



506:299 HISTORY WORKSHOP – SLAVERY AND ISLAM

One of the most horrific practices of terrorist groups in recent years is the revival of a brutal form of sexual slavery. Groups like ISIS in Syria and Boko Haram in Nigeria have based this revival on a particularly unusual reading of Islamic history. How can history be mobilized to justify such atrocities? How might history be mobilized to neutralize such claims, and to push forward the cause of justice and toleration? This course investigates the long and intertwined histories of slavery and Islam in order to think about the uses and abuses of history. We will explore the diverse worlds of enslaved Muslims and Muslim slave-owners from pre-Islamic Arabia to present-day America. This broad canvas of historical materials will allow us to think about what is history and what is the work of a historian. Students will learn how to pose historical questions, find historical evidence, interpret historical sources, and write histories that matter today. The enormous diversity of Muslim slavery will help us learn how to write histories, and we will practice writing history in order to tackle the questions of our own historical moment.

