ISLAM AND POLITICS IN THE MIDDLE EAST
REL 408/PS 408/SAME 408
Spring 2021

A synchronous online course taught Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00–3:20 Central Time
https://illinois.zoom.us/j/89794333450?pwd=U1dZSndneTBRVUs0R3B2UDZlZHZHdz09;
Meeting ID: 897 9433 3450

Course Description:

This course examines the role of Islam in the politics of various Muslim states in a region stretching from Morocco to Pakistan. We will read about the rise of Islamism (an ideology that advocates the establishment of a political system based on Islamic law and conservative social norms) against the backdrop of Western imperialism and the failures of secular nationalisms in the region. We will compare states that claim to be based on Islam (Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Iran) in order to explore Islamism's variable manifestations. We will also study the varieties of Islamist opposition movements and the extent to which they work within secular political structures or constitute armed resistance to them. We will learn about different Islamist perspectives on democracy, the experience and limitations of democracy in the Muslim world, and reasons for the democracy deficit in the Middle East. Our authors approach the study of Islam and politics from several distinct theoretical and personal perspectives, which will be analyzed, discussed, and compared. Undergraduates receive 3 hours of credit; graduate students receive 4 hours of credit. Course prerequisite: junior standing or consent of the instructor.

Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will be familiar with the role of Islam in the history and current politics of Middle Eastern nation-states and will be intellectually equipped to analyze political currents in the region from several theoretical perspectives. Writing assignments and class discussions are geared toward improving student ability to understand, analyze, and articulate important aspects of the intersection between Islam and politics in the Middle East.

Long-term student learning outcomes include enhanced critical thinking, improved ability to express ideas orally and in writing, and a greatly increased understanding of different cultural perspectives and the impact of international policies on local contexts.

The following books are required for this course:

Ayoob, Mohammed and Danielle N. **Lussier**. *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in Muslim Societies*, 2nd ed. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020. ISBN 978-0472037650.

Feldman, Noah. *The Arab Winter: A Tragedy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020. ISBN hardcover 978-0691194929.

Ghattas, Kim. *Black Wave: Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the Forty-Year Rivalry that Unraveled Culture, Religion, and Collective Memory in the Middle East*. New York: Picador/Henry Holt & Co., 2020. ISBN 978-1250789389.

Hamid, Shadi. *Islamic Exceptionalism: How the Struggle over Islam Is Reshaping the World*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016. ISBN 978-1250135131.

Robinson, Glenn E. *Global Jihad: A Brief History*. Stanford University Press, 2021. ISBN PB 978-0804760478.

Taşpinar, Ömer. *What the West Is Getting Wrong about the Middle East: Why Islam Is Not the Problem*. London, New York, Oxford, New Delhi, Sydney: I. B. Tauris, 2020. ISBN hardcover 978-1788310109.

Ullah, Haroon K. *Vying for Allah's Vote: Understanding Islamic Parties, Political Violence, and Extremism in Pakistan*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2014. ISBN 978-1626160156. Available online through our Library.

This course uses Compass (https://compass2g.illinois.edu/), which lists only the primary course rubric. The primary rubric for this course is REL 408, so students registered in PS 408 or SAME 408 will have to click on REL 408 to access the site.

Course requirements:

1. **Attendance and participation**: It is expected that students will attend all class sessions and be prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that day. Lack of preparation and more than two unexplained absences from class will adversely affect your grade. In order to get full credit for attendance and participation, you must log onto Zoom before the beginning of class and contribute at least one meaningful point derived from or critiquing the readings assigned for that day. In some sessions, students may be randomly selected to lead discussion of the readings for seven minutes. The readings assigned for each day are listed in the syllabus, and must be completed before coming to class. Class participation accounts for 9% of your course grade.

2. **All About Me video**: The goal of the All About Me assignment is to help build community in this class by sharing a little about yourself with your classmates and professor. In this assignment you will produce a short video (2 to 4 minutes) in which you tell us a little bit about yourself. Be sure to include your name, where you are from, what your major is and how you got interested in it, why you are interested in this course, and three things you love to do. Upload your video to the All About Me Media Gallery on the course's Compass website. You are encouraged to watch the videos posted by the professor and your classmates. The All About Me assignment is due February 6 and is worth 1% of your course grade.

3. **Summaries of the readings**: Before each class session, starting on January 28, each student is to write a summary of approximately 500 words, providing a balanced summary of all the readings assigned for that day, emphasizing the points that the authors emphasize (not just the ones you find most interesting). Feel free to critique the readings, bearing in mind the following steps, which are necessary for any such critique: The first step is to make sure you really understand what the author is saying; that is the main point of doing these summaries. Then ask yourself the following questions:

a. What am I being asked to believe?
b. What evidence does the author present to support his or her contention? Does this evidence support the author's contention?
c. Is there other evidence that points to a different conclusion?
d. Weigh the evidence that supports the author's contention as well as the evidence that undermines it, and come to your own conclusion, *based on the evidence*. It is irrelevant whether you *like* this conclusion.

These summaries must be submitted **as a Word document** on Compass *before* class begins. The reading summaries will account for 30% of your course grade.

4. **Three five-page essays**: Each student will write three essays of five double-spaced pages each on a topic that will be provided on Compass a week before it is due. The prompt for each of these essays includes several questions, *each* of which must be carefully and directly addressed in the essay. The due dates for these papers are February 27, March 27, and May 1 (all Saturdays); papers turned in after midnight on the due date will be subject to a grade deduction of 5 percentage points for each half-week it is late. Please follow these instructions for the essays:

   a. These essays are based entirely on readings assigned for this course; do not base your essay on readings that are not assigned.

   b. Incorporate all the readings that are relevant to the topic. The student must demonstrate mastery of these readings, critique the readings, and include comments relevant to as broad a range of these readings as makes sense for the topic.

   c. Because we are all using the same readings, it is unnecessary to provide a bibliography, but it is *essential to provide citations to specific page numbers* of the sources. Use in-text citations following this format:

      > In Islamic law, "the burden of proof is invariably against the claimant" (Abou El Fadl 153).

      Note that quotation marks go before the parentheses, but punctuation goes after the parentheses. A page number citation is necessary even if there is no direct quotation. Unless we have read more than one source by the same author, there is no need to cite the date of publication. Further guidelines given in the document entitled "Paper Guidelines" (PG), which is posted on the Compass website.

   d. These papers must be turned in as MS Word documents attached to the assignment on the Compass website for our class. Use standard 12-point font and one-inch margins.

   e. Consult the grading rubric provided on Compass for each essay, to make sure you are doing all that is expected.

   f. Papers must use a clear writing style, including proper spelling and grammar.

Many common grammatical errors are explained in the document on our Compass website titled "Correcting Common Writing Problems" (CCWP). I will make comments and corrections on your paper by using the Microsoft Word "track changes" function. If you did not adhere to the proper format, I will refer to the appropriate section of "Paper Guidelines" by writing "PG," followed by the relevant paragraph number. If you make an error in your writing, I may refer you to something in "Correcting Common Writing Problems" by writing "CCWP," followed by the relevant paragraph number. If essays have an excessive number of grammar or spelling errors, I may request that they be rewritten for a reduced grade.

For undergraduate students, each 5-page essay will be worth 20% of your course grade, for a total of 60% of your course grade. For graduate students, each 5-page paper will be worth 10% of your course grade, for a total of 30% of your course grade.

5. **Term paper** (graduate students only), due Saturday, May 8, worth 30% of your course grade: Graduate students will write a term paper of about 12-15 pages on a topic of your choice pertaining to Islam and politics in the Middle East. In this course, the Middle East includes the entire Arab world, Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The term paper should draw on both the assigned readings and additional readings. Additional instructions:

    a. A 300-word topic proposal and bibliography for your term paper must be submitted as a MS World document on the Compass website no later than Saturday, March 13.

    b. Submit your paper as a Microsoft Word document attached to the assignment on Compass.

    c. Term papers may use the same sort of in-paper citations that we use in the five-page essays. Alternatively, footnotes may be used, following the *Chicago Manual of Style* (https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html).

    d. Include a bibliography. For bibliographic format, see Paper Guidelines #20 or the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Grades for undergraduate students will be calculated as follows:

Class participation	9%
All About Me	1%
Summaries of the readings	30%
Three five-page essays	60% (20% each)
Total	100%

Grades for graduate students will be calculated as follows:

Class participation	9%
All About Me	1%
Summaries of the readings	30%
Three five-page essays	30% (10% each)
Term paper	30%
Total	100%

All assignments must be completed in a satisfactory manner in order to pass the course.

Grading system: Letter grades correspond to the following numerical percentages:

A+ = 97-99%	B+ = 87-88%	C+ = 77-78%	D+ = 67-69%	
A = 92-96%	B = 82-86%	C = 72-76%	D = 62-66%	
A- = 89-91%	B- = 79-81%	C- = 70-71%	D- = 60-61%	F = below 60%

An "A" grade must be earned by work that is clearly *superior* and goes beyond what is simply good.

Academic Integrity

All work submitted for grades in this class **must be the work of that student alone**. To represent someone else's ideas as your own is **plagiarism**, which, according to the Student Code of the University of Illinois (http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/article1_part4_1-402.html), includes, but is not limited to:

(1) **Copying**: Submitting the work of another as one's own.

(2) **Direct Quotation**: Every direct quotation **must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be promptly cited**. We will use the citation style provided in "Paper Guidelines," which is posted on our Compass website. The actual source from which cited information was obtained must be acknowledged.

(3) **Paraphrasing**: Prompt acknowledgment is required when material from another source is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part. This is true **even if the student's words differ substantially from those of the source**. *A citation acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice as an acknowledgment of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material*.

(4) **Borrowed Facts or Information**: Information obtained through reading or research that is not common knowledge must be acknowledged. Examples of common knowledge might include the names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc. Materials that contribute only to your general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in a bibliography and need not be immediately cited. One citation is usually sufficient to acknowledge indebtedness when a number of connected sentences in the paper draw their special information from one source.

Any assignment on which a student has cheated or plagiarized will receive a failing grade. Repeated infractions may result in a failing grade for the course.

Class etiquette:

- Log onto the class's Zoom link before the beginning of class.
- Use a laptop rather than a cellphone to access class sessions. Sometimes I will share my computer screen in class, and we will also be using Zoom's chat feature to share ideas. A phone screen is not large enough to read texts or for using chat if one is also looking at something else on the screen. Students who do not have an appropriate digital device or adequate bandwidth for the course should contact the Dean of Students office to request assistance.
- Have the assigned readings with you during class.
- **Activate your video** so we can see each other, but **mute your microphone** during class in order to minimize extraneous noises. Zoom has a "raise your hand" feature that you can use to signal a desire to ask a question or make a comment. You can temporarily unmute yourself by pressing the space bar. This allows you to react more quickly than if you click on the "unmute" icon. Another way to ask questions during class time is by using the chat feature. We will also use the chat feature sometimes to solicit student input.
- All comments and questions must be phrased in an appropriately respectful fashion.
- Islam is not a person or a single way of thinking; it is a complex religious tradition that has been variously interpreted by different members of that tradition. Therefore, no one is allowed to speak on behalf of Islam as a whole. You may refer to things you have learned or been taught, but that is only one of any number of possible perspectives.
- This class welcomes a diversity of perspectives and opinions. Please treat each other with courtesy and respect, even if you disagree.
- Do not post or share materials from the course with people outside the course. That is a violation of copyright and of academic integrity.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: To ensure that disability-related concerns are properly addressed from the beginning, students with disabilities who require assistance to participate in this class are asked to notify the professor as soon as possible.

One-on-one meetings: I would like to meet each one of you one-on-one through a Zoom meeting at least once between the third and seventh weeks of the semester, in order to get to know you and to hear what you like about the course, as well as any challenges, concerns or suggestions you may have. I am also available to meet with you for individual help in understanding the material or assignments. Hours during which I can be available for meetings are Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays between 9:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. I am *not* available to meet on Tuesdays or Thursdays. Email me at vhoffman@illinois.edu to request a meeting; please suggest a time within the above-mentioned parameters when you can be available.

Email Etiquette

- You are welcome to email me any questions, requests, or concerns. I am not always on email, but I will get back to you within a 24-hour period.
- Write an email as if you are writing a letter: begin with "Dear Professor Hoffman".
- In your email, please immediately make clear which of my classes you are taking, until I have had an opportunity to get to know you.
- Do not address a professor by his or her first name unless that person has given you permission to do so.
- Use polite language and formal English.

Help with technology: After receiving the link to our class's Zoom meeting, if you are prompted to log in, click on "sign on with SSO". You must have the latest version of Zoom. You will then be prompted to provide your University of Illinois password. If you have difficulty accessing Zoom or Compass, please contact the tech services help desk: email consult@illinois.edu or phone 217-244-7000. Other useful help resources are at https://ops.citl.illinois.edu/for-students.

Session Topics and Assigned Readings

Tu Jan 26 Introduction
Ayoob and Lussier, chapters 1 and 2, pp. 1-44

Th Jan 28 How relevant is Islam to Middle Eastern politics?
Taşpinar, introduction and ch. 1, pp. 1-56
Hamid, ch. 2, pp. 38-67

Tu Feb 2 Models of Islamic reform
Ayoob and Lussier, ch. 3 sections on Saudi Arabia, pp. 46-49, 52-54
Hamid, ch. 3, pp. 68-100

Th Feb 4 The Iranian revolution and the Islamic Republic
Ghattas, introduction and chs. 1&2, pp. 1-50
Ayoob and Lussier, ch. 3, pp. 45-64

Tu Feb 9 The Muslim Brotherhood and the origins of modern jihadism
Robinson, introduction, pp. 1-34

Th Feb 11 Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, and the crucible of radical Islamism
Ghattas, chs. 3&4, pp. 51-89
Robinson, ch. 1, pp. 35-60

Tu Feb 16 Ideology and pragmatism in Islamist organizations
Ayoob and Lussier, ch. 4, pp. 65-90
Ghattas, ch. 5, pp. 93-109

Th Feb 18 Islamism and the rise of sectarianism
Ghattas, chs. 6-8, pp. 110-163

Tu Feb 23 Islamism and national politics
Ayoob and Lussier, ch. 6, pp. 118-137
Ghattas, chs. 9-12, pp. 164-216

Th Feb 25 Secularism and Islamic politics in Turkey
Taşpinar, ch. 2, pp. 57-108
Hamid, ch. 5, pp. 148-176

Sa Feb 27 FIRST ESSAY due by midnight

Tu Mar 2 Islam and Politics in Pakistan
Ghattas, ch. 15, pp. 249-262
Ullah, chs. 1-3, pp. 1-50

Th Mar 4 Muslim Democratic and Islamist Parties in Pakistan
Ullah, chs. 4-5, pp. 51-105

Tu Mar 9 Islamism and Electoral Processes in Pakistan
Ullah, chs. 6-7, pp. 106-153

Th Mar 11 The Arab Spring
Ghattas, ch. 16, pp. 263-278
Feldman, preface and ch. 1, pp. ix-29

Sa Mar 13 Deadline for graduate students to submit term paper proposal and bibliography

Tu Mar 16 Islamists and the Arab Spring
Hamid, ch. 4, pp. 101-147

Th Mar 18 Tunisia after the Arab Spring
Feldman, ch. 5, pp. 128-158
Hamid, ch. 6, pp. 177-199

Tu Mar 23 Egypt after the Arab Spring
Hamid, ch. 1, pp. 1-37
Feldman, ch. 2, pp. 30-76

Th Mar 25 Muslim democracies
Ayoob and Lussier, ch. 5, pp. 91-117
Ullah, ch. 8, pp. 154-173

Sa Mar 27 SECOND ESSAY due by midnight

Tu Mar 30 Transnational jihadism
Robinson, ch. 2, pp. 61-87
Ayoob and Lussier, ch. 7, pp. 138-162

Th Apr 1 The Iraq war and its consequences
Ghattas, chs. 13 & 14, pp. 219-248
Robinson, ch. 3, pp. 88-121

Tu Apr 6 Syria and Iraq, 2011-2018
Ghattas, ch. 17, pp. 279-292
Feldman, ch. 3, pp. 77-100

Th Apr 8 Sunnis versus Shi'ites
Taşpinar, ch. 3, pp. 109-146

Tu Apr 13 no classes

Th Apr 15 Emergence of the Islamic State (ISIS)
Robinson, ch. 4, pp. 122-144
Feldman, ch. 4, pp. 101-127

Tu Apr 20 Understanding ISIS
Taşpinar, ch. 4, pp. 147-176
Hamid, ch. 7, pp. 200-237

Th Apr 22 Jihadism beyond ISIS
Robinson, Conclusion: Movements of Rage, pp. 145-184

Tu Apr 27 The struggle against authoritarianism
Ghattas, chs. 18-19 and conclusion, pp. 293-334
Feldman, afterword, pp. 159-162
*Michele Dunne, "Fear and Learning in the Arab Uprisings." *Journal of Democracy* 31, 1 (Jan. 2020): 182-192 (This reading is on Compass.)

Th Apr 29 Which way forward?
Robinson, Epilogue: Who Won?, pp. 185-188
Ayoob and Lussier, ch. 8, pp. 163-179
Hamid, ch. 8, pp. 238-268

Sa May 1 <u>THIRD ESSAY due by midnight</u>

Tu May 4 Policy implications
Taşpinar, chs. 5 and 6, pp. 177-236

Sa May 8 <u>GRADUATE STUDENT TERM PAPERS due by midnight</u>