

University of Pennsylvania
Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
AMES 335/535, RELS 311
Writing Across the University (WATU) Seminar

**Muslim, Christian and Jewish Relations in the Middle East:
Historical Perspectives**
Fall, 2004

Professor Heather J. Sharkey

Class: Tuesdays, 2-5, Williams Hall #216

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DESCRIPTION

This seminar addresses several recurring questions about Muslim, Christian, and Jewish relations in the Middle East. How have Islam, Christianity, and Judaism influenced each other in the region historically? How have Jews, Christians, and Muslims fared as religious minorities? To what extent have communal relations been characterized by harmony and cooperation, or by strife and discord, and how have these relations changed in different contexts over time? To what extent and under what circumstances have members of these communities converted, intermarried, formed business alliances, and adopted or developed similar customs? How has the emergence of the modern nation-state system affected communal relations as well as the legal or social status of religious minorities in particular countries? How important has religion been as one variable in social identity (along with sect, ethnicity, class, gender, etc.), and to what extent has religious identity figured into regional conflicts and wars?

The focus of the class will be on the modern period (c. 1800-present) although we will read about some relevant trends in the early and middle Islamic periods as well. Students will pursue individually tailored research to write a final paper and to share their findings with the class at the end of the semester.

STRUCTURE, REQUIREMENTS, AND GRADES

This class is a reading- and discussion-intensive seminar though the professor will sometimes give short lectures to place assignments in historical context. Students are expected to participate actively and to prepare occasional presentations on selected readings. Note that failure to attend classes will result in deductions from the final course

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grade, and that late papers will be subject to daily five-point penalty deductions. Extensions are not routinely granted. The professor will not accept papers that are more than one week late. These policies apply equally to undergraduate and graduate students. Writing assignments include two short essays that require synthesis of course readings (see details in the syllabus below), a final research paper on a topic of the student's choice, and preliminary writings for the final paper (including a proposal and early draft). Students enrolled in AMES 335 or RELS 311 (the undergraduate section) should write a final paper that is approximately 15-20 pages long; students enrolled in AMES 535 (the graduate section) should write a final paper that is 25-30 pages long. Throughout the semester we will devote time to discussing practical techniques for planning oral presentations; structuring, writing, and revising essays; and conducting independent research. During the semester we will also meet with librarians in Van Pelt for a special session on research strategies.

The teaching fellow for this class is Spencer L. Allen. He will work with students to discuss writing assignments (e.g., choosing topics, planning essays, and making improvements through revision). This class seeks to bolster students' writing skills, and is therefore designated a Writing Across the University (WATU) course.

There will be no final exam.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

- attendance, participation, and oral presentations: 25%
- first short essay (due Oct 5th): 20%
- paper proposal and short bibliography (due October 19th): 5%
- second short essay (due Nov. 9th): 20%
- preliminary draft of the final paper (first 2-3 pages) (due Nov. 16th): 5%
- final paper (due Tues., Dec. 14th): 25%

BOOKS AND READINGS

A coursepack of book excerpts and articles is available for purchase from Wharton Reprographics. In addition, the following texts are available for purchase at the Penn Book Center, 130 South 34th Street (34th & Sansom), Philadelphia:

- Joel Beinin, *The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry: Culture, Politics, and the Formation of a Modern Diaspora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
- ***OUT OF PRINT, Cancelled*** Youssef Courbage & Philippe Fargues, *Christians and Jews under Islam*, Trans. From the French by Judy Mabro (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997).
- Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).
- Bernard Lewis, *Cultures in Conflict: Christians, Muslims, and Jews in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).
- Emran Qureshi & Michael Sells (Eds.), *The New Crusades: Constructing the Muslim Enemy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).
- Elaine P. Mamon and Janice H. Peritz, *A Writer's Resource* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2003).

• **Optional additional reading (as an interesting comparative study of Judeo-Christian-Islamic doctrines and customs):** F.E. Peters, *Islam: A Guide for Jews and Christians* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

Good News! One of our required books is available for download as a PDF file through the Franklin UPenn Library Catalogue:

• Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Note: If you would like to buy a published copy of this book or of any other coursebook that is in print, the staff in Penn Book Center will be happy to arrange a special order for you.

Other Readings:

Several assigned articles are available for internet download (e.g., through JSTOR; see details in the syllabus below). Other articles and book excerpts are available for purchase as a course reader from Wharton Reprographics. All books, whether used in the class in whole or in part, are also in Van Pelt Library's Rosengarten Reserve. Encyclopedias are located in Van Pelt library's reference section on the first floor.

COURSE PLAN

Week 1, September 14th:

Introduction: Muslim, Christian, & Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective

Bernard Lewis, *Cultures in Conflict: Christians, Muslims, and Jews in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). *Note:* this book is a series of three short lectures that Lewis gave to commemorate the 500-year anniversary of the events of 1492 – a year that witnessed Columbus's sailing for the Americas as well as the Spanish capture of Muslim Granada and the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. Various themes that Lewis mentions (e.g., the construction of the idea of 'Europe' in opposition to the Islamic world, or fluctuations in religious tolerance and persecution) will resurface throughout the semester. The book therefore provides an excellent starting point for discussion.

Week 2, September 21st:

Key Concepts, Recurring Debates: Dhimma, Jizya, Pact of Umar

Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 3-66.

Bernard Lewis (Ed. & Trans.), "The Pact of Umar", in *Islam from the Prophet Muhammad to the Capture of Constantinople*, vol. 2 (Religion & Society) (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 216-23.

Cl. Cahen, "Dhimma", in B. Lewis, Ch. Pellat & J. Schacht (Eds.), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, Vol. 2 (C-G) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983), pp. 227-31.

Cl. Cahen & Halil Inalcik, "Djizya" (Parts 1 and 2), in B. Lewis, Ch. Pellat & J. Schacht (Eds.), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, Vol. 2 (C-G) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983), pp. 559-66.

Gudrun Krämer, "Minorities in Muslim Societies," in John L. Esposito (Ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Vol. 3 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 108-11.

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For your own reference or edification: F.E. Peters, *Islam: A Guide for Jews and Christians* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), skim for topics that interest you.

Questions for Discussion: What did it mean for a state to be “Islamic” historically? What is a minority? Did it matter in practice to the status of non-Muslims that they sometimes constituted clear numerical majorities within Islamic state domains? How debilitating or positive, tolerant or intolerant, inclusive or exclusive were early Islamic policies towards non-Muslim communities?

*****VAN PELT LIBRARY VISIT with Deb Bucher (Religious Studies librarian) and William Kopycki (Middle East Studies bibliographer), Goldstein Electronic Classroom, 3:30-5pm. NOTE: we will meet first in our regular classroom for discussion of the week’s readings before going to our library session.**

Week 3, September 28th:

Christians, Jews & Muslims in the Ottoman Empire to c. 1800

Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 1-67.

Molly Greene, *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 3-12, 39-44, 177-86.

Linda T. Darling, “Capitulations,” in John L. Esposito (Ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 257-60.

- Class Discussion: How to Write a Review Essay

Questions for Discussion: What was the Ottoman Empire? What does “sectarianism” mean? What can we say about the quality of religious communal relations and the quality of life of non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire before 1800? How did (Christian) European powers begin to impinge on Ottoman imperial and communal affairs before 1800?

*****FIELD TRIP TO THE CENTER FOR ADVANCED JUDAIC STUDIES (CAJS), 4th & Walnut Streets, details to be announced. We will have a library tour with Arthur Kiron, the Judaica bibliographer, and will spend the rest of class time in one of the CAJS seminar rooms (#602).**

Week 4, October 5th:

The Late Ottoman Empire and the Western Advance

Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World*, pp. 130-99.

Moshe Ma’oz, “Changing Relations between Jews, Muslims, and Christians during the Nineteenth Century, with Special Reference to Ottoman Syria and Palestine,” in Avigdor Levy (Ed.), *Jews, Turks, Ottomans: A Shared History, Fifteenth through the Twentieth Century* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2002), pp. 108-18.

Benjamin Braude, “Foundation Myths of the *Millet* System,” in Benjamin Braude & Bernard Lewis (Eds.), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, Vol. 1 (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982), pp. 69-88.

Questions for Discussion: What was the *millet* system all about? What social transformations affected Muslim, Christian, and Jewish relations in the 19th-century Ottoman Empire? What was the short- and long-term import of the Ottoman Tanzimat decrees of 1839 and 1856? What can we say about the changing nature of Muslim-Jewish, Muslim-Christian, and Jewish-Christian relations in the nineteenth century and how important was European intervention to these processes?

*** First Short Essay Due:** In a concise essay of four pages (approx. 1,000 words), discuss the status of Christian and Jewish communities in the Islamic Middle East by drawing upon and synthesizing ideas from the readings we have done so far.

*****FIELD TRIP TO THE PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY (PHS), 5th & Lombard Streets, details to be announced. We will have an archives tour with Beth Bensman, the manager of public services and outreach.**

Week 5, October 12th:

Christian Missionaries and Western Imperialism

Ussama Makdisi, "Reclaiming the Land of the Bible: Missionaries, Secularism, and Evangelical Modernity," *American Historical Review*, 102:3 (1997), pp. 680-713. (Available for download through JSTOR.)

Ussama Makdisi, "Reconstructing the Nation-State: The Modernity of Sectarianism in Lebanon," *Middle East Report*, No. 200: Minorities in the Middle East, July-Sept. 1996, pp. 23-26, 30. (Available for download through JSTOR.)

Heather J. Sharkey, "Christian Evangelism and Western Imperialism: American Presbyterian Missionaries and Muslim Conversion in Egypt," work in progress; a copy is included in the coursepack.

Heather J. Sharkey, "A New Crusade or an Old One?" *ISIM Newsletter* (Leiden: International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World), 12 (June 2003), 48-49. (Available for download through <http://www.isim.nl> -- follow the link for Publications.)

Questions for Discussion: Why did European and American Christian missionaries descend on the Middle East in increasing numbers during the nineteenth century, and what did they aim to accomplish among Muslims, Jews, and local Christians? How did missionaries affect local intra- and inter-communal dynamics in the 19th and 20th centuries? To what extent were missionaries associated with Western imperial powers, and to what extent did this matter in the long run?

κ In-class: Choosing a Final Paper Topic and Planning Your Research

Week 6, October 19th:

Muslims and Jews: Social Changes, Political Upheavals, Economic Reversals

Joel Beinin, *The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry: Culture, Politics, and the Formation of a Modern Diaspora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 1-59.

Daniel J. Schroeter, "Royal Power and the Economy in Precolonial Morocco: Jews and the Legitimation of Foreign Trade," in Rahma Bourquia & Susan Gilson Miller (Eds.), *In the Shadow of the Sultan: Culture, Power, and Politics in Morocco* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 74-102.

Susan Gilson Miller, "Dhimma Reconsidered: Jews, Taxes, and Royal Authority in Nineteenth-Century Tangier," in Bourquia & Miller, *In the Shadow of the Sultan*, pp. 103-26.

Skim historical overviews and sections on economic life and Zionism in Reeva Simon et al (Eds.), *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 3-51, 165-79.

Questions for Discussion: How would you evaluate the social standing of the Jewish communities of Egypt as described by Beinin? To what extent were Egypt's Jewish communities genuinely "Egyptian", and how did conceptions of identity change (internally, among Jews, and externally,

in the view of the Muslim majority) in tandem with developments in Zionist, Egyptian nationalist, and Islamist thought and activism? In Morocco, how did political and economic changes affect the Jews as *dhimmi*s and *jizya*-payers, and how did Jews act as intermediaries between Moroccan Muslims and European Christians? In your view, to what extent was the *jizya* payment (as reflected in the articles by Schroeter and Gilson) a form of humiliation or a source of internal Jewish communal empowerment?

*** Final Paper Proposal Due:** This proposal has two parts. (1) Submit a one-page abstract of your final paper topic, describing what you intend to study and what preliminary hypotheses you have. (2) Submit a bibliography listing at least six relevant published books or academic articles -- not internet sources.

Week 7, November 2nd:

Religious Minorities, the Nation-State, and “Dhimmitude”

Joel Beinin, *The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry*, pp. 60-117, 207-67.

Karim al-Gawhary, “Copts in the ‘Egyptian Fabric’”, *Middle East Report*, Special issue on Minorities, 200 (July-Sept. 1996), pp. 21-22. (*Available for download through JSTOR.*)

Bat Ye’or, *Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilizations Collide*, Trans. From the French by Miriam Kochan & David Littman (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002), pp. pp. 266-304 (Ch. 9, “Expansion of Inter-*Dhimmi* Conflicts in the Modern Period”).

Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, pp. 154-91.

Optional: Youssef Courbage & Philippe Fargues, *Christians and Jews under Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997), Ch. 5, “From Multinational Empire to Secular Republic: The Lost Christianity of Turkey,” pp. 91-129.

Questions for Discussion: What are your thoughts on “Operation Susannah” and its import for Egyptian Jewry and Egyptian-Israeli relations? Regarding the concept of *dhimma* – is it or should it be relevant in the modern age and in the context of the nation-state? What are the challenges of incorporating religious minorities into states defined by religious majorities? What is the relationship of religion to citizenship? What are your thoughts on Bat Ye’or’s assessment of Middle Eastern Christian Judeophobia and on the “internationalization of hate” in the postcolonial period (e.g., with regard to Arab reactions to Vatican II’s attempts, in 1963, to revise Catholic doctrine on the relationship of Jews to the crucifixion of Jesus)?

Week 8, November 9th:

Minorities and Diasporas in the Colonial and Postcolonial Eras

Joëlle Bahloul, *The Architecture of Memory: A Jewish-Muslim Household in Colonial Algeria, 1937-1962*, Trans. Catherine Du Peloux Ménagé (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 1-27.

Talal Asad, “Muslims and European Identity: Can Europe Represent Islam?,” in Anthony Pagden (Ed.), *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 209-27.

Syed Z. Abedin & Saleha M. Abedin, “Muslim Minorities in Non-Muslim Societies,” in John L. Esposito (Ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Vol. 3 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 112-17.

Optional: Youssef Courbage & Philip Fargues, *Christians and Jews under Islam*, Chapters 6,7,8 (on French North Africa, Israel & the Palestinians, and Arab Christianity), pp. 130-209.

Questions for Discussion: What are your thoughts on the meaning of the phrase “second-class citizen” and its relevance for say, the 19th-century Ottoman empire versus the present-day context of Israel, Egypt, or Iran? To what extent have Middle Eastern societies had or developed local forms of anti-Semitism? What particular circumstances affect Muslim minorities (many of them emigrant diaspora communities) globally today? Can Europe (or more precisely, the European Union) accommodate Islam and Muslims or is the “idea of Europe” implicitly rooted in a concept of Christendom? How have Muslim and Christian minorities fared in Israel?

*** Second Review Essay Due:** In an interpretive review essay of 4-5 pages that reflects on our readings to date, discuss the status of Jewish communities in the Middle East in the century before the emergence of Israel (1948). It is clear from our readings that historians hotly contest the social condition and historical representation of Jewish minorities in the region (e.g., were they an increasingly vulnerable community subject to widespread discrimination as the modern age progressed, or were they integral parts of Islamic societies who identified culturally with their Muslim and Christian neighbors before the politics of Zionism and the Arab-Israeli conflict uprooted and dispersed them?). What is your assessment?

Week 9, November 16th:

New Crusades and the Clash of Civilizations, or Dialogue and Interfaith Amity?

Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?,” *Foreign Affairs*, 72:3 (1993), pp. 22-49.

Emran Qureshi & Michael Sells (Eds.), *The New Crusades: Constructing the Muslim Enemy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 1-47, and other chapters to be announced.

Mario Apostolov, *The Christian-Muslim Frontier: A Zone of Contact, Conflict, or Cooperation* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), pp. 1-21.

(Rabbi) Jonathan Magonet, *Talking to the Other: Jewish Interfaith Dialogue with Christians and Muslims* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), Foreword by (Jordanian Prince) Hassan bin Tallal, pp. Vii-xi, plus pp. 1-10, pp. 179-203 (including prospects for peaceful dialogue in the midst of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict).

Royal Institute of Interfaith Studies, Amman, Jordan:
<http://www.riifs.org/purpose/purpose.htm> (Note: those of you who know Arabic can investigate *al-Nashra*, the Institute’s Arabic journal on Muslim-Christian relations; back issues are available on this website.)

(Archbishop) Michael L. Fitzgerald, “Message for the End of Ramadan (1424/2003)”, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue,
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_20031117_ramadan2003_en.html. Please investigate other relevant documents on the website of the Vatican, the political entity of the Roman Catholic church.

World Council of Churches, Reports on Interreligious Relations and Dialogue,
<http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/index-e.html>. Please investigate other relevant documents on the website of this international organization of Protestant and Orthodox churches.

Note: for comparative insights that go beyond the scope of this class, you may be interested in a website dedicated to the study of Islam and Interfaith Relations in South Asia (especially Muslim-Hindu relations): <http://www.islaminterfaith.org/>

• In Class: Choosing Countries for Next Week's Short Presentations (Note: Students can find the religious freedom reports issued by the U.S. Department of State at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/>)

Questions for Discussion: In your view, how compelling or distasteful, insightful or intellectually blinkered, are Huntington's theories about the clash of civilizations, particularly as they pertain to the Middle East or the Muslim world? How would you evaluate Apostolov's argument about a contemporary "Christian-Muslim frontier" that constitutes a psychological, cultural/civilizational, and even economic construct? In your view, to what extent are Muslims today subject to dehumanizing or demeaning stereotypes propagated by Western (non-Muslim) religious groups, governments, or the media? Are Muslim communities in Europe and North America blurring cultural frontiers, or have such frontiers been artificial/imaginary constructs in the first place? How do historical encounters and conflicts (e.g., the Crusades, Western imperialism, the Holocaust, the Arab-Israeli conflict) affect the nature and direction of interfaith dialogue today? How mainstream or marginal are the participants in these conversations, and what kind of impact do you think they have had or can have? What historical impulses have given rise to the interfaith dialogue movement?

Week 10, November 23rd:

Debates on Religious Freedom and Human Rights, Globally and in the Middle East

Abdullahi An-Na'im, "Muslims Must Realize that There Is Nothing Magical about the Concept of Human Rights" (Interview), in Farish A. Noor (Ed.), *New Voices of Islam* (Leiden: ISIM, 2002), pp. 5-14. (*Available for download at <http://www.isim.nl/> -- follow the link for Publications*).

U.S. Congress, International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, available at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/irf/c2132.htm>

U.S. Department of State, Fact Sheets on the "History of the Office of International Religious Freedom" and "Religious Freedom: An International Responsibility," available at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/irf/fs/>

Questions for Discussion: In your view, are there basic universal human rights? If so, what are these, and to what extent do they involve religion? Should the ability to convert into or out any religion, or the ability to practice or choose not to practice traditional religious dictates (e.g., observing the Sabbath, fasting during Ramadan) be regarded as a human right? How much power should religious authorities have in setting social policies and influencing or administering the practice of law? In your opinion, is the U.S. government's policy on religious freedom, as enshrined in law in 1998, a legitimate focus for foreign policy and does it represent constructive or self-interested intervention on the part of American Christian lobbying groups? To what extent can or should policies of secularism accommodate religious practice?

Short Presentations in Class: Having read one of the Middle East country reports published by the U.S. State Department in 2003 (the selections of which were made last week), each student will give a five-minute presentation summarizing the status of religious freedoms and communal relations as presented in the report.

Week 11, November 30th:

Final Presentations

* **Preliminary Draft of Final Paper Due:** Submit the introductory section of your paper (approx. two pages). This introduction should provide an overview of your topic, explain the structure of your paper, and point to your general thesis or argument. The introduction is often the most difficult part of a paper to write, so it is critical that you give yourself the opportunity to get early feedback before revision.

Week 12, December 7th:

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Final Presentations & Wrapping Up

Final Paper due Tuesday, December 14th!