collector" in al-Tanukh; Abu Hamza in Crone, <i>God's Caliph</i>.</p> <p><i>The Prophet ruled in the name of Islam. Did his successors?</i></p>

Week 5	<p>The Caliphates</p> <p>T: Egger, ch. 4.</p> <p>R:; Robinson, “al-Ma’mun”, “al-Tabari”, “Ibn Fadlan”.</p> <p><i>If Umayyad rule resulted in an Islamic revolution, what was the result of `Abbasid rule?</i></p>
Week 6	<p>Classical Islamic Society</p> <p>T: Egger, ch. 5</p> <p>R: Robinson, “Rabi’a al-Adawiya”, “Arib”, “al-Hallaj”; # “Kafur”, “Bajkam” in Lewis, <i>Islam</i>, Vol. I, pp. 39-45.; “Women and her Five Lovers” in <i>1001 Nights</i>;  <a href="https://www.aramcoworld.com/Articles/January-2019/Cairo-s-House-of-Knowledge">https://www.aramcoworld.com/Articles/January-2019/Cairo-s-House-of-Knowledge</a></p> <p><i>Who was better off in Islamic society: women or slaves? Why?</i></p>
Week 7	<p>Islamic Politics</p> <p>T: Egger, Pt. 2, chs. 6, 7</p> <p>R: Robinson, “Ibn Taymiyya”, “Ibn Khaldun”; # Letter to al-Malik al-Ashtar in <i>Nahj al-Balagha</i>; “Ibn Taymiyya on Politics” in <i>al-Siyasa al-shar’iya</i></p> <p><b>Paper #1 Due; Midterm review</b></p> <p><i>What was Islamic about politics in the Islamic world?</i></p>
Week 8	<p>Midterm Exam</p> <p>T: Fall Break: <b>No Class</b></p> <p><b>R: MIDTERM EXAM</b></p>
Week 9	<p>Islamic Civilization</p> <p>T: Egger, chs. 8, 9. Robinson, “Abu Bakr al-Razi”, “al-Biruni”, “Saladin”, “Ibn Rushd”.</p> <p>R: Robinson, “Ibn Hazm”, “Karima al-Marwaziyya”, “Rumi”.</p> <p><i>What was common to Islam’s cultures?</i></p>
Week 10	<p>From Caliphate to Military State</p> <p>T: Egger, Pt. 3, chs. 10, 11.</p>

R: # “The Merits of the Turks” in Jahiz, *Life and Works*, “Beyrek and the Oghuz” in *Book of Dede Korkut*; Robinson, “Timur”

*“The Turks ... are the bedouin of the non-Arabs”, said Jahiz. Explain.*

Week 11      The Ottoman and Safavid Empires

T: Egger, Pt. 4, chs. 12, 14.

R: Gelvin, Chs. 2, 3. Robinson, “Mehmed II”; # Letters of Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq, selections; “The Turkic and Mongol Heritage” in C. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*; Ottoman kanun – selections

*“No distinction is attached to birth among the Turks...”, which according to de Busbecq was the reason for Ottoman success. Do you agree? Why?*

Week 12      The Early Modern Middle East

T: # “The Frankish Character” in Usama b. Munqidh, *Arab-Syrian Gentleman*; Ottoman views of the West – selections; Al-Jabarti on the French – selection

R: Robinson, “Shah Ismail”

*Is modern the same as western?*

Week 13      The Modern Era

T: Gelvin, Ch.4

R: Gelvin, Ch. 5, 6; # “Ibrahim Hakki Pasha” in Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom*

*“... in the hands of Eastern rulers, the civilization of the West ... instead of restoring a tottering state, appears to threaten it with speedier ruin”, wrote Curzon. Do you agree? Why?*

Week 14      Documentary

T: **TBD**

R: *No Class*; **Thanksgiving break**

Week 15      The Modern Era Continued

T: Gelvin, Chs. 11-14.

R: # Sati al-Husri, "Muslim Unity and Arab Unity" in Haim, *Arab Nationalism*; "Ziya Gokalp" in *Ency. Of Islam*; "Discourse of the Veil" in Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*

**R: Paper #2 Due  
Review for Final**

*Who were more important in shaping the Middle East after WWI, imperialists or nationalists?*

**FINAL EXAM: 12/14**