

Department of History
Dalhousie University
Winter, 2009

HISTORY 3510

Sultans and Shahs: Polity and Religion in the Islamic Gunpowder Age (1500-1800)



Syllabus

Instructor: Prof. C. Mitchell

Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10:05-11:25

Location: McCain 1198

Office Hours: Fridays, 1:30 -3:30 p.m.

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Until the devastating Mongol invasions of the 13th century, the principal centers of Islamic power, culture, and thought had been based in Cairo and Baghdad. This class will examine the post-Mongol Islamic world, and how politics and religion were irrevocably changed with the

annihilation of the Sunni `Abbasid caliphate. Religious heterodoxy, combined with the power vacuum left by Chingiz Khan and his descendents, allowed for the emergence of a number of unique Turkmen states in Western Asia, the most famous being the Ottoman Turks of Anatolia. By 1500, innovations in military technology and the paper-making industry allowed for the emergence of centralized and bureaucratically-sophisticated 'gunpowder' empires in western and south Asia. This class will discuss the three most significant of these: the Ottoman Turks (based in Istanbul), the Safavid Persians (based in Isfahan), and the Mughal Indians (based in Delhi). Areas of focus will include: issues of political legitimacy, use of military "slave" corps, orthodox and popular religious movements, tensions between nomadic and sedentary segments of society, innovations in cultural expression (poetry, art, architecture), scientific and philosophical development, and the penetration and impact of the Portuguese, English, Dutch, and French "world economies" into Asia and the Indian Ocean. This course will also examine different debates regarding the "decline of the East", and introduce the theoretical implications of how the Islamic world is approached by contemporary scholarship.

II. EVALUATION

a) *Mid-term* (value: 25%)

Identifications and essay questions

Date: Feb. 12, 2009

b) *Research Paper* (value: 25%)

A list of possible topics will be posted on WEB CT in February. Only two students per topic will be permitted - a sign-up list will be circulated. Students are encouraged to consult with the instructor in the event that they wish to pursue an original research topic.

Length: 3,000 -3,500 words

Due date: April 2, 2009 (Late penalty in effect!)

c) *Final Exam* (value: 40%)

Identifications and essay questions

Date: T.B.A.

e) *Participation* (value: 10%)

Students will be expected to attend and participate during discussion sessions.

Absenteeism or lack of preparation will jeopardize this portion of the grade.

All assignments are due on their respective due dates; **no extensions will be granted**. Failure to submit an essay on its proper due date result in a **3% per day penalty (5% per weekend)** for a maximum of 1 week. If students are having difficulty with an assignment, they are encouraged to approach the instructor **as soon as possible**.

*****Note***:** Students must fulfill every portion of this course (book review, research paper, mid-term, final) to receive a grade. Non-completion of any major assignment for this course will result in an "incomplete", or INC.

Note on submissions and plagiarism:

Written assignments must be submitted on time. A late penalty of 3% a day and 5% per weekend will be levied for late papers. Medical documentation - if appropriate - may be considered. If students are having difficulty with an assignment, they are encouraged to approach the instructor as soon as possible. Students are advised to keep all research notes for their essays, and to retain a photocopy of their essay. Assignments and essays will be marked for clarity of writing, grammar, organization - in addition to content and analysis. Note: students must complete all components of the class (midterm, paper, final) in order to receive a grade; non-completion will result in an F.

Dalhousie University now subscribes to Turnitin.com, a computer-based service which checks for originality in submitted papers. Any paper submitted by a student at Dalhousie University may be checked for originality to confirm that the student has not plagiarized from other sources. Plagiarism is considered a serious academic offence which may lead to loss of credit, suspension or expulsion from the University, or even the revocation of a degree.

If there is any confusion regarding what constitutes plagiarism, consult p. 25 of the Dalhousie University Undergraduate Calendar, or visit the following website for the Department of History:

http://www.dal.ca/~histwww/style_guide.htm

The Senate has affirmed the right of any instructor to require that student papers be submitted in both written and computer readable format, and to submit any paper to a check such as that performed by Turnitin.com. You must therefore keep an electronic copy of any paper you submit, and the course instructor may require you to submit that electronic copy on demand. (Copies of student papers checked by this process will be retained by Turnitin.com.)

Note on disabilities:

Students with disabilities should register as quickly as possible at Student Accessibility Services if they want to receive academic accommodations. To do so please phone 494-2836, e-mail <disabilities@dal.ca>, or drop in at the Killam, G28.

III. TEXTS (Available in the Dalhousie University Bookstore)

Required:

1. Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The History of the Ottoman Empire*, New York: 2005.
2. Andrew Newman, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire*, London: 2006.
3. Annemarie Schimmel, *Empire of the Great Mughals*, Chicago: 2006.

IV. LECTURE SCHEDULE

Δ Jan. 6 - *Orientation & Introduction: Historical Geography of Islamic Gunpowder Empires*

Ottomans

Δ Jan. 8 – *Narrative I: Origins and Rise of the Ottomans (1280-1400)*

Readings:

1) Finkel, pp. 1-47

Δ Jan. 13 – *Narrative II: Zenith of Ottoman Rule (1400-1600)*

Readings:

1) Finkel, pp. 48-114

2) Pierce “Changing Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire: The Early Centuries” (**WEB CT**)

Δ Jan. 15 – *The Topkapi Palace, the Ottoman Court, and Harem Culture*

Readings:

1) Finkel, pp. 115-151

Δ Jan. 20 – *Administrative and Legal Institutions in the Ottoman Empire*

Readings:

1) Finkel, pp. 152-195

2) Necipoghlu-Kafadar, “The Suleymaniye Complex in Istanbul: An Interpretation (**WEB CT**)

Δ Jan. 22 – *Social and Economic Life in Istanbul*

Readings:

1) Finkel, pp. 196-222

Δ Jan. 27 – *Ottoman Religious Dynamics*

Readings:

1) Finkel, pp. 223-252

2) Durstehler, “Commerce and Co-existence: Veneto-Ottoman Trade in the Early Modern Era (**WEB CT**)

Δ Jan. 29 – *3 Great Battles in Ottoman Military History: Kosovo, Mohacs, and Lepanto*

Readings:

1) Finkel, pp. 253-288

Δ Feb. 3 – *Narrative III: Ottoman Imperialism and Regional Dissent (1600-1800)*

Readings:

1) Finkel, pp. 289-328

2) Grehan, “Street Violence and Social Imagination in Late-Mamluk and Ottoman Damascus (ca. 1500-1800) (**WEB CT**)

Safavids

Δ Feb. 5 – *Narrative I: Origins and Rise of the Safavids (1400-1576)*

Readings:

1) Newman, pp. 1-39

Δ Feb. 10 – *Narrative II: Height of the Safavid Empire (1576-1666)*

Readings:

1) Newman, pp. 41-92

2) Babaie, “Shah `Abbas II, Conquest of Qandahar, the Chihil Sutun, and its Wall Paintings”

Δ Feb. 12 – **Midterm**

Δ Feb. 17 – *Between Tent and Palace: Turkic, Persian, and Ghulam Culture in the Safavid Empire*

Readings:

1) Gronke, "The Persian Court Between Palace and Tent: From Timur to `Abbas I" (**WEB CT**)

Δ Feb. 19 – *Shi`ism and Sufism in Safavid Iran*

Feb. 20-24 – **Spring Break**

Δ March 3 – Film: Shi`ism: Waiting for the Hidden Imam

Δ March 5 – Film: Persian Miniature

Δ March 10 – *Social and Economic Life in Isfahan*

Readings:

1) Walcher, "Between Paradise and Political Capital: The Semiotics of Safavid Isfahan" (**WEB CT**)

Δ March 12 – *Narrative III: Rise of the Clerical Elite and the Decline of the Safavids*

Readings:

1) Newman, pp. 93-128

Mughals

Δ March 17 – *Narrative I: Rise of the Mughals (1500-1556)*

Readings:

1) Schimmel, pp. 15-40; 229-37

2) Dale, "Steppe Humanism: Autobiographical Writings of Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur" (**WEB CT**)

Δ March 19 – *Narrative II: Height of the Mughals (1556-1658)*

Readings:

1) Schimmel, pp. 41-55, 237-251

Δ March 24 – *Mughal Nobility*

Readings:

1) Schimmel, pp. 65-80, 225-228

2) Dale, "A Safavid Poet in the Heart of Darkness" (**WEB CT**)

Δ March 26 – *Administrative and Legal Institutions in Mughal Empire*

Readings:

1) Schimmel, 81-106

Δ March 31 – *Social and Economic Life of Delhi, Agra, and Fatepur Sikri*

Readings:

1) Schimmel, 167-224

2) Blake, "Patrimonial-Bureaucratic Empire of the Mughals" (**WEB CT**)

Δ April 2- *Religion Under the Great Mughals*

Research Paper Due

Readings:

1) Schimmel, 107-142

Δ April 7 – 3 *Great Battles of Mughal Military History: Panipat, Haldighat, Bay of Hoogli*

Readings:

1) Robinson, "Ottomans-Safavids-Mughals: Shared Knowledge and Connective Systems"

Δ April 9 – *Narrative III: Mughal Imperialism and Regional Dissent*

1) Schimmel, 51-64; 251-61