MEIS-UA9694L01 /HIST-UA9520L01
Islam and the West

Instructor Information

- Dr. Philipp Wirtz
- Instructor office hours & office location: By appointment (Office at SOAS main college building, room 306)

Course Information

- Class meeting days and times: Mondays, 1-4 pm, room tbc.
- Co-requisite or prerequisite, if any: An above-average level of curiosity and the willingness to change pre-conceived notions about the world around us… Some familiarity with basic developments in world history and the basic points of the Islamic faith help, but are not mandatory. For reading suggestions to help you along, see the “required texts” section below.

Course Overview and Goals

This course examines the relationship that developed between the Islamic world and “the West” (broadly defined) and their historical impact on each other. The class surveys and analyses the historical relationship between these two regions from the rise of Islam through the early modern period and the advent of European colonialism to modern-day resurgence of traditional aspects of Islam. The course will focus mainly on the eastern Mediterranean as sphere of diplomatic, trade and cultural relations. Particular emphasis will be on periods that saw intensified interaction between the two civilizations. Examples of these are sessions on the Crusades in Syria, the westernisation-modernisation dilemma within the Ottoman reformist movement, the diplomatic battle fought on education between the Ottoman Sultan and the missionary schools, and the exchanges between European and Middle Eastern intellectuals towards the end of the 19th century.

The course is taught via a mixture of lectures and seminar discussions and includes at least one field trip.
Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:

1) Read, think and speak critically about “Islam and the West”;
2) Have an overview of the shared histories between Europe, North America and the Islamic world;
3) Be familiar with broad trends and developments in the history of Islam;
4) Be able to critically assess key historical themes and narratives in the relationship between “Islam and the West” (such as the Crusades or fundamentalism);
5) Be equipped to participate critically and proactively in current debates, inside and outside academia.

Course Requirements

Grading of Assignments
The grade for this course will be determined according to these assessment components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments/Activities</th>
<th>Description of Assignment</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term test</td>
<td>Written test, 60 minutes, covering week 2-6</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>Participation in class discussion, asking pertinent questions, attendance and punctuality</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaction paper</td>
<td>2000 (two thousand) words maximum length, choice of two options: 1) Primary source analysis; 2) Media analysis</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>Written test, 90 minutes, covering week 7-13</td>
<td>25</td>
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Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.

Grades
Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Example: 93.5% and higher</td>
<td>[Enter expectations for A]</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Example: 82.5% - 87.49%</td>
<td>[Enter expectations for B]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Example: 72.5% - 77.49%</td>
<td>[Enter expectations for C]</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Example: 62.5% - 67.49</td>
<td>[Enter expectations for an D]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter Grade</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Example: 59.99% and lower</td>
<td>[Enter description of failing work]</td>
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**Course Materials**

**Required Textbooks & Materials**

I would strongly suggest you get a copy of the following excellent introduction: **Brown, Daniel: A New Introduction to Islam, 3rd ed., Oxford 2017. ISBN: 9781118953464.** Students in the past have found this book very helpful, especially those without a previous background in Islamic studies/history.

For further **optional** background reading: Another excellent general introduction to Islam and the Muslim world is Andrew Rippin and Teresa Bernheimer: **Muslims: Their religious Beliefs and Practices, 5th edition New York 2018.**

- This book has a very useful companion website with additional resources: [https://www.routledgetextbooks.com/textbooks/9781138219687/](https://www.routledgetextbooks.com/textbooks/9781138219687/)

**Optional Textbooks & Materials**

Not required, but highly recommended as independent companion reading:

- **Ansary, Tamim: Destiny Disrupted: A History of the World through Islamic Eyes.** New York 2010. Not an academic study, but a more journalistic, very well told overview—light bedtime reading!
- **Frankopan, Peter:** *Silk Roads: A New History of the World.* London 2015. An analysis of the long-term historical connections between Asia and Europe. Essential reading for our times!
- **Mishra, Pankaj:** From the Ruins of Empire: The Revolt against the West and the Remaking of Asia. London 2013. A fascinating study of Asian responses to western domination during the 19th and 20th century.
- **Silverstein, Adam:** *Islamic History: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford 2010. Exactly what the title implies. Fits into every jeans pocket...

For (even) wider background orientation:


De Bernieres, Louis: The Islamic Enlightenment.
Brotton, Jerry: This Orient Isle: Elisabethan England and the Islamic World.
Black Tudors

Remember: The more you read (on- or off-syllabus), the more solid your understanding, the safer you feel in the exam, etc. …

For most of the sessions you have to read one or several additional texts that are available as PDFs via NYU Classes. I expect you to have these texts (especially the primary sources) in class, either as printouts or on-screen, as they are the basis for class discussions. You might want to purchase those books from the Further Reading list from which we read substantial passages.

**Resources**

- **Access your course materials:** [NYU Classes](nyu.edu/its/classes)
- **Databases, journal articles, and more:** [Bobst Library](library.nyu.edu)
- **NYUL Library Collection:** [Senate House Library](catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk)
- **Assistance with strengthening your writing:** [NYU Writing Center](nyu.mywconline.com)
- **Obtain 24/7 technology assistance:** [IT Help Desk](nyu.edu/it/servicedesk)

**Course Schedule**

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<tr>
<th>Session/Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>Session 1:</td>
<td>General introduction</td>
<td>None: Class discussion only</td>
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<td>Session 5:</td>
<td>De-colonising the History of the Crusades</td>
<td><strong>Primary sources:</strong> 1) Accounts of Urban II’s sermon at Clermont, 1095. 2) Usama ibn Munqidh, excerpts from <em>The Book of Contemplation</em> (<em>Kitab al-I’tibar</em>). <strong>Background reading:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Primary source:</strong> Sidi ‘Ali Reis: The Mirror of Countries, transl. C. Horne. (This is a long source of about 50 pages, instructions on how to skim-read it effectively will follow!)</td>
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|              |       | **Background reading:**  
2) Selections from the “Turkish Embassy Letters” by Mary Wortley Montague. | Mid-term test  
**Background reading:**  
1) Almond, *Two faiths*, pp. 139-180.  
2) İnalcık, H. *Turkey and Europe in History. “The Ottoman and the Protestant World.”* (174-178)  |
2) “An Imam in Paris”: Excerpt from the travelogue of Rifa’a at-Tahtawi. |  |
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<td>Session 13:</td>
<td>Islam in the West: The Muslim experience in Europe and the US</td>
<td>Primary sources: TBC</td>
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<td>Round-table discussion with SOAS students: “What is it like to be a British Muslim in 2019?”</td>
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| Session 14:  | Islam and the West reconsidered: Final discussion and exam revision | - reflection on the key themes of the course  
- clarification of questions  
- discussion of exam preparation | |
| Final Assessment: | Final exam | | |

**Co-Curricular Activities**

- Suggested trips: Victoria and Albert Museum (collection of Islamic art and crafts); Museum of London Dockyards (for some of London’s global connections, including to parts of the Muslim world).

**Classroom Etiquette**

- Food and drink may be consumed in moderation, as long as this does not distract other students through sounds and smells or constitutes a health and safety hazard.  
- Please dispose of any litter in the bins provided.  
- Toilet breaks may be taken whenever the need arises, but make sure that you leave and re-enter the classroom with minimum disruption to other students.
• Put your mobile phones on silent and only use them during breaks or in an emergency.
• Serious clinical studies have shown that the use of laptops in class has negative implications for students’ overall success. You are however permitted to use laptops in this class at your own discretion. I assume that you are mature enough to decide for yourself what constitutes legitimate use and what does not.
• Freedom of speech is an achievement of the highest value. Do not abuse it by behaving towards your classmates in any way that is disrespectful or discriminatory. Remember that one can have open, vigorous discussions of your intellectual positions without being rude or uncivilised.

NYUL Academic Policies

Attendance and Tardiness
• Key information on NYU London’s absence policy, how to report absences, and what kinds of absences can be excused can be found on our website (http://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/attendance-policy.html)

Assignments, Plagiarism, and Late Work
• You can find details on these topics and more on this section of our NYUL website (https://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/academic-policies.html) and on the Policies and Procedures section of the NYU website for students studying away at global sites (https://www.nyu.edu/academics/studying-abroad/upperclassmen-semester-academic-year-study-away/academic-resources/policies-and-procedures.html).

Classroom Conduct

Academic communities exist to facilitate the process of acquiring and exchanging knowledge and understanding, to enhance the personal and intellectual development of its members, and to advance the interests of society. Essential to this mission is that all members of the University Community are safe and free to engage in a civil process of teaching and learning through their experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Accordingly, no student should engage in any form of behaviour that interferes with the academic or educational process, compromises the personal safety or well-being of another, or disrupts the administration of University programs or services. Please refer to the NYU Disruptive Student Behavior Policy for examples of disruptive behavior and guidelines for response and enforcement.

Disability Disclosure Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.
Instructor Bio

I studied the histories, cultures and languages of Europe and Asia in Germany and the UK. Eventually specializing on the history of the Middle East from around the 16th century to the present and doing research in Syria, Iran and Turkey, I received my PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. After two years at the University of Warwick, I returned to SOAS as Lecturer in the Modern History of the Middle East in 2017.