

**Introduction to Islamic Civilization:  
Religious, Cultural, and Historical Foundations,**

**570-1801**

**Dr. Ahmad Agbaria**

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**Office Hours: Monday 2-4**

**Short description:** This course surveys the history of the Middle East from the rise of Islam to the end of the eighteenth century, a vast historical period in which Islam gave rise to cities, science and cultural norms that are still with us today. Students will be introduced to basic aspects of the political, social, and cultural dimensions of Islamic civilization from Spain to Iran to increase their familiarity with cultural groups outside the West.

In the midst of mapping this broad view, we will focus our attention on how specific historical figures and events contributed to definitions of Islamic identity, community, and authority. Central themes include the emergence of Sunni and Shi'i identities, the relationship of Muslims and non-Muslims, and the unique material and intellectual contributions of Islamic civilization to world history and other societies.

An overarching goal of this course is to focus attention on the history of the Middle East in this formative phase as a fascinating, complicated, and enriching study in its own right. In order to do this, students will be expected to master key terms and concepts of the period.

**Assessment:**

Three exams:

- Two in-class exams during term-time worth 19% each
- One final take-home exam worth 22%

**Minor assignment:**

Each student is required to write a film review or a short essay on one of the documents discussed in class. Prior approval from your instructor is a mandatory. This assignment makes up 20% of your final grade.

### Participation:

Students are strongly encouraged to participate in class discussion, come to class prepared and ask questions. Though this class requires no presentations, student engagement with the reading assignment is required. 20% of your grade depends on your class performance.

### 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.