Does religion cause violence? Why does the Middle East seem to be in perpetual conflict? Is Islam a more violent religion than Christianity and Judaism? Can secularism and democracy co-exist with a society and state founded on divinely revealed scripture? How does the history of the Middle East affect the modern world?

This course introduces students to the development of civilization in the Middle East within the context of world history, with particular attention to how social and economic developments are related to the evolution of cultural conceptions. Readings, class discussions, and tests focus on a more thorough understanding of the role of religion in the lives of individuals and societies in the evolution of the region, and in relationship to the foundations of modern European and American history. Through the analysis of selected ideas, texts, and historical artifacts, students are expected to challenge their understanding of the values and institutions of western civilization, and their dedication to a career of service in command, citizenship, and government.

Cuneiform Squeeze

This course provides a broad overview of how certain religious, political, and technological structures emerged and progressed over time and in different locations. Examples are drawn
from a period spanning the origins of human communities in the Near East to the end of the
pre-modern period emphasizing the impact of critical concepts and ideas on the course of the
political and social institutions of agrarian societies enmeshed in the global context of world
civilization.

**Expectations and Objectives**
Students are expected to approach this course with intellectual curiosity, mental discipline, and
a mind open to exploring creative possibilities across a wide spectrum of beliefs, practices, and
philosophical and ethical principles. Essential to this expectation is students’ responsibility to
exercise careful attention to discrete details and the thoughtful combination of these details
into synthetic concepts with generic significance.

The primary goal of this course is to equip students with certain attitudes and skills integral to a
liberal arts curriculum, and to provide opportunities for students to enhance and implement
these attitudes and skills. These skills include the ability to read effectively, think comparatively,
and construct a reasoned argument. The course also imparts to students basic information
about the history of the Middle East, fundamental institutions, and selected “classics” of Islamic
and regional civilizations in comparison with influential texts and artifacts from the larger global
framework of human society and culture.

At the conclusion of HH215, the student will be able to do the following:

1. Identify factors that shape change over time; to explain historical narratives; and to analyze
historical evidence as well as apply it to historical questions

2. Express their ideas in writing clearly, precisely, and in an organized fashion

3. Describe and explain the most important factors leading to change over time between 500
BCE and 1750 CE in one of the following AREAS: Europe (HH215), the Middle East (HH215M), or
Asia (HH215A).

4. Compare political, social, ethical, and religious features of civilizations before 1750 CE from at
least two of the following areas: Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Africa, or the Americas.

5. Compare the development of the idea of citizenship in Europe with the evolution of social
rights and duties of the individual in a civilization in one of the following areas: Asia, the Middle
East, Africa, or the Americas.

As part of the core curriculum, this course compliments other courses in the Division of
Humanities and Social Sciences and across the curriculum. Students are expected to be
cognizant of connections among these courses, and to work through the implications of such
connections as they apply to the overall curriculum of their four-year course of study. As part of
an education leading to military commissioning, this course provides students with skills and
information designed to enhance their abilities to lead and serve as naval officers.
Bibliography


Suyuti, Itiqan fi 'ulum al-Quran. Trans. Brannon Wheeler


Maimonides. Law of Kings and Wars (various translations) from his Mishneh Torah.


Assignments and Grades

Grades do not represent simply the total points received on assignments during the course of the semester. The instructor reserves discretion in exercising his professional evaluation concerning how well a student performed, how much a student learned in the course, and other factors. These other factors include the instructor taking into account trends in student learning, assessment of student effort, and an overall judgment regarding how well a student has mastered the course materials and objectives.

All assignments must be completed, turned in, and judged to be of at least adequate quality for a student to pass this course, regardless of the total number of points earned by that student with other assignments. No late assignments or make-up tests are accepted without prior approval of instructor. All outside of class assignments are to be typed (laser-printed), double-spaced, stapled (when appropriate), and are to include the full name and Alpha number on each page of the assignment. Assignments are to be completed and ready to turn in at the beginning of class on the date they are due.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Class Participation. This is a discussion-based course. Students are expected to attend all class sessions having prepared carefully, in advance, all reading and other work assigned to date. Effective participation is informed, active, creative, and respects the overarching goals of the course and the standards of the institution. Evaluation of class participation may also include quizzes, extra-credit assignments, and other short assignments. Students are responsible for obtaining all readings and, when applicable, supplementing those readings with additional materials, but are not required to purchase readings.

Exams. Students are required to complete all exams. Each exam is to cover materials from the course previous to each exam. Exams may include short identifications and/or essays. Students must be present in class to complete the exams. Students must provide blue-books or stapled pages of paper and writing implement. Each blue-book or other stapled pages is to be marked with student name and alpha number. No late exams or make-up exams allowed.

Final Exam. Students are required to complete a final exam. The time and place of the exam is to be determined in due course. This final covers all aspects of the course including readings, in-class presentations, discussions, and other outside-of-class support for these activities. Specific content and parameters of the final exam are to be provided at the end of the course.

Spoils from the Jerusalem temple displayed on the Arch of Titus in Rome

Grading of all assignments is based on an evaluation of how well a student can develop a convincing and well-documented argument demonstrating a comprehension of the pertinent issues in the readings and the course. Demonstration of comprehension includes evincing detailed knowledge of specific facts, careful consideration of those facts in relation to the larger themes and questions of the course, and an ability to think beyond the particulars of the course.
to broader concerns. These broader concerns might include generic theoretical and practical questions relating to a student’s overall curriculum and experience at the US Naval Academy and its role in world civilization.

**Plagiarism and Documentation of Papers**

Plagiarism statement: All direct quotations, paraphrases, allusions to specific passages in a text, and use of another person’s interpretations and research must be documented with a note that includes specific page and section reference to the work used. It is not necessary to document “common knowledge,” which includes the factual information from the course textbook or such information acquired in-class.

Portion of earliest extant Buddhist text discovered to date, from Afghanistan

**Notes**

Portions of this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Students are responsible for the contents of this syllabus. Each student must submit his or her own work for evaluation, and all students are accountable for knowing and abiding by the statement regarding plagiarism in this syllabus and the History department’s statement on plagiarism.

Uighir miniature from Turfan
**SCHEDULE**

Monday, August 21. Introduction

Wednesday, August 23. Clash of Civilizations?
   Reading: Bernard Lewis, “The Roots of Muslim Rage,” *Atlantic* (September 1990)

Friday, August 25. Global War on Religion?
   Reading: (a) Muqtedar Khan, “Understanding the Roots of Muslim Rage,” *Outlook* (October 2001)

**Creation: Combat Myth and Human Purpose**

Monday, August 28
   Reading: Enuma Elish and Bible passages

Wednesday, August 30
   Reading: Maimonides

Friday, September 1
   Reading: Maimonides

Monday, September 4. No class

Tuesday, September 5
   Reading: Ghazali

Wednesday, September 6
   Reading: Ghazali

Friday, September 8
   Test 1

**Territory: Temple and Pilgrimage**

Monday, September 11
   Reading: Gudea, Selections from Bible

Wednesday, September 13
   Reading: Abraham in Bible and Quran

Friday, September 15
   Reading: Constantine and Heraclius
Monday, September 18  
Reading: Kuzari

Wednesday, September 20  
Reading: Kuzari

Friday, September 22  
Test 2

**Holy War: Axiums**  
Monday, September 25  
Reading: Mesha Stele and selections from the Bible

Wednesday, September 27  
Reading: Selections from Crusades

Friday, September 29  
Reading: Selections from Fada’il al-Jihad text and Islamic legal texts on Jihad and Siyar

Monday, October 2  
Reading: Maimonides, *Book of Kings and Wars*  
Grades due Tuesday October 3

Wednesday, October 4  
Test 3  
Grades due Thursday October 5

Friday, October 6  
Test 3

Monday, October 9 Columbus Day

**Revelation and Scripture**  
Wednesday, October 11  
Reading: Esarhaddon and PGM 13

Friday, October 13  
Reading: Selections from Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and Prophet Muhammad

Monday, October 16  
Reading: Selections from Masorah, Miqraot Gidalot, Midrash Rabbah

Wednesday, October 18. Field Trip: National Council on US-Arab Relations
Friday, October 20
Reading: Suyuti on the Quran

Monday, October 23
Reading: Suyuti on the Quran

Wednesday, October 25
Test 4

Friday, October 27
Test 4

State
Monday, October 30
Reading: Leviticus

Wednesday, November 1
Reading: Leviticus

Friday, November 3
Reading: Socrates

Monday, November 6
Reading: Socrates
Grades due Tuesday November 7

Wednesday, November 8
Test 5
MAPRs due

Friday, November 10 Veteran’s Day

Apocalypse
Monday, November 13
Reading: Daniel and Ezekiel

Wednesday, November 15
Reading: Selections from Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and Dead Sea Scrolls

Friday, November 17
Reading: Selections from Gospel of Mark and Apocalypse of John

Monday, November 20. Field Trip: Middle East Studies Association
Wednesday, November 22 Early schedule  
Reading: Proclamation of the Caliphate, Proclamation of Adnan al-Shami (2014)

Thursday-Friday, November 23-24 Thanksgiving

Monday, November 27.

Religion and Violence  
Wednesday, November 29  
Reading: Jaffee

Friday, December 1  
Reading: Cavanaugh

Monday, December 4  
Reading: Cavanaugh

Wednesday, December 6. General Conclusions

Final exam 12-19 December  
Grades due 21 December  
MAPRs due 26 December