Islam and Politics
Political Science 452
Meeting times: M, W 10:30-11:45am
346 MARB

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Office hours:

Monday-Wednesday 12pm-1pm

Introduction:

This course will provide an overview of the central questions in studies of political Islam, focusing on the emergence of Islam as a political force in the contemporary era. Discussion will center on the following core questions:

- What is political Islam?
- Why does Islam become a politicized religion?
- What do Islamic movements want?
- When do Islamic political movements develop?
- When do they succeed and when do they fail?
- Why is political Islam prominent in some Islamic countries but not in others?
- How are Islamic interests expressed in the political arena?
- How do Islamic movements affect the state?
- What happens if Islamic movements capture the state?
- What types of political systems are most compatible with politicized Islam?

These questions will be addressed by looking at the general history of the contemporary Islamic resurgence and by examining case studies in some detail. Case studies will focus on Egypt, Iran, Algeria, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Senegal, Nigeria, Somalia, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

Required texts:

The following texts are available at the college bookstore and are on reserve at the library.


Note: We will read substantive portions of these books, but will not read all of each book. You may prefer to make individual copies of the selected readings from the copies on course reserve at the library.

Additional readings for the course are available under *Electronic Reserves* in Learning Suite.

**Requirements:**

Regular attendance at class, active participation, and the reading of assigned materials is expected. In addition, two sets of take-home essays and a final research paper are required.

*Grades* will be calculated as follows:

- Course participation and informal writing: 20%
- Key concepts mid-term quiz: 10%
- Mid-term essays: 20%
- Final exam essays: 20%
- Final paper: 30%

*Course participation and informal writing:* Each member of class is expected to actively participate in the course discussion every week. Students are expected to respond to the weekly readings and screenings by posting a personal reaction to the question on the weekly weblog for the class. These postings are due by **midnight Tuesday** and can be short (1-2 paragraphs) and personal in style. There will be at least 15 total posting opportunities (13 for weekly readings, 2 for screenings) of which 12 responses are required to complete this assignment. Some posting opportunities will be responses to a weekly question; others will be open reactions to the screenings. You may choose any combination of questions from readings and screenings to complete the 12 postings.

If you do not already have an account at wordpress.com, you will need to register online in order to use the course website. Connect to the course website at the web address: **plsc452.wordpress.com**. Writing assignments will be posted under the tab titled
“Weekly Responses.” Each participant is assigned to a specific working group, and you should post your response under the section designated for your working group. The course website also includes the syllabus, reading schedule, and course requirements for your reference.

*Mid-term quiz:* A short quiz (25 questions) designed to test student understanding of key concepts from the reading and lectures will be taken at the end of the first month of class. This quiz will be available to take at the testing center on **Jan 30-31.**

*Mid-term essays:* Requirements include a take-home essay exam after the first half of the course. Essays are open book, individual work only, and should be typed. The questions will be provided on Wednesday **February 12** in class and are due on Monday **February 24** in class. Students will choose 2 of 3 possible essays; each completed essay should be no longer than 4 double-spaced pages in length. You should make your own argument in response to the questions you choose, drawing from the readings for supporting evidence, and highlighting the implications of your argument.

*Concluding essays:* Requirements include a take-home essay exam at the end of the course. Essays are open book, individual work only, and should be typed. The questions will be provided on Monday **April 14** in class and are due on Friday **April 18** at 5pm in SWKT 770. These essays will follow the same format and have the same requirements as the mid-term essays.

*Final Paper:* A final paper (12-15 double-spaced pages) is required. Participants will choose a topic of interest based on course readings and discussion. The paper may be either a case study of a key movement, concept, figure, or political system relevant to political Islam, or it may be a policy paper that makes the case for a specific policy with regard to some of the political challenges that we discuss in class. The final paper is due at SWKT 770 on Friday, **April 11** at 5 pm.

*Late policy:* All late papers will be assessed a 3 point late fee for each day that they are late. The exams will only be given at the times scheduled. No papers will be accepted after the final exam concludes on April 18.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

**M Jan 6**—Course Introduction

**W Jan 8**—What is Political Islam?

Eickelman and Piscatori, Chapters 1 & 2
Ayoob, Chapter 1


M Jan 13—The Emergence of Modern Political Islam

Ayoob, Chapters 2, 3, 4

Hefner, Chapter 1, “Introduction”

W Jan 15—Key Concepts in Political Islam

Eickelman and Piscatori, Chapter 3


Hasan al-Banna, “Toward the Light” pp. 56-78 in Euben and Zaman

M Jan 20—No class (MLK day)

W Jan 22—Government, Civil Society, and War in Political Islam


Abu’l A’la Mawdudi, “The Islamic Law,” pp. 86-106 in Euben and Zaman


M Jan 27—Philosophical Foundations of Islamist Activism

Abu’l Hasan ‘Ali Nadwi, “Muslim Decadence and Revival,” pp. 112-128 in Euben and Zaman

Sayyid Qutb. 1964. “Signposts Along the Road,” and “In the Shade of the Qur’an,” pp. 136-152 in Euben and Zaman


W Jan 29—Islam and Political Regimes

Ayoob, Chapter 5


John Esposito and Dalia Mogahed. 2007. “Democracy or Theocracy?,” Chapter 2 in Who Speaks for Islam?, Gallup, pp. 29-64. (Reserve)


TH/F Jan 30-31—Key Concepts Mid-Term Quiz (at the Testing Center)

M Feb 3—Sociology of Islamist Movements

Eickelman and Piscatori, Chapters 4 & 5


Nadia Yassine, “Modernity, Muslim Women, and Politics in the Mediterranean,” pp. 311-317 in Euben and Zaman

**W Feb 5—Islamist Political Parties**


**M Feb 10—Radical Mobilization**

Ayoob, Chapter 6


W Feb 12—Transnational Islamism

**Paper topics due**

Eickelman and Piscator, Chapter 6

Ayoob, Chapter 7


Usama bin Laden “Declaration of War Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places,” pp. 436-459 in Euben and Zaman


T Feb 18—Screening

Paradise Now

7:30-9:30 pm SWKT 270

W Feb 19—Research session at the BYU library
M Feb 24—Preparation for Conference of Islamist Intellectuals (in class)

**Mid-term Essays Due in Class**

W Feb 26—Conference of Islamist Intellectuals (in class)

M Mar 3—Foundations of Modern Islamism: Egypt


W Mar 5—Evolution of Islamist Movements: Egypt


M Mar 10—The Great Revolution: Iran


**W Mar 12—Living in an Islamic Republic: Iran**


**TH Mar 13—Screening**

*Persepolis*

7:30-9:30 pm SWKT 270

**M Mar 17—Electoral Victory and Civil War in Algeria**


**W Mar 19—Sectarianism and Conflict: Iraq and Syria**


Thomas Hegghammer and Aaron Zelin. 2013. “How Syria’s Civil War Became a Holy Crusade,” Foreign Affairs, 7 July. (Reserve)


Frederic Wehrey. 2013. “Syria’s Sectarian Ripples Across the Gulf,” United States Institute of Peace, November. (Reserve)

M Mar 24—Evolution of Islamist Parties: Turkey


W Mar 26—Islam without Islamism: Sufi Brotherhoods in Senegal


M Mar 31—Islamic Law and Regional Rebellions: Nigeria and Somalia


W Apr 2—Islam and Democratization: Indonesia


Robert Hefner, “Muslim Democrats and Islamist Violence in Post-Soeharto Indonesia,” Chapter 11 in Hefner

M Apr 7—Islam and Cultural Pluralism: Malaysia


W Apr 9—Final Paper Working Groups
F April 11—Final Paper Due (SWKT 770), 5 pm

M Apr 14—Conclusions

Ayoob, Chapter 8


F Apr 18—Final Essays Due (770 SWKT), 5 pm