

History 2607

Introduction to Islamic History and Civilization

Fall 2026

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This is a **draft** outline. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace for a final version.

Course Description

This is a survey course aiming to introduce students to the main historical events surrounding the rise of Islam and the foundation of Islamic states and the major achievement achievements of Islamic civilization. We begin in the 7th century with the appearance of the prophet Muhammad in Arabia and the birth of Islam. We follow with the discussion of the Qur'an, and the military conquest of the Middle East, North Africa, Spain, Iran and Central Asia and the settlement, culminating in a newly established Islamic Empire and a new Arabic-Islamic civilization. We end the survey in around the 1500, after which the Middle East was conquered by the Ottoman Turks.

The course is structured thematically but also organized in a chronological order of events and achievements. Topics include but not limited to Muhammad and the Qur'an, the conquest of the Middle East, the Islamic legal system, the economy, social structures, political institutions, literature, philosophy, theology, art and architecture, medicine and science, the Crusades to the Holy Land, trade, and the creation of Arabic science. The course methodology combines lectures provided in a Power point format and requires independent work by the students which consists of readings in the primary sources and secondary sources, scholarly articles and books, Encyclopedia entries and writing a second year level research paper.

Course Syllabus

The course is built on the lectures and students reading chapters from two textbooks. Course readings are available on OWL but copies for purchase should be available in the bookstore. Students will write a research paper which will be graded I two phases, a plan and a final paper.

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Lectures 1-4 Students are asked to read in the Oxford Islamic Studies, Muhammad and the Caliphate (All 12 sections) To gain background for all lectures in addition to specific entries from Egger, *A History of the Muslim World to 1405* Orientation Structure, general introduction. Readings: Egger, xv-xvi, 1-20.

1. Muhammad: The man and the mission. The Environment. Readings: Egger, 20-32.

2. Political Developments 1: Conquest and the Empire

Readings: Heidemann, Stefan, "The evolving representation of the early Islamic empire and its religion on coin imagery" (OWL).

3. The Qur'an

Readings: Egger, 33-61; Bauer, K., "The Male Is Not Like the Female (Q 3:36): The Question of Gender Egalitarianism in the Qur'an" (OWL).

4. Social Structures and Institutions. The Islamic City.

Readings: Egger, 62-103

5. The Legal System

Readings: Egger, 114-122 *Library Assignment due by email

6. The Economy.

Readings: Egger, 104-113 *Library Assignment due on the Friday by email

For Lectures 5-6 general background is Oxford Islamic Studies online, Law and Society (All 9 sections) *Encyclopedia of Islam Assignment due printed in class*

7. Political Developments 2: Regional States

Readings: Egger, 94-104

8. Arabic Literature, Philosophy and Mysticism *Research Essay due printed in class*

Readings: Egger, 123-138. General background Oxford Islamic Studies: Philosophy and Theology (All 13 sections)

9. Islamic Medicine and Science

Readings: Oxford Islamic Studies: Science, Medicine, and Technology (All 10 sections); van Dalen, Elaine, "Medical translations from Greek into Arabic and Hebrew" (OWL). For Lectures 11-12 Oxford Islamic Studies online, read: Art and Architecture (All 6 sections)

10. Islamic Architecture

Readings: Goodson, Caroline, “Topographies of Power in Aghlabid-Era Kairouan” (OWL).

11. Islamic Art Readings: no additional readings

Course Materials:

-Vernon O. Egger, *A History of the Muslim World to 1405. The Making of a Civilization*. (Pearson Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 2004) –

Oxford Islamic Studies online (Gain access through the UWO Library website) –

Textbooks with help for writing papers

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing In History*, Sixth Edition. (Bedford/St.Martin’s, 2010)

OR

William Kelleher Storey and Towser Jones, *Writing History. A Guide for Canadian Students, Third Edition*. (Oxford University Press, Canada, 2011) All other readings available on OWL

Methods of Evaluation

Research paper plan including bibliography 15%

Research paper 35%

Final exam 50%

Timing of assignments:

First Assignment due after reading week October 10-18

Second Assignment due November 27

Exam will be written online.

Make-up tests, midterms, and exams can only be approved by Academic Advising. Please see https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for department procedures and requirements involving make-up tests and exams.

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You must complete all course assignments in order to pass this course.

Use of generative artificial intelligence (AI):

The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT, will be acceptable, in the search for the research paper but not permitted and unacceptable in the writing of the research paper.

Namely, you may use generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, in this course for activities such as researching and refining your ideas, or drafting an outline to organize your thoughts—but not for generating prose. All writing submitted in this course must be your own. If in doubt, please ask me for clarification and advice.

Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.