

SEVI 435 Spain and Islam

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1. Course description:

Discussing Islam is discussing culture. At least in Spain, and throughout Mediterranean Europe, the influences that this culture has exercised cannot go unnoticed. In addition, the settling of populations of Muslim origin in Europe is one of the most important phenomena of the last quarter of the 20th century. Today, knowledge of this culture has spread to all of the corners of the planet, which in part could be attributed to a desire of individuals to better understand this culture that some have begun to view as “a problem for the world”

Spain is unique in respect to its surrounding European countries, given the strong influence of Islam throughout the country's history. There is no branch of knowledge in the West that has not been expressed through Arabic studies, but Spain in particular, represents a historical present in which Muslims, despite being a small population numerically, is an important symbol of our social reality. In Spain, a country that has converted into a receptor of immigrants, Islam appears closely linked to political, legal, cultural and religious transformations that are occurring in society.

Our program aims to delve into the social, historical and cultural aspects that are most representative of this civilization, since its origin in the 6th century until the present, passing through its expulsion from the European West in 1492, and paying special attention to the influences that we have acquired from it throughout history.

We believe that a course such as this one, is completely necessary in today's society, so that a culture such as Islam can be understood and judged without prejudices, and in the most objective manner possible, especially because in our time, when speaking about this civilization, people tend to neglect the great influence that it has had upon the West throughout history.

2. Objectives:

-Learn about the origin and the evolution of Islam as culture and thought, acquiring knowledge of its social and religious aspects, while paying special attention to the presence of Muslims in present day Spain: cultural and religious challenges, as well as how much we actually possess of its culture, in regards to historical inheritance: artistic pieces, monuments, etc.- and in relation to different aspects of our lifestyle: entertainment, food, language, customs, etc.

-Emphasize the expansion of Islam around the world throughout history, detailing its influence in the societies and geographical regions that it has extended to, while reviewing present day Spanish society and its relationship with Islam.

- Study the artistic and cultural expressions of the fields of urbanism, the architecture, arts, sciences, literature or music of Spain.

- Present the reality of Spain and other European countries in relation to Islam: relations between the Orient with the West, while outlining the unique situation of Spain in regards to topics of debate such as religious education in schools, the role of women, the problem of the veil, etc.

3. Methodology:

The development of the course will be structured in two different modules: one dedicated to “History, Art and Culture”(whose topics occupy about two thirds of the class) and other dedicated to “Present Day Society” (equivalent to a third of all of the topics studied)

The material will be presented through theoretical and practical classes, as well as tutorials. The theoretical classes will be based on explanations by the professor. The practical classes will be developed through commentaries of texts, for which at the beginning of the course the corresponding readings will be provided. The tutorials will be an additional resource for students.

4. Content of the Module “History, Art and Culture”

I. History:

- Pre-Islamic culture
- The birth, expansion and settlement of Islam
- The arrival of Islam to the Iberian peninsula

II. Art:

- Decoration in Muslim art.
- Figurative and sumptuary art.
- Hispanic Muslim urbanism
- Engineering and military architecture
- Palace architecture, domestic and religious
- The structure and functioning of other public buildings

III. Culture:

- Industry, commerce and communications
- Literature and thought in Islamic Spain
- Islam and science in everyday life
- Cohabitation and coexistence with other cultures and religions
- The long duration of Islamic influence after the movement of Muslims from Occidental Europe

5. Content of the Module “Present Day Society”

- The Muslim religion: beliefs, precepts and rituals
- Spain and the European Union and their relationship with Islam: the distinct European models in regards to Muslim immigration and Islam in the region.
- Spain and religious pluralism: the most frequent conflicts and debates

- Gender relations in Islam

6. Program of “History, Art and Culture”:

Day 1:

- General introduction

Day 2:

- Pre-Islamic culture: civilizations preceding Islamic settlement in Asia and the Mediterranean

Day 3:

- The birth of Islam: the prophet and the diffusion of its thought

Day 4:

- Expansion and settlement: of the religion and its conversion in political, economic and social structure

Day 5:

- Showing of the documentary *Islam, Imperio de Fe: El Mensajero, producido por Gardner Films, 2000.*

Day 6:

- The arrival of Islam to the Iberian Peninsula. Preceding situation and peninsular expansion.

Day 7:

- The decoration of Muslim art. Figurative arts: painting and sculpture. Sumptuary arts.

Day 8:

- Hispanic Muslim urbanization. Engineering and military architecture.

Day 9:

- Palace architecture and domestic architecture (I): el alcázar

Day 10:

- Palace architecture and domestic architecture (II): the home

Day 11:

- Exam I (from “Pre-Islamic culture” to “Palace architecture and domestic architecture (I),” both topics included.

Day 12:

- Religious architecture (I)

Day 13:

- Religious architecture (II)

Day 14:

- Structure and functioning of other public buildings

Day 15:

- Industry, commerce and communications. Its spaces and infrastructures

Day 16:

- Literature and thought in Islamic Spain. Islam and sciences in everyday life

Day 17:

- Showing of the documentary *La Meca por dentro*, produced by National Geographic, 2003.

Day 18:

- Exam II (from “Palace architecture and domestic architecture (II)” until “Islam and sciences in every-day life (II),” both topics included)

7. Program of “Present Day Society”

Day 19:

- Presentation of the course
- The Muslim religion: beliefs, precepts and rituals (I)

Day 20:

- The Muslim religion: beliefs, precepts and rituals (II)

Day 21:

- Spain and the European Union and their relationship with Islam: the distinct European models in relation to Muslim immigration and Islam in Spain (I).

Day 22:

- Spain and the European Union and their relationship with Islam: the distinct European models in relation to Muslim immigration and Islam in Spain (II)

Day 23:

- Spain and religious pluralism: the most frequent conflicts and debates

Day 24:

- Showing of the documentary *¡Mezquita no!*, produced by Acontraluz Films, 2006.

Day 25:

- Gender relations in Islam (I)

Day 26:

- Gender relations in Islam (II)

Day 27:

- Final exam

8. Evaluation:

I. “History, Art and Culture” Module

This model will make up **70% of the final course grade.**

-Two partial exams that will make up 60% of the final evaluation.

-Analysis of readings, graphs, maps, etc. and possible exhibition of commentaries referring to some of the concrete themes of the program. These activities, all of them of brief redaction or exposition, will have a due date of one week from the time that they are assigned to students. These due dates will not be listed on the syllabus, but rather announced by the professor throughout the duration of the course. The total of these activities will make up **10% of the final course grade.**

-A practical and obligatory research assignment. This assignment will be considered a practice of the theoretical classes and will allow the students to demonstrate their acquired knowledge through “field investigations.” Students may choose from the following topics:

- A) “Military Architecture in Islamic Seville.”** Students will visit the remnants of the Almohad Sevillian walls, as well as its towers and doors, analyzing the materials and constructive elements of the time.
- B) Hispanic Muslim Craftwork and its Influence in Present Day Decorative Arts-** Students will visit el Museo de Artes y Costumbres Populares in Seville, analyzing the different craftworks brought to Spain by the Muslims, as well as their permanence and evolution up until the emergence of different art forms from the present.

C) **“Gastronomy in Al-Andalus.”** Students will analyze the products introduced in the Iberian Peninsula by Muslims, as well as their survival in present day Spanish gastronomy. For this assignment, students will have to share opinions and experiences with establishments or citizens that will help them to understand their use and importance.

- This work must be between 5-6 pages, not counting space occupied by maps or photos. It must be typed double-space in 12 size font. The work must also include a list of sources consulted (bibliography, webpages, etc.) and the personal opinions of the student in regards to the topic of investigation.
- The due date of this assignment is March 12th. In any case, no work can be turned in once completing the second partial exam of the module “History, Art and Culture”
- The work will be turned in as a hard copy; papers sent by email will not be accepted.
- The grade of this assignment will make up **30% of the final course grade.**

II. **“Present Day Society” Module**

This module will make up **30% of the final course grade.**

The students will be required to demonstrate that they possess the necessary knowledge to pass this module through the completion of a written exam (that will cover the content of the module) and an essay about one of the assigned readings. In addition, attendance and participation through a class presentation of assigned readings will make up part of the final grade. The final grade will correspond to the following break-down:

- Final exam: **60%**
- Essay about one of the readings: **20%**
- Class participation: **20%**

9. **Disciplinary Politics of the Course:**

- Only three unjustified absences are allowed throughout the course. After the fourth absence, one point will be deducted from the final course grade for each additional absence.
- Exam and quiz dates will not be changed for personal reasons of the students (trips, family visits, etc.)
- On the occasion that a student misses an exam or quiz, they will only be able to make it up at the end of the course, on a determined day between the 3rd and 6th of May.
- In this class, eating is not allowed, neither is the use of computers, tablets, phones, or anything similar.

10. **Bibliography:**

- ESPOSITO, John L.: El Islam: 94 preguntas básicas. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2004. ISBN 8420656518.

* **Recommended Bibliography:**

- ABUMALHAM, Montserrat (coord.): Comunidades islámicas en Europa. Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 1995. ISBN 8481640395.

- ABUMALHAM, Montserrat: El Islam. Madrid: Ediciones del Orto, 1999. ISBN 847923203X.
- CALVO BUEZAS, Tomás: Inmigración y racismo: así sienten los jóvenes del siglo XXI. Madrid: Cauce Editorial, 2000. ISBN 84-89612-42-0.
- CHECA, Francisco (ed.): Africanos en la otra orilla. Barcelona: Icaria Editorial, 1998. ISBN 84- 7426-336-0.
- GARCÍA HERNANDO, Julián (dir.): Pluralismo religioso en España. III.: religiones no cristianas. Madrid: Sociedad de Educación Atenas, 1996. ISBN 978-7020-401-2.
- GREUS, Jesús: Así vivían en Al-Andalus. Madrid: Anaya, 2004. ISBN 84-207-3365-2.
- MARTÍ, José María; CATALÁ RUBIO, Santiago (coord.): El Islam en España; historia, pensamiento, religión y derecho. Actas del Primer Encuentro sobre Minorías Religiosas (Cuenca, 21-22 de marzo de 2000). Cuenca: Universidad de Castilla – La Mancha, 2001.
- MORALES, Alfredo José: Las claves del arte islámico. Barcelona: Ariel, 1987. ISBN 84-344- 0335-8.
- RIEL, Pierre Van: El Islam. Barcelona: Art Enterprise, 2002. ISBN 978-84-96046-11-5.
- VV.AA.: El Islam: un mosaico de cultura. Barcelona: Bibliograf, 2003. Aparte, cada alumno será aconsejado sobre qué fuentes específicas podrá emplear para la realización de sus respectivos trabajos de investigación.

11. Additional Information: Due to local festivities, there will be no class during the 20th and 27th of March (Semana Santa), and the 11th and 17th of April (Feria de Abril).