

Muslim world: history and legacy

In 2002, just months after the terrorist attacks that took place on September 11, 2001, Bernard Lewis published a very powerful book entitled *What went wrong?* (2002). Curiously enough, the book was not written as an intellectual reply to those ominous events; in fact, as the author assures, the “book was already in page proof when the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington took place”.

The question still remains: if it is true that, “for many centuries the world of Islam was in the forefront of human civilization and achievement” (p. 3), “in the course of the twentieth century it became abundantly clear (...) that things had indeed gone badly wrong” (p. 151).

In this short course we do not pretend to provide an answer Bernard Lewis’s question, of course. Our aim is to identify and understand the main historical and intellectual roots of the world of Islam, comprising almost a quarter of the current world population.

Methodology and grading assessment

The course evaluation will be based on two factors: regular attendance and active participation in class (30%) and a final essay (70%).

1. Introduction
2. Meca and Medina: “hijra” or “jihad”?
 - a. Beginnings
 - b. “hijra” or “jihad”?
 - c. Expansion
3. Damascus and Cordoba:
 - a. Umayyads and Abbasids
 - b. Jerusalem and Damascus
 - c. Cordoba
4. Baghdad and Toledo: wisdom and translation
 - a. The Library of Alexandria
 - b. The “House of Wisdom”
 - c. The “School of Translators”
 - d. Philosophers: al-Farabi, ibn Sina, ibn Rushd, al-Ghazzali, (Maimonides)
5. Schools and traditions
 - a. The great schism: Sunnis and Shias
 - b. Sufism
 - c. Other traditions: Kharijites (Ibadism), Ismaelites, Wahabites
 - d. The four Sunni schools: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi’i, Hanbali
6. Radicalisation
 - a. The Muslim Brotherhood
 - b. Sayyid Qutb’s *Milestones*

Bernard Lewis, *What went Wrong? The clash between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2002

Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East: 2000 years of History from the Rise of Christianity to the Present Day*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1995

Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, London, Phoenix, 1982;

Bernard Lewis, Buntzie Ellis Churchill, *Islam: The Religion and the People*, Upper Saddle River (NJ), Wharton School Publishing, 2009, pp. 51-60;

Charles Kurzman (Ed.), *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998;

Charles Kurzman (Ed.), *Modernist Islam: 1840-1940*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002;

Antony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2001, pp. 81-136;

Karen Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2000, pp. 69-79

John J. Donohue, John L. Esposito (Ed.s), *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2nd Ed., 2007,

Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, London & New York, I.B. Tauris, 2005, 2009;

Christopher Caldwell, *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe*, Allen Lane, 2009.

Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1969;

Brynjar Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt*, Reading, Ithaca Press, 1998;

Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, New Dehli, Islamic Book Service, 2001;

Albert J. Bergesen (Ed.), *The Sayyid Qutb Reader*, New York, Routledge, 2008;

Tariq Ramadan, *The Messenger*, London, Penguin Books, 2007;

Tariq Ramadan, *Radical Reform*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009

Gilles Kepel, *The Roots of Radical Islam*, London, SAQI, 2005