Syllabus

CROSS CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS IN THE PRE-MODERN MUSLIM WORLD - 38480

Last update 06-09-2016

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: islamic & middle east stud.

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Prof. Michal Biran

Coordinator Email: biranm@huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Monday 1015-1115 (fall); 1115-1215 (spring)

Teaching Staff:
  Prof Michal Biran
Course/Module description:
The course thematically reviews different channels of cross-cultural encounters between the Muslim world and its surrounding cultures. Via these examples, taken mostly, but not exclusively, from the later Middle Ages (1000-1500), and studied on the basis of studies and of primary sources, it aims to evaluate the impact of the Muslim world on world history and vice versa.

Course/Module aims:
Presenting work-in-progress for peers' and experts' feedback; daily management of the project; acquiring digital humanities tools; reading and analyzing primary sources in Chinese, Persian and Chaghatay.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
Present their research in a coherent way and give feedback and comments to others; Enhance their understanding of Mongolian and Inner Asian history; Grasp the use of databases and digital humanities tools; Practice reading and analyzing primary sources.

Attendance requirements(%):
100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: The course will be based on discussion of the assigned readings; each student will also present a referral related to a certain class and will write a take-home exam at the end.

Course/Module Content:
Course Topics and Reading:

1. Introduction: Culture and Cross-Cultural Contacts; Islamic History and World History.
Reading: Halivand, Cultural Anthropology (Hebrew version: Tel Aviv, 1999), ch. 2 (What is Culture); ch. 15 (Cultural transformations)
OR
Recommended Reading:
R. M. Eaton, "Islamic History as Global History," in M. Adas (ed.) Islamic and

Unit 1: Intellectual Encounters:
2. The Case Study: The Translation Movement, Bayt al-Hikma, the Renaissance
   Reading: D. Gutas, Greek Thought, Arabic Culture (New York and Oxon, 1998), 1-10,
   187-192, 75-106.
   Recommended Reading:

3. Languages and Translators
   Reading: T. Th. Allsen, "The Rasulid Hexaglot in its Eurasian Cultural Context, in
   B. Dodge (tr.), The Fihrist of al-Nadim: A Tenth Century Survey of Muslim Culture.
   (Cambridge, 1970), 1:6-40

4. Knowledge and Science: Scholars as Cultural Brokers: Rashid al-Din - World
   History, Chinese Medicine, Buddhism and Judaism in Mongol Eurasia.
   Reading:
   T. T. Allsen, Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia (Cambridge 2001), esp. 72-82.
   A. Akasoy et al. Rashid al-Din: Agent and Mediator of Cultural Exchanges in Ilkhanid
   Iran (London, 2014). [Various chapters assigned to various students for
   presentation].

5. Religious Polemics:
   Reading: P. Jackson (trans. And ed.) with assistance of D. Morgan. The Mission of
   M. Perlmann, Ibn Kammuna's Examination of the Three Faiths: A Thirteenth Century
   Riccoldo da Montecroce. 2012. Liber peregrinationis. Trans. in Rita George-
   Tvrtković, A Christian Pilgrim in Medieval Iraq. Riccoldo da Montecroce’s Encounter
   with Islam. Turnhout: Brepols.

   Recommended Reading: R. Pourjavady and S. Schmidtke, A Jewish Philosopher of
   Baghdad: ‘Iz al-Dawla Ibn Kammuna (d. 1284) and his Writings (Leiden, 2006), 8-58.

6. Inter-faith Experiments: Akbar’s Din-i Ilahi
   M. H. Elliot (tr.), The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians, V, 523-46
   (Badauni's description of Akbar's religion).

Unit 2: Practical Encounters
7. Empires as Creators of Inter-Cultural Contacts: Conquest, War and Diplomacy
   Reading:
8. Travel Literature: Different Views of the Timurid Courts:
M. Rossabi, A Translation of Ch'en Ch'eng's Hsi yu fan kuo chih, Ming Studies, 17 (Fall 1983), 49-57.

9. Trade and Slave Trade
Translated passages from 'Umari's Masalik al-absar on the Golden Horde's slave trade.

10. Migrations:
Translated biographies from Ibn al-Fuwatti's Talkhis Majma' al-udaba'.

Unit 3: Images
J. A. Boyle, The Death of the Last Abbasid Caliph: A Contemporary Muslim Account, JSS, 6 (1961), 151-161; rpt. in idem, The Mongol World Empire 1206-1370 (London, 1976) [DS 19 B69 86002] [Nasir al-Din Tusi] 
B. Spuler, History of the Mongols (London, 1972), 115-121 [Wassaf] 
Yuanshi's biography of Guo Baoyu (ERC translation) 
Safi al-Din Urmawi's biography in Umari's Masalik al-Amsar (Biran's trans).

13+14.: Collective Memory: Between Crusaders and Mongols
Reading: C. Hillenbrand, The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives (Edinburg, 1999), 589-616. 
M. Biran, Chinggis Khan (Oxford, 2007), ch. 5. 
Ibn al-Athir (d. 1233) and Jurji Zaidan (d. 1914) on the Fall of Jerusalem in 1099 and on the Mongol invasion of 1220.

Required Reading:
SEE SYLLABUS EACH LESSON HAS ITS OWN READINGS.

Additional Reading Material:
RECOMMENDED READING
Bentley, J. H. Old World Encounters (Oxford, 1993)
Ricci, Ronnit. Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and South-East Asia (Chicago, 2011).

Course/Module evaluation:
End of year written/oral examination 60 %
Presentation 10 %
Participation in Tutorials 30 %
Project work 0 %
Assignments 0 %
Reports 0 %
Research project 0 %
Quizzes 0 %
Other 0 %

Additional information: