

INTRODUCTION TO ISLAM

Dr. Elisheva Machlis

Spring semester

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Office Hours: by appointment

Short description:

This course will expose students to the multiple facets of Islamic history, civilization, and diverse iterations of Islam as a faith. It will commence with a historical review of the rise and expansion of Islam with emphasis on the political, social, and cultural forces of its development. It will then move on to fundamental features from the classical Islamic period such as the development of Islamic law and the effervescence of Islamic philosophy. We will explore religious institutions and their interactions with Muslim empires as well as their evolution throughout time and geographical space. The course will introduce students to religious, cultural, and political trends of Islam from its rise to present day. It will invite and enable students to ponder questions such as: What unites a vast plurality of societies and phenomena across an expansive geography and over a millennium under one banner? We will conclude by looking at how diverse agents have sought to integrate their conceptions of Islam with the exigencies of modernity and different types of solidarity and identity. Throughout the semester we will also discuss empirical and methodological challenges to the historical study of Islam.

Assessment:

Midterm: Essay 30%

Final requirement: Take-home exam 50%

Participation: 20%

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Students are permitted a maximum of three absences without penalty. Any additional absences will affect the final grade and may result in failure of the course.

Academic conduct:

Plagiarism is taken extremely seriously. Any instance of academic misconduct which includes: submitting someone else's work as your own; failure to accurately cite sources; taking words from another source without using quotation marks; submission of work for which you have previously received credit; working in a group for individual assignments; using unauthorized materials in an exam and sharing your work with other students, will result in failure of the assignment and will likely lead to further disciplinary measures.