

## NES 153 Synagogues, Cathedrals, and Mosques: The Rise and Fall of Islamic Iberia

Fall 2018 – MWF 11 am – Barrows 166  
Nasser Meerkhan

**Office hours:** Mon 12.15-1.15 pm, Wed 8.45-9.45 am

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This course will focus on the cultural history of Islamic Iberia (Al-Andalus) from the Muslim conquest of 711 until the expulsion of Moriscos in 1609 CE. Topics covered include the history, literature, architecture, arts and music of Al-Andalus. The major aim is for the students to develop an understanding of, and a sensibility to the history, politics, and cultures of Al-Andalus as well as its social and cultural relevance to contemporary audiences.

### Required texts:

Constable, Olivia Remie. *Medieval Iberia: Readings From Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. Available through bookstore & on [Amazon](#) and [Barnes & Noble](#). **Used books are fine; older/other editions are not.**

Other readings on bCourses site (marked below with asterisk)

### Expectations

Students are expected to:

1. Come to class with textbook, printed readings and/or laptops.
2. Spend three hours studying/preparing for each hour of class time.
3. Participate actively in class; challenging themselves to go beyond their comfort zone in order to make the most out of their learning experience.
4. Be respectful and open about others' opinions and interpretations of readings, especially when they disagree.
5. Turn in assignments promptly, following [MLA recommended formatting](#)
6. Provide reasonable feedback about the course whenever they deem it necessary.
7. Phones are **not allowed** (unless asked to use them for polls, etc.)

### Course Requirements and Grading

1. Class attendance and participation (10%): Your attendance and daily participation is crucial not only for your grade, but for the success of this class. Students are expected to come to class having carefully done the assigned readings.
2. Semester-long cultural project (25%): Students will work in groups of four or five on an ePortfolio to explore a cultural topic relevant to Al-Andalus (list of suggested topics available on bCourses > ePortfolio).

The project will comprise four entries on the ePortfolio website. The first entry will explain why the students have chosen this specific topic and what their expectations are. The second and third entries will constitute the core of the project where students a) study previous literature on the chosen topic and b) provide a “close reading” of the *text* in question (be the object of study written word, images, buildings, music, etc.) The final entry will comprise a personal reflection on the outcomes of the project. This is an on-going endeavor, which means students will have the chance to improve their entries until the very end of the semester, when all projects will be assessed for a final grade. Besides each student’s own undertaking, groups will be assigned to comment on each other’s entries, providing feedback and suggestions.

3. Informal journals (10%): You are expected to write four journals (2.5% each) where you reflect on the texts that you are reading in class. This is *your* space to express *your* thoughts freely on the texts, and the ways in which you can relate to them.
4. Midterm (%15) and final (%35) exams: Both exams are cumulative and will include multiple-choice questions, true or false, short essay prompts, etc.

**Tentative program (subject to change)**

Date	To read before class – To be covered in class	Assignments <sup>1</sup>
<b>Iberia before Islam: The Visigoths</b>		
Week 1 <i>Introduction to course, Visigothic history and arts</i>		
W, Aug 22	Syllabus; Course Introduction: What do we mean by Islamic Iberia?	
F, Aug 24	Visigothic Arts & History: Constable, pp. 1-20, *Ripoll Lopez, Gisela "Formation of Visigothic Spain"	
<b>The Islamic Conquest: 711-750</b>		
Week 2 <i>A Turbulent Beginning: Al-Andalus before Abdul Rahman I</i>		
M, Aug 27	History: Constable, pp. 33-42.	
W, Aug 29	Literature: *Legendary speech of Tariq Ibn Ziyad (by Maqqari)	
F, Aug 31	Architecture: *Dickie, James. “The Hispano-Arab Garden”	
M, Sept 3	<b>Labor Day – No class</b>	
<b>The Emirate: 750-912</b>		
Week 3 <i>The Umayyads Resurrect</i>		
W, Sept 5	Poetry: *Abdul Rahman I (poems) *Kennedy, Hugh. “Conquest and the Age of the Amirs: 711-56”	
F, Sept 7	Architecture: *Dodds, Jerrilyn. “The Great Mosque of Cordoba”	ePortfolio Entry 1
Week 4 <i>Resistance: The Murwalladun and their rebellion</i>		

<sup>1</sup> All assignments are due online at 11.59 pm the day before class.

M, Sept 10	History: Constable, pp. 47-54.	
W, Sept 12	Literature: *Selections from <i>The Unique Necklace</i>	
F, Sept 14	Arts: *The music of muwashshahat (Audio/Video) *Davila, Carl. <i>Fixing a Misbegotten Biography: Ziryab in the Mediterranean World</i> [Selection]	Journal 1
<b>The Caliphate (and hijaba): 929-1031</b>		
Week 5 <i>The Golden Age of Cordoba</i>		
M, Sept 17	History: Constable, pp. 75-90.	
W, Sept 19	Poetry: *Ibn Masarra, *Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi (selected poems)	
F, Sept 21	Architecture: *Vallejo, Tiano. “Madinat al-Zahra’: The Triumph of the Islamic State”	
Week 6 <i>The rise and fall of Banu ‘Amir</i>		
M, Sept 24	History: *Hillenbrand, Robert. “The Ornament of the World: Medieval Cordoba as a Cultural Centre.”	ePortfolio Entry 2
W, Sept 26	Poetry: *Jarchas [Selection]	
F, Sept 28	Architecture: *King, G. “The Mosque Bab Mardum in Toledo and the Influences Acting Upon It”	
<b>The Taifa Kingdoms: 1033- 1086</b>		
Week 7 <i>Beginning of The End</i>		
M, Oct 1	History: *Ibn Bullugin, Tibyan [Selection], *The risala of Ibn Gharsiya	Journal 2
W, Oct 3	Literature: Constable, pp. 103-6, 122-24; *Ibn Zaydun; *Wallada [Selections]	
F, Oct 5	Arts: *Robinson, Cynthia. “Arts of the Taifa Kingdoms.”	
M, Oct 8	<b>Midterm Exam – in Class</b>	
<b>The Almoravids: 1086 - 1147</b>		
Week 8 <i>Help or Invasion?</i>		
W, Oct 10	History: Constable, 138-141, 227-233	
F, Oct 12	Literature: *Ibn Hazm; *Ibn Quzman; *al-Saraqusti [Selections]	
<b>The Almohads: 1147 - 1248</b>		
Week 9 <i>Decline of Religious Tolerance</i>		
M, Oct 15	History: Constable, 239-251	ePortfolio Entry 3
W, Oct 17	Literature: *Hafsa Al Rakunyya; *Ar-Rundi; *Ibn Arabi [Selection]	
F, Oct 19	Architecture & Arts: *Ruiz, Begoña, and Alfonso Jiménez. “A Fifteenth-Century Plan of the Cathedral of Seville.”; *Partearroyo, Cristina “Almoravid and Almohad textiles”	
Week 10 <i>Golden Age of Jewish Culture in Spain</i>		
M, Oct 22	History: Constable 265-67; *Scheindlin, Raymon “The Jews in Muslim Spain”	

W, Oct 24	Literature: *Harizi; *Maimonides; *Abraham Ibn Ezra [Selection]	
F, Oct 26	Architecture: *Meir, Ben-Dov. <i>The Golden Age: Synagogues of Spain in History and Architecture</i> [Selections]	Journal 3
<b>Nasrid Kingdom of Granada: 1230 - 1492</b>		
Week 11 <i>The Final Stronghold</i>		
M, Oct 29	History: Constable, 463-69.	
W, Oct 31	Literature: *Ibn al-Khatib; *Ibn Zamrak; *Abu Hayyan [Selections]	
F, Nov 2	Architecture: *Dickie, James "The Palaces of the Alhambra"	
<b>The Moriscos: 1492-1609</b>		
Week 12 <i>Mass Conversions, Resistance and Revolts</i>		
M, Nov 5	History: Constable, 496-512.	ePortfolio Final Entry
W, Nov 7	Literature: *Anonymous, <i>Poema de Yuçuf</i> [Selections]	
F, Nov 9	Arts: *Vernet, Juan "The Legacy of Islam in Spain"	
Week 13 <i>The Expulsion of Moriscos</i>		
M, Nov 12	History: Constable, 535-546.	
W, Nov 14	Literature: *Cervantes, Miguel de. <i>Don Quixote</i> [Selection]	
F, Nov 16	Arts: *Roselló Bordoy, Guillermo. "The Ceramics of Al-Andalus"	
<b>Al-Andalus Today</b>		
Week 14 <i>Nostalgia Revisited</i>		
M, Nov 19	History: * Shannon, Jonathan H. "Performing Al-Andalus, Remembering Al-Andalus: Mediterranean Soundings from Mashriq to Maghrib."	Journal 4
<b>Nov 21- Nov 23</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Break – No classes</b>	
Week 15 <i>Futures of Al-Andalus</i>		
M, Nov 26	History: *Lopez-Gomez, Margarita "Islamic Civilization in Al-Andalus. A Final Assessment"	
W, Nov 28	Literature: *Boase, Roger "Arab Influences on European Love-Poetry"	Final ePortfolio
F, Nov 30	Arts: *Dodds, Jerrilyn. "The Arts of Al-Andalus."	
<b>FINAL EXAM: Monday, December 10 @ 11.30 am</b>		

**Suggested secondary readings (on reserve):**

Coope, Jessica A. *The Most Noble of People. [Electronic Resource]: Religious, Ethnic, and Gender Identity in Muslim Spain*. University of Michigan Press, 2016.

Gerli, E M, and Samuel G. Armistead. *Medieval Iberia: An Encyclopedia. [Electronic Resource]* Routledge, 2003.

Menocal, Maria Rosa. *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance In Medieval Spain*. Little, Brown, 2002.

Nirenberg, David. *Communities of Violence. [Electronic Resource]: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages*. ACLS Humanities E-Book., Princeton University Press, c1996.

Patterson, Lee. *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1987.

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