

HIS 411: THE MIDDLE EAST TO 1700
Spring 2015
Prof. Elizabeth Urban

Syllabus

PROF. URBAN'S INFORMATION

Office: Wayne Hall 429

Office Hours: MWF 12:00-1:00, 3:00-4:00 (or by appointment)

Work Phone: 610-436-2541

Email: eurban@wcupa.edu

Description:

This course offers an in-depth look at some of the most fascinating figures, puzzling problems, and heated debates of the pre-modern Middle East. Each week, we will explore a particular historical topic in depth, using both primary sources (in translation) and secondary scholarship. Students will become familiar with major events and trends from Islamic history, as well as the most prominent Islamic historians and scholars. We will cover such topics as: The Origins of Islam, The Classical Islamic Caliphates, The Mongol World, and The Gunpowder Empires. By the end of the course, students will be able to analyze crucial moments in Islamic history and understand how these pre-modern roots have lasting effects on our world today.

Throughout this upper-level course, students will not be passive learners who simply memorize information from a textbook or from the professor. They will be *active* learners who are training to be expert historians. Students will work heavily with primary sources, consider secondary scholarship with a critical eye, learn to ask interesting and answerable historical questions, and come up with their own original analyses of pre-modern Islamic history. Students will be empowered to construct their own view of the past and to recover its meaning. Students will demonstrate their deep understanding of these materials by writing an original research paper.

Required Book:

-Adam Silverstein, *Islamic History: A Very Short Introduction*
(all other readings will be provided on D2L.)

Student Learning Outcomes:

-This course fulfills the goals emphasized by the History Department for upper-level courses:

- 1) Develop effective communication skills (**Goal 1**): The course provides opportunities for students to share their interpretations of the past in a wide variety of written and oral assignments. Students are encouraged to become active participants in the class.
- 2) Develop critical thinking skills (**Goal 3**): Reading and writing assignments as well as oral presentations provide opportunities for students to develop critical thinking skills as you work to answer historical questions on the basis of primary and secondary sources.
- 3) Demonstrate the ability to think across and about disciplinary boundaries. (**Goal 4**): The course draws on examples from the humanities to help students understand the interconnectivity of ideas.
- 4) Develop a sense of empathy for others. You don't have a monopoly on meaning or truth—there are other human beings in this world. Consider the issue from other viewpoints, gain new insights on your own position, then refine your position. Behold the varieties of human experience and the complexity of living in the modern world.

Assignments and Evaluation Policies:

Quick Breakdown:

- Active Attendance: 10%
- Bibliographic Exercises (x3): 15%
- Primary Source Markups (x3): 15%
- Scholarly Article Report/Presentation: 10%
- Final Paper Steps: 50% total*
 - Bibliography 5%
 - Primary Source Markup 5%
 - Quick Lit Review 5%
 - In-Class Progress Report 5%
- First Draft: 10%
- First Draft Peer Review: 5%
- Final Draft: 15%

Description of Assignments:

Active Attendance: 10%

-I will take attendance every day. In an upper-level class, attendance is crucial.

-"Active" attendance means: you come to class prepared. If you have not done the reading, do not have the reading printed out, or have not completed your assignments, you are not prepared. *If you are unprepared, you will receive half credit for that day.*

- "Active" attendance also means: if I notice that you are sleeping, surfing the web, more than 10 minutes late, or otherwise phoning it in, *I will count you as absent that day.*

- You get one unexcused absence before your grade begins to suffer. Starting with your third absence, your attendance grade will go down a third of a grade for each class missed (i.e. from A to A-, from B+ to B, etc.).

- You must contact me *before* class begins to get an excused absence. I cannot count after-the-fact "I'm sorry I missed class because..." emails as excused unless you can demonstrate a true emergency had occurred (you were at the hospital, etc.)

Bibliographic Exercises: 15% [5% each x3]

- The goal of these bibliographic exercises is to help you figure out how to go about researching a paper. They will help you learn *how to search for relevant books and articles* on a topic; *how to get ahold of those materials* once you've located their names and publication information; and *how to cite this information correctly* for your final paper. I will provide specific prompts on D2L.

Primary Source Markups: 15% [5% each x3]

- The goal of these primary source markups is to help you learn *how to ask good historical questions* and *how to construct good historical arguments*. Primary sources are the basis of the historian's craft—it is only through primary sources that we know anything at all about the past, and how to construct the meaning of that past. I will provide specific prompts on D2L.

Scholarly Article Report + Presentation: 10%

- On an assigned day, you will present on a scholarly article of your choosing (I will help provide suggestions if it is in the first half of the semester; for the second half of the semester, you should choose an article you are reading for your final paper.)

- You will come to class on your assigned day with a *short* handout (1 page, **MAX**) outlining your article, summarizing its main argument, and assessing its value. You will then present this report to the class (5-10 minutes) in a way that is engaging and helps build a community of shared learning in our classroom.

- One goal of this report on a secondary scholarly article is for you to analyze and criticize the work of another scholar—what makes a piece of scholarship good, bad, convincing, unconvincing, thorough, incomplete, etc.? Understanding how to analyze someone else's work can help you better understand how to craft your *own* work.

- Another goal of this report is to help you practice oral communication skills. How do you present complicated information succinctly? How can your peers learn from you?

Final Paper Steps: 50% total

- Each step in this paper-writing process is crucial. For this reason, if you fail to complete one step, I will not accept any future work until that step has been completed. (For instance, if you fail to meet with me about your topic, I will not accept your bibliography or your first/final draft.)

- The final paper should be approx. 10-12 pages long, double spaced, 12 pt. font.

-The paper should contain an *original argument*, expressed in a strong *thesis statement*, based on a careful analysis of *primary source materials*, building upon existing *secondary scholarship*. We will practice each of these components throughout the course.

-You may use materials from class or outside class to formulate your argument, but in either case you must use at least *three* different primary sources and *three* different article-length secondary sources in your paper.

-You must use a scholarly citation apparatus: I prefer Chicago style, but MLA or another widely accepted style is fine as long as you are consistent.

-A handout with full details and grading rubric will be available on D2L soon.

Meeting with me to discuss topic: 0% but required for next steps

-During Spring Break, you should spend some time considering which topic you might like to write a final paper on. You shouldn't yet have formulated your *argument* (you haven't done the research yet!), but just know what topic interests you and why. I will help guide you and think about how to continue researching your chosen topic.

Full Bibliography for Your Topic: 5%

-You will apply the skills you learned in your bibliographic exercises to come up with a complete bibliography for your final paper topic, including both primary and secondary sources. You don't have to have read all of these works, but simply to have located them and figured out how to get ahold of them.

Primary Source Markup for Your Topic: 5%

-You will acquire and print out three (3) different primary sources on your topic. You will apply what you learned in your primary source markup exercises to raise interesting questions about your sources. These questions will help direct you to the *original historical argument* of your final paper, and your argument will be based heavily on your own analysis and synthesis of these primary sources.

Quick Lit Review for Your Topic: 5%

-You will acquire and skim three (3) different article- or book-chapter-length sources to see if they will be helpful for your final paper. You do not have to have read them slowly and thoroughly at this point, but simply to have identified those articles/chapters that are most promising for your paper. You will write a few sentences about what each article is about (its main argument) and how you envision the article being helpful for your final paper. (Does it provide background information? Will you refute its main argument? Push it further? Come at it from a different angle?)

Preliminary Work + In-Class Progress Report: 5%

-The week of Apr 13-17 will be devoted to workshopping our papers. That means you have to have done some good work on your paper by then! So come to this class having written *something* to share with the class. It can be a rough draft, an annotated outline, some free-writing or brainstorming about your argument, an attempt at a thesis statement, etc. Anything that shows 1) where you are in the paper writing

process, 2) where you are heading with your paper, 3) what is going well, 4) what you are having trouble with – maybe your peers can help you out.

-The first draft is due *soon!* You should be about ready to write everything up.

-Be prepared to speak in class (either in the entire group or in smaller groups) about your paper's progress. You don't have to prepare a formal report, but simply be able to express the above four points (where you are, where you're heading, what's good, what's problematic).

-The goal of this exercise is to build a collaborative community of learning, to help one another and learn from one another as you write your papers. It will also give you a deadline that will keep you slowly and steadily working on your paper.

First Draft: 10%

-Your first draft is due by Friday, Apr. 24. You will turn in this first draft to me, and also share it with one of your peers. Please bring a *hard copy* to class. We will both provide feedback on your paper and how you can improve it for your final draft.

-This is not a *rough* draft. It is the first version of your *final* draft. All major components of your paper should be complete by this time, even if a few small additions or changes still need to be made. I will grade it slightly more leniently than if it were a final draft, but it still gets a quality grade based on four criteria: strong argument/thesis, analysis of primary sources, engagement with secondary sources, and overall readability/clarity.

-The final draft will not erase or replace the grade from the first draft. You have to turn in a quality product here.

First Draft Peer Review: 5%

-On Friday, April 24, one of your peers will give you their first draft for you to assess. The following Monday (Apr 27), you must return an annotated copy of this paper draft to its original author.

-Please also make a scan or copy to hand in to me.

-The grade here goes to the *reviewer*, not to the paper being reviewed. I want to see how much thoughtfulness and effort you put into assessing your peer's work. This is great practice for those of you who hope to be teachers some day – learning how to assess others' work. It also helps you assess your *own* work better: did you see some strengths and weaknesses in your peer's paper that reminded you of your own work? Did you apply the same standard to your peer's work as you would to your own?

Final Draft: 15%

-Due by 1 PM on Wednesday May 6, our last class meeting.

-This has the exact same guidelines as the first draft. However, I will hold it to a higher standard when assigning the grade.

Schedule of Classes and Readings (All information also available on D2L):

Class #	Week Day	Month Date	General Topic	Readings Due	Major Assignments Due
1	Weds	Jan 21	Course Intro	n/a	-
2	Fri	Jan 23	Content Overview	-syllabus	-
3	Mon	Jan 26	Late Antiquity	-Silverstein, Ch. 1	-
		Jan 27	Last Day to Add-Drop		-
4	Weds	Jan 28	Late Antiquity: 1° (primary sources)	D2L: Procopius + Ardashir	-
5	Fri	Jan 30	Late Antiquity: 2° (secondary sources)	D2L: Daryae OR Brubaker	Bibliographic Exercise (BE) #1
6	Mon	Feb 2	Pre-Islamic Arabia	-Silverstein, Ch. 4	-
7	Weds	Feb 4	Pre-Islamic Arabia: 1°	D2L: Poets + Ibn al-Kalbi	-
8	Fri	Feb 6	Pre-Islamic Arabia: 2°	D2L: Drory OR Hawting	Primary Source Markup (PSM) #1
9	Mon	Feb 9	Islamic Origins	-Silverstein, Ch. 5	-
10	Weds	Feb 11	Islamic Origins: 1°	D2L: Quran, Hadith, and Ibn Ishaq/Ibn Hisham	-
11	Fri	Feb 13	Islamic Origins: 2°	D2L: Crone/Cook	BE #2
12	Mon	Feb 16	First Caliphs	-Silverstein, Ch. 2	-
13	Weds	Feb 18	First Caliphs: 1°	D2L: Tabari on murder of Uthman	-
14	Fri	Feb 20	First Caliphs: 2°	D2L: Hinds OR Keaney	PSM #2
15	Mon	Feb 23	Umayyads	-Silverstein, Ch. 3	-
16	Weds	Feb 25	Umayyads: 1°	D2L: Dome of the Rock Inscriptions + Letter of Al-Walid II	-
17	Fri	Feb 27	Umayyads: 2°	D2L: Grabar OR Rabbat	BE #3
18	Mon	Mar 2	Abbasids	Silverstein, Ch. 6	-
19	Weds	Mar 4	Abbasids: 1°	D2L: Tabari and Jahiz	-
20	Fri	Mar 6	Abbasids: 2°	D2L: Meisami	PSM #3
	M-F	Mar 9-13	SPRING BREAK		
21	Mon	Mar 16	Seljuqs & Fatimids	Silverstein, Ch. 7	Meet With Prof. Urban
22	Weds	Mar 18	Seljuqs & Fatimids: 1°	D2L: Nizam al-Mulk + al-Mu'ayyad fi al-Din al-Shirazi	
23	Fri	Mar 20	Seljuqs & Fatimids: 2°	D2L: Lambton OR Walker	

24	Mon	Mar 23	Islamic Spain	Silverstein, Concl.	Final Paper Bibliography
25	Weds	Mar 25	Islamic Spain: 1 ^o	Ibn Hayyan + Abraham bar Daud + El Cid	-
26	Fri	Mar 27	Islamic Spain: 2 ^o	D2L: Coope OR Ray	-
27	Mon	Mar 30	Crusades	READ for your own paper, work on PSM	Final Paper PSM
28	Weds	Apr 1	Crusades: 1 ^o	D2L: Pope Urban II + Solomon bar Samson + Usama b. Munqidh	-
29	Fri	Apr 3 (Good Fri)	Crusades: 2 ^o	D2L: Chevedden, "The View of the Crusades from Rome and Damascus"	-
30	Mon	Apr 6	Mongols	READ for your own paper, work on Quick Lit Review	Final Paper Quick Lit Review
31	Weds	Apr 8	Mongols: 1 ^o	D2L: Secret History + Rashid al-Din + Ata Malik Juvayni	-
32	Fri	Apr 10	Mongols: 2 ^o	D2L: Lewis, "The Mongols, the Turks, and the Muslim Polity"	-
33	Mon	Apr 13	Final Paper Progress Reports & Workshop	catch up/work on paper	Preliminary Work + Progress Report
34	Weds	Apr 15	Final Paper Progress Reports & Workshop	catch up/work on paper	Preliminary Work + Progress Report
35	Fri	Apr 17	Final Paper Progress Reports & Workshop	catch up/work on paper	Preliminary Work + Progress Report
36	Mon	Apr 20	Special Topic: Ibn Battuta	D2L: Ibn Battuta	-
37	Weds	Apr 22	Special Topic: Ibn Khaldun	D2L: Ibn Khaldun	-
38	Fri	Apr 24	Mamluks: 1 ^o	D2L: Maqrizi + Ibn Taymiyya	First Draft Due
39	Mon	Apr 27	Mamluks 2 ^o	D2L: Allouche OR Meloy	First Draft Peer Review Due
40	Weds	Apr 29	Ottomans & Safavids: 1 ^o	D2L: Kritovoulos + Poetry of Shah Ismail + Letter from Selim I to Ismail	-
41	Fri	May 1	Ottomans & Safavids: 2 ^o	D2L: Babayan OR Hess	-

42	Mon	May 4	Into Modernity	n/a	-
43	Weds	May 6 1-3 PM	Recap & Celebration	n/a	Final Draft Due

Additional Course Policies:

Office Hours

-My office hours are Monday & Wednesday 12:30-2:00, and Tuesday 3:30-5:30 in Wayne Hall 429.

-You do not need to make an appointment for office hours. During these times, I pledge to be in my office and available to any students who drop by.

-You can come to office hours for almost any reason: to discuss an assignment, to ask a question about the reading, just to introduce yourself and say hi, to ask for advice about study habits, to share a personal issue you are having, etc.

-The one thing office hours are *not* for: making up for missed classes. If you have missed a class and want me to give you an individual mini-lecture in office hours, I will instead direct you to get notes from a classmate and review any course materials on D2L. If you still have questions about the missed material after getting a friend's notes, then you may come to office hours to get your questions answered.

-If you cannot come to office hours, don't despair! Just send me an email and we can work out a time to meet outside office hours. My goal is to be as available to students as possible.

Email

-It is expected that both professor and students activate and maintain regular access to University provided email accounts. I will check my university email at least once every 24 hours, and you are expected to do the same. Failure to access will not exempt you from responsibilities and liabilities.

-I will respond to any email within 24 hours of receiving it. If I have not responded within that time, please contact me again.

-Professor and students will maintain professional etiquette in all correspondence. When in doubt, refer to me and all your other professors as Prof. or Dr. so-and-so.

Cell Phones

-Please don't use your cellphones during class, for calls, texting, or the Internet. It's best to keep your phone in your bag so that you aren't tempted.

-If you are expecting an important/emergency call, please let me know before class. You may leave your phone out on your desk and exit class to take the call.

-If I catch you using your phone in class, I will ask you to put it away. If I catch you multiple times in one class period, I will count you absent for that day.

Plagiarism

-All written assignments must be in your own words. Any quotations or borrowings from outside sources must be clearly marked with quotation marks and citation of the original source.

-This isn't just a meaningless hoop to jump through. Expressing ideas in your own words is the best way to truly learn them. If you have trouble expressing the idea, it's possible you don't fully understand it. It's harder and much more rewarding than cutting-and-pasting the work of others.

-I will run all written assignments through Turnitin, which checks student's dropbox submissions for potential plagiarism. The Originality Reports that are generated provide a summary of matching or highly similar text found in a submitted paper. Turnitin will search the web and all documents that have been submitted through the tool to check for originality.

-Any plagiarized assignments will be returned to the student with a grade of F.

Safe, Civil Classroom

-Sometimes we will treat difficult or controversial subjects in class (race, genocide, immigration, gender, etc.). Our goal is to be able to deeply discuss these issues in class while still maintaining a civil and respectful atmosphere in class.

-Students are free to express their thoughts about course topics, but other students are free to challenge or question those opinions. Being questioned may make you feel uncomfortable or upset, but it should not make you feel *unsafe*.

-Students should not direct any insulting or offensive comment toward another student. If you disagree with something your classmate has said, explain why and how you disagree with their idea: do *not* respond by personally insulting your classmate.

-If any student feels that the class atmosphere has become offensive and unsafe, please meet with me and we will work together to rectify the issue.

Time Management

-It is good practice to set aside some time every day for reading and working on your assignments. The sooner you can get into a routine study pattern, the better.

-Learn to use a calendar, whether it is a paper calendar, Google calendar, or the calendar function on your phone. Write down when your assignments are due, and set up reminders for yourself. Do it on the first day of class, and you won't have to worry about it anymore!

Conduct

For questions regarding Academic Dishonesty, the No-Grade Policy, Sexual Harassment, or the Student Code of Conduct, students are encouraged to refer to their major department's handbook, the Undergraduate Course Catalogue, the Rams Eye View, or the University Web Site. Please understand that improper conduct in any of these areas will not be tolerated and may result in immediate ejection from the class

Disabilities

West Chester University will make accommodations for persons with disabilities. Consult the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (ext. 3217) and bring the resulting documentation to the instructor.

WCU Excused Absences Policy for University-Sanctioned Events:

Undergraduate students participating in University-sanctioned events such as, but not limited to, the Marching Band, musical ensembles, theatre group, athletic events, forensics competition, etc., will be granted an excused absence(s) by the respective faculty members for class periods missed. Students will be granted the privilege of taking, at an alternative time to be determined by the professor, scheduled examinations or quizzes that will be missed. The professor will designate such times prior to the event. Professors can provide a fair alternative to taking the examination or quiz that will be missed. Students must submit original documentation on University letterhead signed by the activity director, coach, or adviser detailing the specifics of the event in advance. Specific requirements include:

1. Responsibility for meeting academic requirements rests with the student.
2. Students are expected to notify their professors as soon as they know they will be missing class due to a University-sanctioned event.
3. Students are expected to complete the work requirement for each class and turn in assignments due on days of the event prior to their due dates unless other arrangements are made with the professor.
4. If a scheduled event is postponed or canceled, the student is expected to go to class.
5. Students are not excused from classes for practice on nonevent days.

The following are specifics for the student athlete:

1. The student athlete is expected, where possible, to schedule classes on days and at hours that do not conflict with athletic schedules.
2. Athletes are not excused from classes for practice or training-room treatment on nongame days.

WCU Final Exam Policy

1. Individual faculty members may not change examination times.
2. Professional practicum examinations will be given during regularly scheduled periods.
3. No final examination should be given before the scheduled final examination time.
4. The times in the blocks above refer to the regular class meeting time.
5. Any course not having a final examination will meet as directed by the instructor during the scheduled examination time for a continuation of regular class work.
6. Any student who has three or more final exams scheduled for the same day should work with the individual instructors to try to arrange alternate exam times.
7. Classes meeting regularly at non-standard times are not included in this schedule.
8. Undergraduate students participating in University-sanctioned events such as, but not limited to, the Marching Band, musical ensembles, theatre group, athletic events, forensics competition, etc.,... and with prior notice to the instructor, will be granted the privilege of taking, at an alternative time to be determined by the instructor, scheduled

examinations that will be missed due to such participation. See details at http://www.wcupa.edu/_INFORMATION/OFFICIAL.DOCUMENTS/Undergrad.Catalog/acpolpro.htm#excused

Exemption from Final Examinations

Students who have attained an A or B prior to the finals, have completed all other course requirements, and have the instructors' permission may waive final examinations. This privilege is subject to several reservations.

1. Any unit examinations given during the final examination period are not subject to this policy.
2. Academic departments as well as individual faculty may adopt a policy excluding the final examination exemption for certain courses.
3. Mutual agreement between the instructor and the student to waive the final examination should be determined during the week prior to the beginning of the examination period. The course grade will be the A or B earned exclusive of a final examination grade.