Course Description:

MESAS 210 The Arab World, is an introduction to the history, culture and society of the Arabs from the earliest recorded periods to the modern age. 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. It brought Arabs fully into contact with the declining ancient civilizations and helped transform Arabs into leading world actors. Historians 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 how Arabs developed cultural and political institutions within the context of the Islamicate world and, toward the end of the course, how ideas of modernism and nationalism brought Arabs into the contemporary world. We will look at primary as well as secondary sources to understand this fascinating period in world civilization.

Texts and Resources:


Muhammad Marmeduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, New York: Tahrike Tarsile Qur’an, Inc., 2009. 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. Other resources, including electronic resources will be posted from time to time on the class BlackBoard conference.

Learner Outcomes:

Students who successfully complete this course will have

- An overall view of the major events in Arab history
- A general knowledge of the basic beliefs of Islam
- Familiarity with the general theories about the development of Arab culture and civilization
- A background for understanding current events in the Arab world

Students will also learn how to
• assess complex primary and secondary historical material relating to Arab history and culture • 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*:

DATE & ASSIGNMENT
• August 26 Introduction
• September 7 – September 9 Hourani, Chapters 2, 3, & 4; Qur’an, Chapters 1, 12, 96, 105-114; Genesis chaps. 30 – 50. Do writing assignment 2
• No class September 9
• September 14 – September 16 Hourani, Chapters 5, 6
• September 21 – September 23 Hourani, Chapters 7, 8; Humphreys, chap. 4. Do writing assignment 3
• September 28 – September 30 Hourani, Chapters 9, 10 Read Andrew Rippin & Jan Knappert, Textual Sources for the Study of Islam, chapters 5 - 6. Do writing assignment 4
• October 5 – October 7 Hourani, Chapters 11, 12
• October 12 – October 14 Hourani, Chapters 13, 14
• No Class October 12
• October 19 – October 21 Hourani, Chapters 15, 16
• October 26 – October 28 Hourani, Chapters 17, 18
• November 2 – November 4 Hourani, Chapters 19, 20
• November 9 – November 11 Hourani, Chapters 21, 22
• November 16 – November 18 Hourani, Chapters 23, 24
• November 23 – November 25 Hourani, Chapters 25, 26
• No class November 25
• November 30 – December 2 December 2 Last day of class

*Note that there are some Tuesdays and Thursdays on which the class will not meet. These days are listed on the schedule and subject to change. If there are questions, please consult the class BlackBoard 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 BlackBoard
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 BlackBoard 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
BlackBoard conference. Please refer to that version for any changes and additions.