

## Schedule and Readings

February 17

Introduction

### Week I: The Problem of Sources

Why is it so difficult to obtain a clear view of "what actually happened" at the origins of Islam? What are the strengths and limitations of the various literary-historical sources that purport to tell us about Islam's origins?

Lectures

February 22 Sources, Periodization and Historical Writing

February 24 Problems of Sources: Discussion of Donner's *Narratives of Islamic Origins*, 1-31.

Readings

Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 346-384.

Fred Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins*, 1-31.

### Week II: Pre-Islamic Near East

What were the political and socio-economic realities of pre-Islamic Arabia? What was the significance of Mecca in pre-Islamic Arabia?

Lectures

March 1 The Near Eastern Context

March 3 Arabia on the Eve of Islam

Readings

Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 1-15.

### Week III: Religion in pre-Islamic Arabia

What was the religious situation in pre-Islamic Arabia? How might Islam have been perceived as a threat to Meccan society?

Lectures

March 8 Religion in pre-Islamic Arabia

March 10 The Early Life of Muhammad

Discussion of Peters' *A Reader on Classical Islam*, 49-74.

Readings

F. E. Peters, *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam* (Albany, 1994), 105-132.

H.A.R. Gibb, "Pre-Islamic Monotheism in Arabia," *Harvard Theological Review* 55 (1962), 269-80.

F. E. Peters, *A Reader on Classical Islam*, 49-74.

#### Week IV: Muhammad in Madina

What was the nature of the early community of Believers? How clear-cut were the community's boundaries in the beginning? What can explain Muhammad's success?

#### Lectures

*March 15* Muhammad in Madina: Confrontations and Triumph

*March 17* The Community in Madina

Discussion of Sergent's "The Constitution of Madina."

#### Readings

Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 16-49.

R.B. Sergent, "The Constitution of Madina," *Islamic Quarterly* 8(1964), 2-16.

#### Week V: Succession and Conquests

Why were the Islamic armies able to make such rapid military advances? How was the early expansion of the Believers organized? How were conquered non-Muslims to be treated?

#### Lectures

*March 22* The Succession of Abu Bakr and the Spread of the Conquests

*March 24* The Conquest of the Near East

#### Reading:

Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 50-81.

Fred Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, 251-271.

#### Perceptions of the Conquered

How were the Muslims perceived in the new conquered territories? How was the Muslim community affected by its conquests of the Byzantine and Sassanian empires?

#### Lectures

*March 29* Early Views of Islam

Discussion of Brock, "Syriac Views...", and Hoyland's *Seeing Islam*, 523-44.

*March 31* Revision

#### Readings

Sebastian Brock, "Syriac Views of Emergent Islam," in G.H.A. Juynboll (ed.), *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society*, 9-21 (notes 199-203).

Robert Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 523-44.

*April 5*

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### Week VII: The Umma's Divisions

What were the major divisions in the Muslim community? What circumstances occasioned them, and what is the greater historical significance of those divisions?

#### Lectures

*April 7* The Murder of Uthman

Discussion of al-Tabari's "The Murder of Uthman."

*April 12* The Caliphate of Ali

#### Readings

Heinz Halm "The Commander of the Faithful: 'Ali b. Abi Talib, *Shi'a Islam: From Religion to Revolution*, 3-37.

Al-Tabari, "The Murder of Uthman."

### Week VIII: The Quran

How was the Quran revealed? How and when was it collected? What are its external forms and features?

#### Lecture

*April 14* The Quran I

#### Reading

Michel Cook, *The Koran, a very Short Introduction*, 3-20 and 125-135.

### Week IX: The Quran

Perspectives on women in the Qur'an. The Formation of the Islamic canon and its relation to women's status, including polygamy and the veil. Comparison of creation stories in Bible and Qur'an.

#### Lectures

*April 19* The Quran II

*April 26* The Quran and Women

#### Readings

Fazlur Rahman, "Status of Women in the Quran," Guity Nashat (ed), *Women and Revolution in Iran* (Boulder, 1983), 47-64.

Quran: Sura 12 (Yusuf).

### Week X: Women & Islam

How were women's status and gender relations structured before the rise of Islam? Did Islam reinforce patriarchy or did Islam actually advocate egalitarian gender relations?

#### Lectures

*April 28* Gender Relations in Transition: Women and the Rise of Islam

*May 3* An Early Muslim Woman: Aisha

#### Readings

Leila Ahmed, "Women and the Advent of Islam," *Signs* 11(1986), 665-691.

Denise Spellberg, "Political Action and Public Example: Aisha and the battle of the Camel," in *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender*, eds. Nikki Keddie and Beth Aron, 45-57.

### Week XI: The Umayyad Caliphate

The establishment of the caliphate and the Sufyanid period. What was the importance of al-Sham in the Umayyad period?

#### Lectures

May 5 The Umayyad Caliphate: Islamization and Arabization

May 10 Identity, Elites and Regionalism

#### Readings

G. R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, 34-45.

M. A. J. Beg, "The Reign of Mu'awiyya: A Critical Survey," *Islamic Culture* 51(1977), 83-107.

Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 82-90.

### Week XII The Umayyad caliphate

In what ways did Karbala' and the subsequent civil war change the character of the caliphate?

May 12 Karbala'

May 14 The Civil War

#### Readings:

Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 90-123.

G. R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, 46-71.

### Week XIII: The Umayyad Caliphate: The Marwanid Caliphate

What were the transformations in Syria from late antiquity to Islamdom?

In what ways was the Arab-Muslim Madina different from the Hellenistic Polis?

Can we identify the key institutions that permit us to describe the community of Believers as a state, and when did they appear? What can be discerned from the Umayyad building projects about their state?

#### Lectures

May 17 The Marwanid Caliphate: Changes in Government and Administration

May 19 From Polis to Madina

#### Readings

Hugh Kennedy, "From Polis to Madina: Urban Change in Late Antique and Early Islamic Syria," *Past and Present* 106(1985), 3-27.

R. Ettinghausen, "The Proclamation of Universal Power: the Umayyad Monuments," *Arab Painting*, 19-40.

Fred M. Donner, "The Formation of the Islamic State," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106 (1986), 283-96.

### Week XIV: The Fall

#### Lecture

May 24 The Fall of the Umayyads