

Preview Version



THE LOST PARADISE

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Introduction

This course delves into the history of Al-Andalus, from the Islamic conquest of Iberia in 711 CE to the expulsion of the Moriscos in 1609. Students will explore its political, cultural, and intellectual contributions to the Islamic world and Europe, while reflecting on lessons of resilience and coexistence. Through primary sources, expert-led sessions, and discussions, participants will gain insights into one of history's most remarkable civilizations and its enduring legacy.

Session 1: The Roots of Al-Andalus – Pre-Islamic Iberian Peninsula and the Rise of Islam	
Dates:	Pre-711 CE (prior to the Islamic conquest)
Key Locations:	Iberian Peninsula, Arabian Peninsula, North Africa
Key Figures:	Tariq ibn Ziyad, Musa ibn Nusayr, Count Julian, Roderic (last Visigoth King)
<u>Key events</u>	<p>Pre-6th Century CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The World Stage Before Islam: Roman and Persian Empires, Council of Nicaea, Trinitarians and Unitarians, fall of western Roman Empire <p>7th Century & The Rise of Islam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expansion of Islam across the Arabian Peninsula under Prophet Muhammad and the Rashidun Caliphs, spreading to North Africa. <p>Pre-711 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visigothic Rule: Dominance of Visigoths in the Iberian Peninsula, religious tensions among Christians, Jews, and Arian Visigoths - Count Julian’s Alliance: Count Julian of Ceuta allies with Muslim forces against Visigoth King Roderic. <p>711 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tariq ibn Ziyad’s Landing: Tariq ibn Ziyad crosses the Strait of Gibraltar with Muslim forces, marking the beginning of the Islamic presence in Spain. - Battle of Guadalete: Defeat of King Roderic by Tariq ibn Ziyad, marking a turning point in the Islamic conquest of Iberia.

Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overview of the Iberian Peninsula under Visigothic rule, highlighting religious diversity and social stratification. - Exploration of Islam’s rise in the Arabian Peninsula, its spread across North Africa, and eventual arrival in Iberia. - Examines how key figures and alliances, particularly between Count Julian and the Muslim leaders, paved the way for conquest. <p>Lessons for Muslims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The importance of alliances and understanding local dynamics in expanding influence. - How Islam’s message resonated across cultures, transcending borders. - Reflection on the adaptability of early Muslim leaders and their engagement with diverse societies.
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Session 2: The Conquest and Early Islamic Rule (711–756)	
Dates	711–756 CE
Key Locations	Iberian Peninsula, specifically the Battle of Guadalete site, Battle of Tours
Key Figures	Tariq ibn Ziyad, Musa ibn Nusayr, Abd al-Aziz ibn Musa

<p>Key Events</p>	<p>711–718 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conquest of Iberia: Muslim forces under Tariq ibn Ziyad and Musa ibn Nusayr continue their expansion across the Iberian Peninsula, capturing key cities. - Establishment of Muslim Governance: Muslim authorities set up a system of administration over conquered territories, maintaining relative autonomy for Christians and Jews. - Alliance with Local Leaders: Various local leaders, including Christian nobles, establish alliances with Muslim rulers to ensure peaceful coexistence. <p>714 C:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Death of Musa ibn Nusayr: One of the early Muslim conquerors of Iberia, he dies after helping to establish Muslim rule across the peninsula. - <p>Post-718 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consolidation and Stabilisation: Muslim leaders work to consolidate power and build a stable governance system in Al-Andalus. <p>732 CE: Battle Tours, Charles Martel, Abdul Rahman Al Ghafiqi</p>
<p>Summary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Details the conquest beginning with the Battle of Guadalete in 711, establishing Muslim presence in Iberia. - Covers the strategies used to consolidate control, including tolerance toward Christians and Jews. - The significance of diplomacy and governance in stabilizing newly conquered territories.
<p>Lessons for Muslims</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The effectiveness of tolerant governance in creating a stable society. - Reflects on how Muslim rulers balanced power with inclusivity, setting an example of religious coexistence. - The importance of strategic leadership in challenging times, fostering a legacy of cultural exchange and mutual respect. - How relevant was the battle of Tours, was it key to stopping Islamic expansion.

Session 3: Abd al-Rahman I and the Foundations of the Umayyad Emirate (756–912)	
Dates	756–912 CE
Key Locations	Cordoba
Key Figures	Abd al-Rahman I, Yusuf al-Fihri
Key Events	<p>750 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abbasid Revolution: Abbasids overthrow the Umayyad Caliphate in Damascus; Abd al-Rahman I, the last surviving Umayyad prince, flees to Al-Andalus. <p>756 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Founding of the Umayyad Emirate: Abd al-Rahman I establishes the Emirate of Cordoba, marking the start of an independent Islamic state in Al-Andalus. - Development of Cordoba: Cordoba begins its transformation into a centre of culture, learning, and governance under Umayyad rule. <p>Mid-9th century:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expansion of the Emirate: Successive Umayyad leaders expand and consolidate their rule, enhancing the emirate’s prosperity and stability.
Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focuses on Abd al-Rahman I’s establishment of the Umayyad Emirate, positioning Cordoba as a key centre of Islamic governance and culture in Europe. - Discusses his resilience after escaping the Abbasid overthrow, rebuilding his legacy in Al-Andalus. - The initial cultural and economic advancements under Umayyad rule.
Lessons for Muslims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A reflection on resilience and the ability to start anew after hardship. - The importance of cultural preservation and adaptation in establishing an Islamic identity in a foreign land. - Cordoba as a model of integration, where Islam coexisted with local culture, enriching both.

Session 4: Abd al-Rahman III and the Caliphate of Cordoba (912–1031)	
Dates	912–1031 CE
Key Locations	Cordoba
Key Figures	Abd al-Rahman III, Al-Hakam II, Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Ziryab, Al Mansur
Key Events	<p>912 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rise of Abd al-Rahman III: Abd al-Rahman III assumes leadership, initiating a period of renewed strength and prosperity in Al-Andalus. <p>929 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Declaration of the Caliphate: Abd al-Rahman III declares himself Caliph of Cordoba, establishing the Caliphate of Cordoba and asserting independence from the Abbasid and Fatimid caliphates. <p>961 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Death of Abd al-Rahman III: His successor, Al-Hakam II, continues his policies, focusing on cultural and intellectual development. <p>961–976 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Golden Age of the Caliphate: Cordoba flourishes as a center for science, medicine, philosophy, and the arts, with contributions from figures like Ziryab and Ibn Rushd (Averroes). <p>938 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Al-Mansur becomes vizier. 976 CE Death of Caliph Al-Hakam II; Hisham II ascends to the throne, with Al-Mansur as the de facto ruler. <p>1031 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collapse of the Caliphate: Internal strife and power struggles lead to the dissolution of the Caliphate, giving rise to the Taifa kingdoms.

Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Examines the establishment of the Caliphate of Cordoba by Abd al-Rahman III and its impact on Islamic and Christian territories. - Highlights cultural, scientific, and intellectual advancements, from medicine and philosophy to the arts. - Cordoba’s role as a beacon of tolerance, innovation, and diplomacy.
Lessons for Muslims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How intellectual and artistic endeavors can reinforce Islamic identity and elevate society. - The importance of diplomacy in advancing Muslim interests and maintaining peace. - Legacy of Cordoba as a centre of learning, encouraging modern Muslims to value education and intellectual openness.

Session 5: The Taifa Kingdoms, Almoravids, and Almohads (1031–1212)	
Dates	1031–1212 CE
Key Locations	Various taifa kingdoms across Al-Andalus, North Africa
Key Figures	Yusuf ibn Tashfin, Ibn Tumart, Ibn Tufayl, Averroes (Ibn Rushd)

<p>Key Events</p>	<p>1031 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emergence of the Taifa Kingdoms: Al-Andalus fragments into smaller, independent taifa kingdoms following the collapse of the Caliphate. <p>1085 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fall of Toledo: Toledo is captured by Christian forces, marking the beginning of Christian reconquest efforts in the Iberian Peninsula. <p>1086 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Almoravid Intervention: Yusuf ibn Tashfin, leader of the Almoravids, crosses from North Africa to assist the taifas against advancing Christian forces. <p>1147 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rise of the Almohads: The Almohad dynasty replaces the Almoravids, establishing stricter Islamic governance and uniting Al-Andalus under their rule. <p>1195 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Battle of Alarcos: Almohads achieve a significant victory over Christian forces, temporarily halting Christian advances. <p>1212 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa: Almohad forces are defeated by a coalition of Christian kingdoms, signalling the beginning of the end for Almohad rule in Iberia.
<p>Summary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describes the fragmentation of Al-Andalus into small taifa kingdoms and the resulting internal strife. - Details the Almoravid and Almohad interventions to unify and restore orthodoxy, stemming from North Africa. - Explores the challenges and achievements of this period, with a focus on philosophical and theological contributions.
<p>Lessons for Muslims</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The dangers of internal division and the value of unity in facing external threats. - Reflection on the role of reform and revitalization in sustaining religious and cultural identity. - Intellectual legacy of figures like Ibn Rushd, inspiring Muslims to reconcile faith with reason.

Session 6: The Fall of Granada and the Legacy of the Moriscos (1212–1609)	
Dates	1212–1609 CE (Granada falls in 1492)
Key Locations	Granada, Iberian Peninsula
Key Figures	Boabdil (Muhammad XII), Ferdinand and Isabella, Cardinal Cisneros
Key Events	<p>1248 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fall of Seville: Christian forces capture Seville, further shrinking Muslim territories to the Kingdom of Granada. <p>1482–1492 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - War of Granada: The final phase of the Reconquista, where Ferdinand and Isabella lead a military campaign against the last Muslim stronghold. <p>1492 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fall of Granada: Granada surrenders to Ferdinand and Isabella, ending nearly 800 years of Muslim rule in Iberia. - Alhambra Decree: Expulsion of Jews from Spain; Muslims are later forced to convert or face expulsion. <p>1502 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forced Conversions of Muslims: Muslims who remain in Spain, known as Moriscos, are compelled to convert to Christianity. <p>1568–1571 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Morisco Revolt: Moriscos in Granada rebel against harsh treatment and forced assimilation, but the rebellion is crushed. <p>1609–1614 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expulsion of the Moriscos: The Spanish crown expels the remaining Moriscos, effectively ending centuries of Muslim presence in Spain.
Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discusses the final Muslim stronghold in Granada and the events leading to its surrender in 1492. - Analyses the subsequent plight of the Moriscos, including forced conversions and eventual expulsion. - Reflection on the legacy of Al-Andalus in Spain, culturally and architecturally, despite persecution.

Lessons for Muslims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The resilience of faith under adversity and oppression. - The consequences of losing political autonomy and the importance of cultural preservation. - The need to remember and honour Al-Andalus’s contributions, as they continue to inspire Muslims today.
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Session 7: Legacies and Lessons – Al-Andalus as a Mirror for Contemporary Challenges	
Dates	Post-1609 legacy and modern parallels
Key Locations	Al-Andalus, modern regions influenced by colonialism
Key Figures	<p>Moriscos (Muslims forcibly converted to Christianity, later expelled) – Their struggles with forced conversion, resistance, and eventual expulsion shaped Spain’s identity and influenced colonial policies.</p> <p>Philip III of Spain (r. 1598–1621) – Ordered the final expulsion of the Moriscos in 1609, marking the complete erasure of Islam from Spain.</p> <p>Ahmed Baba of Timbuktu (1556–1627) – A Malian scholar who wrote against the treatment of exiled Andalusians and contributed to preserving Andalusian intellectual traditions in West Africa.</p> <p>Ottoman Empire’s Role – Various Ottoman leaders, like Murad III (r. 1574–1595), attempted to support Morisco resistance but failed to provide long-term aid.</p> <p>Al-Hasan Al-Wazzan (Leo Africanus, 1494–1554) – A Moroccan-born Andalusian who documented Islamic Spain’s legacy and its impact on Europe after its fall.</p>
Today	<p>2003 CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -A Legacy Reborn: Granada Mosque opens, symbol of hope and reassurance, a relevant reminder <p>"They plan, and Allah plans. And Allah is the best of planners." (Quran, 3:54).</p>

<p>Key Events</p>	<p>1609–1614 – The Expulsion of the Moriscos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300,000 Moriscos were expelled from Spain, mainly to North Africa, where many faced hardship and discrimination. • This created a demographic and economic crisis in Spain, as many Moriscos had been skilled artisans and farmers. <p>The Influence of Andalusian Exiles on the Maghreb & Ottoman World</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andalusian refugees significantly contributed to Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and the Ottoman Empire, influencing architecture, trade, and scholarship. • Cities like Tétouan, Fes, and Algiers became hubs of Andalusian culture. <p>European Colonial Strategies & Al-Andalus’s Legacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spain and Portugal exported the Reconquista mindset to the Americas, justifying land dispossession and forced conversions of Indigenous peoples. • The Catholic Church’s Doctrine of Discovery (1493) mirrored Reconquista policies, legitimizing colonial expansion. <p>Parallels with Modern Displacement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Palestinian Nakba (1948) and the forced exile of Moriscos share themes of land loss, cultural erasure, and resistance. • Policies of forced assimilation in France (targeting Muslims) and China (targeting Uyghurs) resemble strategies used against Andalusians.
<p>Summary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explores Al-Andalus’s legacy on European colonial strategies, linking it to modern conflicts and issues of occupation and displacement. - Draws parallels between the Reconquista and current geopolitical struggles, notably in Palestine, examining themes of land dispossession, forced assimilation, and cultural resistance. - Encourages reflection on how the resilience of Al-Andalus’s Muslim communities can guide Muslims today in navigating contemporary challenges.

<p>Lessons for Muslims</p>	<p>The Importance of Recording & Preserving Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just as Andalusians preserved their knowledge in exile, Palestinians today emphasize oral history, art, and storytelling to resist cultural erasure. • Documenting lived experiences ensures that truth outlives oppression, as seen with Al-Andalus and other displaced peoples. <p>The Power of Global Solidarity & Collective Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Al-Andalus teaches that disunity accelerates oppression—Muslim communities today must prioritize unity over sectarianism to counter occupation and injustice. • The Morisco exile reminds us that silence enables oppression; today’s Muslim communities must be active in advocacy, legal resistance, and mobilization. <p>Rebuilding & Reviving After Displacement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The exiled Andalusians rebuilt thriving communities in Morocco, Tunisia, and the Ottoman world, showing that survival leads to revival. • Palestinians and other displaced communities can draw hope from this: exile does not mean extinction—culture, knowledge, and identity endure through effort and resilience. <p>Challenging the Colonial Mindset in Media & Politics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Reconquista mindset justified displacement, much like today’s "settler-colonial narratives" in Palestine. • Muslims must engage in media, politics, and education to counter revisionist history and challenge narratives that erase oppression. <p>Justice & Ethical Governance as the Foundation of Survival</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fall of Al-Andalus resulted from internal division and lack of just leadership—today, Muslim societies must demand ethical governance and reject corruption. • Oppressed communities must strategize for long-term justice, ensuring that human rights violations are documented and pursued legally. <hr/> <p> Why These Additions Matter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Links history to the present, making the lessons more relevant. ✓ Encourages proactive resistance through education, advocacy, and unity. ✓ Provides hope by showing how displaced communities rebuild and thrive despite oppression.
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