

Winter 2016

NEW LECTURES IN HISTORY

HISTORY 300-33

JEWS AND MUSLIMS IN THE ISLAMIC MIDDLE AGES

INSTRUCTOR: Professor Jacob Lassner

TIME: WED, 4-6:50 PM.

OFFICE HOURS : To be determined

OFFICE PHONE: To be determined.

EMAIL: [J-Lassner@Northwestern.edu](mailto:J-Lassner@Northwestern.edu)

MAXIMUM ENROLLMENT: 30 [increase possible]

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course deals with Jewish-Muslim relations during the formative period of Islamic civilization with a particular emphasis on how Jews and Muslims viewed one another, and interacted with one another politically, socially, and culturally at a time when the overwhelming majority of world Jewry lived in lands ruled by Muslims and dominated by a vibrant Islamic culture whose territorial scope and influence rivaled that of the Roman Empire at its height. We will discuss the social, political, and cultural connections between Jews and Muslims, pointing out the rules by which social contacts and cultural artifacts were shared and showing how a shared culture could and did serve as a point of friction between both monotheist faiths as well as one of mutual admiration. We will also point out how much of traditional Jewish life today is linked to intellectual and social developments traced back to Jewish experience in the lands of medieval Islam.

AREA OF CONCENTRATION: Asia/Middle East

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION: Lectures and discussion based on close readings of translated primary Arabic and Hebrew sources and selected secondary works.

EVALUATION: Final paper; Class participation. Attendance mandatory unless excused

## SYLLABUS AND READING LIST

\*Readings in course pack available at Quartet Copiers (corner Clark & Maple)  
Books available at Norris bookstore

### I INTRODUCTION

Introducing the material of the course and the requirements. The importance of studying the Jews of Islamic Lands in the Middle Ages. Definitions of oft-misused terms.

### II THE JEWISH DISCOVERY OF ISLAM IN MODERN TIMES

\* B. Lewis, "The Pro-Islamic Jews."

\* M. Kramer, Introduction. (suggested)

\*L. Conrad, "Ignacz Goldziher." (suggested)

J. Lassner, Jews Christians and the Abode of Islam: Modern Scholarship, Medieval Realities (University of Chicago Press, 2012), 3-25

### III MUHAMMAD AND THE JEWS: THE FORMATION OF MUSLIM ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE JEWS AND JUDAISM

\*H.A.R. Gibb. "Mohammed" and "The Tradition of the Prophet"

W.M. Watt, Muhammad Prophet and Statesman. (Oxford University Press, multiple editions)

\*M. Cook, "The Sources [for the life of Muhammad]."

J. Lassner, Jews, Christians and the Abode of Islam. 131-54; 26-60 (suggested)

\*Translated texts: The Birth of the Prophet and the Origins of the Prophet's mission.

### IV THE LEGAL AND SOCIAL STATUS OF THE JEWS UNDER ISLAM

\*B. Lewis, "Islam and Other Religions."

\*N. Stillman, "Translated Arabic Texts."

S.D. Goitein, A Mediterranean Society, abridged and reworked in a single volume by J. Lassner (University of California Press), 162-196, 290-327

## V PERCEIVING THE OTHER, ACCOMODATING THE OTHER

J. Lassner, Jews, Christians and the Abode of Islam. 155-93.

## VI CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC INTERACTION AND SACRED SPACE

Goitein/.Lassner, 146-161; 197-219; 248-289.

\*S.D. Goitein, Studies in Islamic History and Institutions, 54-148, esp. 133-48.

\*Translated texts: The Bahira Legend

J. Lassner, Jews, Christians and the Abode of Islam. 194-216.

## VII THE WORLD OF WOMEN

Goitein/Lassner, 439-467

\*J. Lassner, Texts in Translation from his Demonizing the Queen of Sheba.

## VIII COMPARATIVE MUSINGS: CHRISTIANS AND THE WORLD OF ISLAM

Jacob Lassner. Jews, Christians and the Abode of Islam. 236-57

BIOGRAPHY: Jacob Lassner is the Philip M. & Ethel Klutznick Professor Emeritus in the departments of History and Religion. He has written and lectured extensively on both Islamic and Jewish history on topics ranging from the history of medieval Baghdad and Arabic historical writing to Arabic versions of Jewish legends and the Arab-Israel problem. He has recently completed his 12<sup>th</sup> book: The Origins of Islamic Jerusalem: Forging Sacred Space in a City Holy to Christians and Jews.