

# **CHRISTIANS AND JEWS UNDER ISLAM**

**(History 3950-001)**

Instructor: Professor Stillman  
Assisted by Mr. Walker Robins

Spring 2014

## **General Introduction**

Perhaps no other region has been the focus of more attention today than the Muslim world, particularly the Middle East. It is an area of tremendous geopolitical importance because some of the greatest reserves of petroleum are found there. But it is also an area of profound malaise and turmoil which some observers believe to be one side in an ongoing “clash of civilizations” (to use Samuel Huntington’s much-debated phrase). For the past fourteen hundred years, ever since its conquest by the Arabs, the Middle East (and for our purposes, “the Middle East” will be taken to include all of the lands stretching from North Africa in the West to Iran in the East) has been the heartland of the greater Islamic world. Although eventually the majority of people living in this world converted to Islam, there remained important minorities of non-Muslims, indigenous Christians, Jews, and in Iran some Zoroastrians, who though not equal in status to the dominant Muslims, nevertheless were shown what was for pre-modern times a considerable degree of tolerance. At times (and the High Middle Ages, the heyday of the Ottoman Empire, and the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were such times), these minorities played a significant role in the socioeconomic life of the region and were part of its distinctive cultural mosaic. At other times, such as the Later Middle Ages, Early Modern Times, and the second half of the twentieth century, minorities did not fare very well.

This course will survey the main lines and themes of the history of Christians and Jews in the Muslim world from the rise of Islam in the seventh century to the present.

In many places they were more open to the modernizing forces that were penetrating their societies than was the Muslim majority, and often they acted as vectors of modernity themselves. But their very success and their association with external forces transforming their region contributed to undermining the foundations of their existence. Most of the Jews have fled the Muslim countries, many migrating in the mid-twentieth century within the Middle East to the new State of Israel. Many Middle Eastern Christians emigrated abroad over a much longer period of time and are continuing to do so now in ever larger numbers. Their story forms an integral part of the history of the region. Knowing that story will contribute – it is hoped – to a better understanding of the complexity of the Middle East today.

## **Class Format**

Classes will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays in ADAMS Hall 355 from 10:30-11:45. The classes will combine lecture with discussion. Students should feel free to ask questions of the instructor. He will feel free to ask questions of them. Regular attendance is highly recommended on two counts: (1) it will greatly help in passing the exams, and (2) it will be taken into account where the exam grades average on the border between two grade levels. Keeping up with the reading assignments should make the lectures more relevant, the discussion more intelligent, and participation much easier. Please note that the lecture topics listed below do not necessarily equal a single class (although most do, approximately). Some topics may run for three or four classes.

There will be no class on Tuesday, April 15. Students who do not have a religious holiday that day can make use of the time to catch up or get ahead on the reading.

### **Papers, Exams and Grades**

Grades will be determined upon the basis of:

- Two in-class quizzes -- dates to be announced (20% each)
- Short Topic Paper from distributed list topics or on a topic chosen in consultation with Prof. Stillman (approx. 5 pages) due on Thursday, March 27 (20%)
- Book report on Wakin, *A Lonely Minority* (approx. 3 pages) due on Thursday, April 24 (10%)
- Final exam at 8:00am on Monday, May 5, 2014 in ADAMS Hall 355 (30%)

Extra Credit will be given for attendance at occasional public lectures on campus that are sponsored by International Area Studies, Middle East Studies, Judaic Studies and other programs. These will be announced when scheduling is known.

### **Office Hours**

Students are cordially invited to take advantage of office hours in addition to the time that they must come to discuss their paper. Office hours provide an excellent opportunity for us to get to know you individually. One can also meet with him by special appointment in addition to the regular hours.

Prof. Stillman's Office Hours are: Wednesdays 10:00-12:30 or by appointment  
Mr. Robins' Office Hours are: Tuesdays & Thursday 12:00-1:30 or by appointment

### **Accommodation Statement**

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities.

### **Required Books**

Benjamin Braude & Bernard Lewis (eds.), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, 2 vols. (Holmes & Meier: New York & London, 1982)  
[On reserve in the Library]

Sidney H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008)

Robert M. Haddad, *Syrian Christians in Muslim Society: An Interpretation* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981) [On reserve in Library]

Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Source Book* (JPS: Philadelphia, 1979)

Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Philadelphia: JPS, 2003)

Bat Ye'or. *The Decline of Eastern Christianity Under Islam: From Jihad to Dhimmitude* trans. Miriam Kochan & David Littman (Associated University Presses, 1996)

Edward Wakin, *A Lonely Minority: The Modern Story of Egypt's Copts* (Backprint.com Edition, iUniverse Inc., 2000)

In addition to the assigned readings in the required books, there will be a number of journal articles and readings posted on D2L from reference books such as the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, and *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia*, all of which may be found in the Library Reference Section and/or Stacks, and several of which are also online through OU Library Access.

### **Films**

There will be a number of films documentary and feature, including the marvelous Tunisian film “Summer in la Goulette” (Ar. *Ḥalq al-Wād'*) which is both humorous and serious, and the mockumentary “The Virgin, the Copts, and Me.” These will be in the same category as assigned readings for which students are responsible.

### **Guest Speaker in Class**

On Thursday, March 27, we shall have Professor Franck Salameh (Boston College) as guest speaker in class. Everyone is expected to be in attendance.

## **LECTURE TOPICS & READINGS**

### **Part One: The Medieval Period**

#### **1. The Initial Encounter: The Rise of Islam; Muhammad and the “People of the Book”**

Read: *Jews of Arab Lands I*, pp., 3-21 and 113-121  
*The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, pp. 1-22  
“Naḥārā,” *ET*, vol. VII, pp. 970a-971b

#### **2. The Muslim Conquests and the New World Order: "The Rules of the Game."**

Read: *Jews of Arab Lands I*, pp. 22-28 and 153-170  
Bosworth, “The Concept of *Dhimma* in Early Islam,” in Braude-Lewis, *Christians & Jews I*, pp. 37-51  
*Decline of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 43-79, 271-308  
*The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, pp., 23-44

“Naḥārā,” *EF*, vol. VII, p. 971b

3. The Medieval Christian and Jewish Communities: Structure & Organization (Internationally, Nationally and on the Local Level)

Read: *Decline of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 71-82  
*Jews of Arab Lands I*, pp. 29-39; 171-182; 195; 252-254

4. The Hellenistic Renaissance: Religious Polemics and Rationalism

Read: *Jews of Arab Lands I*, pp. 226-228  
*The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, pp. 45-128  
*Decline of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 71-94  
“Naḥārā,” *EF*, vol. VII, pp. 971b-972b  
“Interfaith Relations,” *MICE*,  
“Interfaith Relations,” *EJIW*, pp. 569a-573b

5. Free Thinking, Sectarianism, Revolt and the Rise of Mainstream Jewish Theology: Hiwi ha-Balkhi, Abu Isa of Isfahan, The Karaites, Saʿadia Gaon

Read: Handouts and *EJIW* under the appropriate entry for each

6. Islamic Spain: The Unique Culture, Convivencia, and So-Called “Golden Age”

Read: *Jews of Arab Lands I*, pp. 53-63 and 210-225  
*The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, pp. 151-155  
and readings to be assigned + handouts

7. Pressures from Within and Without and the Decline of Tolerance -- Crusades, Almohads, Mamluks and Mongols: Misery Loves Company: Marginalization and a Hardening of Attitudes

Read: *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, pp. 156-175  
“Almohads” in *EJIW*, vol. I, pp. 184a-185b  
*Decline of Eastern Christianity*, p. 342-346  
*Jews of Arab Lands I*, pp. 64-87 and 262-287

Part Two: The Transition to Modern Times: Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed . . . Followed by “Future Shock”

8. The Ottoman Conquest, the Reversal of the Decline of Tolerance, and the Partial Recovery of the Dhimmi Communities

Read: *Jews of Arab Lands I*, pp. 87-94; 289-302  
Braude-Lewis, *Christians & Jews*, vol. I, “Introduction,” pp. 1-18  
*Decline of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 114-140  
Braude, “Foundation Myths of the Millet System,” in Braude-Lewis, *Christians & Jews*, vol. I, pp. 69-83

9. Ottoman Decline and European Ascendancy

Read: *Jews of Arab Lands I*, pp. 93-95

Mantran, "Foreign Merchants and the Minorities," in Braude-Lewis, *Christians & Jews*, vol. I, pp. 127-135

10. Middle East Meets West: The Initial Impact and European Intervention on Behalf of Non-Muslims: Idealism and Cynicism, or "The White Man's Burden and "The Terrible Turk"

Read: *Shaping of the Modern Middle East*, pp. 44-52, 71-84  
*Jews of Arab Lands II*, pp. 3-26; 183-198  
*Jews of Arab Lands I*, pp. 95-101; 324-339; 347-367  
Behrens-Abouseif, "Political Situation of the Copts," in Braude-Lewis, *Christians & Jews*, vol. II, pp. 185-189  
"Tanzimat," in *EJIW*, vol. IV, pp. 461b-463a and in *ET*, vol. X, pp. 201a-209b

11. The Age of "Do-Gooders": Religious and Cultural Missionaries

Read: *Jews of Arab Lands II*, pp. 23-35; 30-35; 199-200; 202-205; 241-242  
"Alliance Israélite Universelle" in *EJIW*, vol. I, pp. 171a-180a

12. Social, Economic, and Cultural Transformations

Read: Salibi, "The Two Worlds of Assaad Y. Kayat, in Braude-Lewis, *Christians & Jews*, vol. II, pp. 135-155  
Issawi, "The Transformation of the Economic Position of the Millets," in Braude-Lewis, *Christians & Jews*, vol. I, pp. 261-279  
Davison, "The Millets as Agents of Change," in Braude-Lewis, *Christians & Jews*, vol. I, pp. 319-333  
*Jews of Arab Lands II*, pp. 15-18, 27-46, 49, 62-63, 186-189, 203-204, 253

13. Those Least Touched by Modernity (Yemen, Kurdistan, South Libya, the Island of Jerba, and the Atlas Region of Morocco)

Read: *Jews of Arab Lands II*, pp. 207-219; 225-227; 236-238

14. Nationalism (a): Generalized Stirrings

Read: *Shaping of the Modern Middle East*, pp. 44-98  
Karal, "Non-Muslim Representatives in the First Constitutional Assembly," in Braude-Lewis, *Christians & Jews*, vol. I, pp. 401-434

15. Nationalism (b): Among the Christian Subjects of Greece and the Balkans

Read: Karpat, "Millets and Nationality," in Braude-Lewis, *Christians & Jews*, vol. I, pp. 141-169  
Clogg, "The Greek Millet in the Ottoman Empire," in Braude-Lewis, *Christians & Jews*, vol. I, pp. 185-207

16. Nationalism (c): The Armenian Tragedy

Read: *Decline of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 437-446

17. Nationalism (d): Arabism and Arab Nationalism

Readings to be posted on D2L

18. Nationalism (e): Zionism

Read: *Jews of Arab Lands II*, pp. 65-91, 305-355

19. The Aftermath of World War I: Ottoman Collapse, Rising Expectations, Frustrations, and Competing Aspirations

Read: *Jews of Arab Lands II*, pp. 47-64; 253-304

20. The Impact of European Fascism and Anti-Semitism

Read: *Jews of Arab Lands II*, pp. 93-112, 357-403

21. World War II, its Aftermath

Read: *Jews of Arab Lands II*, pp. 113-139, 405-459  
*The Arab Christian*, pp. 233-256, 279-303

22. The Situation Today and Prospects for the Future