The course is an introductory survey of the politics, society, and culture of the pre-modern Middle East from the birth of Islam in Arabia to the beginnings of European domination of the region, seventh through the eighteenth centuries. Themes such as state formation, sectarianism, political legitimacy, imperial consolidation, and contacts with the Christian world will be examined on the example of early Arab empires and the Ottoman and Safavid states.

BEGINNINGS OF ISLAM AND THE ISLAMIC POLITY

0. **Th Sep 23** (No class)

Independent viewing assignment:

**Islam: Empire of Faith** (part I)

1. **Tu Sep 28** Islam in historical perspective
   **Th Sep 30** The creation of the first Islamic state

Readings:

Michael Sells, *Approaching the Qur’an*, 42-59, 136-37
“The Qur’an and Other Islamic Texts,” in M. E. Gettleman and S. Schaar, *The Middle East and Islamic World Reader*, 12-26

Independent viewing assignment:

**Hajj: The Pilgrimage**

2. **Tu Oct 5** The problem of political legitimacy and schisms
   **Th Oct 7** Discussion

Readings:

Saunders, 39-75
Richard Yann, *Shiite Islam*, 15-34
THE AGE OF ARAB DYNASTIC EMPIRE

3.  **Tu Oct 12**  Formation of an empire and a civilization  
    **Th Oct 14**  Societal tensions in the domain of the caliphate

Readings:

Saunders, 77-105  

Independent viewing assignment:  
*Islam: Empire of Faith* (part II)

4.  **Tu Oct 19**  Rival caliphates  
    **Th Oct 21**  The challenges from the West and the East: The crusades and the Mongols

Readings:

Saunders, 106-198  
Rashid al-Din Fazlullah, “The Mongol Conquest of Baghdad,” in Gettleman and Schaar, 48-51

FROM DISUNITY TO RE-CONSOLIDATION

5.  **Tu Oct 26**  Fragmentation  
    **Th Oct 28**  Discussion

Excerpt from Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah*, ed. Charles Issawi, 99-126  
Ross Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta*, 1-12; 41-62  
6. **Tu Nov 2** MID-TERM EXAMINATION  
**Th Nov 4** The rise and foundations of the Ottoman state

**Readings:**

Norman Itzkowitz, *Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition*, 3-36

Independent viewing assignment:  
*Islam: Empire of Faith: The Ottomans*

**RE-CONSOLIDATION OF MUSLIM EMPIRES**

7. **Tu Nov 9** Ottoman institutions and expansion  
**Th Nov 11** Holiday – Veterans’ Day

**Readings:**

Itzkowitz, 37-61  
Kritovoulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror* in McNeill and Waldman, 312-36  

8. **Tu Nov 16** Film: "The Age of Suleyman"  
**Th Nov 18** The gunpowder empires (16th century): Safavid Iran and Mughal India

**Readings**

Ira Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 226-47  
“Letters from Selim and Isma’il,” in McNeill and Waldman, 337-44  
Stephen Dale, *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals*, 1-9; 48-76

**THE MUSLIM WORLD AND THE RISE OF MODERN EUROPE**

9. **Tu Nov 23** Internal and external challenges  
**Th Nov 25** Holiday -- Thanksgiving
Readings:

Itzkowitz, 63-109
Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, The Complete Letters, v-vii; 353-373

10. Tu Nov 30 Discussion
    Th Dec 2 Towards the modern Middle East

Reading:

James Gelvin, The Modern Middle East, 47-59, 69-87

READING LIST

Norman Itzkowitz, Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition
J. J. Saunders, A History of Medieval Islam

(Both available at the University Bookstore and on hard-copy Reserves at SSH Library)

All other readings can be accessed on Web-CT.
https://webctweb.ucsd.edu/webct/logon/3667069843001
The films for independent viewing are available at SSH Video and Film Reserves.

REQUIREMENTS

Mid-term exam on November 2 (35%)
Final exam (comprehensive) on December 7 (8:00 a.m.) (65%)

Both exams are mandatory and in-class. Bring blue book and pen/pencil.