

M. A. History (II & IV Semesters)

Course Number: M31420

State and Society in the Central Islamic Lands: 7th-13th Centuries

Winter Semester 2022 (4 Credits)

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The course provides an understanding of the emergence and consolidation of major political and social institutions in the Central Islamic Lands (Arabia, the Fertile Crescent, Iran, Khurasan and Central Asia) from the rise of Islam to the Mongol invasion. The themes are organized around the evolution of Islamic ideology, polity and society during the process of unification and transformation of the diverse political and social landscapes lying between the Nile and the Oxus

General Readings: Intended to provide students with a short list of references that might serve as the basis for **Specialized Readings** (under each theme) and navigate the search for further readings. Students can choose as many books as they wish from the list below. The idea is to spend more time on fewer pages, not memorizing a lot of information but rather thinking through some of the important issues raised by the readings.

1. Bowersack, *The Crucible of Islam* 2017 (early Islam & caliphate; reflective) *
2. Gerhard Endress, *Islam: An Historical Introduction*, 2002*
3. Carole Hillenbrand, *Islam: A New Historical Introduction**
4. Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vols. 1 and 2 (Reflective, a must for theme 4) *
5. Stephen Humphreys, *Islamic History. A Framework for Inquiry*, 1991 (Critical survey of modern writings with emphasis on sources) *
6. Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 2016 (Best text book so far) *
7. H. Kennedy, *Caliphate, the History of an Idea*, 2016 (based on no. 6, focused on leadership)*
8. Gabriel Said Reynolds, *The Emergence of Islam*, 2012 (Clever mix of traditional and revisionist arguments) *
9. Andrew Rippin, *Muslims. Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, 2019 (Excellent survey) *
10. *Routledge Handbook on Early Islam*, ed. Berg, 2018* (themes of formative Islam, can select)

1. Arabia and the Near East in Late Antiquity and the rise of Islam

The debate on the origin of Islam is about the source material and its interpretation by scholars (traditional Islamic, Orientalist and Revisionist and those who do not fall into any of these categories). The discussion on the two seminal concepts Muhammad introduced - monotheism and the community of believers - includes Donner's argument that Muhammad's community originally consisted of monotheists (and not Muslims)

Theme: Historiography of the origin of Islam

Readings: Lecker, 'Muhammad';* Donner, *Muhammad & the Believers**; Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins**; Donner, 'Talking about Islam's Origins', *Bulletin of SOAS* 2018*; Donner, 'Modern Approaches to Early Islamic History', *NCHI*, I, pp. 625-47*; Spoerl, 'Fred Donner and Tilman Nagel on Muslims and Believers' 2021*; Reynolds, *Emergence of Islam*, pp. 1-57*;

Hoyland, 'New Documentary Texts and the Early Islamic State', *BSOAS* 2006*; 'Early Islam as a Late Antique Religion'*; Athamina, 'Abraham in Islamic Perspective. Reflections on the Development of Monotheism in Pre-Islamic Arabia', *Der Islam* 2004*; Ali, 'The Islamic Background to Indian History', *JESHO*, 30*; Habib, 'In Defence of Orientalism: Critical Notes on Edward Said', *Social Scientist*, nos. 380-1*; Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam**; Serjeant, 'Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam: Misconceptions and Flawed Polemics', *JAOS* 1990*; Ibn Warraq, *Quest for the Historical Muhammad* (Chs. 1 & 2)*; Crone & Cook, *Hagarism**; Jeremy Johns, 'Archaeology and the History of Early Islam: The First Seventy Years', *JESHO*, 46, 4, 2003*

2. Islamic state under the Prophet and the Umayyads

The challenges to the unity of the community and the protection of its interests formed the basis for the creation of the Islamic state by Muhammad and the caliphs. The Islamic state tended towards imperialization under the Umayyads (661-750 AD). The death of the Prophet created opportunities for innovations (Caliphate) but also divisions (Sects)

Themes: *Rashidun* Caliphate and Islamic conquests; civil wars (*fitna*); Umayyad state; Arabization and Islamization; community of believers become community of Muslims!

Readings: Reynolds, *Emergence of Islam*, pp. 59-82*; Donner (ed.), *Articulation of Early Islamic State Structures* ('Introduction' & Ch. 1*); Donner, *Muhammad & the Believers**; Donner, 'The Islamic Conquests', *Companion to the History of the Middle East*; Donner (ed.), *Expansion of Early Islamic State* 2016 (Introduction); Kennedy, *Great Arab Conquests**; Madelung, *Succession to Muhammad**; Humphreys, *Muawiya ibn Abi Sufiyan**; Foss, 'Muawiya's State'*; Lapidus, 'State and Religion in Islamic Societies', *Past & Present*, 151*; Hawting, *First Dynasty of Islam**; Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, pp. 29-36*; Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, I, pp. 58-59, 217-30; Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph**; Robinson, *Abd al-Malik*; *idem*, 'Rise of Islam, 600-705', *NCHI*, I, pp. 208-225*

3. Abbasid absolutism and Islamic Public Sphere

The Abbasid Revolution (750 AD) is considered to be a turning point in the history of the Islamic state. The key historiographical issues are the nature of the Revolution and its impact. The Abbasids consolidated the political authority of the Caliph, while *ulama* (Islamic scholars) and Sufis consolidated 'Islamic public sphere'. The official and public spheres collided during the reign of al-Mamun and caused separation between religion and politics

Themes: *Dawa* and *dawla*; political absolutism & problems of legitimacy; Abbasids & the *ulama*; institutional bases of Islam: *sharia*, *kalam*, *madradas*; challenges to established order: *tasawwuf*; *mihna*; Greek learning in the Arab World; political thought; Iran & Islam

Readings: Kennedy, *When Baghdad Ruled the Muslim World**; Micheau, 'Baghdad, an imperial foundation', *Cambridge World History* 3, pp. 397-415; Humphreys, *Islamic History*, pp. 104-127; Elton Daniel, 'The Ahl al Taqadum and the Problem of the Constituency of the Abbasid

Revolution in the Merv Oasis’*; El-Hibri, ‘The empire in Iraq’, *NCHI*, I, pp. 269-304*; Sharon, *Black Banners from the East**; Cooperson, *Al-Mamun**; Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology & Law*, 1981, pp. vii-xiii, 1-66, 116-166; Schacht, *Introduction to Islamic Law*, pp. 1-56; Zaman, *Religion & Politics under the Early Abbasids*; Karamustafa, *Sufism. Formative Period**; Knysh, ‘Sufism’ *NCHI*, IV, pp. 60-104*; Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam; Public Sphere in Muslim Societies**; Berkey, *Popular Preaching & Religious Authority in the Medieval Islamic Near East*; Watt, *Islamic Theology and Philosophy*; Taylor, ‘Philosophy’, *NCHI*, IV, pp. 532-63*; Leaman, *Brief Introduction to Islamic Philosophy*; Robinson, ‘Education’, *NCHI*, IV, pp. 497-531*; Gutas, *Greek Thought Arabic Culture*

4. Unity in the face of political divisions

Periodisation and Marshall Hodgson; political fragmentation and cultural efflorescence. Turks in the Central Islamic Lands and creation of Saljuq and Ghaznavid Sultanates

Themes: Breakup of the Abbasid Caliphate; *Iqta* & military slave bureaucracy; the ‘Shi’i Century’ (Fatimids and Buyids); rise of Turkish Sultanates (Ghaznavids & Seljuqs); popular preaching & conversions; efflorescence of literature and art in the tenth and eleventh centuries

Readings: Donner, ‘Periodization’*; Goitein, ‘Unity of the Mediterranean World’*; Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, vol. 1, pp. 473-95; vol. 2, pp. 12-61; Arjomand, ‘Evolution of the Persianate Polity’*; Tor, ‘Islamization of Central Asia’*; H. Busse, ‘Revival of Persian Kingship under the Buyids’; Bosworth, ‘Barbarian Incursions: the coming of the Turks into the Islamic World’*; Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, pp. 98-106*; Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*, pp. 10-30, 53-76; *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5, pp. 62-87, 218-22; Bloom, ‘Literary and oral cultures’, *NCHI*, IV, pp. 668-681*; Schoeler, *The Genesis of Literature in Islam*.*

5. Social order and economic organization

Did Islam lead to a new social and economic order?

Themes: Agrarian economy; trade & commercial techniques; Geniza Records; ‘Islamic’ urbanization; Islam & Capitalism; social order; gender, slavery.

Readings: Schultz, ‘The Mechanics of Commerce’, *NCHI*, IV, pp. 332-54*; Lapidus (ed.), *Middle Eastern Cities*; Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages*, 1984, pp. vii-xvi, 1-8; Bulliet, *Islam. The View from the Edge* (Ch. 4. ‘Islamic Urbanization’); Rodinson, *Islam and Capitalism*; Maya Shatzmiller, ‘Economic Performance and Economic Growth in the Early Islamic World’, *JESHO* 54 (2011), pp. 132-184; Banaji, ‘Islam, the Mediterranean and the Rise of Capitalism’*; Heck, *Charlemagne, Muhammad, and the Arab Roots of Capitalism**; Koehler, *Early Islam & the Birth of Capitalism*, 2014*; Ali, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam**; Abbott, ‘Women and the State in Early Islam’ & ‘Women and the State in Early Islam: Umayyads’ *JNES*, 1942*; Marin, ‘Women, Gender and Sexuality’, *NCHI*, IV, 355-79*; Ahmed, ‘Women and the Advent of Islam’; Mernissi, *Women & Islam**; Schimmel, *My Soul is a Woman*

6. Islam and the ‘Other’

Themes: Houses of peace and war; protected people (*zimmis*) and *jizya*; Mongols & the sack of Baghdad; Nomads and state Formations; Islam and Christianity; India and the Islamic Frontier.

Readings: Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam**; Bonner and Hagan, ‘Muslim accounts of the dar al-harb’, *NCHI*, IV, pp. 474-94*; Morgan, *The Mongols*; Manz, ‘The rule of the infidels: the Mongols & the Islamic world’, *NCHI*, III, pp. 128-68*; Krader, *Formation of the State* (chapter 6); Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, pp. 18-26*; Lindner, ‘What was a Nomadic Tribe?’ *CSSH*, 1982*; Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, II, pp. 329-68*; Rodinson, *Mystique of Islam*; Richards, ‘Islamic Frontier in the East: Expansion into South Asia’, *South Asia*, 4, Oct. 1974*.

Note: Most readings are available with Shubho Photostat (SSS 3) in a Reader, Ambedkar Central Library and CHS Library (Pashchimabad). Currently, references marked with asterisk* are available in soft copies on the website of the Central Library. Send mail on nhaider@jnu.ac.in to get soft copies. Please note that more readings will be recommended as we go. Students stand to gain from reading the assigned material before coming to the class.

Evaluation: Half of the grades come from tutorials (critical essays presented with mandatory participation in the discussion). A critical study would mean that you reflect upon the theme rather than repeat the readings. The end semester examination carries 50 % of the credit.

Contact Hours: Monday and Friday (11 AM to 1 PM) in room 319, SSS3 (alternatively on phone or google Meet). Call 9871575587 or send mail (also for out of hours discussion)

Glossary

Islam = Submission [to the will of God]

Allah = Arabic word for God in Islam. Persian for Allah is Khuda

Rusul = Messenger (Prophet with a message, sometimes contained in a book, such as, in the case of Islam, the Quran. Notable *rusuls* are Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus and Muhammad)

Muminun = Believers (according to Donner, all monotheists); sing. *mumin*

Muslimun = Muslims among the believers (*a la* Donner); sing. Muslim

Umma = Community of believers, later Community of Muslims

Khalifa = Deputy or successor (Caliph in English). Head of the Muslim community (also called *Amir ul muminun* or commander of the believers)

Imam = Another term for leader of the community or any leader for that matter (such as *imam* of a mosque who leads the prayers). The term has a special meaning in Shiism

Political and Religious Chronology

Muhammad c.570-632 AD.

Four Caliphs 632-661 AD.

Umayyads 661-750 AD.

Abbasids 750-1258 AD.

Buyids 945-1055 AD.

Samanids 819-1105 AD, Ghaznavids 977-1187 AD and Seljuqs 1037-1072 AD.