MESAS 316/REL 316 Early and Medieval Islam

Fall 2005

T, Th 10:00 to 11:15

Emerson E102

Instructor: Gordon D. Newby
Office: S-312 Callaway Center
Telephone: 404-727-2717
Email: gdnewby@emory.edu
Office Hours: By Appointment

Description

MES 316/REL 316 Early and Medieval Islam is an introduction to the civilization surrounding the religion of Islam from its beginnings to the near modern period. The course will be historical in frame and discuss religious phenomenology within that perspective.

The rapid rise of Islamic civilization at the end of the ancient world is one of the major events in world religious and political history. Historians and theologians have debated the rapid rise of Islam and its successful overtaking of major portions of the empires that formed the ancient world. In a little over a century, Muslims spread their religious and political culture to cover the area from the Pillars of Hercules to the Indian Sub-Continent, and soon well beyond that. In this course, we will explore the theories that have been advanced for this expansion as well as the historical events themselves. We will look at primary as well as secondary sources to understand this fascinating period in world civilization. We will also explore the relationship of Islam’s foundational events to our own religious, civilizational and cultural discussions and experiences.

Texts

Marshall G. S. Hodgson, The Venture of Islam, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 3 vols. Volumes 1 and 2 are required for this course. Volume 3 is available in the bookstore and is highly recommended as an addition to your personal library

Muhammad Marmeduke Pickthall, The Meaning of the Glorious Koran. This translation of the Quran is one of the most widely accepted translations of the Quran into English by English speaking Muslims. If you are able to read the Quran in Arabic, please feel free to do so.

Andrew Rippin and Jan Knappert, Textual Sources for the Study of Islam, Manchester, Manchester U. Press.

Other resources, including electronic resources will be posted from time to time on the class LearnLink conference.

**Learner Outcomes**

Students who successfully complete this course will have

- a general knowledge of the basic beliefs of Islam
- the relationship of Islam to other religions, such as Judaism and Christianity
- a knowledge of the historical development of Islamicate civilization
- Students will also learn how to
- assess complex primary and secondary historical material relating to Islamicate civilization
- write critically about what they have read
- present clear, cogent, fact-based arguments about complex ideas
- research and write an academic term paper

**Assessments**

Students will be assessed on

- Class attendance and participation  20%
- Weekly writing assignments 30%
- A term-end research paper on a topic approved by the instructor 50%

**Schedule***

1. September 1 – Introduction to the course and to the Study of Islamic Civilization

2. September 6 – Introduction to Islamic Civilization

   Assignment: Read Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, (hereafter Venture) vol. 1, pp. vi to 100 and write a one page summary of the author’s point of view.

3. September 8 – The World before Islam

   Assignment: Read Venture, vol. 1, pp. 101 – 145 and look at a copy of the Nicene Creed and the Chalcedonian Creed

4. September 13 – The Life of Muhammad and the Beginning of Islam

5. September 15 – The Early Islamic State

Assignment: Read Venture, vol. 1, pp. 187 – 230

6. September 20 – The Early Islamic State (Continued)

Assignment: Review material read to date.

7. September 22 – The Struggle for an Islamic State

Assignment: Read Venture, vol. 1, pp. 231 – 314. Write a two-page paper describing and critiquing the role of religious minorities in the Islamic state.

8. September 27 – The Shari’i Vision


9. September 29 – Muslim Personal Piety


10. October 6 – Falsafah, Kalâm, and the Hellenistic Heritage

Assignment: Read Venture, vol. 1, pp. 410 – 443

11. October 20 – The Development of Arabic Literary Culture

Assignment: Read Venture, vol. 1, pp. 444 – 472; TSSI, pp. 115 – 133.

12. October 25 – Challenges to Absolutism


13. October 27 – The Establishment of an International Islamic Order

Assignment: Read Venture, vol. 2, pp. vi – 61. Write a one-page thought paper on the nature of ethnic and religious identity within Islamic empires.
14. November 1 – The Islamic Social Order
   Assignment: Read Venture, vol. 2, pp. 62 – 151

15. November 3 – The Intellectual and Scientific Traditions
   Assignment: Read Venture, vol. 2, pp. 152 – 200

16. November 8 – Institutional Sufism
   Assignment: Read Venture, vol. 2, pp. 201 – 254; TSSI, pp. 158 – 174. Write a one-page thought paper on some aspect of Islamic asceticism and/or mysticism.

17. November 10 – Sunni Internationalism and its Challenges
   Assignment: Read Venture, vol. 2, pp. 255 – 292

18. November 15 – The Development of Persian Literary Culture

19. November 17 – Comparing Islamic and Western Cultures
   Assignment: Read Venture, vol. 2, pp. 329 – 368  Submit an annotated bibliography for your term paper.

20. November 29 – The Mongols and After

21. December 1 – Court Culture and the Arts
   Assignment: Read Venture, vol. 2, pp. 437 – 531

22. December 6 – Islamic Expansion to 1503
   Assignment: Read Venture, vol. 2, pp. 532 – 575

23. December 8 – Course Review

24. December 13 – Course Review

25. December 15 – Term papers due on or before this date.
*Note that there are some Tuesdays and Thursdays on which the class will not meet. These days are not listed on the schedule. If there are questions, please consult the class LearnLink conference or the instructor.

**General Policies and Requirements for this course**

If you find that you are having any difficulties with the material in this course or its method of presentation, I will be pleased to discuss this matter with you or refer you to an appropriate source of help. Emory University complies with the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and offers accommodations to students with disabilities. If you are in need of a classroom accommodation, please make an appointment with me to discuss this as soon as possible. All information will be held in the strictest confidence.

During the semester, I will be available by appointment to discuss matters related to the course with each student. You can make an appointment by calling me at my office number, 404-727-2717, or by emailing me at gdnewby@emory.edu or gdnewby@learnlink.emory.edu. During the semester, you will be expected to make a minimum of two appointments with me, one of which should be toward the end of the semester to discuss your research project. My office is located in Callaway S-312, inside the Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies Department office.

Regular attendance is expected of all students, and will be a component of your grade. If you find that you must be absent, please send a notice to the confidential LearnLink conference for this class indicating the reason for your absence. If you cannot post your reason before your absence, please do so as soon as you can after you are able.

All reading assignments must be completed before the class period they are due. They will form the basis for class discussion.

Writing assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day they are due. They should be submitted electronically to the appropriate LearnLink conference for this course as well as handed in as printed hard copy at the beginning of class. The electronic version should be in Microsoft Word© or, if you use another word processing software, in RTF format. The printed version should be double spaced in 12-point type on white paper. Your name and the date of the assignment should appear in the upper left-hand corner.

This course, like all courses in Emory College, is under the Honor Code. You must do your own work, even though collegial collaboration is encouraged. Please retain evidence of your own work (research notes, drafts, etc.) until the end of the course and a grade has been assigned. If asked, you should be prepared to produce evidence that you have adhered to the Honor Code and done your own work.

*Please note that the latest version of the syllabus will be the one posted on the class LearnLink conference. Please refer to that version for any changes and additions.*