

**GO 365 ISLAM AND POLITICS IN THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST  
Spring 2010**

Class meetings: Tue and Thu 12:40-2 p.m., Library 213.

Instructor: Sumita Pahwa

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Office Hours: Wednesday 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. or by appointment.

**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.

We will structure our discussion of the readings each week around the following main questions: Why did Islam become politically important in this case? In what form did it play a political role – through its religious institutions? As the basis of a group’s identity or as something that rallied community sentiment? As a set of values and moral guidelines that were important to people? 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?

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 more than one class you will also be required to come in to office hours by the following week prepared to answer a few questions about the missed week’s readings.

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 session’s readings (to be selected by the second session of the semester) and present your paper in the relevant class (20% of class grade). Please come to the second class session prepared to pick a day’s reading, with no more than one student per day. Your review 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 with regard to the “main questions” of the course (above).

Your second assignment will be a short take-home midterm essay assignment with a choice of questions asking you to analyze and pull together readings from the first six weeks and to apply some of their insights to other cases (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, which may be an Islamist movement, or a study of Islam in the political process of one or more states, or an analysis of the role of Islam in a particular political debate (e.g. women’s rights or human rights) in the Middle East (35% of class grade).

You are encouraged to keep up with news reports on Islam in the political process in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Economist*, *Financial Times*, *Guardian* and the news wires (AP, Reuters, etc). As an extra credit assignment you may pick a news article of at least 500 words that is specifically about Islam in the politics of a particular country and write a 2-3 page essay analyzing the assumptions the article makes about Islam and politics and considering how the insights you have acquired through the course readings would help you interpret that article. You will also be asked to briefly discuss that article with your classmates. A well-written and analytical essay will get you an extra 5% for the class; an unsatisfactory essay will not get any credit.

#### **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 students constantly entering and leaving the classroom is disruptive to discussion and the learning process and will result in a poor participation grade.

#### **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. No excuses will be accepted for an inability to access these readings.

#### **Islam, modernity and political thought**

*Tuesday January 26:*

Class introduction. Be sure to do the following background readings in preparation for the first class, particularly if you have no background in Islamic studies or Middle Eastern history.

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>

Khaled Helmy, “The Contrasting Fates of Middle Eastern Politicized Islam and European Politicized Christianity,” pp. 16-33. Paper presented at the Religion and Democracy Seminar, Columbia University, Oct 12, 2006. (Blackboard)

*Thursday January 28:*

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 2:*

Nikki Keddie, “The Revolt of Islam, 1700-1993: Comparative Considerations and Relations to Imperialism” in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 36 (3), July 1994. pp 463-487.

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 4:*

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

Selections from Charles Wendell Five Tracts of Hasan al-Banna (to be distributed in class)

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

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

*Tuesday February 9:*

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&toc.id=ch03&brand=ucpress>

*Thursday February 11:*

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)

### **Radical Islamic protest as class struggle?**

*Tuesday February 16:*

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 18:*

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

### **Redefining jihad: Islamist violence in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

*Tuesday February 23:*

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 25:*

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.”

### **Ideals and realities of Islamic theocracies:**

*Tuesday March 2:*

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 4:*

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>

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

***The growth of a ‘civic Islam’:***

*Tuesday March 9:*

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.

MIDTERM ESSAY ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED AT END OF CLASS.

*Thursday March 11:*

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 12 BY 5 P.M.

SPRING BREAK MARCH 14-21 – NO CLASS.

### ***Islamist party politics and ‘post-Islamism’***

*Tuesday March 23:*

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 25:*

Janine Clark, “The Conditions of Islamist Moderation: Unpacking Cross-Ideological Cooperation in Jordan,” *IJMES* 38 (4) 2006.  
Joshua Stacher, “Post-Islamist Rumblings 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 30:*

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 April 1:*

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 6:*

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 8:*

"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 13:*

Salwa Ismail, "Confronting the Other: Identity, Culture, Politics and Conservative Islamism in Egypt," *IJMES* 30(2), 1998.

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 15:*

Lindsay Wise, "Amr Khaled: Broadcasting the Nahda" *Transnational Broadcasting Studies* Fall 2004

<http://www.tbsjournal.com/Archives/Fall04/wiseamrkhaled.html> and "Amr Khaled vs Yusuf Al

Qaradawi: The Danish Cartoon Controversy and the Clash of Two Islamic TV Titans"

<http://www.tbsjournal.com/wise.htm>

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

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

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOfEfiNDy54>

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

*Tuesday April 20:*

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 22:*

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 27:*

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 29:*

"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 4:*

Class wrap-up and presentation of student research in progress.

*Tuesday May 11:*

FINAL PAPERS DUE BY 5 P.M.