History 751: Graduate Reading Course
European/Muslim Encounters in the Pre-Modern World
Term 1, 2012/13
Tuesday 1:30-4:30 pm

This seminar will explore the historical origins and evolution of East/West (Europe/Islam) relations, concentrating on a number of themes such as perceptions of religious difference (Christianity and Islam), the narratives of warfare (crusades and jihads), the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the Orient and the “Turk” in European thought (17th-19th centuries), and the politics and representations of eastern and western empires & cultures until the present. This is largely a course on the history and circulation of ideas. We will read select primary texts which continue to influence the writing of the history of the Middle East in English and French. The subject is vast, and I begin with the assumption that the students will have little background knowledge. Our aim is to reach a broad understanding of the origins of present-day cross-cultural apprehensions.

Each student is responsible for the required readings and for participating in the weekly discussion. It is my expectation that students will acquire a mastery of some theoretical concepts and historical evidence, take charge of their own intellectual development of the subject at hand, and engage seriously in the rigors of research and discussion. Students will prepare a 1000 word summary (précis) on each set of readings for the seminars (10 in total). The intent of the précis is for students to respond to the readings with a series of statements or questions which will serve as the focus of discussion. I will ask each of you to lead the discussion around the readings at least once over the term as part of your participation in the seminar. **Summaries are due at the end of every class.** No summaries will be accepted after the last class.

Students will also be asked to prepare an analytical bibliography/historiography on a topic of his/her choice, 2500-3500 words (10-15 pages) in length, which is due at the end of term. The subject of the essay will be chosen in consultation with me, and should reflect the course intentions but not necessarily the course content.

**Assessment:**

- summaries (ten in total) 40%
- discussion 30%
- essay (10-15 pages, due December 3) 30%
A note on evaluation:

Attendance at seminars is mandatory. Students should retain a photocopy of any written work.

Graduate students are expected to be well acquainted with the subject under discussion. Overall performance which demonstrates firm knowledge of the required literature and sources, but no intellectual spark, will be in the high B range. Work of A caliber requires diligence, maturity, articulate oral and written communication, and originality. The McMaster History Dept. takes structure, style and fluidity of presentation seriously. Lack of attention to those aspects of the process has an immediate impact on the final mark.

E-mail Communication

It is the policy of the McMaster University History Department that all e-mail communication between students and instructors (including TAs) must originate from their official McMaster University e-mail accounts. This policy protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information and confirms the identities of both the student and instructor. History Department instructors will delete messages that do not originate from McMaster e-mail accounts.

Academic Dishonesty

See: http://www.mcmaster.ca/graduate/2003-2004/61.htm

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy located at:

http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity/

The following illustrates only three of the various forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Schedule of Seminars and Readings

All readings are available on Reserve in Mills Library, on the Avenue to Learn website for the course, or in the course box in CNH 619. Take the time to examine the originals of some of the primary texts in Research Collections. You may not have another such opportunity.
September 11: Introduction and Definitions

September 18: The Religious Encounter

Richard Bulliet, *The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 1-45 (DS36.85B85 2004); also available as Kindle download (hereafter K) and on "vimeo".


No summary is required this week: bring all your questions about the Muslim world – terminology, etc., to the seminar for a general discussion

September 25: Frontiers


October 2: Crusades, Jihads and Gazis


October 9: Constantinople, that’s Istanbul


The Siege of Constantinople: Seven Contemporary Accounts, trans. By J. R. Melville (Amsterdam, 1971) excerpts

Mehmed II the Conqueror and the Fall of the Franco-Byzantine Levant to the Ottomans Turks: Some Western Views and Testimonies, ed., trans, and annotated by Marios Philippides, read a sample of the writings, esp. Pope Puis II and Henry of Soemmern (Tempe, Ariz., ACMRS, 2007) (DF649.M44 2007)

October 16: Renaissance Encounters


October 23: Minorities in Muslim Societies


S. D. Goitein, A Mediterranean Society: the Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza (Berkeley,
October 30: Non-European lives: priests, captives, merchants, courtiers


Nabil Matar, Turks, Moors and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery. (New York: Columbia, 1999), 1-82. (DS63.2G7M38 1999)


To accompany this: Robert Dankoff, An Ottoman Mentality: The World of Evliya Çelebi (Leiden, 2004) esp. chap. 1-2, to browse through, and Afterword by Gottfried Hagen which is a brilliant analysis of 17th century Ottomans (DR486.E95D3 2004)

November 6: Travellers:


November 13: Reflections on Muslim Empires

Constantine Volney, *Travels Through Egypt & Syria* (New York, 1798) Research Collections B7683 (1798) and C1218 (1788) – read first 50 pages – work can be found online.


**November 20: The Orient & the Enlightenment**


Michael Curtis, *Orientalism and Islam: European Thinkers on Oriental Despotism in the Middle East and India* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), 139-76.

**November 27: Modern Perspectives: Representations? Has anything changed?**


