

Michigan State University
James Madison College
Spring 2007
MC492: Senior Seminar in IR, sec 001
Time: M, W, 10:20am-12:10pm

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The Many Faces of Political Islam

Course Objectives and Outline

This seminar will focus on the interaction between religion and politics in the Muslim world with special emphasis on the role of regimes and/or political formations that use Islam to legitimize their rule or oppose existing political orders. This subject has become a topic of lively debate especially since 9/11. Unfortunately, the debate has generated more heat than light on the issue with media pundits and analysts who have acquired instant expertise sounding off on this very complex subject with a degree of confidence often inversely related to their knowledge of the subject.

This seminar will seek to achieve several objectives: (a) locate the discussion of religion and state in the Muslim world in its proper historical perspective tracing the relationship from the classical age of Islam to the colonial period; (b) contextualize the discussion by analyzing the relationship between religion and politics in discrete Muslim countries in order to determine how far national and local variables determine the nature of the relationship between religion and politics; (c) discuss the concept of political Islam or Islamism and analyze specific variables that have contributed to its appeal in different Muslim societies; (d) study the ideas of seminal Islamist thinkers and analyze how ideological purity has been diluted by pragmatic considerations in different settings; (e) look at transnational manifestations of political Islam from the 19th century to the contemporary period with specific emphasis on the factors that have in the past 15 years led some militant transnational Islamists to make the “far enemy”, the United States, the primary target of opposition and attack; (f) predict the future of political Islam with special reference to the process of democratization in Muslim countries.

Members of the seminar will attempt to achieve these goals both by scrutinizing the analytical literature on the subject, including some focused on particular countries or regions, and by undertaking research projects on particular facets of political Islam or on case studies dealing with individual countries that highlight the nature of the interaction between religion and politics in discrete settings in the Muslim world.

Required texts:

L. Carl Brown, *Religion and State: The Muslim Approach to Politics*, Columbia University Press, 2000, ISBN: 0231120397 (hereafter “Brown”)
Robert W. Hefner, *Remaking Muslim Politics: Pluralism, Contestation, and Democratization*, Princeton University Press, 2005, ISBN: 0691120935 (hereafter

“Hefner”)

Fawaz Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global*, Cambridge University Press, 2005, ISBN: 0521791405 (hereafter “Gerges”)

Mohammed Ayoob, *Political Islam Demystified: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World*, University of Michigan Press, forthcoming 2007, ms available as course pack (hereafter “Ayoob”)

The above four books will be available only at the Student Book Store. If you have any problems obtaining copies, please contact Rose Miller at SBS.

Journal articles mentioned under topics and assignments are available through MSU Library electronic resources. Please contact Terri Miller at the MSU Library, e-mail: ticklet@mail.lib.msu.edu, if you have any problems accessing these articles. The International Crisis Groups Reports and Briefings may be accessed through the ICG website. Carnegie Endowment Reports and Briefings may be accessed through the Carnegie Endowment website. Essays appearing in *Middle East Report Online* may be accessed on the web through its website <http://www.merip.org/mero>. My chapter in the Hunter and Malik volume titled “The Muslim World’s Poor Record of Modernization and Democratization: The Interplay of Internal and External Factors” will be posted on the course website in ANGEL at a later date.

The instructor may recommend additional readings from time to time depending upon the interests of particular students and the special requirements of their research projects.

Course Evaluation:

Students' work in the seminar will be evaluated on the basis of the following formula: research paper, including oral presentation of research findings, 50%; a review of literature paper 25%; oral presentations of literature review and seminar participation 25%.

Each student will have to prepare a research paper dealing with a particular aspect of the problematic to be analyzed in the seminar. This paper must take the form either (a) of a case study analyzing the interaction of religion and politics in a particular Muslim country with special emphasis on the role of Islamist political formations in the politics of that country or (b) an analysis of a particular facet of political Islam, including ideology, political organization, or social base of Islamist political activity in a comparative perspective, or (c) the contribution of one or more seminal Islamist thinker(s) to the ideology of Islamism.

The student must choose the topic of the research paper in consultation with the instructor. This process must be completed by the end of January and a research proposal not exceeding 5 pages with an accompanying bibliography must be submitted to the instructor by **February 7**. Each student will have to make an oral presentation of her/his research findings during an allotted session to provide members of the seminar the opportunity to react to her/his findings in the light of their own research as well as their reading of the

literature. It is expected that students will submit first drafts of their paper to the instructor for his comments. It is also expected that students will revise their initial drafts in light of the instructor's comments and those of other members of the seminar made following his/her oral presentation. The final draft of the research paper – 20-25 pages in length, typed double-spaced - must be submitted to the instructor for evaluation **no later than 10am on May 1**. The research paper and its accompanying presentation will count for **50%** of the total grade.

A substantial portion of the seminar meetings will be devoted to a review of the analytical literature prescribed for the course. This is essential to provide students with the conceptual tools necessary for them to complete their research projects successfully. The instructor will expect all seminar participants to have full familiarity with the literature to be discussed in a particular session. This familiarity can be achieved only by a thoughtful reading of the material before attending each session. However, in order to provide structure to our discussion, each student will be responsible, either individually or jointly with one or more students, to lead the discussion in several meetings of the seminar. His/her performance in this role as discussion leader will count heavily in that category of evaluation termed "oral presentation and participation" which will determine **25%** of the final grade. In addition, each student will provide the instructor with a written review of literature on a designated topic **no later than April 2**. Earlier submissions will be appreciated. The review essay of 10-15 pages, typed double-space, must provide a critical evaluation of the readings' central arguments and will count for **25%** of the total grade. **Students must undertake and successfully complete each of the three assigned tasks – research paper, review essay, and oral presentation and participation – in order to receive a passing grade for the course.**

Attendance at seminar meetings is compulsory. A seminar is a collective learning exercise in which students learn not merely from the literature they read, the research projects they undertake, or from the instructor's comments. They learn even more from what their colleagues have to contribute both in terms of their own research and their interpretations of the analytical and conceptual literature that they analyze. Each member of the seminar must not only attend every session but also must comment intelligently and knowledgeably on what her/his colleagues have to say on the topic of the day. **Absence from seminar meetings and inadequate contribution to seminar discussions will affect the final grade adversely.**

Topics and Assignments

Jan 8: Introduction and course assignments

Jan 10: "State and Religion in Islam: The Historical Record and Its Implications for the Present and the Future" Presentation by Professor L. Carl Brown, author of *Religion and State: The Muslim Approach to Politics*.

Jan 15: MLK Day

Jan 17: Setting the Stage I: The Heritage

Readings:
Brown, chs. 1-7

Jan 22: Setting the Stage II: The Challenge of the West and the “Return” of Islam

Readings:
Brown, chs. 8-15

Jan 24: Political Islam: Definitional Issues

Readings:
Ayoob, ch. 1
International Crisis Group, "Understanding Islamism." ICG Middle East/North Africa Report March 2005.

Jan 29: Who Speaks for Islam?

Readings:
Ayoob, ch. 2
Bulliet, Richard W. "The Crisis within Islam." *Wilson Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2002)

Jan 31: The “Islamic State” in Theory and Practice-I

Readings:
Ayoob, ch. 3
Hefner, ch. 8
International Crisis Group, "Saudi Arabia Backgrounder: Who Are the Islamists," (ICG Middle East Report, September 2004)

Feb 5: The “Islamic State” in Theory and Practice-II

Readings:
Ayoob, ch. 3
Hefner, ch. 8
Ali M. Ansari, "Continuous Regime Change from Within," *Washington Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (2003)
Said Amir Arjomand, “The Rise and Fall of President Khatami and the Reform Movement in Iran”, *Constellations* 12, no. 4 (2005)

Feb 7: The Interplay Between Ideology and Pragmatism-I

Readings:
Ayoob, ch. 4

International Crisis Group, "Pakistan: The Mullahs and the Military", (ICG Asia Report, 20 March 2003)

Vali Nasr, "Military Rule, Islamism, and Democracy in Pakistan," *Middle East Journal* 58, no. 2 (2004)

Frederic Grare, "Pakistan: The Myth of an Islamist Peril," (Carnegie Endowment Policy Brief, February 2006)

Feb 7: Research Proposal Due

Feb 12: The Interplay Between Ideology and Pragmatism-II

Readings:

Hefner, ch. 6

Hesham Al-Awadi, "Mubarak and the Islamists: Why Did the 'Honeymoon' End?," *Middle East Journal* 59, no. 1 (2005)

Bassma Kodmani, "The Dangers of Political Exclusion: Egypt's Islamist Problem," (Carnegie Papers, October 2005)

Bruce K. Rutherford, "What Do Egypt's Islamists Want? Moderate Islam and the Rise of Islamic Constitutionalism," *Middle East Journal* 60, no. 4 (2006)

Feb 19: Muslim Democracy: Oxymoron or Wave of the Future? -I

Readings:

Hefner, chs. 1 and 2

Mohammed Ayoob, "The Muslim World's Poor Record of Modernization and Democratization: The Interplay of External and Internal Factors," in *Modernization, Democracy, and Islam*, ed. Shireen T. Hunter and Huma Malik (Westport: Praeger, in cooperation with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, 2005)

Vali Nasr, "The Rise Of "Muslim Democracy"." *Journal of Democracy* 16, no. 2 (2005)

Feb 21: Muslim Democracy: Oxymoron or Wave of the Future? -II

Readings:

Ayoob, ch. 5

Hefner, ch. 4

Ziya Onis, "A New Path Emerges", *Journal of Democracy* 14, no. 2 (2003)

February 26: Muslim Democracy: Oxymoron or Wave of the Future? –III

Readings:

Hefner, ch. 11

Anies Rasyid Baswedan, "Political Islam in Indonesia: Present and Future Trajectory," *Asian Survey* 44, no. 5 (2004)

Muhammad Qodari, "Indonesia's Quest for Accountable Governance," *Journal of Democracy* 16, no. 2 (2005)

Feb 28: Islamist National Resistance

Readings:

Ayoob, ch. 6

Anders Strindberg and Mats Warn, "Realities of Resistance: Hizballah, the Palestinian Rejectionists, and Al-Qa'ida Compared," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 34, no. 3 (2005)

Lara Deeb, "Hizballah: A Primer," *Middle East Report Online* (2006), available on the Internet at <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero073106.html>.

International Crisis Group, "Enter Hamas: The Challenges of Political Integration", Middle East Report No. 49, 2006

March 5 and 7: Spring Break

March 12: Transnational Political Islam –I

Readings:

Ayoob, ch. 7

Hefner, ch. 12

Yoginder Sikand, "The Tablighi Jama`at and Politics: A Critical Reappraisal," *Muslim World* 96, no. 1 (2006)

March 14: Transnational Political Islam-II

Readings:

Gerges, chs. 1-3

Michael Scott Doran, "Somebody Else's Civil War," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 1 (2002)

March 19: Transnational Political Islam-III

Readings:

Gerges, chs. 4 and 5

Quintan Wiktorowicz, "A Genealogy of Radical Islam," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 28, no. 2 (2005)

March 21: Transnational Political Islam After the Iraq War

Readings:

Gerges, ch.6

Ahmed S. Hashim, "Iraq: From Insurgency to Civil War?," *Current History* 104, no. 678 (2005)

Peter Bergen and Alec Reynolds, "Blowback Revisited: Today's Insurgents in Iraq Are Tomorrow's Terrorists," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 6 (2005)

Thomas Hegghammer, "Global Jihadism after the Iraq War", *Middle East Journal* 60, no. 1 (2006)

Vali Nasr, "When the Shiites Rise", *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 4 (2006)

March 26: The Future of Political Islam

Readings:

Ayoob, ch. 8

Gilles Kepel, "Islamism Reconsidered", *Harvard International Review* 22, no. 2 (2000)

Graham E. Fuller, "The Future of Political Islam", *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 2 (2002)

Mansoor Moaddel, "The Future of Islam after 9/11", *Futures*, 36 (2004)

Gilles Kepel, "Shia Power and the West", *American Prospect* 17, no. 9 (2006)

March 28, April 2, 4, 9, 11, 16, 18, and 23: Research Paper Presentations

April 2: Review of literature paper due

April 25: The Many Faces of Political Islam: Concluding Observations

May 1, 10am: Research Paper due