MEDLATIN 207

Medieval Latin Encounters of Christianity and Islam

Paris, Bibl. de l'Arsenal, MS 1162, f. 11r

Instructor: Dr. Julian Yolles
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Office hour: By appointment
Boylston Hall 218

Half course (Spring term): Mo 4–6pm
Course website: https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/9740

Course description
How did medieval Christians writing in Latin perceive Islam and its adherents? What knowledge did they possess, and how did they acquire it? How did they engage with Islam in various Latin literary forms, and to what end? These questions and many others will be at the center of this graduate seminar, in which students will read large amounts of medieval Latin prose and poetry spanning from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries in a variety of genres, from epic poetry to polemical treatise, including texts that were pivotal in shaping the perception of Islam in the Early Modern period and beyond. Designed for graduate students with a solid background in Latin (familiarity with medieval Latin not required), this seminar will allow students to develop a thorough knowledge of a topic that remains relevant to this day.

Recommended text
Daniel, Norman. *Islam and the West: the making of an image.* Oxford: Oneworld, 1993.
Available at the Harvard COOP. All primary readings will be provided.

Requirements:
- Latin: Generous amounts, to be discussed in seminar (but not translated *in toto*).
- English: Substantial scholarly articles or chapters, to be read by everyone. Occasional presentation of articles or chapters that are not read by everyone.
- Seminar paper of fifteen pages.

Grading
20%   Participation and preparation
20%   Two presentations
20%   Close reading assignment
10%   Prospectus
30%   Final paper

Participation and Preparation
Attendance, active participation, and due preparation are crucial components of the course. All assigned readings are to be completed **prior** to the meeting of the class under which they are listed.

After more than one unexcused absence, a student's final grade will be reduced by one third of a letter grade (e.g., an A will become an A-) for each such absence. If you cannot attend a class meeting (for illness, a family emergency, an interview, or a varsity athletic match), please make every effort to contact me beforehand.

Two Presentations
Over the course of term, each student will give two presentations to practice presentation skills and to help other students contextualize the primary readings. For these presentations, students will summarize an item of secondary literature and lead the discussion on its relevance to the topic at hand. All texts will be provided on the course website or placed on reserve in Smyth. **Students will choose the date and topic of their presentations by the end of the second week of term.**

Close Reading Assignment
Students will discuss a relevant primary source of their choosing, demonstrating an ability to perform a sustained analysis of a primary text **without** recourse to secondary literature.

Prospectus
Students will develop a final paper topic, ideally centered on the primary source discussed in the Close Reading Assignment. By **April 11th**, you should have developed an idea of your topic in consultation with me and will submit a one-page proposal accompanied by a short preliminary bibliography of at least five items of secondary reading.

Final Paper
The final paper will be approximately 15 pages in length (double-spaced), and is due on the last day of reading period (**Wednesday, 5/04**, by midnight).

Late Assignments
All assignment deadlines are final, except in the event of medical or family emergencies. If such a situation should arise, please let me know as soon as possible by email, clearly stating the reason for the delay. In all other circumstances, the following rules apply: for the shorter assignments (i.e., the presentations and paper prospectus), late submissions will not be accepted and a grade of zero will be assigned; for the final paper, each day that the paper is late will be accompanied by reduction of the equivalent of a full letter grade.

Accessibility Education
Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with me by the end of the second week of the term.

Academic Dishonesty
Discussion of scholarship and sharing of sources are essential for successful academic work. You are encouraged to consult with the instructors about the written assignments for this course and to exchange ideas with your classmates. You should, however, ensure that any written work that you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing, and that it reflects **your own approach** to the topic. You must also provide full citation for any books, articles, websites, etc. that you have used in the preparation of your work. Other people's ideas and opinions must always be attributed to them. All quotation from published sources must be enclosed in quotation marks and the source must be acknowledged with a full citation. If you paraphrase a source, you must still acknowledge it by supplying a citation. **Plagiarism, whether of published sources or another student's work, will not be tolerated.** If this occurs, a grade of zero will be assigned and the case will be brought to the attention of university officials.

Schedule of Readings

Week 1

01/25: Introduction. Procedurals: syllabus and expectations, aims of the course; tools and resources

Week 2

02/01: Between Spain and Byzantium: John of Seville, Eulogius of Córdoba, and Paulus Alvarus; Anastasius the Librarian and Theophanes the Confessor
Secondary readings: Tieszen 2013, "Outlining borders of religious identity"; Neil 2013, "The earliest Greek understandings of Islam"; Southern 1964, *Western views of Islam in the Middle Ages*

PRESENTATION SIGN-UPS DUE

Week 3

02/08: The first Latin literary traditions: Embrico of Mainz and Walter of Compiègne
Secondary readings: Stella 2008; Tolan 2008, "Antihagiography" in *Sons of Ishmael*; Daniel, Chapter III
Presentation topic: Ratkowitsch 1993, "Das Grab des Propheten"

Week 4

02/15: PRESIDENT'S DAY: NO CLASS

Week 5

02/22: The Crusades and the medieval imagination: Guibert of Nogent, *Dei Gesta per Francos*, Ps.-Adelphus; Ps.-Turpin's *Historia*
Secondary readings: Bischoff 1984, "Ein Leben Mohammeds"; Tischler 2012, "Modes of literary behavior"; Daniel, Chapter IV
Presentation topic: Kedar 1984, *Crusade and mission*

Week 6

02/29: Pedro Alfonsi: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity in Spain and France
Secondary readings: Hasenhütl 2014, "Die Muhammad-Vita bei Petrus Alfonsi und bei Walter von Compiègne"; Di Cesare 2014, "Petrus Alfonsi and Islamic culture";
Presentation topic: Tolan 1993, *Petrus Alfonsi and his medieval readers*

Week 7

03/07: The Apology of al-Kindi; Christian-Muslim polemic in 8th-9th c. Baghdad (Coleman Connelly guest lecture)
Secondary readings: Van Koningsveld 2004; González Muñoz 2005, "Consideraciones"

Week 8

03/14: SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS

Week 9

03/21: Peter the Venerable: *Summa totius heresis; Liber contra sectam; Epistula de translatione*
Secondary readings: D'Alverny 1965, "La connaissance"; Tolan 2008, "Peter the Venerable on the 'Diabolical heresy of the Saracens'"; Iogna-Prat 2005, "The creation of a Christian armory against Islam" in *Order & exclusion*
Presentation topic: Kritzeck 1964, *Peter the Venerable and Islam*

Week 10

03/28: The Qur'anic translations of Robert of Ketton and Mark of Toledo
Secondary readings: D'Alverny 1948, "Deux traductions"; Burman 2007, *Reading the Quran in Latin Christendom*; Cecini 2013, "Main features of Mark of Toledo's Latin Quran"; Martínez Gázquez 2015, "Translations of the Qur'an and Other Islamic Texts before Dante (Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries)" in *Dante and Islam*
Presentation topic: Medieval translation practice

CLOSE READING DUE

Week 11

04/04: *Liber denudationis / Contrarietas alfolica*; Raimond Llull, *Liber de participatione christianorum et Saracenorum*. Discussion of final paper topics, tools, and methodology.
Secondary readings: Burman 1994 (introduction); Burman 1991, "The influence of the *Apology of al-Kindi* and *Contrarietas Alfolica* on Ramon Lull's late religious polemics"; de la Cruz Palma 2005, "Raymundus Lullus contra Sarracenos"
Presentation topic: Life and work of Raimond Llull

Week 12

04/11: Prospectus presentations; Riccoldo da Montecroce, *Confutatio Alcorani*; *Liber peregrinationis*
Secondary readings: Tvrtkovič 2014, *A Christian pilgrim in medieval Iraq*

PAPER PROSPECTUS DUE

Week 13

04/18: *Kitab al-Miʻraj*; Dante and Islam (guest lecture by Jan Ziolkowski)
Secondary readings: Hyatte 1997; Ziolkowski 2015, introduction to *Dante and Islam*; Schildgen 2015, "Philosophers, Theologians, and the Islamic Legacy in Dante: Inferno 4 versus Paradiso 4" in *Dante and Islam*; Frank 2015, "Dante's Muḥammad: Parallels between Islam and Arianism" in *Dante and Islam*; Battistoni 2015, "Dante and the Three Religions" in *Dante and Islam*

Week 14

04/25: *Liber Nycholay; Quomodo iniquus Machometus*; Nicholas of Cusa, *Cribratio Alchorani*. Post-script: Reformation and Islam, Martin Luther
Secondary readings: González Muñoz 2004; Biechler 1983, "Nicholas of Cusa and Muhammad. A fifteenth-century encounter"; Hopkins 1994, "The role of *pia interpretatio* in Nicholas of Cusa's hermeneutical approach to the Koran"; Selections from Levy et al. 2014, *Nicholas of Cusa and Islam: polemic and dialogue in the late Middle Ages*
Presentation topic: Burgevin 1969, *Nicholas Cusanus's criticism of the Koran in the light of his philosophy of religion* OR Francisco 2007, *Martin Luther and Islam: A Study in Sixteenth-Century Polemics and Apologetics*

Reading Period

05/04: FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE BY MIDNIGHT