

Islam and Christianity

Intersections Class - Spring 2017

Course Outline

April 23rd

The History of Islam

April 30th

Culture of Islam

May 7th

Islam and Christianity

May 14th

Bridging the Divide – Islam and the Gospel

May 21st

Our Response to Islam

Why are we here?

- Dark Time in Islamic History
- Mass Migration
 - We are currently experiencing the largest mass migration of Muslims in world history
 - Muslims are coming out from under many repressive regimes and societies and can discuss beliefs more freely than any time in recent history
 - Especially Europe, where outreach opportunities abound
- Arab Youth Survey
 - An overwhelming majority of **young Arabs reject Daesh (ISIS)** and believe the group will fail to establish an Islamic state.
 - Many young Arabs believe Sunni-Shia relations are deteriorating (and are a major cause of unrest in the area) and that **religion plays too big of a role in the middle east.**
 - Arab youth want their leaders to do more to **improve the personal freedom and human rights of citizens, particularly women.**
- Personally

Islam and Christianity

Day 1 The History of Islam

Muhammad, Islamic Expansion, and Islamic Practices

Arabian Religions Circa 500AD

- Christianity had been around for about 500 years
 - Few practitioners were to be found in and around Medina and Mecca
 - It is not clear how well current biblical interpretations were practiced or taught within this remote community (heretical)
 - There was no Arabic Language Bible (first published in 1516)
- Judaism was also well known in this part of the world
 - Several tribes that adhered to Jewish traditions lived in the area – including three large (and relatively wealthy) tribes in the agricultural Yathrib (Medina).
 - They were known to worship Allah, but their scriptures likely remained private.
- Most of the Arab population was polytheistic (pagan)
 - Knowledge of Allah may be due to Abrahamic traditions or was a Jewish influence , but it is not clear.
 - Allah (“The God”) was among these and it seems he may have been the supreme God.
 - Several lesser gods were enshrined with Allah in the Ka’aba in Mecca, a key trading center in this part of Arabia.
 - Jinn (Genies), spirits, evil eyes, and omens permeated beliefs as well.

Birth & Youth of Mohammad

- Mohammad was born to the Quraysh tribe, Banu Hashim clan in ~570AD
 - His family was fairly successful and well respected in Medina
- Mohammad was orphaned at six and was raised by his paternal grandfather then his paternal uncle.
- Spent time on caravans, trading on routes between the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean.
 - He developed a reputation of being fair, just, and trustworthy.
- In ~595AD, he was married to Khadija, a wealthy widow that had hired him to run a caravan to Syria.
 - This was a good marriage, providing Muhammad with love, wealth, an influential position, and six children (two boys).

The Revelations of Mohammad

- Mohammad often went to seek God in solitude by visiting a cave outside Medina.
- During one of his trips he experienced an angel
 - Passage from EWI pg. 7
- Revelations paused for about three years before resuming
- The heart of the revelations are:
 - There is no god but Allah, creator of heaven and earth
 - Man is God's slave whose duty it is to submit to the will of God
 - God's goodness and mercy are seen in His provision for all of man's needs
 - A great and terrible Judgment Day is coming when all the dead will be raised to life and judged – and sent to either a sensual paradise or condemned to Hell.
 - The worst evil is to associate other gods with God
 -

Establishment of Islam

- Early believers were very few – and mostly family
- Expansion was first with those of humble origin, with city leaders rejecting his claims and teaching.
- As Muhammad started to attack the other gods as no gods at all, he started to be persecuted, and sent 80% of his followers to Ethiopia (then Christian). His uncle (Abu Talib) prevented actions from being taken against Muhammad.
 - Read EWI passage Pg 22
- In 620, both his uncle and wife died
 - Within two years (622), he left for Yathrib, renamed Medina (“City of the Prophet”) in his honor. There his followers rejoined him from Ethiopia.
 - This is the foundational date for the Islamic calendar
- In Medina, his message was much better received. He imitated Jewish custom in prayer, but eventually broke with Jewish and Christian practices. While he held their scriptures to be true, he believed the followers had misinterpreted them.
- With funds exhausted, he received a revelation to “...contend against the infidels...and be rigorous with them.” (Sura 9:73). Many victorious raids convinced others that Muhammad was divinely connected.
- Muhammad then conquered the local tribes and, after many battles between Mecca and Medina, he was able to finally conquer Mecca in 630. He cleansed the Ka’aba upon his entry.
- His last pilgrimage to Mecca (the greater, or Hajj) was in 632. He took his wives and performed all of the (then) pagan rites of passage, thus setting the example and incorporating them into Islamic practices. He died later that year.

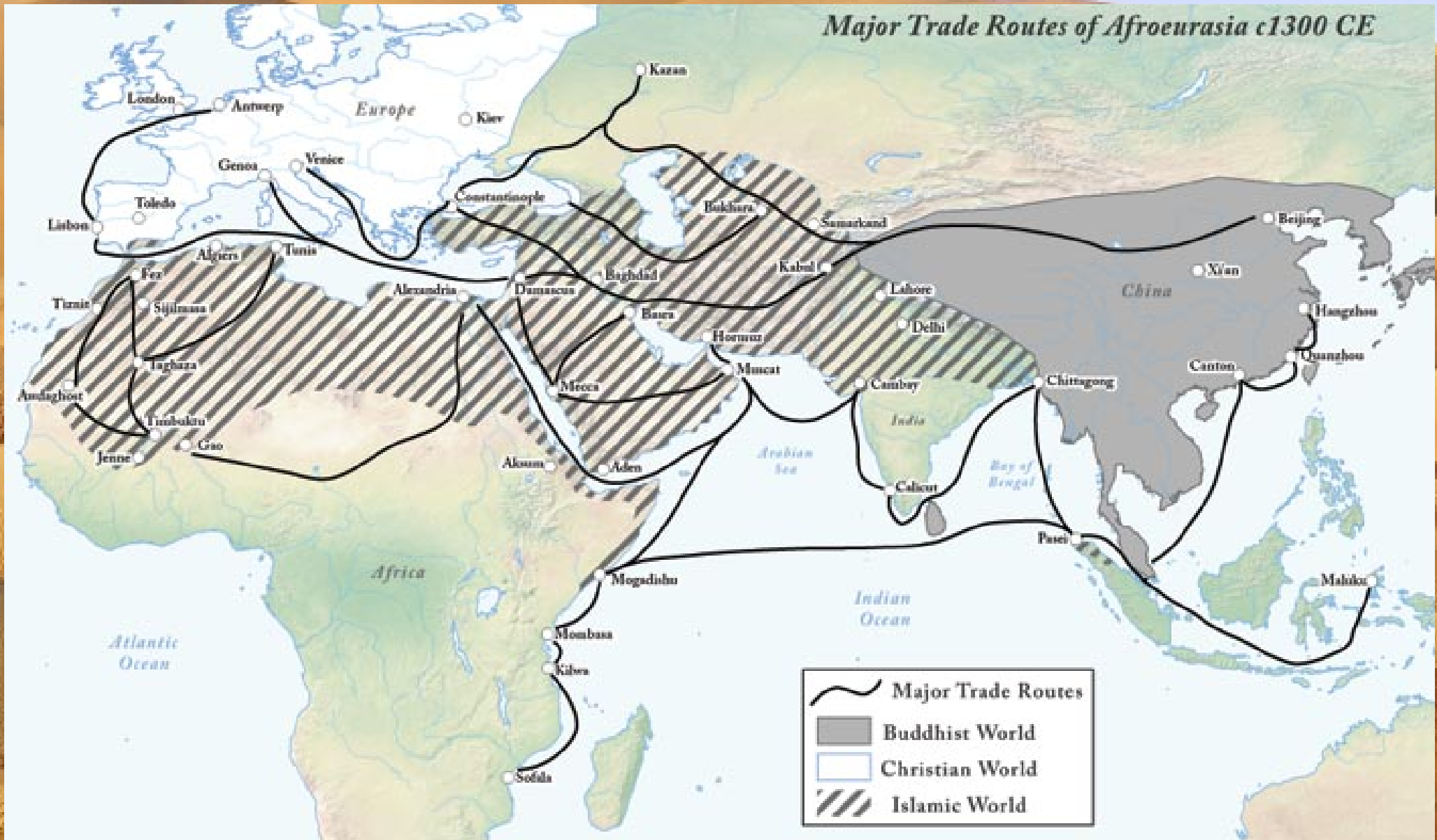
The Expansion of Islam

- The expansion occurs well after Mohammad's death.



See EWI pg 35.

The Expansion of Islam



Islamic Practices – Holy Books

- The Torah – The books of Abraham, Moses, and David
- The Gospels – The books of Jesus
- The Qur'an – The recitation of Mohammad. Came into being as a book after Muhammad's death. 644-656
- The Hadith – The collected stories of the life, words, actions, and habits of Muhammad.
- Shari'a – Codified rules and principles derived from the Qur'an and Hadith setting judicial precedence and law.

Islamic Practices – Pillars of Faith

- Confession of Faith – Formal recitation of the creed with full knowledge of its meaning
- Adoration and Prayer – Traditionally performed five times each day, with both words and motions strictly prescribed by tradition.
- Alms giving – The most treasured of the pillars, this requires Muslims to give a prescribed amount of their incomes to the poor. The amount may vary by sect or country, and in some countries is administered as a tax.
- Fasting – Ritual fasting during daylight hours in the month of Ramadan.
- Pilgrimage – Traditionally, a once in a lifetime obligation to follow in the footsteps of Muhammad during his great pilgrimage to Mecca (The Hajj).

Islamic Practices – Articles of Faith

- One God
- Messengers of God
- Scriptures
- Angels
- Day of Judgment
- God's infinite power and plan
- Life's purpose
- Dignified Status of Man
- Islam Universal
- Freedom, responsibility, and sin
- Salvation by belief and practice
- Unreached not responsible
- Goodness of Human nature
- Faith is completed by Convictions
- Qur'an is God's only perfect word
- The traditions of Muhammad

Table Discussion Topics

- If you are new to the study of Islam, what items did you find most enlightening or surprising?
- How well do the Mohammadan Revelations align with the Great Commandment? With the Lord's Prayer?
- How does Muhammad's first revelatory experience compare with angelic encounters from the Old and New Testaments?
- What is the single question you most desire to have answered in this series?