Title: The “Coexistence” in Córdoba: myth or reality?

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Objectives: Explore the coexistence of different ethnic groups of the three major monotheistic religions in Córdoba during the period of Al-andalus. Understand how their daily interactions influenced the culture of each of the ethnic groups. Discuss how these historical interactions had shaped the current relations between these groups.

Description: This is a semester historical anthropology course that explores the cultural interactions that molded Southern Spanish society during the period of Al-andalus. During this period Muslins, Jews and Christians lived side by side in Córdoba, the capital of Al-andalus, in apparent harmony. During this period of history these ethnic groups not only coexisted but also benefited synergistically from their interactions. The class is divided in three major units. The first unit will familiarize the students with these peoples’ origins in the Middle East, focusing on the Jewish legacy and the rise of Eastern Christians. The second one will be dedicated to the rise of Islam, as a new religion, and its spreading throughout the “Arabic” world. Finally, using historical evidence the class will discuss the arrival of these three groups to Al-andalus, the cultural climate in Córdoba at the time, the interaction between the three ethnic groups, specifically exploring the idea of coexistence as opposed to tolerance. If time permits, we’ll explore the diaspora of the cordovan wise men. Students will bring their own interests and perspectives to the class via an essay project and their oral presentations, which will include topics that range from the architectural legacy of these groups in Córdoba (e.g., La Mezquita) to the current state of political relations in the world.

The students will be evaluated using a diversity of tools that will include exams, oral presentations, group discussions, and an essay.