History and Institutions of the Muslim World

Prof. Elena Maestri

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to provide understanding of the ‘Islam system’ and the modernization vs. identity-tradition process within the Muslim world, with particular attention to political-institutional and economic-social structures in time and space context.

At the end of the course, students will have acquired useful reading and interpretation keys for a variety of complex problems and phenomena that are typical of major Muslim countries.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course is divided into two equal parts.

1. Islam. Typical structural elements:

* *The origins of Islam, society and environment in Arabia.* The Islamic-tribal paradigm. The Quran. The Islamic concept of state*.*
* *The ‘geography’ of the Muslim world.*  Arab conquests and the Arab-Islamic expansion. Arabism vs non-Arab Islamic cultures: the ‘historical roots’ of the present times;
* *Differences within Islam and main sects*: history and doctrines;

*– The development of Islamic Law.* Sources and juridical schools.

2. Islam in the modern-contemporary era:

* *Fiqh, Islamic legal institutions and rights.* The terms/concepts of *jihad* and *ijtihad*. Family law and condition of women (*case studies*). *Ijtihad* and Islamic finance;
* *Historical evolution.* Centres of power and proto-state cases;
* *The disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the origins of modern States*.The different forms of nationalism and fundamentalism in Arab and non-Arab Islam; historical and cultural identity in *nation-building* processes;
* *Cooperation and “Islamic modernity”.* Human development and ICT (models, pilot projects, organisations and institutions). The GCC case.

***READING LIST***

Texts to study:

C. Hillenbrand, *Islam. Una nuova introduzione storica*, Einaudi ed., Turin, 2016.

E. Maestri,*The Arabian City and its Territory. Historical Identity and Heritage Issues,* EDUCatt, Milano, 2019.

V. M. Donini, D. Scolart, *La shari‘a e il mondo contemporaneo*, Carocci editore, Roma, 2015 (for students sitting for a 9 ects examination; pp. 25-40, pp. 61-124, pp. 159-210, pp. 223-231, in addition to a case study of Asia or Africa).

E. Maestri - A. Profanter (Eds.), A*rab Women and the Media in Changing Landscapes*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2017 (a chapter of students’ choice of the book).

Further material for an in-depth study on various areas/contexts of the Muslim world will be communicated and provided in class.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Classroom lectures and practical classes. Guest speakers and thematic seminars.

Presentations by students on topics of their choice.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The final exam is oral and will assess through questions students’ ability to orientate themselves among the topics covered in class and studied in the textbooks and study materials made available. The more or less active participation demonstrated during lectures and practical classes will also be taken into consideration: presentations and in-depth studies on topics of interest developed through readings recommended by the lecturer, will be assesed and will affect the final mark.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no content-related prerequisites to attend the course. However, interest and a good basic knowledge of history and geography is expected.

For students attending the degree programme in International Cooperation Policies for Development, the examination is worth 9 ects.

For students attending the degree programme in Europena and International Policies, the examination is worth 6 ects; for these students the course carries out through 20 hours lessons during the first semester and 20 hours lessons during the second semester dealing with specific topics, with the exclusion of the Islamic Law and all related subjects. Further details will be given during the course.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG, or on the Faculty notice board.