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 Muslim-majority countries.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course is divided into two parts.

1. Islam. Typical structural elements:

* *The origins of Islam, society and environment in Arabia.*  The Quran. The Islamic concept of stateand the Islamic-tribal paradigm.
* *The ‘geography’ of the Muslim world, and differences within Islam.*  Arab conquests and the Arab-Islamic expansion. Main sects. Arabism vs non-Arab Islamic cultures: the ‘historical roots’ of the present times.
* *The development of Islamic Law.* Sources and juridical schools.
* *Fiqh, Islamic legal institutions and rights.* Family law and condition of women (*case studies*). *Ijtihad* and Islamic finance. *Kafala*.

2. Islam in the modern-contemporary era:

* *Historical evolution.* Centres of power and proto-state cases. Shiism and Shiites in the Middle East.
* *The disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the origins of modern States*.Different forms of nationalism and fundamentalism in the Arab world and among non-Arab Muslims; historical and cultural identity in *nation-building* processes. Islamic movements and *jihad.*
* *Cooperation and ‘Islamic modernity’.* Societies and human development (ICT, 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. 13-22, pp. 61-86, pp. 114-124, pp. 166-192, in addition to a case study of Asia or Africa).

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

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.

For students attending the degree programme in International Cooperation Policies for Development there is the possibility of taking the partial examination in January/February. The more or less active participation shown during the lectures and practical classes will also be taken into consideration, as it will enable students to acquire a more complete knowledge of the topics tackled in the lectures, also through in-depth readings and any presentations agreed upon with the lecturer, with an obvious impact on the level of preparation for the exam.

***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, the examination is worth 9 ects.

For students attending the degree programme in European 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 part on 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.