Morocco: History on the Cusp of Three Continents

Explores the range and limits of social mixture – cultural, political, economic – as three civilizations met at the northwest corner of Africa and influenced one another from the 8th to the 21st centuries.

This reading seminar, open to both advanced undergraduate and graduate students, explores the history of the northwest African kingdom of Morocco. Because it is located on the cusp of three continents, the region has long been affected by developments elsewhere. Through focusing on Morocco, we will learn about its people’s historical interactions with Europe (especially colonization by and emigration to and from Spain and France), the Middle East (from where Muslim invaders came in the 8th and 12th centuries), and Africa (through trade across the Sahara).

Most of our reading will be in the form of monographs, but there are a few comprehensive histories in English that students may wish to purchase or consult because they provide useful background. One example is Jamil-Abun Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib in the Muslim Period*. The Journal of North African Studies may be found on the 6th floor of Mugar Library; its call number is DT 160 J68. I intend to give a mini-lecture at the end of each class to introduce you to the material of the following week.

Seven titles by the following authors may be purchased: Ibn Khaldun (*The Muqaddimah*), Maria Menocal (*Ornament of the World*), Natalie Z. Davis (*Trickster Travels*), Aomar Boum (*Memories of Absence*), S.G. Miller (*A History of Modern Morocco*), Mohamed Choukri (*By Bread Alone*), Fatima Mernissi (*Dreams of Trespass*). The books by Miller and el Hamel (*Black Morocco*) are available online at Mugar. All our required readings are on 2-hour reserve in Mugar library (or on Blackboard if they are articles). Supplementary readings are optional.

We have the good fortune to be seeing three Moroccan films on selected evenings. They will be shown before we meet to discuss a book that is relevant to their subject matter. In this way, I hope you’ll gain greater visceral familiarity with the Maghreb, its languages and landscapes. One evening we will dine together on Moroccan cuisine.

**Evaluation Criteria**

The forms of evaluation in this seminar will emphasize writing in two forms. The first will be **weekly one-page précis** statements that describe the central argument and evidence in the week’s reading, as well as raise a provocative issue for discussion (30%). The second writing exercise will be a **15 page bibliographic essay** that surveys the
Academic Integrity
Students are expected to observe the procedures and guidelines regarding plagiarism and academic integrity prescribed by the Arts and Sciences Academic Conduct Code. Those guidelines are provided on the following websites:
http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/undergrad-resources/code/
http://www.bu.edu/grs/academics/resources/adp.html

1. Sept. 3  Introduction: The Historical Grid, a broad overview

THE MIDDLE AGES

2. Sept. 10  A Muslim Perspective


3. Sept. 17  A European Perspective

Maria Rosa Menocal, The Ornament of the World, How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Muslim Spain (omitting the five chapters on the following pages: pp.101-29, 147-73, 216-28);


4. Sept. 24  An African Perspective

Chouki el Hamel, Black Morocco, a history of slavery, race, and Islam, chapters 1 to 6 (pp. 1-240)

THE EARLY MODERN WORLD

5. Oct. 1 The Aftermath of the Expulsion from Spain: Through the eyes of Leo Africanus

Natalie Zemon Davis, Trickster Travels: a Sixteenth Century Muslim between Worlds, chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9.


6. October 8 Piracy and its aftermath

Thomas Pellow, The Adventures of Thomas Pellow, selected chapters (online), and S.G. Miller, A History of Modern Morocco, chapters 1 and 2.

Supplementary reading: Nabil Mattar, Britain and Barbary 1589-1689; Linda Colley, Captives, the story of Britain’s pursuit of empire and how its soldiers and civilians were held captive by the dream of global supremacy 1600-1850, Part One (pp. 23-134); Charles Hanford Adams, The Narrative of Robert Adams, A Barbary Captive; Paul Baepler, White Slaves, African Masters.

THE COLONIAL ENCOUNTER

7. Oct. 15 The Coming of the French and the Spanish

Susan G. Miller, The History of Modern Morocco, chapters 3, 4, 5; el Hamel, chapter 7

Supplementary reading: Susan Miller (trans. and ed.), Disorienting Encounters, Travels of a Moroccan Scholar in France 1845-1846; Sebastian Balfour, Deadly Embrace, Morocco and the Road to the Spanish Civil War; Edmund Burke III, Prelude to

Film: “Where are you going, Moshe?” (Hassan Benjelloun, 2007)

8. Oct. 22 The Jewish Presence

Aomar Boum, Memories of Absence, How Muslims remember Jews in Morocco


Film: “Ali Zaoua” (Nabil Ayouch, 2000, 98 mins.)

9. Oct. 29 Life in Modern Cities

Mohamed Choukri, For Bread Alone; Fatima Mernissi, Dreams of Trespass


INDEPENDENCE

10. Nov. 5 A Powerful King and Domestic Dissent

Susan Miller, chapters 6 and 7; Susan Slyomovics, The Performance of Human Rights in Morocco, chapters 4 and 6

11. Nov. 12  Berber Culture and Nationalism (incl. visit by Prof. C. Becker)


Film: “Le Grand Voyage” (2004, 108 mins.)

12. Nov. 19  Islams: Integriisme/Political Islam and Sufism (incl. visit by Prof. Malika Zeghal)


13. Dec. 3  Presentation of papers (due 10 Dec. so the presentations should be designed to evoke constructive criticism from the audience)

14. Dec. 10  CONCLUSIONS