

HIS 301.01

The Medieval Mediterranean

M/W 11:00am-12:20pm

Satisfies: ESI

Prof. Mohamad Ballan

The medieval Mediterranean world was an integral component of a dynamic and interconnected universe characterized by mobility, transformation and exchange. It was among the most politically sophisticated, culturally diverse, and prosperous human societies on earth well into the eighteenth century, and reflected the entangled histories of Europe, Africa and Asia between 600 and 1700. In the first part of the course, we will closely explore one specific case study of medieval Mediterranean history, namely the emergence of the Islamic Empire during the seventh and eighth centuries, and concentrate on the basics of reading and assessing secondary sources and analyzing and using primary sources. In the second part of the course, you will apply these skills to a specific historical topic of your choosing, in close consultation with the instructor. Over the course of the semester, you will identify a topic, develop a coherent research plan, and produce a final paper (8-10 pages) focusing on one aspect of medieval Mediterranean history. This will be done in close collaboration with the instructor and your classmates.

This is a 301 Workshop in the craft of history, with an emphasis on source analysis, writing & argumentation, and historical research methods. As the gateway course for the capstone seminar (401), 301 teaches students how to interpret and critique primary and secondary sources, become proficient in the standards of writing in History, and develop competency in library research.