**POLS 335: MUSLIM POLITICAL THOUGHT**

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**Course Description:**

This seminar is an exploration of the resurgent tradition vn of Muslim political thought. We begin with two works from the canon of political philosophy. The first is from Al Farabi, the Muslim philosopher recommended by Maimonides, whose work preserved Plato and Aristotle in a period of European neglect. The second is taken from one of the great philosophers of history and theorists of political change, Ibn Khaldun. This brief introduction will provide, I hope, a sense of the power of the traditional canon of Muslim political thought. We will then read Albert Hourani’s magisterial account of the confrontation and engagement of Arab theorists with a largely European liberalism. Their readings, critiques, adaptations, challenges to, and expansions of liberalism remain powerful in the shaping of contemporary Muslim political thought. The remainder of the course will be spent in exploring a small part of the extraordinary renaissance of Islamic philosophy. We will read the controversial work of Sayyid Qutb, who has been charged with providing the intellectual roots of modern Islamic fundamentalism and whose populist writing threatened the military dictatorship of Gamel Nasser’s Egypt. We will examine the work of Ayatollah Khomeini whose Islamic Revolution led to the foundation of an Islamic State in Iran and look at the recent tumultuous political events there. We will examine the question of women and Islam through an exploration of the contemporary debates surrounding the issue of veiling. We will close by examining the recent popular democratic movements in the Middle East.

# Course Rationale and Objectives

The fundamental rationale of the course is to bring past writings and concepts to bear on present realities in order to explore the complex relationship between Islam and the West. The thinkers we will read provide conceptual tools with which we can work to understand the many aspects of Islamic politics and identity. The course aims to critically analyze concepts such as freedom, power, justice, secularism, modernity, and democracy through a view from “the other side”.

The course is designed to help you:

* Understand the foundations of Muslim Political Thought
* Move beyond simple binaries to an understanding of the complex relationship between Islam and the West
* Ask and confront challenging and difficult questions about religion and politics
* Improve your ability to write in depth and speak clearly about complex theoretical concepts

**Course Requirements:**

As an advanced level seminar, this course requires active participation in class. You must come to class having not only done the reading, but also having actively engaged with it, explored its assumptions and implications, and questioned its premises. Regular attendance is a must. This course is a seminar, which requires active and engaged participation. The reading each week will be roughly 80-100pgs. This material is dense and complex and requires close attention on your part.

You will be required to write two essays for this course—an open book in-class essay on the Muslim canonical tradition and a longer 8-10 page final essay that is cumulative and covers a variety of thinkers we will explore in the class. Topics for both papers will be distributed well in advance of the due date.

All students will be required to do an in-class presentation on the text of their choice. All days marked with a P on the syllabus are designated presentation days. Early in the semester you will be allowed to choose a date for your presentation. In addition to the oral presentation, you must submit a written version of the presentation to me before class. Detailed presentation instructions are available on the Moodle site for the course.

You will be graded on three criteria: (i) content (highlighting key concepts, analyzing them effectively and raising questions for discussion) (ii) structure (do your points flow together and are they connected to a set of arguments) (iii) style (speaking clearly and engaging others).

If you are permitted extra time during an exam because of a disability, you must inform me well in advance of the scheduled exam so alternative arrangements can be made for you. If you need to reschedule an exam because of an athletic or university event or because of illness, you must submit documentary evidence for my consideration in advance of the scheduled exam. If you miss an exam without prior notice you will not be allowed to make it up, except in rare cases, with detailed documentation from your doctor or DePauw Administration

Your grade for this course will be computed as follows:

Midterm Exam 30%

Final Essay 35%

Class Presentation 20%

Class Participation and Attendance 15%

**Course Policies:**

* Violations of DePauw University’s Academic Integrity Policy will be taken very seriously and punished accordingly. All violations will be reported officially and the student will fail the assignment for which they are charged with the violation.

The complete Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <http://www.depauw.edu/univ/handbooks/dpuhandbooks.asp?ID=101&parentid=100>

* Laptops are NOT permitted in class unless you have a documented reason for using them.
* Any student who feels she or he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability or learning challenge is strongly encouraged to contact Pamela Roberts, Director of Student Disability Services and ADA Compliance for further information on how to receive accommodations and support.  It is the responsibility of the student to share the letter of accommodation with faculty and staff members. Accommodations will not be implemented until the faculty or staff member has received the official letter. Accommodations are not retroactive.   It is the responsibility of the student to discuss implementation of accommodations with each faculty and staff member receiving the letter.

**Course Materials:**

The following books are compulsory for this class and are available for purchase in the DePauw University Bookstore. All readings marked with an asterisk (\*) will be available for you to download from the Moodle page for the course.

* Al-Farabi, *Political Writings*
* Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*
* Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*
* Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*

**SCHEDULE OF READINGS**

Jan 27 Introduction to Muslim Political Thought

Jan 29 Al-Farabi, *Political Writings*, pp.11-37

Feb 3 Al-Farabi, *Political Writings*, pp. 37-67

Feb 5 Al-Farabi, *Political Writings*, pp. 76-113

Feb 10 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah,* pp. 11-43

Feb 12 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah,* pp. 45-89

Feb 17 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah,* pp. 91-160

Feb 19Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age,* pp.25-66 (P)

Feb 24 Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age,* pp.67-102 (P)

Feb 26 \*Roxanne Euben: *Travel in Search of Practical Wisdom* (P)

Mar 3 Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age,* pp.130-161 (P)

Mar 5 Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age,* pp 324-341(P)

Mar 10 \*Saba Mahmood: *Secularism, Hermeneutics and Empire* (P)

Mar 12 MIDTERM REVIEW

Mar 17 **IN CLASS MIDTERM ESSAY**

Mar 19 Sayyid Qutb, Milestones, Introduction

Sayyid Qutb video: The Power of Nightmares

**Mar 23-29 SPRING BREAK**

Mar 31 Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, pp. 7-43 (P)

Apr 2 No class—away for conference

Apr 7 Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, pp. 45-76 (P)

Apr 9 Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, pp.77-127 (P)

Apr 14 Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, pp .129-160 (P)

Apr 16 \**Islamist Political Thought 1(Excerpt)* (P)

Apr 21 \**Islamist Political Thought 2 (Excerpt)* (P)

Apr 23 \*Khomeini: *Islam and Revolution* (excerpt) (P)

Apr 24 Film, *Persepolis*

Apr 28 Film discussion and analysis

Final paper topic distributed

Apr 30 \*Anne Norton, *The Muslim Question (excerpt 1) (P)*

May 5 \* Anne Norton, *The Muslim Question (excerpt 2)* (P)

May 7 Conclusion

**Tuesday, May 12 Final Paper Due by Email only by 10PM\*\*\***

***\*\*\*All late papers will be assessed a penalty of a third of a grade for every day that they are late***