New York University

World Cultures:

Muslim Spain

(711-1609 AD)

[V55.0527]

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"Andalusia and everything in it belongs to God"
(Anonymous Arab poet)

The intent of the course is to introduce the student to one of the two examples—the other is the Balkans—of the long-term establishment of a Muslim polity in Europe. The course will trace the political flow of events, from the Arab-Berber conquest of the peninsula and their experiments in state-formation to the gradual emergence of Christian rivals in the northern kingdoms and the reversal of the tide until the final submission of the surviving Muslim enclave of Granada in 1492. The chief emphasis, however, will be on 1) the construction of a remarkable social and intellectual culture out of the various indigenous and imported elements available; 2) how the three indigestible ingredients called Islam, Christianity and Judaism fared in that melting pot, particularly when one of the others was stirring; and 3) the problems posed by the notion of "Muslim Spain" for Spanish historians and for Westerners generally.

"You live in al-Andalus, with its waters, its shade, its rivers, its trees—how blessed you are! If Paradise lies somewhere else than in your country, and if it was possible to choose between them, it would be your country I would choose."
(from the Collected Poetry of Ibn Khafaja (d. 1139)

Syllabus of Meetings and Assignments

The following syllabus will also be found on the “Blackboard” version of the class (available to registered students), along with a Study Guide and much required and supplementary material for the course is available online. Log onto your NYU Home account and you will find it there. Problems getting on? Try 998-3333 or send an email to: problems.blackboard@nyu.edu.

A useful link for this course may be found at: http://libro.uca.edu

   Readings: Fletcher, pp. 1-14.
2. [M. 26 Jan.] The Making of Hispania: The Romans in Iberia  
*Readings:* Reilly, pp. 1-16.

3. [W. 28 Jan.] Christian and Visigothic Spain  

4. [M. 2 Feb.] The Coming of the Muslims, or Was It the Berbers and Arabs?  
*Readings:* Reilly, pp. 51-56; Fletcher, pp. 15-34; Constable, pp. 27-42.

5. [W. 4 Feb.] The Message of Islam: Muhammad and the Quran  
*Readings:* In Blackboard “Course Documents”.

6. [M. 9 Feb.] The Structure of Islam: Law, Lawyers and Law Schools  
*Readings:* In Blackboard “Course Documents”

7. [W. 11 Feb.] Muslims, Christians (Mozarabs) and Jews: Counting Heads  
*Reading:* Fletcher, pp. 35-42; Constable, pp. 48-55.

8. [W. 18 Feb.] The Umayyad Caliphate of Cordoba  
*Readings:* Fletcher, pp. 53-78; Constable, pp. 56-74.

9. [M. 23 Feb.] Slide Lecture: *La Mezquita*

10. [W. 25 Feb.] The High Culture of the Cordoban Caliphate and  
*First Paper Due*  
*Reading:* Reilly, pp. 56-74.

11. [M. 1 Mar.] The Other Spain: The Christian Kingdoms of the North  
*Readings:* Reilly, pp. 74-89.

12. [W. 3 Mar.] The Era of the Party Kings  
*Readings:* Fletcher, pp. 79-103.

13. [M. 8 March] The Culture and Civilization of Early Muslim Spain  

14. [W. 10 March] MIDTERM [Examine your options!]

*Readings:* Reilly, pp. 90-98; Fletcher, pp. 113-118; Constable ##20-31 (pp. 109-172).

*Readings:* Fletcher, pp. 105-113 and see BLACKBOARD.

17. [M. 26 March] Muslim Fundamentalists in al-Andalus: Al-Muwahhidun or Almohads  
*Readings:* Reilly, pp. 129-139; Fletcher, pp. 118-130; Constable ##34-35 (pp. 185-197).

*Readings:* Reilly, pp. 121-128; Fletcher; pp. 118-130; see BLACKBOARD.

19. [M. 5 Apr.] Convivencia I: The Meeting of Minds  
*Readings:* Fletcher, pp. 147-156; see BLACKBOARD

20. [W. 7 Apr.] Slide Lecture: *Toledo, City of Three Faiths*  
*Readings:* Reilly, pp. 153-159.

21. [M. 12 Apr.] Convivencia II: The War for Souls  
*Readings:* See BLACKBOARD “Course Documents.”

22. [W. 14 Apr.] Muslim Society in Exile: The Mudéjars  
*Readings:* Reilly, pp. 195-198; Fletcher, pp. 134-145; Constable, #47, #58.
23. [M. 19 Apr.] Granada and the Reconquista  
   Readings: Reilly, pp. 160-172; Constable, pp. 207-236.

24. [W. 21 Apr.] Slide Lecture: Nasrid Granada and Its Alhambra  
   Readings: Reilly, pp. 190-195; Fletcher, pp. 157-162 and  
   **Second Paper Due**

25. [M. 26 Apr.] 1492: The Fall of Granada and the End of Al-Andalus  
   Readings: Readings: Fletcher, pp. 163-169; Constable, pp. 343-351.

26. [W. 28 Apr.] The Denouement: The Spanish Inquisition, the Conversos and Moriscos  

**Final Exam: Monday May 3, 2003: 11:00-12:15 PM**

**Required Readings:**

[At the Campus Bookstore]


If you need additional background for this course, the bookstore also has available the very useful: Maria Rosa Menocal, *Ornament of the World, How Muslims, Jews and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain*. Back Bay Paperbacks, 2003.

**Note:** In addition to those printed texts, many of the required readings for this course are found only in the “Course Documents” section of the Blackboard.

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There will be both a midterm and final examination. The midterm is optional. If you do take it, the final exam will cover only the second half of the course; if you choose not to take the midterm, your final exam will cover the entire course. If you do take the midterm and are not satisfied with it, you still have the option of taking a full-course final exam and so canceling the midterm grade. In addition, there will be two papers, each of 3 double-spaced typed pages. They will be due at the meetings indicated on the syllabus. Papers will not be accepted after the due date. Spelling, syntax and neatness all count, just like in the real world.

*The grading breaks down approximately as follows: midterm 20%, final exam 40%, each paper 15%, discussion participation, 10%. Mashallah.*

**Failure to hand in any of the two papers will result in an automatic grade of “Incomplete”**

**Failure to take the midterm and the final examination will result in an automatic grade of “F”**
**Note:** Attendance will be taken regularly at discussion sessions and randomly at the lectures. *Failure to attend discussion sessions will lead to a progressive grade loss: after three recorded absences, a half letter grade will be subtracted from the final grade for each subsequent absence.* And, in accordance with college policy, recurrent or consistent absences will be reported to the dean.

Are you interested in majoring in Middle Eastern Studies, where this all started? Nothing easier:

For the **Major**: 4 MES language courses (Turkish, Hindi, Farsi or Arabic) plus 8 non-language MES courses (history, politics, religion, literature etc.).

For the **Minor**: either 4 MES language courses or 4 non-language MES courses.