

**NWC 107**  
**Middle Eastern Cultures**  
**Proposal to Revise Course**

Revised  
7-1997

Course Proposal: *NON WESTERN CULTURE*

Course Number: 107

Title: Middle Eastern Cultures (*edited*)

Rationale:

This interdisciplinary course introduces the cultures of the Middle East in a comprehensive framework using the various concepts in social sciences and the humanities. It offers students an understanding of the religion of Islam and Islamic culture and other Middle Eastern cultures in the diverse Middle Eastern societies. Middle Eastern works that are translated into the English language represent a significant part of this course.

Course Description:

A comprehensive historical-cultural approach to the study of Middle Eastern cultures, illustrating the use of various social science concepts in gaining an understanding of the religion of Islam and Islamic culture, the role of the Arabic language and literature, geography and politics, the various social classes, including the role of women, the influence of foreign powers, the origins and development of regional movements, conflicts and crises, including the Arab/Israeli conflict.

*Every Semester*

Course Outline:

- I. The Physical Setting:
  - A. Some Descriptive Geography.
  - B. Climatic Regimes and Water.
  - C. Population and Settlements Patterns.
- II. The Middle East Before Muhammad:
  - A. Persia and Rome.
  - B. The Arabs.
- III. The Prophet of Mecca:
  - A. Muhammad's Early Life.
  - B. The Emigration (Hijrah).
  - C. Muslim Life in Medina.
- IV. The Religion of Islam:
  - A. Basic Beliefs.
  - B. The Five Pillars of Islam.
- V. The Early Arab Conquests:
  - A. The Succession Issue.
  - B. The Initial Conquests.
  - C. The Beginnings of Islamic Government.
  - D. Dissension in the Ummah.
  - E. Changes in the Government of Islam.
- VI. The High Caliphate:
  - A. Restoration of the Umayyad Order.
  - B. The Downfall of the Umayyads.

- C. The Abbasid Caliphate.
- D. The Decline of the Abbasids.
- VII. Shi'is and Turks, Crusaders and Mongols:
  - A. Shi'a Beliefs and Sects.
  - B. Shi'i Islam in Power.
  - C. The Turks.
  - D. The Crusaders.
  - E. The Mongol Invasion.
- VIII. Islamic Civilization:
  - A. The Sources, Rules and Laws of Islam (Shari'a).
  - B. Islamic Society, Regional Ethnic Groupings.
  - C. Sources of Social Organization: Kinship, Marriage, and Family.
  - D. Women and the Moral Order: Identity and Change.
  - E. Intellectual Life.
  - F. Islam as Culture.
- IX. Muslim Empires:
  - A. The Mamluks.
  - B. The Mongol Il-Khanids.
  - C. The Ottoman Empire.
  - D. Persia Under the Safavids.
- X. European Interests and Imperialism:
  - A. Ottoman Weakness.
  - B. The European Powers and the Eastern Question.
- XI. Westernizing Reform in the Nineteenth Century:
  - A. Westernization of Egypt.
  - B. Westernization of the Ottoman Empire.
  - C. Persia Under the Qajars.
- XII. The Rise of Nationalism:
  - A. Egyptian Nationalism.
  - B. Ottoman, Pan-Islam, and Turkism.
  - C. Nationalism in Persia.
- XIII. The Roots of Arab Feelings Toward the West:
  - A. Arab Nationalism.
  - B. The First World War.
  - C. The Postwar Peace Settlements.
- XIV. Modernizing Rulers in the Independent States:
  - A. Turkey Under Ataturk.
  - B. From Persia to Iran.
  - C. The Rise of Saudi Arabia.
- XV. Egypt's Struggle for Independence.
  - A. Britain's Role in Egypt.
  - B. Egypt's Democratic Experiment.
  - C. The Egyptian Revolution.
- XVI. The contest for Palestine:
  - A. Origins of the Conflict.

- B. The Beginnings of Political Zionism.
- C. Britain and the Palestine Problem.
- XVII. The Creation of Israel and Arab Nationalism:
  - A. The 1948/49 War between Israel and the Arabs.
  - B. The Aftermath of the War.
  - C. The Arab Countries.
  - D. Israel's Early Years.
  - E. Oil in the Middle East.
  - F. The Great Powers and the Arab World.
  - G. Background to the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.
- XVIII. War and the Quest for Peace:
  - A. The June 1967 War.
  - B. The Palestinians.
  - C. Abortive Peace Efforts.
  - D. Political Change: 1967-1970.
  - E. The October War of 1973 and Its Aftermath.
  - F. Lebanon: The Arena for a New Arab Struggle.
  - G. The Road to Camp David.
- XIX. The Reassertion of Islamic Power:
  - A. Islam and Politics.
  - B. The Iranian Revolution.
  - C. The Struggle for Gulf Supremacy.
  - D. The Retreat from Camp David.
  - E. Western Policy Formation and Islamic Polity.
- XX. The Gulf War and the Peace Process:
  - A. The Gulf War.
  - B. Operation Desert Storm.
  - C. Palestinians and the Peace Process.
- XXI. Current Issues.

Time Provision:

This course is being taught every semester as part of the Non-Western Cultures series.

Bibliographical Materials: The library has resources adequate to support this course.