UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF ISLAM IN POLITICS: RELIGION, MODERNITY AND DEMOCRACY
SPRING 2014
Dr Jocelyne Cesari

Time: Mondays-Wednesdays
2-3 pm

COURSE OVERVIEW
In this course, we will investigate the relationship between modernization, politics, and Islam in Muslim-majority countries. This course provides a unique overview of the historical and religious developments from the end of World War II to the Arab Spring that have made Islam a major political force, and discusses Islam's impact on emerging democracies in the contemporary Middle East. We will systematically analyze the status of Islam within modern nation-states through several case studies” Iraq, Pakistan and Turkey as well as Egypt and Tunisia. Such case studies will show how Islamic references have been central to building modern national narratives and institutions, and how collective Islamic discourses and actions will influence post-authoritarian regimes and democratic transitions. The analysis of each country will be based on a discussion of the theories of modernization as well as on a comparison with other similar developments in other parts of the world. It will also discuss and present current sociological approaches of the concept of religion and apply it to Muslim-majority countries.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
1. To reconsider the theories of modernization by introducing the role of Islam in particular and religion in general
2. To reconsider the theories of secularism and religion in the light the cultural and religious changes in Muslim countries
3. Discuss the gap between theological work and social interpretation of the Islamic religion in different national contexts

Materials:
• Readings for each session will be scanned and uploaded onto the course website.
• The following books are required as resources that we will use in the course in addition of the materials for each session:

• The Qu¨ran Interpreted (1955) by Arthur Arberry.
• Or The Koran (1956) by N.J Dawood.
Class Requirements:
- Each student is expected to read the materials before each class and participate actively in the class discussions.
- Midterm Paper will be an assigned topic. (10-15 pages)
- Final Paper is on a topic of students’ choice – 15 (minimum) to 20 pages. (after approval by the professor)

The assignments aim to evaluate students understanding about the contemporary discussions on the Islamic religious tradition in different cultural contexts and their ability to compare with parallel discussion in other religious traditions.

Grading:
- Class Participation: 20%
- Midterm Paper: 35%
- Final Paper: 45%

COURSE SCHEDULE

Session 1:
STATE AND RELIGION IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES I


Session 2:
STATE AND RELIGION IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES II  (Comparative perspective)


Session 3 ASSESSING THE GAP BETWEEN POLITICAL ISLAM AND ISLAMIC THEOLOGY


Session 4:
**ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY IN EGYPT**


**Recommended background reading:**

Session 5:
**ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY IN EGYPT II**

Stephane Lacroix, "*Sheikhs and Politicians: Inside the New Egyptian Salafism*"
Brookings Doha Center Policy Briefing, (June 2012).
http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2012/06/07-egyptian-salafism-lacroix

Tschirgi, Dan; Kazziha, Walid; McMahon, Sean F.; Boulder Colo (Eds), “*Egypt’s Tahrir Revolution,*” Lynne Rienner Publishers, (2013):103-142; 142-183; 249-275.

Session 6:
**ISLAM IN TUNISIA: TOWARD AN ISLAMIC DEMOCRACY?**


Recommended background reading:


**Session 7:**

**ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY IN MOROCCO: TOWARD A CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY?**


**Session 8:**

**ISLAM IN IRAN: FUSION OF RELIGION AND POLITICS**

Kamali, Masoud. “*Revolutionary Iran: Civil Society and State in the Modernization Process,*” Aldershot: Ashgate, (1998): Chapter 7; Pt.III.


**Session 9: TURKEY: SYNTHESIS BETWEEN ISLAM AND SECULARISM?**


Parlar Dal, Emel. “The Transformation of Turkey's Relations with the Middle East:

**Session 10 : ISLAM IN PAKISTAN: THE INTERNATIONAL RISK OF A POTENTIAL “FAILED” STATE**


Session 11:
LIBYA: DEMOCRACY AFTER QADAIFI?


Session 12:
IRAQ: OVERCOMING SECTARIAN DIVIDES?

See Iraq country profile on www.islamopediaonline.org


SESSION 13: WOMEN’S RIGHTS, RELIGION AND DEMOCRACY


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