

### Advice for Future Students from Students Who Took the Course in Fall 2018

For future students, I highly recommend this course. It is very interesting and you'll learn a lot about math, history, and religion. My top suggestion is to keep up with the reading and to take the time to understand what you're reading. Taking the time to reread parts you don't understand will help a lot for homework and for exams. I would also highly recommend going to help sessions for homework, and on starting the homework early so that you can ask any questions you have. Professor Aydin is a great resource as well and is always available to explain things.

I am incredibly glad that I took this class. I was shocked that, even having attended a liberal high school and having taken numerous courses at Kenyon dedicated to Arabic and the history of the Middle East, I didn't really know any of this information. I feel that this class has filled a large gap in my education and am grateful that I now have a more inclusive, accurate view of history. I would certainly recommend this class to my friends so that they could also obtain the same information and accurate view of history. All in all, this class helped me brush up on my math skills while also teaching me incredibly important information about history and how to improve my study skills. I enjoyed the presentations at the NICC. I was very excited to have the opportunity to tour the mosque and learn more about what it hopes to achieve in the Columbus area. I was not expecting as many people as there were in the audience. I was very happy that the very important information we were sharing would be spread to more people I definitely think the trip to NICC needs to continue to be a part of the class. My recommendation for future students taking the course is to make sure to keep up with the information throughout the semester so that it is easier to remember the math information before the exam. It is better to be diligent and read and study every day than to try to cram before the exam. I found it very helpful when preparing for the math portion of the exam to do each of the practice problems at least twice without looking at notes to make sure I understood the process. I did not have enough time to do this for the second exam, and my grade on the second exam definitely reflected that. I also wish I had taken advantage of office hours more and feel that I would have come away with a better understanding of the math had I done that. My final recommendation is to appreciate the unique class that this is, and to take advantage of the incredible opportunities available in the course (the opportunity to speak with the author of *The First Scientist*, the opportunity to engage with the community at NICC, the opportunity to publicly present your work, etc), because you can come away with something really magical if you do!

My biggest advice to new students taking this course is to relish in the opportunity to learn math in the style of medieval mathematicians. The math was definitely the hardest part, but it was also what made the course so unique. I am able to understand different number bases and the foundations of trigonometry. I now understand *why* and *how* certain math concepts came to be (i.e. completing the square). Actually computing the problems in the style of the medieval Islamic scholars has helped me appreciate how amazing it is that they were able to figure all of this stuff out. I hope new students taking this course can see how amazing that aspect of the course is, even if it's the most challenging component. I would definitely recommend this class to my friends because it is completely unique. There is no other class that combines so many disciplines and teaches such an important lesson about the method of teaching and inscribing history.

I would not hesitate to recommend this course to my friends. Though I did struggle at times, I learned a great deal in this class and had a lot of fun with the final project. To students signing up for the course, I would have two pieces of advice. First, to do the readings slowly and carefully. Though the chapters are often short (namely, in Berggren), I have often regretted not reading more thoroughly when I'm in class and don't understand the exercises because I didn't read carefully enough. Secondly, I would highly encourage going to office hours and help sessions. Personally, I could not conceive of doing well on the homework without either of these. I only went to office hours relatively late in the course, and when I got my first A on a homework assignment I regretted not going earlier. Overall, I enjoyed my time in this class, and I would recommend it to any student interested in a math or history course

I would also recommend this course to others, for that very reason of righting the wrong in history, at least on a personal level. I also found studying the methods of the many ancient mathematicians to be fascinating, as we sort of deconstructed modern methods and solved problems as these methods and number systems had not been created. It was interesting to sort of go backwards in time. The textbooks also proved to be useful references for this timeline and methods. I also really enjoyed presenting these topics at the Noor Islamic Center. The opportunity to engage with the community was definitely invaluable not only because we were able to spread this lesser known knowledge to the masses, but also because it allowed us to master our knowledge in the portion we focused on.

I would definitely recommend this course to future students, although I would do so with the warning that it is very challenging. For me, and I believe for many of my classmates, it took a significant amount of time to adjust to the format of the class. It is easy to get caught up in the historical aspects or the mathematical aspects alone, and forget to integrate the two. I would remind students interested in the class that it is a *math* class as well as a history class, and that they should expect to put in a lot of work and think in ways they may not have since graduating high school. Ultimately, it is hard to say if this course will be relevant to my future career, but it will certainly be relevant to my outlook on life and approach to purveying facts. If this class has taught me anything, it is that authority and popular narratives should always be questioned, and that I should always keep the Shukuk tradition of doubt close to me as I am presented with news, facts and narratives throughout my life. It has also given me material which I can use to fight prejudice, Islamophobia and ignorance throughout my personal sphere of influence.

It was a wonderful experience to be able to engage with the community of the NICC—it gave us insight into a community and a lived religious experience. It was wonderful to see the children engaged and involved in their schooling and our guide from the first visit was so kind. I am a

big advocate of public presenting—it's a skill that will be of great importance in our professional lives and anytime we have to practice this skill should be taken advantage of. I would recommend this course to my friends! I would tell them about the very interesting historical and sociological conversations that we have in discussing prejudice against Islam as a religion and generally ignoring achievements of the non-Western world. These are important conversations that must be had as The Academy works on inclusion and correcting historical prejudices and errors. For all future students I would say to study harder and longer for the midterms than you think you need to and in studying balance the history and math equally, but don't rely too much on the history—the math counts too, a lot!

This course has been incredibly powerful for me. Realistically, I may never use the methods learned in this class in my day to day life just due to how we have new modern techniques that do what the ancient scholars did in a much more efficient manner. Presenting our final projects at the NICC was a really wonderful experience. Initially, I expected it to be a hassle and quite honestly seemed unnecessary. However, as time went on and we got further and further in depth with our individual projects as well as the class itself, I found myself more and more excited to present and share what we learned about the flaws of the classical narrative to a wider audience. The information in this class should be more widespread, and I am very glad to have had the opportunity to help disseminate this information into a more general audience. The world does not have the full picture of history, and I am now fortunately in a position to help fix this. This course taught me to question even the most basic things we learn in grade school. The information I learned in this class will definitely not stay in the classroom, but I will continue to share it with friends, family, and peers because we take everything in our history textbooks as truth when that might not always be the case. Very few classes have a purpose like this one. I learn quite a bit in all of my courses, but it sometimes feels like I am just taking the class to check off a box on my requirements for a major. This course felt like it had a true purpose and the reason to learn this information was because it gave me a new responsibility to help correct this false narrative that has developed for hundreds of years. I would recommend this class to a friend who is interested in history and is confident in their mathematical ability. The content and importance of the class is pretty fascinating, but I think the math component is deceptively difficult. It is very possible that it was difficult for me because it had been a few years since I have worked with geometry and trigonometry, but I did have trouble with the mathematical component. With that said, however, being a part of the class and presenting at the NICC and learning about the historical and religious component of the Islamic world made working through the difficulties with the math very much worth it. With all the outside help offered as well, the mathematical component should not scare anyone away from taking the class. I would highly recommend taking advantage of all the outside help offered to anybody who takes the class in the future.

I think that this course was very informative and very interesting. It shed a lot of light on the problematic aspects of the Classical Narrative. I have taken math and science courses ever since I can remember, and this is the first time that I'm learning about most of these topics. Even here at Kenyon, I took a class called *Early Modern Europe* where we spent a significant amount of time learning about the Renaissance and the Scientific Revolution. We learned all about Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton. I never thought to question what I was being taught or the origins of their theories. This course has taught me to question and be skeptical about things that I believe to be facts, which I think is very valuable. I really enjoyed the presentations at the NICC and think it was a good way to use what we have learned in class and inform others in the community. The community members really appreciated all of the work that we put into the project, and it was especially gratifying to see all of the children enjoying our projects and playing with the tiles. It was a very great experience, and a great way to present our research. I would recommend this course to friends, but would warn that it is a lot of work for a 100-level class. Considering that most students took this class to fulfill a distribution requirement, I think a slightly lower workload would attract more students just looking to take an interesting class. That being said, the material is very interesting and unlike anything I've learned at Kenyon, or elsewhere.

Throughout the course, I was constantly surprised by the fact that we never learned about the history of Islamic Civilization, let alone the major contributors to math and science. I was surprised to find that even in the history of science, there is a dominant discourse and movement to alternative history. One of my favorite parts in this course is learning about the religion. Visiting the Noor Muslim Center twice was definitely my highlight. Not only because it encourages us to engage with the community, but also just learning about a subject and relating to a culture (and its pattern of migration to all corners around the world) was important to me. Hearing our guide present on Islam and later presenting about what we learned in class felt rewarding and closing the chapter with a full circle. I believe this class is exemplary for its interdisciplinary form, connecting math to religion to history to community. I have not only gotten the opportunity to practice mathematical problems and familiarize myself with numbers again, but also practiced my presentation skills more than three times! I have also been talking to my friends and family about this class, hoping that if they have a chance, they should take it at Kenyon. Perhaps it is because I have only taken more humanities class that I have a different expectation of the course workload. It seems to be much more than the average 100-level course. As there have been less requirements to write reading responses in my other reading-dominant classes, this math course surprised me with the amount of reading and writing. Besides this, nothing was surprising in terms of the requirements of the course. Thanks to Professor Aydin and my classmates in this class. I have no doubt became a student who is more aware of the danger of an inaccurate or incomplete history. Moving forward, I will not only remember the wisdom of the day, but also be more outspoken about the existence of the classical narrative and the absence of alternative ones.

Overall, I really enjoyed this course and thought it broadened my academic horizons since my time here at Kenyon. I learned a lot of new things about the math and sciences as well as history, and was able to put more truth hand understanding to new concepts. I would recommend this course to my friends, while the math portions can be challenging at times there are useful help sessions to get through the homework and study for the tests. This course was interesting and something that I never expected to take while in college, but I'm glad I have gotten a chance to learn a little but about this knowledge and hope the popularity of this course, and subject matter, will continue to spread through Kenyon and beyond.