

**ISLAMIC SOCIETIES
CORE-UA 502
Fall 2022**



**Lectures: Monday & Wednesday 12:30–1:45 PM
Location: 19 West 4th Street, room 101**

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Office Hours: By appointment

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Course Description

From the Taliban Emirate of Afghanistan to the Islamic Republic of Iran, from al-Qaeda to ISIS, (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), Islam as both religion and political ideology has motivated diverse individuals and groups in different parts of the world. While recent political developments have driven people to posit Islam as the antagonist of Western values, the media has paid little attention to the history of Islamic politics. Key political terms like *caliphate*, *emirate*, *sultanate* and *jihad*, as well as categories like *dar al-Islam* (abode of Islam), and *dar al-harb* (abode of war) have continued to be used by journalists without taking into account their histories and discursive complexities, thereby exacerbating common misunderstandings. Contemporary Islamic political and social movements are at least partly grounded on historical precedents and earlier forms of Islamic political models. Consequently, to understand different figurations of Islamic politics today, we need to understand their multifaceted histories.

This course is an introduction to Islamic societies from the birth of Islam (c. 622) to the present. It aims to equip students with a comparative understanding of different configurations of Islamic politics and society that have taken shape in different cultures and contexts. Throughout the course, students are introduced to the historical milieu, meaning, and significance of Islamic political cultures and societal practice as well as the various internal and external contestations that have continued to shape Islamic societies. Students are exposed to the thoughts and activism of different Muslim leaders, thinkers, educators, and ideologues and their attempts to define Islam against internal and external difference. Different materials and perspectives are juxtaposed to highlight the diverse streams of Islamic politics and the divergent ways in which the relationship between Islam and society have been imagined due to various socio-cultural determinants. By the end of the course students will hopefully develop a historical and comparative understanding of Islamic societies that will also allow them to make sense of the latest trends in Islamic political thinking and practice, whether of reformist, modernist, liberal, or Islamist bent. By taking this course, students will in turn develop a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between Islamic and Western political and social thinking, which has become a matter of urgency in the current sociopolitical climate. As such, this course prepares students for life in a globalized world by introducing them to the ways in which humans come to understand themselves as members of social, religious, national, and regional collectives and by fostering their appreciation of the dynamics of cultural flows, interaction, and influence. As a part of the College Core Curriculum, this class is designed to extend your education beyond the focused studies of your major, preparing you for your future life as a thoughtful individual appreciative of cultural diversities and active member of national and global society.

Students should be aware from the start that this is a class in history and social science not theology, religious studies, or psychology. As an empirical discipline, social science is concerned with the observable phenomena of religion as actually practiced. Thus, in certain respects social science does not necessarily take religions on their own terms — as a working method, for example, the comparative approach cannot accept the claims of any religion to be the sole possessor of truth. Moreover, social science does not treat religions as transcending this world, but endeavors to situate them in their social and historical contexts. We appreciate that these are not the only ways in which religions can be understood, but these are the limits within

which we work. At the same time, social scientists make special efforts to understand society and culture as insiders actually experience them. **The minimal demand this places on the student is to leave intolerance, partisanship, or the claims of supra-rational insight or other special sources of authority behind when entering the classroom, and to accept the basic premises of scholarly analysis. Students and instructors are required to work together to create an educational atmosphere of mutual trust and respect in which differences of opinion can be subjected to deliberate and reasonable examination.**

Expectations

The readings, lectures, and recitation sections go together, and none is sufficient in itself for understanding the class and for preparing you for the midterm and final exams. Students must attend lectures and recitations having read the assigned readings, and turn in all assignments on time. **In-person attendance in both lectures and recitation is mandatory and will be noted.**

Students who believe they have valid reasons for being remote the entire semester should request accommodation through the [Moses Center for Student Accessibility](#). The University permits students to take their courses remotely this semester, but it is the student's responsibility to find appropriate online courses. Student should not expect that in-person courses like this one will be made remotely available to them at their choosing.

In the event that the course needs to be offered entirely online for a particular class meeting, we will meet synchronously at the standard class time using Zoom. Additional instructions about particular details of class meetings or work will be emailed to you in the event of a shift to online instruction.

Academic Integrity

We take academic honesty to be a non-negotiable requirement for passing this course. Cheating in any manner will result in a failing grade for the entire course. This includes *plagiarism*. For information about plagiarism and academic integrity, you may start with this:

<https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html>

and

<http://cas.nyu.edu/page/academicintegrity>

On proper way to cite, see:

<http://guides.nyu.edu/c.php?g=276562&p=1844731>

All cases of plagiarism will automatically get a zero and will be reported to the Dean. Do not jeopardize your career for one college course. If you have any doubts about what is or is not plagiarism, please ask your recitation instructor or the professor for clarification.

Special Needs

We are always happy to accommodate students with special needs, according to the guidelines of the University's Moses Center for Students with Disabilities; please consult the center's website for more information:

<https://www.nyu.edu/about/leadership-university-administration/office-of-the-president/office-of-the-provost/university-life/office-of-studentaffairs/student-health-center/moses-center-for-students-with-disabilities.html>

Course Requirements and Grading

Participation (20%)

Two analytic papers (30%)

Islamic Art Paper (15%)

Midterm Exam (15%)

Final Exam (20%)

Participation (20%)

Your final participation grade is made up of:

1. **Attendance.** Attendance in both lectures and recitation sections are mandatory.
2. **Discussion participation.** Active participation in recitation is mandatory. Discussion participation involves not only attending recitations, but coming to class prepared — having read the assigned readings — and taking active part in the discussions. When participating in discussion, students should focus on discussing the assigned readings. Note that it will be quite evident to the instructor who has done the reading and who has not.
3. **Four one-page critical paper on the primary-source readings.** These papers should be emailed to your recitation instructor prior to the beginning of the recitation meeting. The paper will be returned before the next meeting, and each will be graded on a $\sqrt{}$ / $\sqrt{+}$ / $\sqrt{-}$ basis. Submission will not be accepted after your recitation meeting.

Two analytic papers on primary source (30%)

Three-page essays discussing a particular section of the primary readings will be due three times in the course of the semester. The specific question for each assignment will be specified in lecture six days before it is due. Submission through Brightspace. The first paper weighs 15% is due on 9/29, the second paper weighs 15% and is due on 12/08.

Islamic Art Paper (15%)

Each student will be required to visit the Islamic galleries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and submit a five-page essay dealing with how Islam is represented in two material objects or works of art of your own choosing, and how that enhances our understanding of the relationship between Islam and society. More specific instructions will be available later in the semester. The paper is due on 11/11.

Mid-Term Exam (15%): 10/19

1 hour and 15 minutes in-class mid-term exam consisting of essay questions.

Final Exam (20%): Date TBA

1 hour and 15 minutes in-class final exam consisting of essay questions.

-No make-ups permitted for either the mid-term or final except in cases of emergency-

Readings

One textbook, which can be purchased from the NYU Bookstore is required for this course:

Ira M. Lapidus. *A History of Islamic Societies, Third Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

*****Please make sure that you purchase the third edition.**

Other readings are available on the class website on Brightspace under the “Content” tab.

***** Readings should be completed prior to coming to the class*****

Schedule

Week 1

Lecture 1 (9/07) Introduction, Pre-Islamic Arabia

- Lapidus, chapter 3 (Electronic: 38-40 or Print: 26-32)
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Week 2

Lecture 1 (9/12) The Prophetic Mission

- Lapidus, chapter 4 (42-48 or 33-45).

Recitation (9/13):

- The Constitution of Medina.

Lecture 2 (9/14) Caliphs and Conquerors

- Lapidus, chapter 5 (51-52 or 46-47), chapter 6 (52-54 or 48-53).
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Week 3

Lecture 1 (9/19) Patrimonial Monarchs and their Opponents

- Lapidus, chapter 8 (62-66 or 65-73), chapter 12 (79-83 or 95-101)

Recitation (9/20):

- Abu Hamzah. Comments on the Caliphs, 129-132.
- Walid II. Letter. 116-126.

Lecture 2 (9/21) The Abbasid Empire: Power and Politics of Patronage

- Lapidus, chapter 9 (67-72 or 74-84), chapter 13 (84-91 or 102-113) .

*****Response paper 1 on primary sources due before recitation meeting*****

Week 4

Lecture 1 (9/26) The Abbasid Empire: Caliphs, Scholars, and Mystics

- Lapidus, chapter 14 (93-95 or 114-117), chapter 15 (96-110 or 118-138).

Recitation (9/27):

- Al-Ṭabarī. *The History of al-Ṭabarī: The 'Abbāsīd Caliphate in Equilibrium*, translated by C.E. Bosworth (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), 41-58.
- Ibn al-Jawzī. *Virtues of the Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, volume one*, edited and translated by Michael Cooperson (New York: New York University Press, 2013), Chapters 21, 22, 23, 28, 50.

Lecture 2 (9/28) Jihad and the Frontiers

- Michael Bonner. *Jihad in Islamic History: Doctrines and Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 97-101, 127-134 (Brightspace)

*****First analytic paper: Imperial court and Pietist circles: Compare and contrast the description of Baghdadi society in al-Ṭabarī and Ibn al-Jawzī.
Due on Brightspace 9/29 11:55PM *****

Week 5

Lecture 1 (10/3) Caliphs and Sultans

- Lapidus, chapter 10 (73-77 or 85-91), chapter 20 (138-140 or 177-184)

Recitation (10/4):

- Al-Mawardi. *al-Ahkam as-Sultaniyyah: The Laws of Islamic Governance*, pp. 10-36.

Lecture 2 (10/05) Andalusia

- Lapidus, chapter 27 (212-222 or 298-315).
 - No Lecture. Instead please watch **When the Moors ruled in Europe** on Youtube
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Week 6

Lecture 1 (10/11) Two Caliphates? The Fatimids in Egypt

- Lapidus, chapter 16 (111-113 or 139-143), chapter 20 (142-144 or 188-192)

Lecture 2 (10/12) The Khans and the Fall of Baghdad

- Lapidus, chapter 20 (140-141 or 184-188).
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Week 7

Lecture 1 (10/17) Timurid Empire and Review

Recitation (10/18): Review

Lecture 2 (10/19) In-Class Midterm Exam

Week 8

Lecture 1 (10/24) Amirs and Saints of the Maghreb

- Lapidus, chapter 26 (207-211 or 288-297), chapter 28 (223-229 or 316-325)

Recitation (10/25):

- Selections from ‘Abd al-Rahmān Ibn Khaldūn. *The Muqaddimah*, translated by Franz Rosenthal.

Lecture 2 (10/26) Clerisy and Kings of West Africa

- Lapidus, chapter 40 (308-315 or 452-466), chapter 41 (316-321 or 467-476)

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*****Response paper 2 on the primary source due before recitation meeting*****

Week 9

Lecture 1 (10/31) The House of Osman

- Lapidus, chapter 31 (234-243 or 331-349).

Recitation (11/01):

- Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq. *The Turkish Letters, 1555-1562*.
- The Status of Jews and Christians in Muslim Lands, 1772.

Lecture 2 (11/02) The Safavid Shahs and the Shi‘ī Clerics

- Lapidus, chapter 34 (263-270 or 377-390).

*****Response paper 3 on the primary source due before recitation meeting*****

Week 10

Lecture 1 (11/07) The Millennial Sovereign

- Lapidus, chapter 35 (271-283 or 391-413).

Recitation (11/08):

- The Poetry of Shah Ismail
- Pierre du Jarric. *Akbar and the Jesuits: An Account of the Jesuit Missions to the Court of Akbar*, 14-23.

Lecture 2 (11/09) Muslim Sultans in the Lands below the Winds

- Lapidus, chapter 38 (295-303 or 432-446).

*****Paper on Islamic Art due on Brightspace 11/11 11:55PM *****

Week 11

Lecture 1 (11/14) The Wahhabi Mission and the Saudi State

- Lapidus, chapter 45 (343-345 or 511-515), chapter 50 (408-412 or 611-617)

Recitation (11/15):

- *Suluk Garwa Kencana* (The Song of the House of Gold) in M.C. Ricklefs. *The Seen and Unseen Worlds in Java, 1726-1749*, 115-121.
- Muḥammad Ibn. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, *The Book of Tawḥīd*, 135-138.

Lecture 2 (11/16) The Decline and Abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate

- Lapidus, chapter 46 (351-357 or 524-533).

*****Response paper 4 on primary sources due before recitation meeting*****

Week 12

Lecture 1 (11/21) Islam and Political Modernity: Egypt

- Lapidus, chapter 48 (375-386 or 561-578).

Recitation (11/22):

- ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi, “Summary of the Causes of Stagnation.” In *Modernist Islam, 1840-1940: A Sourcebook* (Oxford: OUP, 2002), 152-157.
- ‘Ali ‘Abd al-Raziq. “Message not Government, Religion not State.” In *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook* (Oxford: OUP, 1998), 29-36.

Week 13

Lecture 2 (11/28) Islam and Political Modernity: The Indian subcontinent

- Lapidus, chapter 54 (464-478 or 698-721).

Recitation (11/29):

- Sir Muhammad Iqbal. “Presidential Address to the 25th Session of the All-India Muslim League” Allahabad, 29 December 1930.
- Sayyid Abul A’la Maududi, “The Islamic State: Its Nature and Characteristics,” 138-147.

Lecture 2 (11/30) Islam and Political Modernity: Iran

- Lapidus, chapter 47 (364-374 or 544-560).

Week 14

Lecture 1 (12/05) Islamism

- Lapidus, Conclusion (551-561 or 828-841).

Recitation (12/06):

- Ayatollah Khomeini. *Governance of the Jurist (Velayat-e Faqeeh)*, translated by Hamid Algar. (Tehran: Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Work), pp. 29-39.
- Sayyid Qutb. *Milestone: Ma'alim fi'l-tareeq.*(Birmingham: Maktabah, 2006) pp. 56-62, 145-156.

Lecture 2 (12/07) Post-Islamism

- Asef Bayat, "Post-Islamism at Large," 3-30 (Brightspace).

*****Second analytic paper: Choose two from the five thinkers we read in week 12, 13, and 14 (al-Kawakibi, 'Abd al-Razīq, Iqbal, Maududi, Khomeini). Analyze and compare their thoughts on the role of religion in modern politics and society. Due on Brightspace 12/08 11:55PM*****

Week 15

Lecture 1 (12/12) Final Review

Recitation (12/13): Final Review

Lecture 2 (12/14) Final Exam