

## HISTORY 281 SURVEY OF MIDDLE EASTERN HISTORY

Fall 2012  
MW12-1:15 pm  
Krug Hall 242

Prof. Hamdani  
RB 347, 993-1250  
[shamdani@gmu.edu](mailto:shamdani@gmu.edu)  
Office hrs: M 3-4pm

This course will provide an understanding of the history of the Middle East from the rise of Islam 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. By the conclusion of the course, students should have a grasp of the major trends in Middle East history, as well as an appreciation for the rich and complex politics, society, economy and culture that characterizes the region.

Readings will include selections from a textbook, as well as a course reader consisting of excerpts from primary and secondary sources on specific topics. Students are expected to have completed the readings for each lecture before class, and to actively participate in class discussion. In addition to readings and attending lecture, the requirements of this course include a midterm exam, final exam, and two short papers. A field trip will be planned for some time during the term, in a manner and time convenient to students.

This course satisfies a Core course in the General Education Requirements. As a course in global understanding, students will be expected to demonstrate their ability to assess and evaluate the sources, both primary and secondary, and to provide clear explanation, interpretation and analysis through the essay exams, papers, and oral participation in class. Upon completing the course, students should also be able to:

- Develop understanding of global patterns and processes and their interaction with society
- Demonstrate understanding of the interconnectedness, difference, and diversity of this global society
- Apply awareness of global issues to a consideration of their individual responsibilities within a global society

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

Berkey, J., *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East 600-1800*. Cambridge, 2003.

Hist 281 Course Reader

## 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 5-7 pages, on a weekly topic from before, and after, the midterm. Paper guide will be provided before due date.

## ADDITIONAL ISSUES:

Students are not allowed to eat, text, or use laptops for any purpose other than taking notes during class. Cell phones must be turned off. Walking in late is not only rude and disruptive, but will adversely affect your grade. If a student is not prepared to participate, it is better not to attend, as attendance of warm bodies alone does not qualify as participation.

## 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—either the existing “MEMO” system or a new “MASONLIVE” account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See <http://masonlive.gmu.edu> for more information.

## 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: A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200; <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

### UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

“Ask a Librarian” <http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>

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

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university academic affairs. Other policies are available at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies

Last Day to Add Classes: 9/4/12

Last Day to Drop Classes: 9/4/12

Drop with Penalty Period: 9/4-9/28/12

## TENTATIVE LECTURE AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE:

- Week 1            Introduction
- M: Introduction to course
- W: Reader: Physical geography (Cambridge Ency); Human geography (Held)
- How has physical geography affected the distribution of peoples and evolution of societies in the Middle East?*
- Week 2            Arabia and the Rise of Islam
- M: **Labor Day**, no class
- W: Berkey, Chs. 1, 3, 4  
Reader: Map 2  
"Muruwwa and Din" – Goldziher, Muslim Studies  
Pre-Islamic poetry – selections  
"Monotheist Politics" – Cook, Muhammad  
"Constitution of Medina" – Watt, Muhammad at Medina
- Why did Islam succeed in uniting the Arab tribes?*
- Week 3            Comparative Monotheisms
- M: Berkey, Ch. 2  
Reader:  
"Gilgamesh" – Kirk, Myth  
"Judaism" – Chambers, The Western Experience  
"Christianity" – Chambers, The Western Experience  
"Monotheist History" – Cook, Muhammad
- W: Reader:  
Selections from Scriptures
- Is Islam merely a Judeo-Christian heresy or a distinct monotheist religion? Why?*
- Week 4            The Arab Empire
- M: Berkey, chs. 5-8
- W: Reader:  
Map 3  
"Tribe and State" - Crone, States in History  
"Abu Hamza's Comments" - Crone & Hinds, God's Caliph  
"The story of a tax collector" – al-Tanukhi  
"The Beauties of Commerce" – Abu'l-Fadl Ja'far  
"The investigation of commerce" – al-Jahiz

“Ajdabiya, Kairouan, Sijilmasa, Naples, Amalfi” – Ibn Hawqal in  
Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World

*The Prophet ruled in the name of Islam. Did his successors?*

Week 5      The Islamic Empire

M: Berkey, chs. 9-11.

W:Reader:

“Ibn Taymiyya on Politics” – tr. Cook, al-Siyasa al-shar’iya

*If Umayyad rule resulted in an Islamic revolution, what was the result of  
`Abbasid rule?*

Week 6      Islamic Society in the Classical Age

M: Berkey, Chs. 12, 13, 19, 25.

W: Reader:

“Confessions” and “Kafur” - ed. Lewis, Islam

“Manners and Customs” - Lutfi, in Women in Middle Eastern  
History

“Women and her Five Lovers” - 1001 Nights

REVIEW FOR MIDTERM

**Paper Due**

*Who was better off in Abbasid Baghdad: women or slaves? Why?*

Week 7      Islamic Politics in the Classical Age

M: **Columbus Day**, no class

T:**MIDTERM EXAM**

W: Berkey, Chs. 14-16.

*Who was better off in Abbasid Baghdad: ulama or udaba (literati)? Why?*

Week 8      Islam’s Cultures in the Classical Age

M: Berkey, Chs. 17, 20.

W: Berkey, Chs. 22-24.

Week 9      From Caliphate to Military State

M: Berkey, Ch. 21.

W: Reader:

“The Siege of Baghdad” - Juwayni, History of the World Conqueror

“The Battle of Ayn Jalut” – Sadeque, Baybars of Egypt

“The Merits of the Turks” – Jahiz, Life and Works

Ibn Khaldun on the Turks – Ayalon, “Yasa”

“Beyrek and the Oghuz” – Book of Dede Korkut

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

Week 10      The Ottoman Empire

M: TBA

W:Reader:

Letters of Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq – selections

“The Turkic and Mongol Heritage” – 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 11      Early Modern Islams

M: Berkey, Ch. 26.

W: Reader:

“The Frankish Character” – Usama b. Munqidh, Arab-Syrian Gentleman

Ottoman views of the West – selections

Al-Jabarti on the French – selection

*Was the breakdown of the “circle of equity” a symptom or the cause of Ottoman decline?*

Week 12      The Modern Era

M: Reader:

“Losers” – Hobsbawm, Age of Capital

W: Reader:

“Losers” – Hobsbawm, Age of Capital

“Muhammad `Ali” – A. Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, Short History of Modern Egypt

“Isma`il” – Tignor, Tarikh

*Who most benefited Egypt in the nineteenth century, Muhammad `Ali or Isma`il? Why?*

Week 13      The Modern Era

M: Reader:

“Iran” –Yapp, The Making of the Modern Middle East

“The Persian army” – Lord Curzon, The Persian Question

“Ottoman Reformers” – Shaw, The Beginnings of Modernization

“Ibrahim Hakki Pasha” – Findley, Ottoman Civil Officialdom

W: *No Class, Thanksgiving Break*

*“... 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      Nineteenth Century Society

M: Reader:

“Nationalism” – Gellner, Thought and Change

W: Reader:

“Sati` al-Husri” – Cleveland, An Arab Nationalist

“Muslim Unity and Arab Unity” – Haim, Arab Nationalism

“Taha Hussain” – Abdel Malek, Contemporary Arab Political Thought

“Ziya Gokalp” – Encyclopedia of Islam

“Discourse of the Veil” – Ahmed, Women and Gender in Islam

*Are national identity and gender identity cultural or natural? Why?*

Week 15      The turn of the Twentieth Century

M: Reader:

Maps 6a and 6b

“The First World War” and “Post-War Settlement” – Holt, Egypt and the Fertile Crescent

W: Reader:

“Iran” and “Anatolia and Thrace” – Yapp, Making of the Modern Middle East

“Documents” – selections from The Arab-Israeli Reader, ed. Laqueur

**Paper Due**

**Review for Final**

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

**FINAL EXAM: 12/17; 10:30-1:15pm (Subject to possible change by registrar: CHECK PATRIOTWEB)**