

**GO 365 ISLAM AND POLITICS IN THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST**  
Spring 2011

Class meetings: Tue and Thu  
Classroom: Ladd 106  
Instructor: Sumita Pahwa  
Office: Ladd 304  
Office Hours: Wednesday 1 – 3 p.m.  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course traces the different ways in which Islam has informed politics in the modern Middle East. Starting with the intellectual engagements of Islamic scholars with political modernity in the late nineteenth century, we ask how and why Islam came to play such an important political role in the contemporary Middle East, and investigate its relationship with nation-states, colonialism, democracy and modern governments. We will study the growth of Islamist movements that focus on social welfare, on alternative economic models, on creating Islamic states, and on participating in democratic political orders. We will also discuss Islamic responses to feminism and human rights, Islamic ‘culture wars,’ new Islamic media and televangelists, the rise of jihadism and transnational Islamist networks. We will draw on examples from Egypt, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and occasionally Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq.

**CLASS REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

This is an upper level seminar in which we will be exploring classic as well as cutting edge writings on Islam and politics, and my aim is to give you a solid grounding in the many roles religion plays in the politics of modern Muslim countries and the tools to understand the dynamics underlying some of the most controversial contemporary debates on Islam in the political process.

The most fundamental requirement is that you do the readings thoroughly and come to class prepared to discuss them critically. Attendance and punctuality are important – students who miss more than one class will have their participation grade reduced by one point for each further class missed, and latecomers will be marked absent. If you are absent for a class you will be required to come in to office hours by the following week prepared to answer a few questions about the missed week’s readings and to go over them with me.

Your participation will form an important component of the class, and therefore of your grade (15%) and you may be called on to discuss a particular question relating to any reading due for a particular class. Students who do not demonstrate that they have done the readings and are able to engage in discussion should expect an unsatisfactory grade by mid-semester.

Your first assignment will be to write a critical review paper of any one week’s readings (to be selected by the second session of the semester) and present your paper in the relevant class (20% of class grade). No more than two students may present in each class.

This paper should be in the form of an essay of about 4-5 pages (double spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font, one inch margins). It should not summarize the readings but should analyze them through the lens of the following questions: In what form is Islam an important political force in this case or set of cases – through its religious institutions? As an identity and organizer of community sentiment? A set of values and moral guidelines? Who has the authority to say what the Islamic way is in this case, and why is this interpretation persuasive or relevant in a given time and place? Does the Islamic tradition prove itself to be flexible for political mobilization, and is it more amenable to a status quo or an oppositional political interpretation in this case? What does this case/set of cases teach you about the possible political uses of Islam?

Your second assignment will be a short take-home midterm essay assignment with a choice of questions, covering the first six weeks of reading (30% of class grade). Your final assignment will be a research paper of 10-15 pages in which you apply the insights of the approaches to Islam and politics you have learned to a case of your choice (35% of class grade)

**CLASSROOM COMPORIMENT AND CIVILITY:**

No laptops may be used during class unless you have a certified medical requirement. Cell phones must be turned off and any student observed using a cell phone will be asked to leave the class and marked absent for the day. Please be sure to use the facilities before class as bathroom breaks will not be permitted and students who leave the class for any reason other than an emergency will not be permitted to return.

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

Readings consist of book chapters and academic articles and are on e-reserve unless otherwise noted on the syllabus. Several readings are on Blackboard and can be downloaded in PDF format, for your convenience. A couple of readings are on closed three hour desk reserve, and you should plan to get these several days in advance of the class for which they are due as no excuses will be accepted for an inability to access these readings.

A strongly recommended but optional background reader that you may wish to purchase (via Amazon.com or other sources) is Mohammed Ayoob [The Many Faces of Political Islam](#). Short extracts and chapters from this reader, while optional, may be helpful in providing a basic framing and background to the different topics we will explore in the first several weeks of the class, and this is particularly recommended if you are new to the study of Islam and/or of the Middle East.

**Islam, modernity and political thought**

*Tuesday January 25:*

Class introduction.

Be sure to do the following background readings in preparation for the first class.

Esposito and Voll [Islam and Democracy](#) Ch 2, “State and Opposition in Islamic History.”

Albert Hourani, [Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age](#), Ch 1, “The Islamic State”

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu.lucy2.skidmore.edu:2048/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?c=acls;cc=acls;rgn=full%20text;idno=heb00896.0001.001;didno=heb00896.0001.001;view=image;seq=00000013;node=heb00896.0001.001%3A4>

(Ayoob, Ch. 1 “Defining Concepts, Demolishing Myths)

*Thursday January 27:*

(Ayoob Ch 2, “Islam’s Multiple Voices” as a background chapter for the next two weeks)

Albert Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age. Ch 5 “Jamal al-din al-Afghani” (e-book on library site)

Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori, Muslim Politics. 1996. Ch 2 “The Invention of Tradition in Muslim Politics”

Bjorn Utvik “The Modernizing Force of Islam,” in Burgat and Esposito, eds. Modernizing Islam.

### **Islam, the West and anti-colonialism in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century:**

*Tuesday February 1:*

Ibrahim Abu Rabi Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World. Ch 3 “Hasan al-Banna and the Foundation of the Ikhwan: Intellectual Underpinnings.” (Blackboard)

*Thursday February 3:*

Ahmad Moussalli, Moderate and Radical Islamic Fundamentalism. 1999. Ch 1 “Two Discourses on Modern Islamic Political Thought” pp. 19-45.

Hasan al-Banna “Our Mission” and “Towards the Light” in Charles Wendell, Five Tracts of Hasan al-Banna. UCLA 1978. (To be distributed)

### **Contesting Islam’s place in modern state politics**

*The role of Islam as law and ‘national’ religion in modern Middle Eastern states*

*Tuesday February 8:*

Hourani Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, Ch 5, “Muhammad Abduh.”

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu.lucy2.skidmore.edu:2048/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=acls;idno=heb00896>

Gregory Starrett Putting Islam to Work Ch 3 “The Progressive Policy of the Government.”

<http://www.escholarship.org/editions/view?docId=ft4q2nb3gp&chunk.id=ch03&toc.depth=1&to c.id=ch03&brand=ucpress>

*Thursday February 10:*

Nathan Brown, “Sharia and State in the Modern Muslim Middle East” *IJMES*, 29 (3), August 1997.

Malika Zeghal “Religion and Politics in Egypt: The Ulema of Al-Azhar, Radical Islam and the State (1952-94)” *IJMES*, 31 (1999)

### **Islamic opposition and revolutionary movements**

*Tuesday February 15:*

(Ayoob Ch 4 “Between Ideology and Pragmatism” – background for the next two weeks)

Olivier Roy, The Failure of Political Islam, Ch 3 “The Sociology of Islamism.”

Haldun Gulalp, “Whatever Happened to Secularization? The Multiple Islams in Turkey,” *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Spring/Summer 2003.

*Thursday February 17:*

Mansoor Moaddel, Class, Politics and Ideology in the Iranian Revolution. 1993. pp. 130-163, 199-216. (Desk reserve)

## **Violent Islamist movements and the redefinition of jihad**

*Tuesday February 22:*

John Esposito, Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam. 2002. Ch 2. "Jihad and the struggle for Islam."

Ellis Goldberg, "Smashing Idols and the State: The Protestant Ethic and Egyptian Sunni Radicalism" *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 33 (1), January 1991.

*Thursday February 24:*

Gilles Kepel, Muslim Extremism in Egypt. 1985. Ch 2 "Signposts."

Q. Wiktorowicz, Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach, Ch 2 "Violence as Contention in the Egyptian Islamist Movement."

## **Islamic theocracies – Ideals and realities**

*Tuesday March 1:*

(Ayoob Ch 3 "Self-Proclaimed Islamic States)

Khomeini Islam and Revolution Ch 2 "The Necessity of Islamic Government."

Sami Zubaida, "An Islamic State? The Case of Iran," *MERIP* July-Aug 1988.

*Thursday March 3:*

Madawi al-Rasheed A History of Saudi Arabia Chs 3-5 (Blackboard)

Gwenn Okruhlik, "Networks of Dissent: Islamism and Reform in Saudi Arabia," *Current History/SSRC* 2006. <http://essays.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/okruhlik.htm>

MIDTERM ESSAY ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED AT END OF CLASS.

## **Mobilizing Islam in civil society and politics:**

***The growth of a 'civic Islam':***

*Tuesday March 8:*

Gudrun Kramer, "Islamist Notions of Democracy" in Benin and Stork, eds. Political Islam.

Charles Hirschkind, "Civic Virtue and Religious Reason: An Islamic Counterpublic" *Cultural Anthropology* 16 (1) 2001.

*Thursday March 10:*

Berna Turem, "The Politics of Engagement between Islam and the Secular State," *British Journal of Sociology* 55(2), 2004

Carrie Rosefsky Wickham "Islamic Mobilization and Political Change: The Islamist Trend in Egypt's Professional Associations" in Benin and Stork, eds. Political Islam

<http://www.netlibrary.com.lucy2.skidmore.edu:2048/Reader/>

MIDTERM ESSAY DUE FRIDAY MARCH 11 BY 5 P.M.

SPRING BREAK MARCH 12-20 – NO CLASS.

## ***Islamist party politics and 'post-Islamism'***

*Tuesday March 22:*

Vali Nasr, "The Rise of 'Muslim Democracy,'" *Journal of Democracy* 16 (2) 2005.

Jillian Schwedler, "A Paradox of Democracy? Islamist Participation in Elections" *Middle East Report* 209, Winter 1998.

Mona el-Ghobashy, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood," *IJMES* 37 (2005).

*Thursday March 24:*

Janine Clark, "The Conditions of Islamist Moderation: Unpacking Cross-Ideological Cooperation in Jordan," *IJMES* 38 (4) 2006.

Joshua Stacher, "Post-Islamist Rumbblings in Egypt: The Emergence of the Wasat Party" *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (Summer, 2002), pp. 415-432.

### **The Political Economy of Islamism:**

*Tuesday March 29:*

Davis and Robinson, "The Egalitarian Face of Islamic Orthodoxy," *American Sociological Review*, April 2006

Timur Kuran, "The Discontents of Islamic Economic Morality" *The American Economic Review* 86 (1996) 438-442.

Samer Soliman, "The Rise and Decline of the Islamic Banking Model in Egypt," in Henry and Wilson, The Politics of Islamic Finance 2004. (Blackboard)

*Thursday March 31:*

European Stability Initiative, "Islamic Calvinists: Change and Conservatism in Central Anatolia" esiweb.org, Sept 19, 2005. Pp. 5-34. (Blackboard)

Filiz Baskan, "The Political Economy of Islamic Finance in Turkey: The Role of Fethullah Gulen and Asya Finans" in Henry and Wilson, The Politics of Islamic Finance 2004.

OR

Gulalp "Globalization and Political Islam: The Social Bases of Turkey's Welfare Party" *IJMES* 33 (2001) 433-448.

### **Women and Islamist politics:**

*Tuesday April 5:*

Sullivan and Abed-Kotob, Islam in Contemporary Egypt, "Zaynab al-Ghazali: Islamist Feminist?" pp. 104-117. (Blackboard)

Omayma Abdel-Latif, "In the Shadow of the Brothers: The Women of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood," Carnegie Papers No. 13, Oct 2008. (Blackboard)

*Thursday April 7:*

"Women of Hizballah" Documentary, Al-Jazeera English (2 parts)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFCOFt24LLE>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpz7eAe-glg>

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSALS DUE IN CLASS.

### **Contemporary cultural politics of Islamism:**

*Tuesday April 12:*

Salwa Ismail, "Confronting the Other: Identity, Culture, Politics and Conservative Islamism in Egypt," *IJMES* 30(2), 1998 OR Fauzi Najjar, "The Debate on Islam and Secularism in Egypt" *Arab Studies Quarterly* Vol 18, 1996.

Patrick Haenni and Hossam Tammam, "Chat Shows, Nashid Groups and Lite Preaching: Egypt's Air-Conditioned Islam," *Monde Diplomatique*, Sept 2003.

<http://mondediplo.com/2003/09/03egyptislam>

*Thursday April 14:*

Lindsay Wise, "Amr Khaled: Broadcasting the Nahda" *Transnational Broadcasting Studies* Fall 2004 <http://www.tbsjournal.com/Archives/Fall04/wiseamrkhaled.html>

Interview with Moez Masoud: <http://www.tbsjournal.com/Archives/Fall05/Masoud.html>

Robert Worth, "Generation Faithful"

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/03/world/middleeast/03preacher.html?\\_r=2&em=&pagewanted=all](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/03/world/middleeast/03preacher.html?_r=2&em=&pagewanted=all)

Fulla and Islamic pop culture <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/move-over-barbie> OR Negar

Azimi "Islam's Answer to MTV" <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/15/magazine/15Pop-t.html>

(For a sampling of the kind of music videos that count as "Islamic," look at this:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2\\_2cFityc4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2_2cFityc4))

Hossam Hagg "Ithagibti, bravo aleiki" ("You veiled, bravo!")

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3n7yPl6iaoc>

Documentary on 4Shabab:

<http://english.aljazeera.net/programmes/witness/2011/04/201141212247721625.html>

### **A New Global Muslim Public?**

*Tuesday April 19:*

Wise, "Amr Khaled vs Yusuf Al Qaradawi: The Danish Cartoon Controversy and the Clash of Two Islamic TV Titans" <http://www.tbsjournal.com/wise.htm>

Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam*. 2004. Ch 3 "Muslims in the West."

Fred Halliday, "Relativism and Universalism in Human Rights: The Case of the Islamic Middle East" in *Political Studies*, Vol 43, No. 1 (1995).

*Thursday April 21:*

Anderson and Gonzalez-Quijano, "Technological Mediation and the Emergence of Transnational Muslim Publics" in Salvatore and Eickelman, eds. *Public Islam and the Common Good*. (Blackboard)

Bettina Graf, "Islamonline.net: Independent, Interactive, Popular" *Arab Media and Society* 4 (2008) <http://www.arabmediasociety.com/?article=576>

### **Jihadism in a Global Era: Local or Transnational, Old or New?**

*Tuesday April 26:*

Peter Mandaville, "Sufis and Salafis: The Political Discourse of Transnational Islam" in Robert Hefner, ed. *Remaking Muslim Politics*. 2004.

Thomas Hegghammer, "Terrorist Recruitment and Radicalization in Saudi Arabia," *Middle East Policy* 13 (4), Winter 2006.

Marc Sageman Leaderless Jihad, Ch 2 “The Globalization of Jihadi Terror” and Ch 4 “Radicalization in the Diaspora” (Desk reserve)

*Thursday April 28:*

“Fatwa Fight,” *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 16-22 September, 2004.

<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2004/708/eg4.htm>

Marc Lynch, “Al-Qaeda’s Constructivist Turn” (Praeger 2005) (Blackboard)

Faisal Devji Landscapes of the Jihad. Ch 4 “Media and Martyrdom” (desk reserve)

*Tuesday May 3:*

Class wrap-up and presentation of research topics.

*Tuesday May 10:*

FINAL PAPERS DUE BY 5 P.M.