

HIST 1440: ISLAMIC HISTORY 1400-1800

(Spring 2009)
Tu & Th 2:30 - 3:50 (Salomon Center 003)
Office: Sharpe House # 208 / Ext.: x3-2446

Instructor: Engin Deniz Akarli
Office hours: W 1-2 & Th. 1-2
(or by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: A survey of the major sociopolitical alignments of the central parts of the Old World in 1400-1800. Three such alignments; namely, the Ottoman, Safavi and Mughal empires spanned much of these central lands in ca. 1500-1750. This course concentrates on the socioeconomic and cultural environment within which the main institutions of these empires developed. Given the important influence of Islamic high cultural traditions and ideals on Ottoman, Safavi and Mughal political and intellectual-artistic elites, we can say that this course covers an important stage of "Islamic history."

It should be clear from the beginning, however, that many other religious communities actively contributed, along with Muslims, to the cosmopolitan cultural syntheses and complex sociopolitical arrangements that emerged on lands covered by these three empires. A number of historians prefer to use the term "Islamicate" in order to underline this synthetic quality of early modern Ottoman, Safavi, and Mughal history, while using the words "Islam" and "Islamic" to refer to the religious traditions and experience of Muslims in general. Whichever word you prefer, you have to be prepared to deal with a phase of history replete with multicultural dialogues, experiences and syntheses in this course. If this observation strikes you as odd in light of your present knowledge of South Asia and the Near or Middle East, then consider that present conceptions and situations reflect the rather peculiar developments of the modern era.

Indeed, you may often find it necessary to rethink some of the still current modern concepts of history in order to appreciate the early modern era at its own terms, particularly in a part of the world that moved from global centrality to global marginality from about 1700 on. We will deal with the 18th-century background of this last mentioned development and its implications for modern perceptions of history at the end of the course.

EVALUATION: Your grades will be based on your performance in three mid-term examinations and one final examination (15% for the 1st test and 25% for each of the rest), and attendance and participation in class discussions (10%). All exams except the first one will have a component of take-home essays. There will be two discussion sections that will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays after class for an extra hour (from 4-4:50). You are expected to attend one of these sections.

TEXT BOOKS:

- Suraiya Faroqhi, *Subjects of the Sultan: Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire* (I.B. Tauris, 2005)
- Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 3 (Chicago, 1974).
- Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (Warner Books, 1991).
- William McNeill and M.R. Waldman, editors, *The Islamic World* (Chicago, 1973)
- Annemarie Schimmel, *The Empire of the Great Mughals: History, Art, Culture* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004)
- *HI 1440 Reader* is available at Allegra [102 Waterman Street]. It includes
 1. Comparative themes: R. Eaton, "Islamic History as Global History" + M. Kunt, "The Later Muslim Empires"
 2. Articles on Ottomans: C. Kafadar, "The Ottomans & Europe" + S. Faroqhi, "Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers, 1570-1670" + M. Zilfi, "'We Don't Get Along': Women and *Hul* Divorce" + Akarli, "Law and Order in the Marketplace"
 3. Readings on Safavis: Selections from R. Savory, *Iran under the Safavids* + Edmund Herzig, "Family Firms in 17th & 18th-century Armenian Commercial Organization + Poems of Shah Ismail (Hatayi)

4. Readings on Mughals: Wilfred C. Smith, "Lower Class Uprisings in the Mughal Empire" + J.F. Richards and V.N. Rao, "Banditry in Mughal India"

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

Introduction

Jan 22: Introduction to the course

(Eaton, "Islamic History" (in the *Reader*) + Hourani, 81-97 & 207-208)

Central Lands of "Islamdom" in ca 1400: In the late medieval era, the heartlands of what we can call "Islamdom" (lands where Islam and Muslim rulers became dominant and an "Islamicate" synthesis emerged) were politically fragmented. States and principalities rose and fell, just as vast 'empires' became dismembered as rapidly as they were established. Governments were often based on politically amorphous networks of personal alliances and affiliations. However, a highly standardized system of legal and public behavioral norms (the *shari'a*), free social and geographical mobility, a shared high cultural outlook, and a common concern over keeping the trade routes open continued to hold in close association the lands in which Islam had spread and continued to deepen. The resulting contractual and diffused nature of political authority structures helped the articulation of diverse interests, but it also entailed political instability, which at times hampered commercial and other economic activities and undermined the position of urban notables. We will concentrate on the Arab lands to acquire a general understanding of the dynamics of this situation.

Jan 27: The countryside: Land use, village and nomads: Hourani, 98-108 & 137-141

Cities & their rulers: Layout, markets, neighborhoods, inter-city connections, notables, wielders and ideas of political authority: Hourani, 109-146

Jan 29: Scholars, Sufis and pious foundations: Hourani, 113-116 & 147-171

[Recommended: Ghazali & Rumi in McNeill & Waldman, 207-47]

Feb 3-5: Divergent paths of thought, the culture of courts, and the culture of people:

Hourani, 172-205

[Feb 10: Test on introductory readings]

The Ottomans: Through the second half of the 15th century, we see a realignment of political forces in many parts of the world, including the lands where Islam and Muslim rulers had become dominant. New military technologies (such as the growing use of gunpowder), new trading opportunities, and the ability to adapt existing notions of governance to changing circumstances were among the reasons behind this development. Thus, much of the Islamic lands became incorporated into three empires, namely the Ottomans in the west, the Safavids in the middle, and the Mughals in the Indian peninsula, in the 16th and 17th centuries. There were important similarities among them as well important differences. The Ottoman State (1300-1922) was the most enduring and arguably the best organized among the three empires under consideration.

Feb 10-12: Highlights of Ottoman history and institutions:

Faroqhi, 21-40 + Hourani, 207-225 + Kafadar, 589-613 (in the *Reader*) + Selections from

Busbecq's *Letters* in McNeill and Waldman, pp. 345-352

[Recommended: Kritovoulos, "Ottoman Conquest of Constantinople" in McNeill and Waldman, pp. 312-336]

Feb 17: No class

Feb 19 & 24: The economy and social networks:

Faroqhi, 43-100 + Hourani, 225-242 + Hodgson III, 99-126

[Recommended: Akarli, "Law and Order in the Marketplace" & Faroqi, "Political Activity Among Ottoman Tax payers, 1570-1670" (in the *Reader*)]

Feb 26 & March 3: Arts, artists, learning, and social life:

Faroqi, 101-223 + Madeline Zilfi, "'We Don't Get Along': Women and *Hul* Divorce" in the 18th Century"

[March 5: 2nd test + First essays are due]

Mughal India: The second important realignment of forces in Islamdom took place in India. Babür, a descendent of Timur (Tamerlane) and a famous belletrist, took control of the remains of Timuri power at Kabul and extended his rule into Northern India. Mughal (or Timuri) India became the economically richest and in certain ways the most universalistic of the three empires

March 10: Overview of the Timuri (Mughal) era of Indian history:

Rulers and ruling institutions: Schimmel, 21-80

March 12: Population, economy and finances: Schimmel, 81-141 + Hodgson III, 59-61 & 90-92

March 17: Resistance and rebellion:

Hodgson III, 92-98 + W. C. Smith, "Lower Class Uprisings in the Mughal Empire," and Richards and Rao, "Banditry in Mughal India," both in the *Reader*

March 19: The royal women and household: Schimmel, 142-223

Arts and literature: Schimmel, 229-61 & passim + Hodgson III, 86-89

March 23-27: Spring recess: No classes

March 31 & April 2: Muslim & Hindu learning & debates on universalism & communalism:

Hodgson III, 61-86 + Schimmel 224-228 & passim + From Abû'l-Fazl's *Book of Akbar* in McNeill and Waldman, 353-373

April 7: 3rd test + Second essays are due]

Safavi Iran: The Safavis took their name from a Sufi mystic order that was based in Ardabil and active among the semi-nomadic Azeri and Turkoman tribes as well as at the commercial centers of the Iranian highlands since about 1400. The chiliastic and egalitarian-populist Shii reorientation of this order carried its charismatic (and poetic) leader, Shah Ismail, to political prominence around the turn of the 16th century. The Safavi dynasty ended in 1736 (although briefly resuscitated in the 1750s). Arguably, the artistically most creative environment among the three empires prevailed in Safavi lands.

April 9: The social movement led by the Safavis and the building of the Safavi state:

Hodgson III, 16-33 + Selections from Shah Ismail's poetry (in the *Reader*) + Letters from Sultan Selim I and Shah Ismail in McNeill and Waldman, pp. 337-344

April 14-16: Social and economic structure:

Savory, Chapter 8 (pp. 177-202) [in the *Reader*] + Hodgson III, 33-41 + Excerpts from the report of a Carmelite mission (in McNeill and Waldman, pp. 373-391)

April 21: Intellectual life, art and architecture in Safavi Iran: Hodgson III, 41-58 + Savory,

128-176 & 203-225 [in the *Reader*]

April 23: Review of comparative themes: Kunt in the *Reader* + Hodgson III, 134-158

+ pp. 613-625 in Kafadar's article in the *Reader* + Hourani, 249-262

May 12 (Tuesday) (9:00 am): Final exam & essays—on Safavis and comparative issues

HAVE A GREAT SEMESTER