

Possible Topics for the First Paper

1. How does one account for the successes and failures of the various Muslim caliphates or empires in the millennia after Muhammad? Focusing on the Umayyad, Abbasid, Seljuk Turk, Mongol, or Ottoman caliphate or empire, analyze the various factors that contributed to the rise and demise of one of these political states.
2. Identify the successes and failures between the Muslim world v. the Christian world during the time of the Crusades. What factors led to successes and failures on both sides?
3. What impact did the vast trade networks used by Muslim merchants have on world history? How did they change the worlds of those they interacted with and how were they, in turn, affected by these interactions?
4. The many of the states of the modern Middle East were born with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the close of the First World War. Taking two of these former Ottoman territories (these could include Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, or Turkey), write an essay comparing their emergence after the war and the struggles they faced creating a unified territorial, political, economic, or cultural identity.