

Islam in the Medieval World

Lecturer: Prof. Roja Fazaeli

Rationale and Aim

This module provides a historical and cultural study of Islam in the medieval period (600-1300 CE). Medieval Islam encompasses diverse traditions across a wide geographical region, and is particularly notable for intellectual advances in the sciences and philosophy. Geographically Islam was practiced across a wide area during the medieval period, from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. As a result the study of Medieval Islam is important to understanding of the development of Muslim majority countries in North African and the Middle East and also to the making of Europe. This course will look at the religious and political movements that were central to Islamic polities in the medieval period alongside significant historical personalities. Some attention will be also given at the conclusion of the course to the continuing contemporary impacts of medieval developments in Islamic thought and practice.

Module Content

This module will introduce a number of different topics under the umbrella of medieval Islam. The topics include major developments in the history of Islam, medieval Islamic literature and poetry, as well as women, religious minorities and sciences in medieval Islam. The course will also look at historical personalities, such as Omar Khayyam, to discern how their works of philosophy and poetry have endured to the present time. The final weeks of the course are focused on the history of the Crusades and the early history of Islam in Europe.

Indicative Resources

J.J. Saunders, *A History of Medieval Islam*, London: Routledge, 1991.

Jonathan Porter, Berkeley, *The formation of Islam: religion and society in the Near East, 600-1800*, Cambridge University Press, 2003 (Available as an ebook Trinity College Dublin).

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Place their learning in relations to the history of Medieval Islam in a wider historical and geographical context.
- Demonstrate a firm grasp of factors contributing to the expansion of Islamic empires as well as appreciate the diversity and plurality of these **dynasties** and variety of polities they gave rise to.
- Identify and discuss topics such as women, religious minorities, literature and sciences in the medieval Islamic world.

Methods of Teaching and Student Learning

Inclusive learning is central to this module. The lectures are mainly participatory. Students are expected to read the material previous to the class and be actively involved in class discussions. Case studies are used to enhance the learning potential of the students.

Methods of Assessment

- a) The module is focused on the assigned readings and in-class discussions. The students should read the assigned articles before each class. The requirements for the module for BC students is one essay (3,000 words) and one book review.

Evaluation

At the end of the semester, this module is evaluated by student questionnaire and issues are addressed in the assessment of the module and its future planning

Student Feedback

At the end of the semester students are asked to complete a module feedback form. These are then reviewed by the lecturer in order to ascertain the success of each component of the module. Particular attention is paid to whether or not the delivery of the module enabled students to engage in class discussions.

