This course traces the history, beliefs, and culture of Iranians from ancient times through the Arab conquest to the twenty-first century. It focuses on politics, administrative and social institutions, religions including Zoroastrianism, Manichaeanism, and Islam (Sunni, Shi'i, and Sufi), relationship between secular and ecclesiastic hierarchies, status of minorities, devotional and communal change, and Iranian influences on other cultures. Lectures and discussions cover the Achaemenian, Parthian, Sasanian, Umayyad, 'Abbasid, Samanid, Buyid, Seljuk, Mongol, Timurid, Safavid, Qajar, and Pahlavi dynasties, and the Islamic Republic. Readings include the analysis of primary textual materials in translation. Visual aids will be used in class. No previous knowledge or course prerequisites are needed.

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Class attendance and preparation of assigned readings (10% of overall grade).
- In-class oral questions on the previous class readings and lecture (10% of overall grade).
- Undergraduate students will be taking the course for Intensive Writing credit and must write two papers (each 40% of the overall grade). Draft versions of each paper must be submitted and subsequently revised based on the instructor’s written comments and suggestions. The first paper is due by the middle of semester and the second is due by the end of semester.
- Undergraduate students taking the class for Honors College credit must write a 10-12 page library-based research paper (80% of overall grade) on a topic relating to the course instead of two separate papers. The topic must be approved by the instructor. The paper’s outline and bibliography are due by the middle of semester and the completed paper is due by the end of semester.