



Course Prospectus Spring 2023

(Syllabus subject to change)

Instructor: Prof. Oscar Aguirre-Mandujano (oscaragm@sas.upenn.edu)

Status: In person class -Williams Hall 421 MW 12:00-1:30PM

Course Level: This is an introductory course with no prerequisites. No prior knowledge is expected. This course is a survey course of the history of the Islamic Empires in the early modern period, from the fourteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century.

Course Description:

In the sixteenth century, the political landscape of the Middle East, Central Asia, and India changed with the expansion and consolidation of new Islamic empires. Gunpowder had transformed the modes of warfare. Diplomacy followed new rules and forms of legitimation. The widespread use of Persian, Arabic and Turkish languages across the region allowed for an interconnected world of scholars, merchants, and diplomats. And each imperial court, those of the Ottomans, the Safavids, and the Mughals, found innovative and original forms of expression in art and literature. The expansion of these Islamic empires, each of them military giants and behemoths of bureaucracy, marked a new phase in world history.

The course is divided in four sections. The first section introduces the student to major debates about the so-called gunpowder empires of the Islamic world as well as to comparative approaches to study them. The second section focuses on the transformations of modes of warfare and military organization. The third section considers the cultural history and artistic

production of the imperial courts of the Ottomans, the Mughals, and the Safavids. The fourth and final section investigates the social histories of these empires, their subjects, and the configuration of a world both connected and divided by commerce, expansion, and diplomacy.

Outline of Assignments & Assessments

1. A) Exam Track

Three Response papers*	20% each	Weeks 5, 8, 15.
Midterm Exam	15%	Week 10
Final Exam	15%	Examination Week
Participation**	10%	Every Week

*Students can choose to re-submit one response paper by the end of the semester for re-grading.

**Participation is graded in a scale from 0 to 10. A minimum of 5 is required to pass the course. Participation will be based on engagement of asynchronous activities and discussion boards

1. B) Paper Track

Three Response papers*	20% each	Weeks 5, 8, 15.
Draft Final Paper	5%	Week 10 (Prerequisite to submit Final Paper)
Final Paper	25%	Examination Week
Participation**	10%	Every Week

*Students can choose to re-submit one response paper by the end of the semester for re-grading.

**Participation is graded in a scale from 0 to 10. A minimum of 5 is required to pass the course.

Assignments

1. The Mid-term will be available on week 10 on Wednesday at 3PM.
2. The final exam will be available on canvas on Examination Week at 4:30PM EST, and submissions will be accepted until the following Saturday by 11:59 PM EST. The final exam is not timed.
3. Response Papers: 4-5 page response to the three required books.
4. Paper track: The final paper must be an original contribution. Topic should be selected in consultation with the instructor. Paper should not exceed 10 pages, Times New Roman, 12 pts, double space, standard margins. Minimum length 9 pages. For the final paper, in addition to the sources read in class, the student should incorporate at least three new sources. The student should connect the reviewed work with at least three readings done in class. A draft should be submitted on Week 10 in order to be able to submit the final paper.

*All sources should be cited properly. See Reference and Citation guidelines in the Pages section of the course's Canvas website.

Essential Course Policies

- Required books*
 - Mikhailovic. *Memoirs of a Janissary*. Trans. Benjamin Stolz (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2010)
 - Babur. *Baburname*. Trans. Wheeler Thackston (New York: Modern Library, 2002)
 - Evliya Çelebi. *An Ottoman Traveller*. Trans. Robert Dankoff and Sooyong Kim (London: Eland Publishers, 2011)
- All other readings will be available in Canvas or accessible online through the University Library

Required Books Subject to Change. Please confirm with instructor before purchasing them.