Syllabus
Islam and Politics (IR 507)

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Spring 2014: Tuesday 1:00 – 4:00pm in IRC 220 (152 Bay State Rd.)
Office Hours: Wed/Thur 2:00 – 4:00pm or by appointment, 156 Bay State Rd., #403

“Contrary to much of the literature on the subject, it is not possible to talk about Islam and democracy in general but only about Muslims living and theorizing under specific historical circumstances.”

Course Objectives
The Islamic revival is one of the most important developments of the twentieth century. This class is motivated by a set of interlocking questions designed to understand the politics of modern Islamic political movements in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia. What are their intellectual origins? How should we understand their relationship to colonialism, theology, nationalism, democracy, liberalism, development, and women and gender? How have Islamic political movements evolved over time? We will explore these questions historically and in comparative perspective by drawing on scholarship from political science, Islamic studies, sociology, anthropology, and history. By the end of the course, students should possess an empirically grounded understanding of contemporary Islamic movements as well as the analytical tools necessary to explain their behavior.

Course Requirements
Participation (20%): The course will be run as a seminar. This format requires students to attend regularly, read diligently, and participate actively in class discussions. Each week, each of you should come to class prepared with 2-3 discussion questions that pertain to the readings.

Response Papers (5 x 5% = 25%): Student will write five short (2-3 pages, double-spaced, 1 inch margins) analytical response papers (RP) over the course of the semester. I will provide the paper prompt before they are due via email by 7pm the evening before class on 2/4, 2/18, 3/4, 4/1, and 4/15. A grade rubric is at the end of the syllabus.

Presentation (2 x 5% = 10%): Each seminar participant will make two presentations. The presentation should be an analytical summary and critical evaluation of one of the readings. The presentation should raise issues that the student believes will be useful for discussion. The presentation will be no more than fifteen minutes in length, to be followed by questions and discussion. A grade rubric is at the end of the syllabus.

Final Exam (Undergraduates Students: 45%): The final exam is a take-home essay, 7-8 pages in length. The exam will be handed out at the end of class on 4/29 and must be returned via email by noon on 5/6.
Research Paper (Graduate Students: 45%): In lieu of a final exam, graduate students are required to write a 20-page research paper. Students must meet with me the week of March 3 to present an abstract and preliminary list of sources. Papers are due via email by noon on 5/6.

Late Work: Late submission of assignments will penalize your grade by incurring an automatic full-grade deduction per day beginning with the assignment deadline.


Special Needs: If you have any special needs or circumstances, such as a learning disability or health concern, please do not hesitate to speak with me and we can discuss suitable accommodations and assistance.

Academic Misconduct: Plagiarism and cheating are serious offences and will be punished in accordance with BU’s Academic Conduct Code: http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/

Electronic Communications in Class: Please do not use laptop computers, cell phones, or any other electronic devices during the seminar. These are serious distractions to your learning.

Required Texts

Recommended
Week One (Jan 21): Our Framework


Recommended:

Week Two (Jan 30 not Jan 28): Justice and Reconciliation in Islam (led by Daniel Philpott)


Week Three (Feb 4): Jamal al-Din ‘al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh [RP1]


Recommended:

Week Four (Feb 11): Sayyid Qutb


Recommended:

Week Five (Feb 18): Political Party Moderation [RP2]


Recommended:

**Week Six (Feb 25): Ruhollah Khomeini and the Islamic Republic of Iran**

• Mandaville, “Islam as the System,” pp. 179-197.

Recommended:

**Week Seven (March 4): Saudi Arabia [RP3]**

• Lacroix, *Awakening Islam*. [Entire book]

**Week Eight (March 20 not March 18): Sectarianism (led by Toby Matthiesen)**


**Week Nine (March 25): Usama bin Laden’s Al-Qaeda**

• Mandaville, “Radical Islamism and Jihad Beyond the Nation-State,” pp. 237-274.
• Daniel L Byman, 2003. “Al-Qaeda as an Adversary: Do We Understand Our Enemy?” *World Politics* 56:1, pp. 139-163.

**Week Ten (April 1): Zaynab Al-Ghazali and Islamic Feminism [RP4]**


**Week Eleven (April 10 not April 8): Religious Freedom (led by Beth Shakman Hurd)**


Recommended:


Week Twelve (April 15): Democracy I [RP5]

Bayat, Making Islam Democratic. [Entire book except ch. 2]

Week Twelve (April 22): Democracy II


Week Thirteen (April 29): US Foreign Policy [RPX]


Grading Rubric – Response Papers

5 Answers the prompt in a coherent manner. Makes creative links between the reading, authors and concepts. Goes beyond the assigned content to draw fresh insights and analysis. Demonstrates mastery of the material and engages in independent thinking. Avoids making claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment, or making fallacious claims including equivocation. Writing is exceptionally lucid.

4.5 Answers the prompt in a coherent way. Makes links between the cases, concepts or authors. Demonstrates a solid understanding of the material and goes beyond simple regurgitation, even if all claims are not convincingly established. Avoids being vague, making claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment. Writing is clear and concise.

4 Answers the prompt in a coherent way although lacks creativity and depth. Demonstrates more than cursory understanding of the material. Tends toward vagueness but does not make claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment. Writing is good.

3.5 Answers the prompt. Provides examples of cases, concepts or authors but fails to effectively connect evidence to the prompt. Makes claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment. Writing itself is acceptable but needs improvement.

3 Unclear answer to the prompt. Fails to lay out the answer with evidence from the cases concepts, and/or fails effectively connect evidence to the argument. Tends toward vagueness, makes claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment. Writing itself is poor.

2.5 States an unclear claim. Fails to lay out the argument with evidence from the texts and fails to demonstrate knowledge of the material itself. Vague, makes claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment. Writing itself is unacceptable or incoherent.

Grading Rubric – Presentations

1 pt. Clear and concise
1 pt. Comprehensive
1 pt. Logical
1 pt. Accurate
1 pt. Imaginative
5 pt. Total