HIST 3450, Section 001: Islam and its Empires  
Spring 2017  
Prof. Nancy L. Stockdale  
Time: Tuesdays, 6:30-9:20 PM  
Place: Wooten Hall 112

**Contact information:** Email: stockdale@unt.edu  
This is a very effective way for us to communicate, so feel free to reach me online. I check my accounts once per day, so please remember that you will not necessarily receive an instant reply from me, but I will answer your email in a timely manner. When emailing me, please identify yourself by giving me your entire name, the class you are in, and your specific question or request.  
**Office:** Wooten Hall #238  
**Office phone:** (940) 565-4209  
**Office hours:** Tuesdays 4:30-6:00 PM and by appointment. Please come and talk to me during office hours, as it is your time set aside for us to discuss history and the course. If you cannot come during these hours, please make an appointment to see me.

**Course Description:** In this class, students will learn the historical foundations of Islam and study the ways that Islamic-identified empires developed in the period between the 7th and 18th centuries. Topics studied include: the life of Muhammad and the early Islamic leadership; cultural borrowing and adaptation within the Islamic Empires; science and arts in Islamic societies; the positions and experiences of minorities under Islamic rule; Sufism; and other issues concerning the development and expansion of Islam as a political and religious force in history. This class will be taught primarily from Middle Eastern perspectives, and will include many contrasting Middle Eastern voices, to give students a wider sense of the variety of issues, ideas, and historical conclusions concerning this dynamic and influential region. Students should leave this course having a clear understanding about the emergence of Islam as a religion and social/political movement, the impact of empires calling themselves “Islamic” in the pre-modern period, and the significance and legacies of Islamic empires to larger trends in world history.

**Course Readings:** There are seven (7) required books for this course:

Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: A Prophet for Our Time*  
Ross Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta*  
Vernon Egger, *A History of the Muslim World to 1405*  
Jim al-Khalili, *The House of Wisdom*  
James Lindsay, *Daily Life in the Medieval Islamic World*  
Rumi (Coleman Barks, translator) *The Essential Rumi*  
Michael Sells, *Approaching the Qur’an*

I cannot stress enough how important it is for you to keep up and complete all of your assigned readings. You will be examined on the information in your books just as you will the lectures, and you will be expected to integrate readings into our class discussions.
as well. If you have any troubles understanding any of the readings, feel free to come in to office hours to discuss them with me, and/or bring up this issue in class. Note that I will be giving unannounced quizzes throughout the semester based on your readings if I find that people are not reading, so make sure that you do the readings on time! Assignments for the books are located in the calendar section of this syllabus.

**Grading:** Your grade for the course will be weighted as follows: class participation (which includes participation on Blackboard discussion forums)—15%, paper--25%, a midterm--25%, and a final--35%. If you have any questions about your grades once received, please come to see me (at least 24 hours after receiving them) during my office hours. There is no curve in this class.

**Exams:** You will be given a take-home midterm (due March 7th). This will be an essay exam and you will have one week to complete it. You will be given a final (in-class on May 9th 6:30-8:30 PM), and this will be a “Green Book” exam that is closed book (i.e., you will not be allowed to use notes or any other aids to take this exam). I will supply the Green Books and you will bring a pen. There will not be make-ups for these exams, so if you have any other engagements, change them and come prepared to turn in the test at the scheduled time/take the test at the scheduled time.

**Paper:** You will write one 6-page paper, due April 18th, before lecture starts. If you need help with your writing, feel free to come to me for assistance. The assignment is attached to this syllabus. Please note: it will NOT be possible for you to turn this paper in late, so please prepare to turn it in on time.

**Turning in things late:** This is a simple one--I do not accept late assignments. All work must be turned in to me by the due date and time! If not, your grade will suffer, because you will receive a 0% for that assignment. Of course, there are life events that pop up that make it impossible for you to turn your assignment in. Such events include death, extreme ill health, etc. If this is the case, please talk with me. (Please don’t fake someone’s death.) Otherwise, turn in your assignments on time.

**ADA Accommodation:** The University of North Texas abides by the legal code of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and I am happy to give qualifying students accommodations. However, the only way that I can provide these accommodations is if you register with the Office of Disability Accommodation in advance of the date when you need such accommodation. Students register with this office, and the office in turn notifies professors of the types of accommodations necessary. If you don’t register with them, I cannot provide any special accommodations. If you do register with them, we can set up the accommodations you require through their office.

This is UNT's ADA statement for syllabi: “The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding
your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at http://www.unt.edu/oda. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.”

**Plagiarism and cheating:** Plagiarism and cheating take many forms, including, but not limited to: the use of another author's words without citation, cutting and pasting uncited materials from the internet, having someone else do your work and claiming it as your own, and copying from another student’s paper or exam. All writing is the intellectual property of the person who came up with it; just think about what would happen if you suddenly starting marketing Microsoft Word as your own software, or released downloads of Grimes songs claiming to be the band--this is plagiarism. If you are caught cheating or plagiarizing, you may be expelled from UNT. Trust me, I will catch you and I will prosecute you, because plagiarism makes me very angry. If you are still unsure at any time during the semester as to what plagiarism is, please come and talk to me.

In order to protect students who do not plagiarize, I will be having everyone in the course submit their papers and midterms electronically, directly to our Blackboard Learn page.

**Classroom decorum:** As a courtesy to me as well as your fellow students, please do not come late to class, nor leave early. Also, please turn off all mobile phones, pagers, music players, and other disruptive devices before entering the classroom. Do not pretend to be taking notes on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device, only to be surfing the net, IMing, texting, or otherwise disrupting people with your computer/phone shenanigans. Furthermore, do not photograph or record the class in any way, including audio or video tape, or digital recording devices, unless you have approved that as a necessary action with me and the Office of Disability Accommodation.

**Guns:** The legislature of the State of Texas has enacted Texas Senate Bill 11, which you may read in its entirety at [http://www.legis.state.tx.us/tlodocs/84R/billtext/html/SB00011F.htm](http://www.legis.state.tx.us/tlodocs/84R/billtext/html/SB00011F.htm). This law permits the concealed carry of firearms on our campus by people with the appropriate license. Per the UNT policy on this law ([http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/04.001_CarryingOfConcealedHandgunsOnCampus_2016.pdf](http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/04.001_CarryingOfConcealedHandgunsOnCampus_2016.pdf)), I am not permitted to ban firearms from my office nor my classrooms.

Please note: I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus.
Schedule:

WEEK ONE/January 17th: Introduction & The Middle East before Islam
Reading: Egger, 1-31

WEEK TWO/January 24th: Muhammad and the arrival of Islam
Reading: all of Armstrong

WEEK THREE/January 31st: Early Islamic Society & early Islamic expansion
Reading: Egger, 33-61, Sells – Read the introduction (pages differ depending on edition)

WEEK FOUR/February 7th: The Emergence of Arab supremacy in the Middle East
Reading: Lindsay, 1-85, Sells – begin reading the Suras

WEEK FIVE/February 14th: The Abbasids and Islamic diversities
Reading: Egger, 62-84, Sells- finish the book

WEEK SIX/February 21st: Islamic Schism
Reading: Lindsay, 86-138

WEEK SEVEN/February 28th: The Mind, the Arts, and the Market
Reading: Egger, 85-171
TAKE HOME MIDTERM DISTRIBUTED

WEEK EIGHT/March 7th: Minorities in the Islamic Empires
Reading: catch up!
TAKE HOME MIDTERM DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

WEEK NINE/March 14th
SPRING BREAK—Have a great vacation!

WEEK TEN/March 21st: The Era of the Crusades
Reading: all of al-Khalili

WEEK ELEVEN/March 28th: Mysticism and Popular Religion
Reading: all of Rumi

WEEK TWELVE/April 4th: Islamic Empires Beyond the Middle East
Reading: Egger, 208-256

WEEK THIRTEEN/April 11th: Non-Arabs Conquer the Islamic Heartland
Reading: Lindsay, 139-207; Reading: Egger, 256-318
WEEK FOURTEEN/April 18th: Islamic Exploration
Reading: all of Dunn
TERM PAPER DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

WEEK FIFTEEN/April 25th: The Rise of the Ottomans and the Middle East on the brink of European hegemony
Reading: catch up!

WEEK SIXTEEN/May 2nd
WRAP UP AND REVIEW!

FINAL EXAM: May 9th, 6:30-8:30 PM
This will be in an in-class green book exam. I will provide the Green Books. Please bring an ink pen (not a pencil). This is a closed note and closed book exam.
Paper Assignment

This paper is due before the start of class on April 18th, 2017. Late papers will not be accepted. It must be at least seven (7) pages double-spaced, with appropriate margins and in 12 point Times font. You will turn it in electronically at the class Blackboard Learn site at https://learn.unt.edu.

Answer this question for your paper:

In Karen Armstrong’s biography of Muhammad, we are presented with the life of one of the most influential figures of history. The early Islamic community, as she presents it, was diverse in social position, but relatively homogenous in culture. However, the message of Islam was universal, and within less than 200 years, millions of people over three continents embraced the faith and/or were ruled by governments identified as “Islamic.” By the late medieval period, a person such as Ibn Battuta could travel for years and remain within the dar al-Islam, or “House of Islam” (Islamic lands.) Using Armstrong’s biography and Dunn’s telling of Ibn Battuta’s travels, explain how and why it was that Islam was able to achieve such expansive success. What was it about the message of Islam that was so appealing? How did the life of Muhammad serve as a role model to Muslims? How was Islam molded and shaped—and how did it mold and shape—many societies as it moved across the landscape of time and place?

Remember: I can help you throughout the writing process! Please do not hesitate to come to me for help if you need it. Come see me in office hours or email me at stockdale@unt.edu and we'll set up an appointment to fit our mutual schedules.

And don't forget: You will turn this paper in electronically on our Blackboard Learn page. A word to the wise: You are required to cite any quotations you take from any source, as well as any ideas that are not your original thoughts. I do not care which citation format you use—MLA, parenthetical, Turabian, Chicago, etc.—but you must use one and be consistent. Please come to me if you would like further help with this concept.

And some more advice: PROOFREAD! Don't just rely on the spell-checker, because it's always inadequate. Read over your paper in hard copy format, and get someone else you trust to read it over as well—a roommate, a friend, a partner—and make corrections before you print out the copy you will turn in. This is crucial because I expect these papers to be made up of excellent spelling and grammar as well as scintillating historical insight—yes, I do count grammar and composition! How can I follow your arguments if I can't understand what they are?

Things to double-check when proofreading your paper: Have you cited all sources? Have you written full sentences? Have you purged your language of Internet jargon, contractions, and other informalities? Have you fully answered the question? Have you proofread and not merely relied upon the spellchecker of your word processing program? Do you have a thesis and have you supported that thesis with historical evidence?
Things I do not want to see in your academic term paper: No dictionary definitions. No Wikipedia or other unreliable sources from the Internet. No mega-paragraphs that go on for pages and pages and incorporate millions of topics: one paragraph = one topic. Please don't go off on tangents about your life. Anecdotes are not historical evidence, and your opinion should only be expressed with historical evidence to support it.

**Don't wait until the last minute to write your paper.** Good luck!