

Attention!

This is a representative syllabus.
The syllabus for the course you are
enrolled in will likely be different.

Please refer to your instructor's
syllabus for more information on
specific requirements for a given
semester.

NELC 3702
Literatures and Cultures of the Islamic World

Instructor:

Class Time:

Office:

Office Hours:

Email:

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will study culture in a variety of Islamic historical contexts with an emphasis on literature, visual arts, and music. By analyzing selected works in a historical context, students will gain insight into how the cultures that produced them have differed from era to era and place to place. While codified principles have a degree of universal validity among Muslims, Islam has been practiced differently in diverse regions at different times. We shall situate societies associated with Islam within a global, plural and interactional vision of world history. The course will include North Africa, Iran, Southeast Asia and voices from Muslim communities in Europe and the Americas as well as the Middle East. The course will convey some idea of Islamic societies' historical complexity and richness and an awareness of how our context and culture can influence our perceptions.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES:

In this GE literature course students will evaluate significant texts in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; interpretation and evaluation; and critical listening, reading, seeing, thinking, and writing. Through reading, discussing, and writing about literature, students appraise and evaluate the personal and social values of their own and other cultures. Through study of the significant cultural phenomena and ideas which form the context of this course students will develop capacities for aesthetic response and judgment, interpretation and evaluation. Students will analyze and interpret major forms of human thought, culture, and expression and evaluate how ideas influence the character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, as well as the norms which guide human behavior.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (<http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>).”

DISABILITY POLICY

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located at

Student Life Disability Services
098 Baker Hall 113 W. 12th Ave

Columbus, OH 43210

Office: 614-292-3307

Fax: 614-292-4190

VRS: 614-429-1334

General business email: slds@osu.edu

READING

Articles and book chapters and audiovisual material will be made available through Carmen (Canvas).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION

Attendance and participation comprise **10%** of your grade. Presence in class, punctuality, and completing assignments on time will mean a weekly grade of 9/10. Missing class without explanation means that the attendance and participation grade for the week will drop to a maximum of 5/10. A score of **10** means, in practical terms, asking a question, making a comment, in class related to course material and/or making a comment related to the course, drawing on your experience, reading and reflection outside class.

Discussion forums (**10%** of your grade) will allow you to post reflections before the class on the assigned readings and participate in discussion of the readings in class.

Presentations

An oral presentation of about 7-10 minutes on a subject of your choice, relevant to the course. You can present this at a time of your choice. (**10%** of your grade)

Quizzes: periodic quizzes will account for **15%** of your grade. These will be generally on-line (Canvas).

Midterm Exam: This written exam conducted in class will cover all material studied up until the midterm.. The midterm will comprise **25%** of your final grade.

Final Exam: This written exam conducted in class will cover all materials studied during the course. The exam will comprise **30%** of your final grade.

Final: Wednesday 26 April 2 pm - 4.45 pm

GRADING

Attendance and participation - 10%	Quizzes – 15%
Discussion forum 10%	Midterm exam - 25%
Presentation 10%	Final Exam – 30%
TOTAL	100%

GRADING SCALE

A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	60-66
F	0-59

**Week One : Thinking about the term
“the Islamic world”**

Tuesday 10 January Introduction and overview

Thursday 12 January

Lecture format: understandings of the terms “culture” and “Islamic world”

**Week two : Muslim communities, the
Quran and *Sharī'a*.**

Tuesday 17 January

- 1) Interview with Dr. Mona Siddiqui on “Mary in the Quran”.
- 2) Discussion and commentary on Sūra 19: a preparatory assignment will involve consulting the on-line *Encyclopaedia of the Quran*, other resources indicated above (page 3) and listening to two BBC short broadcasts in the series *Heart and Soul* as well as based on a short historical lecture (14 minutes) on state formation in the early Islamic period by Professor Hugh Kennedy (School of Oriental and African Studies, London). These audio resources and Suras 19 and 98 will be available in the Module 2 folder (Canvas).

Thursday 19 January : Sūra 98 of the Quran, the “People of the Book” and the wider historical background of the Arab conquests in the North Africa and the spread of Islam in Asia

**Week 3 Muslim communities, the Quran and
Sharī'a (continued)**

Tuesday 24 January : contemporary readings of the Qur'an and early Islamic history (preparatory assignment: extract from *The Quran between message and history* by Abdelmadjid Charfi, 2010). This will be available in PDF form in Module 3 (Canvas).

Thursday 26 January

Islamic Law and its Origins : preparatory assignment will involve listening to the BBC broadcast “Islamic law and its origins.” See Module 3 for the link to this.

Week 4
**“In the deserts of the heart...” poetry from the early Islamic
centuries**

For this week we shall be using an online resource: Princeton Online Arabic Poetry project which is accessible in Module 4. This enables you to read in translation and hear (in Arabic) a variety of poetic registers.

Tuesday 31 January : poetry and poets (an overview: lecture format).

Thursday 2 February : presentation by class members of individual poems which figure in the Princeton Online Arabic Poetry

Week 5

Medieval Baghdad and Cairo as intellectual centres.

Preparation **listen to two BBC broadcasts: one on the Abbasid caliphate and the other on Baghdad and Cairo as intellectual centres. Readings from *Consorts of the caliphs: women and the court of Baghdad* (2015).**

These texts give us an insight into the world of the Abbasid courts with female slaves participating, it seems, in a rich cultural and social life. At this stage please note three questions on each reading, points that you would like developed or discussed. These can relate to the institution and practice of slavery, for example. There will be a discussion forum "Caliphs and their consorts" where you can post questions.

Tuesday 7 February Discussion of questions posted in the discussion forum.

Thursday 9 February Preparation

Imagine you are in Abbasid Baghdad. Night is falling. Few in the city have access to the palace, seen as secluded and rich, a richly decorated labyrinth. You find yourself listening to a recital of Abu Nuwas' poetry. The caliph is accompanied by his cup-companion or *nudama'*, page boys and singing girls. These (male) *nudama'* have a repertoire of captivating stories and amusing anecdotes, for the purpose of entertaining their master. Characters and places from the "caliphs and their consorts" readings can be brought into your narrative. Compare and contrast Abu Nuwas' poetry with what you know of your older poetic heritage written by people such as Imru al qays. Imru al Qay's *qasida* (poem) is also on the Princeton site, with a translation. On Friday we shall listen to selected readings of your texts.

Week 6

TIMBUCTOO!

Tuesday 14 February

Islamic culture in West Africa (lecture)

Preparatory assignment:

Documentary film (and accompanying quiz on the Empire of Mali discussed in a BBC broadcast in the “In our time series”): *The lost libraries of Timbuktu*: this 2009 BBC documentary explores the circulation of ideas in the wider Muslim world in the pre-modern period and its contemporary relevance in a particular locality in West Africa. The film is presented by Aminatta Forna, a writer of Scottish and Sierra Leonean descent.

Thursday 16 February

Islamic culture in West Africa and its connections with the wider world (part 2): the case of Leo Africanus.

Al-Hasan ibn Muhammad al-Wazzan, as Leo was first named, was born in Muslim Granada a few years before the city fell to the armies of Aragon and Castile in 1492. He grew up in Fez (Morocco) and, after some years working as a notary to a hospital, was sent by the sultan of Fez on various diplomatic missions to African rulers. In 1518, on his way back from Cairo, his ship was intercepted by Christian pirates and he was brought as a captive to Rome. There, he converted to Christianity at the hands of Pope Leo X and was baptised as Joannes Leo. His most important work was *The Description of Africa*, completed in 1526. Besides providing a verbal map of the Maghreb and Egypt, *The Description of Africa* refers to Arabic sources which were of vital importance to Orientalists and scholars in the centuries that followed.

Preparatory assignment:

Documentary film: (and accompanying quiz): *Leo Africanus* (all above links in Module 6 Canvas)

Week 7 *Arabian Nights*

Tuesday 21 February The Arabian Nights and the West. “Orientalism” and other “isms.”

Thursday 23 February Role-playing exercise

Week 8

Wednesday 28 February : Revision and overview

MIDTERM THURSDAY 2 MARCH (TBC)

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Week 9

Islam in South Asia

Tuesday 7 March: Midterm comments and introduction to the second part of the course. Graham Zhao, NELC PhD candidate, will give a presentation on the history of Islam in China.

Thursday 9 March: Islam, trade and communication in the Indian Ocean

Week 10

Tuesday 14 March NO CLASS

Thursday 16 March NO CLASS

Week 11

Mughal India Art and statecraft

Tuesday 21 March Mughal India: state-building and art

Thursday 23 March The Mughals and the “White Mughals” in British India

Week 12 modern Iran

Tuesday 28 March Film in class : *Iran: the hundred years war*. (link in Module 12)

Please watch the first half of this film before class. Despite the somewhat misleading title the film covers many aspects of Iranian life since the late nineteenth century including religion, nationalism, and modernization

Thursday 30 March : state building in Tunisia and Turkey

Week 13 music and visual arts

Tuesday 4 April Music and spirituality: Sufis and Whirling Dervishes

Thursday 6 April: Music in Morocco and al-Andalus

Week 14

music and visual arts (continued)

Tuesday 11 April

Thursday 13 April

Week 15

Tuesday 18 April

Thursday 20 April LAST CLASS: OVERVIEW and SUMMARY

Final : Wednesday 26 April 2 pm - 4.45 pm

