



Code: LOR/10

Credits: 6

Subject: History of Islamic Countries

Main teaching language: Italian

Secondary teaching language: English

Teaching Staff

Head teacher

Prof. Enrico Ferri – enrico.ferri@unicusano.it

Introduction

1. Course topics:

The goal of the course on the History of Islamic Countries is to provide the basic outlines of Islam, intended not only as a religion but also as a culture that embraces various aspects of life: from politics to food, from morals to law. The course will examine the key moments of the development of Islam through the figure of Muhammad and his teachings, while also focusing on the events leading to the birth of Islam and its earliest phase of expansion in the century following the death of the Prophet. Special attention will be given on the relationship between Islam and the other monotheistic Abrahamic religions, namely Hebraism and Christianity. The study of the life of the Prophet, his doctrine and the early phase of Islam, students will be provided with the tools to understand aspects of contemporary Islam, like, for example, the contrast between Sunnis and Shiites.

Goals

2. Course Structure:

The principal goals of the course:

- 1) To point out the commonplace misconceptions about Islam, namely the identification of Islam and the Arab world.
- 2) To provide the historico-cultural framework of reference in which Islam developed.
- 3) To explain the relationship Islam held already in Muhammad's times with Christianity and Hebraism.
- 4) To highlight the impact of the Arab-Bedouin world on Islamic doctrine.



5) To teach students how to read and consult the Quran.

Competencies:

At the end of the course, students should be able:

- 1) To have a basic knowledge on the historical origins of Islam and the geographic and cultural environment where it first developed
- 2) To understand the fundamental categories of the Muslim religion: the principle of the oneness of God: the meaning of *Sunna* (“Tradition”); the meaning of Revelation; what is intended as Prophecy in Islam; etc.
- 3) To get an idea of the sheer complexity of the Islamic world and its inherent current articulations with regard to the geographical area, to the socio-cultural background, to the various currents of Islam (Sunnism, Shi'ism, Sufism, etc.)
- 4) To have the basic instruments to understand – albeit partially – present-day Islam even in difficult settings as the Middle East.

Syllabus

1. Course outline:

- 1) Historical and geographical background of pre-Islamic Arabia
- 2) Cultural and religious presence in Arabia at the time of Muhammad
- 3) Birth and childhood of Prophet Muhammad
- 4) Maturity of the Prophet and marriage to Kadijah
- 5) The start of the Revelation
- 6) The early outlines of Islamic doctrine
- 7) Muhammad’s struggle in Mecca.
- 8) Flight from Medina
- 9) Constitution of the *Umma*
- 10) The role of war in the development of early Islam
- 11) Conflicting relationship with the Medina Jews
- 12) Return to and conquest of Mecca
- 13) The Quran and doctrinal aspects of Islam
- 14) Death of the Prophet and establishment of the Caliphate.

Evaluation system and criteria

80% of the marks are assigned in the final exam, which consists of: a) three essays plus three multiple choice questions; or b) thirty multiple choice questions. The remaining marks are assigned in consideration of the e-activities students carry out or the specific tasks assigned to them by the teacher.

Bibliography and resources

2. Materials to consult:

Lecture notes.

Claudio Lojacono, *Maometto* – Laterza, 2011.

3. Recommended bibliography:

The Quran, edited by Alessandro Bausani – BUR, 2002

W. Montgomery Watt, A. T. Welch, *L'Islam. Maometto e il Corano* – Jaca Book, 1981