

Cross and Crescent: Mediterranean Encounters

Graduate Syllabus

Dr. Allen Fromherz

The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.'

Office Hours: Mondays 1-2:30 or by appointment. MARHABA come and see artifacts from the Middle East!

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Prereqs – NA

*“In a boat down a fast-running creek,
it feels like trees on the bank
are rushing by. What seems
to be changing around us
is rather the speed of our craft...”*

-Jelaluddin Rumi (d. 1273) trans. Coleman Barks.

“Asabiyya (group feeling) produces the ability to defend oneself, to offer opposition, to protect oneself, and to press one’s claims. Whoever loses it is too weak to do any of these things.” – Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406) trans. Fazlur Rahman.

Course Description

It is the purpose of this course to study interactions between cultures and religions in the Medieval Mediterranean and to demonstrate how these interactions became a basis for the Renaissance and the rise of the modern world. It was during the medieval period when Europeans came into extensive contact with the Islamic world through trade, scholarship and war. Most of this contact occurred over and across the Mediterranean sea, creating a common Mediterranean culture and Mediterranean experience that has survived to this day. This course will also focus on the contribution of the Medieval Muslim Empires of the Mediterranean and the diverse views that Medieval Muslims had of the West.

Course Philosophy

According to the medieval historian Ibn Khaldun’s examination of historical methodology in his own time, “little effort is being made to get at the truth. The critical eye, as a rule, is not sharp. Errors and unfounded assumptions are closely allied and familiar elements in historical information.” Also, “if the soul is infected with partisanship for a particular opinion or sect, it accepts without a moment’s hesitation the information that is agreeable to it.” There continues to be a great deal of truth in Ibn Khaldun’s description of historical writing. As this course will examine, there are, in fact, many different schools and methodologies of historical writing about the medieval Mediterranean. Those who vigorously follow one school or paradigm (“infected with partisanship” in the words of Ibn Khaldun) may tend to limit evidence to what is “agreeable” to a particular opinion. This course will not only equip you with the necessary critical skills and necessary understanding of historical methodology to make your own decisions

and conclusions about historical evidence. In order to accomplish this goal, however, we must be willing to re-examine our most basic assumptions of what history is, and our role as historians in shaping historical narrative and interpretation. As Rumi's poetry illustrates, we may think the trees are moving when it is actually our own craft. Note: This class is structured as a seminar and students are encouraged to contribute to the discussion as much as possible.

Learning Outcomes: After satisfactory completion of this course students will have developed a professional understanding of historical methodology on the Mediterranean and primary source (in translation) criticism. They will have developed advanced graduate-level critical thinking skills, not only in writing history but interpreting historical events and ideas. Students will learn from the unexpected opportunities and challenges of working with original material and engaging in historical research on the Mediterranean.

Required Texts:

Richard Fletcher, *The Cross and the Crescent*, Penguin 2003. **ISBN-10:** 0143034812

Peregrine Horden and Nicolas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, Wiley Blackwell, **ISBN-10:** 0631218904

Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Ornament of the World*, Back Bay Books, **ISBN-10:** 0316168718

Olivia Constable, *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim and Jewish Sources*, University of Pennsylvania Press, **ISBN-10:** 0812215699

Henri Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, Dover, **ISBN-10:** 0486420116

SD Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, University of California Press, **ISBN-10:** 0520240596

Olivia Constable, *Trade and Traders in Muslim Spain: The Commercial Realignment of the Iberian Peninsula, 900-1500* **ISBN-10:** 0521565030

Francesco Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, University of California, **ISBN-10:** 0520052242

Chronicles of the Crusades, Penguin, **ISBN-10:** 0140441247

SUGGESTED text - John Abert, *The Black Death: The Great Mortality of 1348-1350*, St. Maarten's, 2005, **ISBN** 031240087X

Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, Princeton University Press, **ISBN** 0691099464.

Jan 7: Introduction to the Course and Purpose of the Seminar. Article to be discussed in class, Hannerz, "Reflections on varieties of culturespeak"

Jan 14: Reading - *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History*, p. 1-51. Be prepared to write responses to questions in class.

Jan 21: *The Corrupting Sea*, p. 123-173 "Connections." Be prepared to discuss, write responses to questions in class.

Jan 28: Writing workshop/presentation preparation day.

Feb 4: Sea of Faiths? Presentation I – *Cross and the Crescent*, Chapters 1-6.

Feb 11: Medieval Iberia Presentation II – *Ornament of the World*, p. 3-130.

Feb 18: Medieval Iberia Presentation III – *Ornament of the World*, p. 130 – 315

Feb 25: Medieval Iberian Sources Pres. IV and V- *Medieval Iberia Reading*, p. 1-167: focus on two parts of the book.

Mar 4: Spring Break

Mar 11: Trade and Commerce Pres VI – Constable, *Trade and Traders in Muslim Spain*, 1-255.

Mar 18: Mediterranean Social History through the Geniza, Pres VII – Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, presenters should choose up to 7 chapters. (Announce chapter selection on March 11)

Mar 25: Midterm – 3 Essay questions and 5 definitions/identifications based on readings. A list of 6 possible essay questions will be provided one week before the midterm. Only 3 questions will appear on the exam. Definitions will be from presentation handouts.

April 1: Muhammad and Charlemagne the Problematics of Pirenne, Pres VIII – *Muhammad and Charlemagne*.

April 8: The Crusades – Arab Perspective, Pres IX, Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*. Focus on two parts.

April 15: Crusades from Europe, Pres X, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, St. Louis.

April 22: Ibn Khaldun – A North African in the 14th Century Mediterranean - Read *Muqaddimah*, 1-150 as well as introduction..

April 29: Final Exam DUE. Take home (Given out April 22) – Cumulative - Short essays and definitions based on handouts. Only 3 of these questions will appear on the final exam. Students may propose an alternative topic but must propose it **before** April 22.

Grade Distribution

Participation – 20% of Grade. Students are encouraged to participate in class discussions, pop quizzes, questions in class, and activities as much as possible. Students with unexcused absences from class may lose significant participation credit. Students who are not prepared for class, and who consistently do not do assigned readings will not receive any grade higher than a D + in this category.

Final – 25% of Grade. 3 essay questions (no longer than 3 pages each), 5 definitions.

Midterm – 25% of Grade 3 essay questions (no longer than 3 pages each), 5 definitions.

Presentation – 15% of Grade. (Handout 5% of Grade) The group leaders will present their book reviews and lead class discussion on the assigned portions of the book. After introducing the assigned reading and its contents the group should prepare a handout for the class. This handout will include at least 10 questions for class discussion as well as at least 4 key terms or personalities from the readings.

Book Review – 15% of Grade. Each student will do a book review on the book they are assigned to present. This review will be due the same day as their presentation.

Suggested Texts:

Digenes Akrites, trans. John Mavrogordato, Oxford, 1956.

The Song of Roland, trans. D.D.R. Owen, London 1972.

(Anonymous) *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, trans. Rosalind Hill, Edinburgh, 1962.

Guibert de Nogent, *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, trans. R. Levine, 1997.

Usamah Ibn Munqidh, *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the Crusades*, tr. Philip Hitti, 1929.

E. Peters, *The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and other Source Materials*, 1971.

Ibn al-Qalanisi, *The Damascus Chronicles of the Crusades*, tr. H.A.R. Gibb, 1932.

The Tibyan: Memoris of ‘Abd Allah ibn Buluggin, Last Zirid Amir of Granada, trans. DDR Owen, London, 1972.

The Poem of the Cid, R. Hamilton and J. Perry trans., 1984.

Poems of Arab Andalusia, trans. Cola Franzen, San Francisco, 1989.

Secondary Readings

Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950-1350*, London, 1993.

Olivia Constable, *Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World*, Columbia University Press, 2001.

Madeleine Fletcher, "Almohadism: An Islamic Context for the Work of St. Thomas Aquinas," *Los Almohades Problemas y Perspectivas*, Vol. II, Madrid, 1163-1226.

Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History*, Oxford 2000.

Robert Lopez and Irving Raymond, *Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World*, New York, 1955.

David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages*, Princeton, 1996.

Stephen O'Shea, *Sea of Faith: Islam and Christianity in the Medieval Mediterranean World*, New York: Walker and Company, 2006. (This is a readable book and recommended for students interested in battles and political history.)

R.W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge, Mass., 1962.

Rebecca Lynn Winer, *Women, Wealth, and Community in Perpignan c. 1230-1300*, Ashgate, 2006.

Honor Code

Evidence of plagiarism or other honor code violations will be dealt with according to university rules and regulations.

Students with Special Needs

Students with special needs are always encouraged to come and discuss accommodation of their needs. Please come to my office hours early in the course so that proper accommodations can be made.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

See current University general Catalog for University guidelines. **Students should make every effort to attend class. Missing class will have an impact on participation credit.**

MAKE UP EXAM POLICY

Students must provide evidence of a medical emergency or excused absence during the exam day. If such evidence is provided, students can make up an exam by arranging an appointment with me.