

# *Modernity and Colonialism in the Muslim World*

HIST 477 - Fall 2020

This advanced seminar introduces students to current trends in the study of modernity and colonialism in the Muslim world. Turning our attention away from the heavily charged debates on the (in)compatibility of Islam and modernity, we will adopt a historical perspective on Muslim encounters with “the modern” (itself a contested term).



Throughout, we will pay special attention to the role of colonial power in facilitating and structuring those encounters. To begin, we will orient ourselves by considering two accounts that compare the pre-modern past to the transformations brought about by modernity. After a methodological discussion on the theoretical issues raised by the critique of Orientalism, we will examine a number of case studies that attempt to uncover the modalities and mechanisms by which colonial modernity reshaped the institutions and sensibilities of the Muslim world. We will then move on to consider the related question of how Muslim social imaginaries and knowledge traditions have both demonstrated resilience and been subject to significant refashioning as a result of changed circumstances. Students will gain a familiarity with central themes that are driving the scholarly study of Muslim societies in the colonial and post-colonial periods.

**Instructor:**

Junaid Quadri (jquadri@uic.edu)

University Hall 925

Office Hours: W 3:00-4:00, or by  
appointment

**Class Times:**

Thursdays 3:30—6:00

All classes will take  
place online through  
Zoom (link on Black-  
board)

## COURSE EVALUATIONS

In order to succeed in this seminar, students will be expected to be (1) attentive readers of the assigned texts; (2) engaged participants in class; and (3) thoughtful respondents and commentators in writing. These are the three primary skills required for successful advanced academic work, and it is expected that students will take all three seriously if they intend to do well in this class.

More specifically, here is how your grade will be broken down:

### **Attendance and Participation: 30%**

Students are expected to attend every class and be prepared to discuss the assigned readings, both of which are *vital* to your success in this course. Each week, one or two students will be assigned readings which they are responsible for preparing with an eye towards facilitating the class discussion. A large part of the in-class discussion will be about figuring out how to put the readings in conversation with each other, so you should arrive having done the proper groundwork — i.e., knowing the basic structure, major arguments and themes, and the nature of the scholarly intervention — for your chosen reading. Each week, I will ask **all** students to prepare a **350-450 word summary/reflection** of the reading that indicates broad familiarity with the text and your impressions. These will be due Wednesday evenings by midnight.

Students are expected to attend all classes, barring exceptional circumstances (which should be accounted for via appropriate documentation). To reflect the importance of this component of the class, a significant portion of your grade (30%) has been reserved for attendance and participation.

### **Final Research Paper:**

The main piece of scholarly work that you will be expected to contribute to this class is a final paper. In order to ensure you are thinking about and working on this paper throughout the semester, it is to be completed in three stages: a topic proposal, a preliminary paper presentation/draft, and the final paper itself.

#### **Topic Proposal — 5%**

At the end of week 5 (**Friday, Sept. 25**), you will be expected to submit a **500-word proposal** of the topic you would like to work on for your final paper. This must be accompanied by **7 to 10 sources** upon which you intend to rely in writing your paper. The primary purpose of this exercise is to provide me with a sense of your topic so that I can provide feedback (including suggested sources) to make sure you are on the right track. Please note that I am generally quite open to topic ideas, provided they are relatively close to the rubric of the seminar itself.

#### **Preliminary Paper Presentation/Draft — 20%**

The last three weeks have been reserved for student presentations of their papers. You will be asked to circulate a draft among your classmates (and me) one week before your presentation. It is expected that the paper will be a work-in-progress at this stage, but the major contours of your argument and structure should be evident. Once again, the idea will be to solicit feedback and constructive criticism from your colleagues and the professor so as to strengthen the final product.

#### **Final Paper: 45%**

The final paper will be due a week after our last session. It is expected to be a well-researched and well-written contribution to the scholarly record on your topic, and will be graded accordingly. Expected length is roughly 15-17 pages for undergraduates and 20 pages for graduate students, double-spaced and with reasonable margins.

## READING SCHEDULE

Week	Topics	Readings
<b>Week 1</b> August 27	<b>Introduction to Class</b>	
<b>Week 2</b> September 3	<b>The Muslim World: Pre-modern Formations</b>	Marshall Hodgson, <i>Rethinking World History</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 8, pages 126-137; 158-170: “Cultural patterning in Islamdom and the Occident”</li> <li>• Chapter 9: “The unity of later Islamic history”</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b> September 10	<b>The Muslim World: Pre-modern Formations</b>	Patricia Crone, <i>Pre-Industrial Societies: Anatomy of the Pre-Modern World</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 2: “Socio-economic Organization”</li> <li>• Chapter 3: “The State”</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 6: “Society and the Individual”</li> <li>• Chapter 7: “Religion”</li> </ul>

<p><b>Week 4</b> September 17</p>	<p><b>Modernity in the Muslim World: General Views</b></p>	<p>Marshall Hodgson, <i>Rethinking World History</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 4: “The Great Western Transmutation”</li> <li>• Chapter 10: “Modernity and the Islamic Heritage”</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <p>Patricia Crone, <i>Pre-Industrial Societies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 8: “The Oddity of Europe”</li> <li>• Chapter 9: “Modernity”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 5</b> September 24</p>	<p><b>The Question of Orientalism</b></p>	<p>Bernard Lewis, “The Question of Orientalism”, <i>The New York Review of Books</i>. June 24, 1982 (followed by responses from Edward Said and Oleg Grabar, with a reply from Lewis.)</p> <p>Edward Said, “Orientalism Reconsidered”, <i>Cultural Critique</i> (No. 1, 1985)</p> <p>James Clifford, “Orientalism by Edward W. Said”</p>
<p><b>Week 6</b> October 1</p>	<p><b>The Colonial Encounter: Colonial Technologies</b></p>	<p>Bernard S. Cohn, <i>Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India</i>, chapters 1, 3, 4</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <p>Timothy Mitchell, <i>Colonising Egypt</i>, chapters 1, 2</p>

<p><b>Week 7</b> October 8</p>	<p><b>Science &amp; Class Formation</b></p>	<p>Cyrus Schayegh, <i>Who Is Knowledgeable Is Strong: Science, Class and the Formation of Modern Society, 1900-1950</i>, chapters 1, 2, 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <p>Marwa El Shakry, <i>Reading Darwin in Arabic, 1860-1950</i>, introduction <i>and</i> either chapter 1 or 3</p>
<p><b>Week 8</b> October 15</p>	<p><b>Gender &amp; Subject Formation</b></p>	<p>Afsaneh Najmabadi, <i>Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity</i> , introduction, chapters 1, 2, epilogue</p>
<p><b>Week 9</b> October 22</p>	<p><b>Sexuality</b></p>	<p>Joseph Massad, <i>Desiring Arabs</i>, introduction and chapter 3</p>
<p><b>Week 10</b> October 29</p>	<p><b>Sectarianism and the Construction of Religion</b></p>	<p>Ussama Makdisi, <i>The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon</i>, chapters 1, 4, 5</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <p>William Cavanaugh, <i>The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict</i>, chapter 2</p>

<p><b>Week 11</b> November 5</p>	<p><b>Militancy &amp; Modernity</b></p>	<p>John Gray, <i>Al Qaeda and What It Means to be Modern</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <p>Faisal Devji, <i>Landscapes of the Jihad: Militancy, Morality, Modernity</i></p>
<p><b>Week 12</b> November 12</p>	<p><b>Embodiment in Ethics and Education</b></p>	<p>Rudolph Ware, <i>Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa</i>, pages 1-12; 39-57, and chapter 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <p>Charles Hirschkind, <i>The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics</i>, introduction and chapter 3</p>
<p><b>Week 13</b> November 19</p>	<p><b>Student Presentations</b></p>	
<p><b>Week 14</b> November 26</p>	<p><b>Student Presentations</b></p>	
<p><b>Week 15</b> December 3</p>	<p><b>Student Presentations</b></p>	