

HST 379 Islamic Empires, 600–1600
A Proposal and Syllabus
Don Matthews, Department of History

Description

This is a course on Islamic Empires from the time of the Prophet Muhammad until the end of the Ottoman classical age. It is a 300-level, intermediate content course and is designed to build bridges to the History Department's courses on pre-modern Europe and the modern Middle East.

The course focuses on conquests, state building, and political thought, and it also explores intellectual history, Islamic institutions, gender relations, and the position of non-Muslims in Islamic societies.

Catalog Description

Explores the rise and expansion of Islamic empires from the Prophet Muhammad to the gunpowder empires. Themes include Islamic conquests, jihad, caliphates, sharia', women, and non-Muslims.

Prerequisite

WRT 160

Professor's Qualifications

I trained in these topics during my graduate education. One of my subfields was history of the Middle East from 1000 to 1500, and my major field was history of the Middle East since 1500. I also had a course in early Islamic history 600–1000 and was examined on the topic in my first battery of qualifying exams. I took the Pro-seminar in Islamic History, which was a study of research methods and sources on the history of the Islamic Middle East in the pre-modern periods.

I taught an earlier version of this course, titled Islamic Civilization to 1500, prior to coming to Oakland University.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, the student will be able to explain...

1. major historiographical questions surrounding the rise and expansion of Islam as a religion and civilization.
2. central concepts of pre-modern Islamic states and state building, including caliphate, sultan, kingship, jihad, dhimmi, shari'ah, qanun, and imam.
3. the roles and status of non-Muslims in pre-modern Islamic empires.
4. the status of women and the concept of the family in pre-modern Islamic societies
5. major enduring intellectual trends, including rationalism and neo-Platonism, mu'tazalism, textualism, and Sufism.
6. the major shifts in power and wealth among Islamic and Christian empires.

Required Texts

Ira Lapidus, *Islamic Societies to the Nineteenth Century: A Global History* (Cambridge, 2012)

Robert Hoyland, *In God’s Path: The Arab Conquests and the Creation of an Islamic Empire* (Oxford, 2014)

Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet* (Harper One, 1993)

Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (Oxford, 2011)

Other articles, chapters and documents will be posted to Moodle. Materials on Moodle are indicated with an asterisk (*).

Components of the Final Course Grade

Midterm in-class exam	27%
Final in-class exam	27%
Book critiques of Hoyland and Casale	30%
Reaction paper on Armstrong	6%
Participation	10%

In-Class Exams

The exams comprise identification items, short-answer questions, and an essay question. All responses must be expressed in in coherent, grammatically correct paragraphs.

Book Critiques

Each book critique should be about five to seven pages, with 1 to 1.25-inch margins, and text in a twelve-point, standard font. The critiques are graded on grammar and style as well as on content.

SCORING RUBRIC FOR BOOK CRITIQUES:

Category	Maximum points
Identifies the author’s thesis	20
Explains the author’s argument in historical context	40
Correct spelling, grammar, and style	15
Correct formatting	5
Total maximum points	100

Book Critiques: A Guide

1. The goals of the book critique are to identify the author’s thesis, explain her argument and her sources, and to evaluate her argument.
2. Begin with an introduction that explains the main theme or thesis of the book, or the reason for the author’s writing of the book. You may also refer to issues in the

existing literature the author seeks to address. It is not necessary to include a chapter-by-chapter summary, but you may choose to do this.

3. If you quote from the book or refer to a specific passage in it, include a citation as a footnote or endnote. It is not necessary to use any outside sources in writing the book critiques, but if you do, cite those sources.
4. Do not use long quotations.
5. Use standard grammar, and avoid colloquialisms.
6. Write as if you are addressing an educated non-specialist who has not read the book. Someone who has an idea of major issues in modern history, sociology, anthropology, or political science should be able to grasp the merits and the flaws of the book by reading your critique.
7. End with a concluding section that summarizes and restates your observations and evaluation of the book.

Participation and Attendance

Come to class prepared. Reading assignments must be *completed by* the time of the class for which they are assigned on the schedule below. Your *informed* participation in class is crucial to the learning and teaching processes. It is likewise a part of your grade to be taken seriously.

Unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade. If you miss a class session, you have one week to submit a one-page essay summarizing that day's reading assignment. The submission will replace your participation score for that day. I do not require doctors' notes or other excuses.

Frequently arriving late for class also will diminish your participation grade. For more on participation, see the section below titled "Criteria for Participation Grades." You should not leave the class except in the case of a true emergency. If you do leave, do not return during that class period.

Turn off your cell phones before class. Do not activate the WiFi of your computer during class. The *only* reason to use your computer during class is to take notes or access your notes. *Texting or browsing the Web during the class will severely diminish your class participation score.* For more information on these and other disruptive behaviors, see the Dean of Students' website: <http://wwwwp.oakland.edu/studentcodeofconduct/faculty-staff-resources/>.

Excused Absence Policy

University excused absences applies to participation as an athlete, manager or student trainer in NCAA intercollegiate competitions, or participation as a representative of Oakland University at academic events and artistic performances approved by the

Provost or designee. For the excused absence policy, see <http://www.oakland.edu/?id=6850&sid=175>.

Academic Misconduct

The University's regulations that relate to academic misconduct will be fully enforced. Any student suspected of cheating and/or plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of Students and, thereafter, to the Academic Conduct Committee for adjudication. Anyone found guilty of academic misconduct in this course may receive a course grade of 0.0, in addition to any penalty assigned by the Academic Conduct Committee. Students found guilty of academic misconduct by the Academic Conduct Committee may face suspension or permanent dismissal. The full policy on academic misconduct can be found in the General Information section of the Undergraduate Catalog or online at <http://wwwp.oakland.edu/studentcodeofconduct/student-code-of-conduct/conduct-regulations/>.

Special Considerations

A student with a documented learning or physical disability must contact the Office of Disability and Support Services, 121 North Foundation Hall, (248) 370-3266, and inform the professor of special needs during first week of classes. For more information, visit <http://www.oakland.edu/dss>.

Grading

All graded elements of the course are scored according to a 100-point scale. The final grade is converted to the University's 4-point scale. Here is the conversion chart:

98–100 pts.	= 4.0	84–83	= 3.2
96–97	= 3.9	81–82	= 3.1
94–95	= 3.8	80	= 3.0
92–93	= 3.7	75	= 2.5
90–91	= 3.6	70	= 2.0
88–89	= 3.5	65	= 1.5
86–87	= 3.4	60	= 1.0
85–86	= 3.3	<60	= 0.0

Grades are not curved; it is quite possible for everyone in the class to attain a high grade. Similarly, every member of the class could do poorly. *No one is permitted to redo an assignment for a higher grade.*

Papers submitted late will be penalized 5 points for each day after the due date. Papers submitted on the due date but after class will be considered a day late.

Criteria for Class Participation Grades

90–100 (Excellent)

The students who attain this grade...

participate nearly everyday.
provide comments that are well thought out and grounded in the assigned readings.

express their ideas in a clear and persuasive manner.
ask questions that advance the learning process of the whole class.
facilitate participation and learning of other students.

80–89 (Good)

This grade is awarded to students who....

usually participate, but nearly always actively listen and take notes.
contribute comments without being called upon.
offer comments and questions that demonstrate that the assigned reading has been completed.
show effort and enthusiasm.

70–79 (Adequate)

This grade is given to students who...

demonstrates good familiarity with the material when called upon.
participates voluntarily but shows only a rudimentary familiarity with the material.
expresses only opinions that are not grounded in the assigned readings.
Is attentive but does not participate verbally.

≤ 69 (Unsatisfactory)

Students receive an unsatisfactory grade if they...

access the Internet or cell phones during class
are frequently absent from class.
are habitually late.
sometimes come to class and leave.
are inattentive.
often come to class unprepared.
undermine the learning process by distracting behavior, talking, or by displaying hostility or disdain towards fellow students or the professor.

Any one or several of the above will result in an unsatisfactory grade.

Note:

If you have a true phobia of speaking on class, talk with me about this, and we will work out a set of criteria that indicate your effort, progress, and daily preparedness.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week 1 Middle Easter Empires Before Islam

a. The Byzantine Empire

Lapidus, 7–26

b. Imperial Iran & the Sasanians

- Lapidus, continued.
c. The Arabs Before Islam
Lapidus, 31–39

Week 2 Muhammad & His World

- a. Discussion: Late Antiquity*
- b. Muhammad at Mecca
Lapidus, 39–54
- c. Muhammad at Medina
Due: Reaction paper on Armstrong

Week 3 The Rashidun Caliphate

- a. Discussion: The Qur'an; Constitution of Medina*
- b. The Rida Wars & Consolidation
Lapidus, 58–78
- c. The First Conquests & the Fitnas
Lapidus, continued.

Week 4 The Umayyad Caliphate

- a. Discussion: The Murder of 'Uthman*
- b. The Umayyads: Internal Crises
Lapidus, 80–90
- c. The Umayyads: Consolidation & Conquests
Lapidus, 114–125

Week 5 The 'Abbasid Caliphate

- a. From the 'Abbasid Revolution to the Last Fitna
Lapidus, 91–102
- b. The Internationalization of Knowledge
Lapidus, 126–140
- c. Sharia': State, Society & Law
Lapidus, 141–173

Week 6 Theology & Authority under the 'Abbasids

- a. **Due:** Critique of Hoyland & discussion
- b. Discussion: 'Abbasid Court Ritual; Mu'tazilite Controversy*
- c. Shiism
Lapidus, 174–180

Week 7 Society to the 900s

- a. Women, the family & Non-Muslims
Lapidus, 181–90
- b. Christians and Jews in the 'Abbasid Calphate
Lapidus, 193–221
- c. **Midterm Exam**

Week 8 The Muslim Commonwealth, 950–1258

- a. Islamic Spain and North Africa
Lapidus, 369–405
- b. The East: from the Seljuqs to the Mongols
Lapidus, 225–237
- c. The East, continued.

Week 9 Intellectuals on War, Society & Law

- a. Egypt: from the Fatimids to the Mamluks
Lapidus, 238–263
- b. Discussion: Nizam al-Mulk & the Sunni State*
- c. The Philosophers v. al-Ghazali
Lapidus, 293–324

Week 10 Islamic Empires & Frontiers

- a. Film & discussion
- b. Discussion: Biography of Ibn Sina*
- c. Discussion: Ibn Batuta in Africa & Usama ibn al-Munqidh on the Franks*

Week 11 The Emergence of the Ottoman Empire

- a. From Ghazi State to Empire, 1280–1413
Lapidus, 425–436
- b. Defeat and Restoration, 1413–1512
Lapidus, continued.
- c. Institutions of the Ottoman Classical Age
Lapidus, 437–466

Week 12 The Ottoman Middle East, 1514–1638

- a. The Ottoman-Safavid Confrontation
Lapidus, 490–506
- b. The Arab Provinces
Lapidus, 482–489
- c. Discussion: Ottoman-Safavid Frontier; Arab Orthodox Christians*

Week 13 Islamic Empires & the Early Modern World

- a. The Question of Ottoman Decline
Lapidus, 468–480
- b. Film: “Empire of Faith,” part 3
HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Week 14 The Ottomans & Early Modern Europe, from Vienna to Karlewitz

- a. “The Great Divergence” & Western Europe
You should be reading Casale.
- b. The Second Ottoman Empire?*
- c. **Due:** Critique of Casale and discussion