



The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World (4 Volume Set)

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This unique reference is a comprehensive encyclopedia dedicated to the institutions, religion, politics, and culture in Muslim societies throughout the world. Placing particular emphasis on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* contains over 750 articles in four volumes on Muslims in the Arab heartland as well as South and Southeast Asia, Europe, and the Americas.

An invaluable resource, the *Encyclopedia* offers extensive comparative and systematic analyses of Islamic beliefs, institutions, movements, practices, and peoples on an international scale. The alphabetically arranged articles range from brief 500-word essays to major interpretive and synthetic treatment of topics such as the Islamic state, pilgrimage, law, marriage, and foreign relations. Related entries cover areas of general interest such as social and political movements, women, Muslim minorities, human rights, Islam in the West, and interreligious affairs. And prominent figures that had a lasting impact on Islam are explored including Muhammad, Aga Khan, Malcolm X, Muhammad Iqbal, 'Ali Shari 'ati, Ayatollah Khomeini, and Hasan al-Turabi.

Truly multidisciplinary, this work reflects the breadth and depth of contemporary scholarship in Islamic studies. Combining the tools of the humanities and social sciences to examine the interrelationship of religion, politics, and culture in Muslim societies, it explains the changing realities of Muslim life. Its unique focus makes *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* an invaluable reference for scholars and students of many disciplines, government and media analysts, and anyone interested in increasing their understanding of Islamic politics and culture.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

With 750 articles, many of them lengthy and thorough, by 450 scholars from around the world, the Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World is a valuable reference for every sort of reader. Scholars and students will rejoice in three very useful features: bibliographies (usually annotated) at the end of each article, references to related articles, and a synoptic outline of contents at the end of Volume 4. Casual readers will be sure to find something of interest in the very broad range of topics discussed; from the personal (Marital and Family life) to the social (Law and Government); from the historical (the development of Islam in the United States) to the newly topical (Hamas, Islamic Jihad); and from the mystical (Sufism) to the mundane (agriculture). The writing, moreover, is well edited, clear, and jargon free. There are a few redundant articles (e.g., entries on Mevlevi and Mawlawiyah both discuss the history and practice of the same Sufi order). This is a small criticism, however. The \$395 price may put the Encyclopedia beyond the reach of many libraries, yet the set is highly recommended for both academic and public libraries. James F. DeRoche, Alexandria, Va.

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From [Booklist](#)

The West knows little of the world's second-largest religion, too often hearing only of the terrorists who try to exploit it for political ends. Muslims are found in all parts of the world, many of them far from the religion's origins in the Middle East. (Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population.) This new encyclopedia is worldwide in scope, treating every part of the globe where Muslims are found, and focuses on the last 200 years. Editor Esposito, a faculty member in the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, has recruited more than 450 distinguished contributors from the fields of art history, religion, science, anthropology, political science, and other disciplines. Some of them are originally from the Islamic world but teaching at universities in the U.S. and Europe; others are at institutions in 30 countries ranging from King Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia to the Indonesian Institute for the Sciences.

The 750 entries include regional overviews (*Islam in Europe*, *Islam in the Americas*) and articles on specific countries (including the predominantly Muslim states of the former Soviet Union). There is coverage of the major branches of Islam, of Islamic sects, and of such related faiths as *Druze*, *Bah'ai*, and *Nation of Islam*. The diversity of Islamic religious belief and practice is discussed in such articles as *Circumcision*, *Funerary Rites*, and *Pillars of Islam*. But because Islam pervades all aspects of believers' lives, there are also entries on politics, law, economics, science and medicine, and the arts. The lengthy article *Cassettes*, for example, describes the impact of this technology on the politics of the Islamic world. *Communism and Islam* discusses the philosophical differences between these two belief systems and the places in the world where they have led to conflict. There are entries for specific organizations and movements (*Ba'th Parties*, *Muslim Brotherhood*, *Hamas*) and on the relationship of Islam to other religions (*Christianity and Islam*). Muslim views on such social issues as *Family Planning* and *Surrogate Motherhood* are examined. There are biographies of people from 24 nations, ranging from *Muhammad* to *Malcolm X*. Coverage seems current; for example, *Balkan States* refers to the "gruesome combat that began in the spring of 1992."

Articles range in length from 500 words to 10,000 words on broad topics (*Islamic State*, *Popular Religion*, *Secularism*, *Women and Islam*) and contain *see also* references. Some entry headings are in Arabic, but *see* references lead from the English equivalent, for example, from *Pilgrimage* to *Hajj* and from *Crusade* to *Jihad*. Entries conclude with bibliographies, some of which are annotated. They list mostly titles in English,

though occasionally sources in other languages are included. Black-and-white photographs are provided for a few articles (*Aesthetic Theory*, *Architecture*, *Calligraphy*, *Gardens*), but the reader wishes for more, especially in such articles as *Dress* and *Textiles*. A few entries have tables, for example, data on universities in *Education*. A synoptic outline of contents in volume 4 lists all entries under such headings as *Schools of Thought* and *Culture and Society*. This outline helps the reader with limited knowledge of the topic to find appropriate entries. For example, listed under *Mysticism* are all the Sufi orders for which there are entries. A detailed index follows, with provision of *see* references from English to Arabic terms.

While this set provides a scholarly treatment of the subject, most articles are accessible to the educated layperson. Articles on some controversial topics such as *Mujahidin*, *Rushdie Affair*, and *Terrorism* won't satisfy all readers, but every attempt has been made to provide a balanced approach, and the inclusion of contributors from many parts of the world has helped to avoid what the editor calls the "pitfalls of Orientalism." The *Encyclopedia of Islam* (Brill, 1954[^]-) covers classical and medieval Islam, not its modern contexts. It is less accessible to the lay reader, requiring a knowledge of Arabic. *The Cambridge History of Islam* (1970) is now dated and tends to emphasize the Middle East. Presenting a rounded picture of a subject about which Americans hear only the extremes, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* is an important purchase for academic and public libraries. *Sandy Whiteley*

Review

"This new encyclopedia...fills an important gap; it does not shy away from such controversial issues as terrorism, holy war, human rights and the status of women."--*London Review of Books*

"Presenting a rounded picture of a subject about which Americans hear only the extremes, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* is an important purchase for academic and public libraries."--*Booklist/Reference Books Bulletin*

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