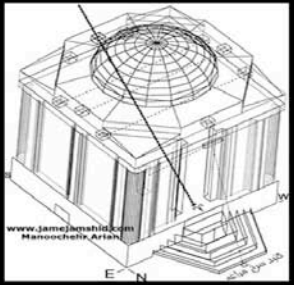



SAINT JOSEPH'S UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
SPRING 2010



**HIS 2891 - Medieval Islamic Civilization:
Material Culture, Scientists, and Philosophy**

Course Section: 151
Course Room: Mandeville 341
Course Time: Mon and Thu, 1:00-2:15 pm
Course Site: St. Joseph's University BlackBoard
Office Hours: -Wed 2-3:30 pm, Thu 10-11:30 am
-Additional hours by appt.

Professor: Dr. Roger L. Martínez
Office: B/L 112P
Telephone: 610-660-1740
Email: roger.martinez@sju.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

HIS 2891: Medieval Islamic Civilization: Material Culture, Scientists, and Philosophy (600-1300 c.e.)

When the Prophet Muhammad (c. 570-632) conveyed Islam to the Arabian Peninsula, he initiated an impressive transformation of human civilization that outpaced and outcompeted European communities in almost every tangible measure. Scientific methods and exploration proliferated, religious and political philosophies cut new paths, and the bountiful arts benefited from generous patronage. In this colloquium we will investigate the essential intellectual and material culture achievements produced by the Umayyad, Abbasid, and Fatimid Caliphates.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND READINGS:

Required Texts:

- Humphreys, R. Stephen. *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991. ISBN-13: 978-0691008561.
- Khalidi, Muhammad Ali. *Medieval Islamic Philosophical Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. ISBN-13: 978-0521529631.

- Saliba, George. *Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007. ISBN-13: 978-0262195577.
- Ettinghausen, Richard and Oleg Grabar, Marilyn Jenkins-Madina. *Islamic Art and Architecture 650-1250*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003. ISBN-13: 978-0300088694.
- Other course readings announced in class that will be available via BlackBoard or as handouts.

Recommended Texts:

- Ramadan, Tariq. *In the Footsteps of the Prophet: Lessons from the Life of the Prophet*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. ISBN-13: 978-0195308808.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

This course will be taught in two distinct parts. In Part One, the primary aim of the course is to quickly gain a basic understanding of Islamic historiography, medieval philosophy, medieval science, and medieval art and architecture. In Part Two, you will produce a 20 to 30-page research paper on a medieval Islamic history topic of your choice.

In this course, almost 100% of our class meetings will involve class discussions of the texts and other students' research papers. It is essential that you read all materials prior to our class meetings. It is critical that you are prepared to participate in class discussions. Your performance in the course will be assessed based on a mix of assignments and in-class participation. ***All written work should be submitted in class by the deadlines specified in the syllabus.*** Late assignments will not be accepted.

PART ONE ASSIGNMENTS: FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF ISLAMIC HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

▪ **Book Reading Notes – Four Separate Assignments (8% each or 32% of total grade)**

For each book we read and discuss in class, you will prepare detailed reading notes that (a) summarize main themes and “arguments” and (b) document key examples from the text. ***For each text, you will you will take detailed notes on each chapter.*** Ideally, your notes should be typed, but can be submitted in hand-written form if your writing style is neat and legible. You can prepare your notes in outline or prose form. You are not required to write complete sentences. Your notes should include page references (i.e., page 23). At minimum, for each book chapter your notes should be at least 1/2 of a typed, single-spaced page. You should bring your reading notes to class so that you can use them for discussions.

PART TWO ASSIGNMENTS: THE RESEARCH PAPER PROCESS

▪ **Research Paper Topic Identification and Questions (3% of total)**

To prepare a thoughtful research paper, it is very important that you begin thinking as soon as possible about topics and ideas for further study. As we read our four required texts for the course you should start to identify those issues (philosophical, scientific, artistic, architectural) that appeal to your interests. For your first research paper assignment, you will prepare a list of one to three potential research topics and questions that you find appealing. You should discuss these topics in a ½ to 1 page, single-spaced typed document.

- **Research Paper Prospectus and Preliminary Bibliography (5% of total)**

After receiving feedback from your professor, you will prepare a 2-3 page research paper prospectus that describes the topic, identifies specific research questions, proposes a research paper methodology and organization, and identifies specific sources for the paper.

- **Initial Research Findings Written and Oral Report (5% of total)**

After conducting your initial research and reading, you will prepare a 3-4 page research findings report. This report can be organized and formatted in outline-form and, ideally, it will begin to include “working” sections of your research paper. The purpose of the report is to help you with the difficult process of clarifying and validating your approach to the research paper. You will present your findings in a short 10-minute oral report to the class during which there will be a Q&A process.

- **First “Working Draft” Paper and Group Discussion (15% of total)**

Utilizing your initial research findings you will prepare your first “working draft” of your paper. Although I expect that this rough draft to be incomplete and unfinished, it should have substantial sections of writing in place.

- **Peer Feedback on Another Student’s Working Draft (10% of total)**

You will select another student to conduct a peer review of your working draft. As a peer reviewer, you will provide one page of typed comments on the (1) the clarity of the paper’s topic, (2) the understandability of the research approach and paper organization, (3) quality of research and evidence, and (4) readability of the paper.

- **5-7-minute Informal Paper Presentation to Class (5% of total)**

On our final day of class, you will present a brief informal oral report on your research topic and the key elements of your paper. One or two-page descriptive handouts are encouraged, but not required.

- **Final Research Paper (25% of total)**

ATTENDANCE

If you must be absent, you may receive an excused absence if you provide a valid doctor’s note or another verification from a school official (for extracurricular activities). Also, when possible, please notify me via email if you know you will be absent from class. Notes from parents are not valid excused absences. If you have four or more unexcused absences (the equivalent of missing two weeks of class) then you will receive an automatic FA, failure due to absence, for the course.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN THE CLASSROOM

You are permitted to use a laptop to take notes in class, but you should not check-email or surf the Internet during class. In addition, during class you should keep your mobile phone in your bag and muted or off. During all quizzes, all electronic devices must be powered off and placed in your bag.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Those who have or think that you may have a disability (learning, physical or psychological) are encouraged to contact Services for Students with Disabilities, Room 113, Science Center, 610-660-1774 or 610-660-1620 as early as possible in the semester. Accommodations can only be provided to student with current (within 3 years) documentation. Students are encouraged to discuss their instructional (“reasonable academic adjustments”) and accommodation needs with their professors. All student requests for extended time to take examinations in a distraction free environment, must be discussed with the professor a minimum of one week prior to the scheduled date of the exam; the student must complete the Extended-Time Request Form and obtain the professor’s approval; and submit the form to the office – Services for Students with Disabilities a minimum of 3 days prior to the date of the scheduled exam. Failure to follow these procedures could result in a denial of the request. Exceptions to exam schedules requires prior written approval of the professor.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to abide by the university’s honor code and policies pertaining to academic integrity. All cases of academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism will be handled per the university’s policies. You should complete all of your assignments independently, unless you are given specific instructions to the contrary. For the specifics of SJU’s Academic Honesty Policy, see:

<http://www.sju.edu/registrar/policies.html#ahp>

CLASS SCHEDULE

I. January 21 Course Introduction and Expectations

- Thu, Lecture: Course Introduction and Expectations

II. January 25 and 28 Overview of Medieval Islamic Civilization & Key Elements of Islamic Historiography

- Mon, Lecture: A Broad Overview of Medieval Islamic Civilization
 - Reading: Humphreys
 - Part II: Problems in Islamic History, Chpt. 3-5, pp. 69-147 (Early Historical Tradition and the First Islamic Polity; Modern Historians and the Abbasid Revolution: The Art of Interpretation; Bayhaqi and Ibn Taghribirdi: The Art of Narrative in Islamic Historical Writing during the Middle Ages)
 - Assignments:
 - None.
- Thu, Discussion
 - Reading: Humphreys
 - None
 - Assignments:
 - Bring your preliminary reading notes to class to use during discussion.

III. February 1 and 4 Key Elements of Islamic Historiography

- Mon, Discussion
 - Reading: Humphreys
 - Continue – Part II: Problems in Islamic History, Chpt. 6-10, pp. 148-254 (Ideology and Propaganda: Religion and State in the Early Seljuk Period; The Fiscal Administration of the Mamluk Empire; A Cultural Elite: The Role and Status of the ‘Ulama’ in Islamic Society; Islamic Law and Islamic Society; Urban Topography and Urban Society: Damascus under the Ayyubids and Mamluks)
 - Assignments:
 - Bring your preliminary reading notes to class to use during discussion.
- Thu, Discussion
 - Reading:
 - None
 - Assignments:
 - **Feb. 4th – Submit your finalized reading notes (only Chapters 3-10).**

IV. February 8 and 11 Medieval Scientific Traditions (Part I)

- Mon, Discussion
 - Reading: Saliba
 - Preface, Chpt. 1-2, pp. vii-72 (The Islamic Scientific Tradition: Question of Beginnings I and II)
 - Assignments:
 - Bring your preliminary reading notes to class to use during discussion.
- Thu, Discussion
 - Reading: Saliba
 - Chpt. 3-4, pp. 73-170 (Encounter with the Greek Scientific Tradition; Islamic Astronomy Defines Itself: The Critical Innovations)
 - Assignments:
 - Bring your preliminary reading notes to class to use during discussion.

V. February 15 and 18 Medieval Scientific Traditions (Part II) & Medieval Philosophy (Part I)

- Mon, Discussion
 - Reading: Saliba
 - Chpt. 5-7, pp. 171-256 (Science between Philosophy and Religion: The Case of Astronomy; Islamic Science and Renaissance Europe: The Copernican Connection; Age of Decline: The Fecundity of Astronomical Thought)
 - Assignments:
 - **Feb. 15th – Submit your finalized reading notes (entire book).**
- Thu, Discussion
 - Reading: Khalidi
 - Pp. xi-xlvi, 1-26 (Introduction; Chronology; Furthering Reading; Al-Farabi: *The Book of Letters*)
 - Assignments:
 - Bring your preliminary reading notes to class to use during discussion.

VI. February 22 and 25 Medieval Philosophy (Part II)

- Mon, Discussion
 - Reading: Khalidi
 - Pp. 27-98 (Ibn-Sina: *On the Soul*; Al-Ghazali: *The Rescuer from Error*)
 - Assignments:
 - Bring your preliminary reading notes to class to use during discussion.
- Thu, Discussion
 - Reading: Khalidi
 - Pp. 99-180 (Ibn Tufayl: *Hayy bin Yaqzan*; Ibn Rushd: *The Incoherence of the Incoherence*)
 - Assignments:
 - **Feb. 25th – Submit your finalized reading notes (entire book).**

VII. March 1 and 4 Medieval Art and Architecture (Part I)

- Mon, Discussion
 - Reading: Ettinghausen
 - Introduction and Part One, pp. 3-132 (Early Islamic Art and Architecture (c. 650-1000))
 - Assignments:
 - Bring your preliminary reading notes to class to use during discussion.
- Thu, Discussion
 - Reading: Ettinghausen
 - Part Two, Prologue and Chpt. 5, pp. 133-186 (Medieval Islamic Art and Architecture (c. 1000-1250) – Eastern Islamic Lands)
 - Assignments:
 - Bring your preliminary reading notes to class to use during discussion.
 - **Mar. 4th – Submit your “Research Paper Topic Identification and Questions” Assignment**

VIII. March 8 and 11 Spring Break

- **Spring Break. Have fun, create unforgettable memories, but please be careful.**

IX. March 15 and 18 Medieval Art and Architecture (Part II) & Research Methods

- Mon, Discussion
 - Reading: Ettinghausen
 - Part Two, Chpt. 6 - 8, pp. 186-302 (Medieval Islamic Art and Architecture (c. 1000-1250) – Central Islamic Lands, Western Islamic Lands, Conclusion: The Impact of Islamic Art)
 - Assignments:
 - Bring your preliminary reading notes to class to use during discussion.
 - **Mar. 15th – Submit your finalized reading notes (entire book).**
- Thu, Discussion of Research Methods for Your Paper
 - Reading: Humphreys
 - Part One: Sources and Research Tools, pp. 3-68
 - Assignments:
 - Do not prepare reading notes on this section of Humphreys.

**X. March 22 and 25
Finalizing Your Research Paper Topic and Beginning Research**

- Mon, Research Prospectus; Creation of Two Work Groups; Finding a Research/Writing Partner
 - Reading: None
 - Assignments:
 - **Mar. 22nd – Submit your “Research Paper Prospectus and Preliminary Bibliography”**
 - **Confirm the members of your research working group (#1 and #2)**
 - **Confirm your research and writing partner**
- Thu, Independent Research Day (Dr. Martinez will be in the Drexel Library Café during class time to assist anyone with their research paper)

**XI. March 29 and April 1
Independent Research and Initial Research Findings Report (Group #1)**

- Mon, Independent Research Day (Dr. Martinez will be in the Drexel Library Café during class time to assist anyone with their research paper)
- Thu, Class Meeting for Research Working Group #1
 - Assignments:
 - **Apr. 1st – Initial Research Findings Written and Oral Report**

**XII. April 5 and 8
Easter Break, Independent Research, & Initial Research Findings Report (Group #2)**

- Mon, Easter Break. No class.
- Thu, Class Meeting for Research Working Group #2
 - Assignments:
 - **Apr. 8th – Initial Research Findings Written and Oral Report**

**XIII. April 12 and 15
Independent Research**

- Mon, Independent Research
- Thu, Independent Research

**XIV. April 19 and 22
Submit Working Draft Papers and Group Discussions**

- Mon, Class Meeting for Research Working Group #1 (An Opportunity to get feedback from fellow students)
 - Assignments:
 - **Apr. 19th – Submit First “Working Draft” Paper and Group Discussion**
 - **Apr. 19th – Provide a copy of your “Working Draft” Paper to your peer reviewer**
- Thu, Class Meeting for Research Working Group #2 (An Opportunity to get feedback from fellow students)
 - Assignments:
 - **Apr. 22nd – Submit First “Working Draft” Paper and Group Discussion**
 - **Apr. 22nd – Provide a copy of your “Working Draft” Paper to your peer reviewer**

XV. April 26 and 29
Peer Reviews and Final Presentations

- Mon, Independent Research
 - Assignments:
 - **Apr. 26th – Peer reviewers deliver written comments to their counterparts and submit a copy to Dr. Martinez.**
- Thu, Class Meeting for All Students – Informal 5-7 minute Paper Presentations
 - Assignments:
 - **Apr. 29th – Informal 5-7 minute paper presentations.**

XVI. May 3 and 6
Final Exams Week

- **Final research paper due on the date of the final exam.**