**POLS 335: MUSLIM POLITICAL THOUGHT**

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**Course Description:**

This seminar is an exploration of the resurgent tradition 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 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— the first, 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 the final paper 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.

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 fail to complete either the exam, presentation or final paper you will not pass the course.**

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:

In Class Exam 30%

Final Essay 35%

Class Presentation 20%

Class Participation and Attendance 15%

**Office Hours and Accessibility:**

My office hours are on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On Tuesday, I am available in my office from 11:30-12:30 and again from 4-5PM. I am also available in my office from 4-5PM on Thursdays. Feel free to drop by to talk about the class, discuss future interests or simply to continue a conversation! In addition to these regular weekly office hours, I am often available to meet on Mondays and Friday, though not every week. Send me an email to set up an appointment if you need to meet to on one of these days. I offer additional office hours before exams as well and will announce them in advance by email. I am also available to meet via Skype (my Skype address is smita.a.rahman) and also available to talk on the phone (I will give out my cell phone number on the first day of class).

**Academic Integrity:**

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

**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**

Thursday, August 25 Introduction to Muslim Political Thought

Tuesday, August 30 Film: *Muslims*

Thursday, September 1 Film: *Muslims*

Tuesday, September 6 Al-Farabi, *Political Writings*, pp.11-37

Thursday, September 8 Al-Farabi, *Political Writings*, pp. 37-67 (P)

Tuesday, September 13 Al-Farabi, *Political Writings*, pp. 76-113 (P)

Thursday, September 15 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah,* pp. 11-43 (P)

Tuesday, September 20 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah,* pp. 45-89 (P)

Thursday, September 22 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah,* pp. 91-160 (P)

**Tuesday, September 27 In Class Essay**

Thursday, September 29 Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age,* pp.25-66 (P)

Tuesday, October 4 Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age,* pp.67-102 (P)

Thursday, October 6 \*Roxanne Euben: *Travel in Search of Practical Wisdom* (P)

Tuesday, October 11 Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age,* pp.130-161 (P)

Thursday, October 13 Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age,* pp 324-341 (P)

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

October 17-23 No Class—Fall Break

Tuesday, October 25 Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, pp. 7-43 (P)

Thursday, October 27 Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, pp. 45-76 (P)

Tuesday, November 1 Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, pp.77-127 (P)

Thursday, November 3 Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, pp .129-160 (P)

Tuesday, November 8 No Class—Religious Holiday (Eid ul Adha)

Thursday, November 10 Maududi, *Islamic Constitution,* pp. 40-92 (P)

Tuesday, November 15 Maududi, *Islamic Constitution,* pp.124-152 (P)

Thursday, November 16 Maududi, *Islamic Constitution,* pp. 201-252 (P)

and pp. 274-299 (P)

Tuesday, November 22 \*Khomeini: *Islam and Revolution* (excerpt) (P)

\*Selected Articles on Political Movement in Iran

Thursday, November 24 No Class—Thanksgiving

Tuesday, November 29 Film, *Persepolis*

Thursday, December 1 \*Markell, *Bound by Recognition* (excerpt)

Friday, December 2 Lunch with Patchen Markell, Ph.D

**Required Events** Associate Professor, University of Chicago

Patchen Markell lecture at Prindle

Tuesday, December 6 \*Nilufar Gole: *The Forbidden Modern*, excerpt1 (P)

\*Selected Articles on the “Veiling” Controversy in Europe

Thursday, December 8 Islam, Democracy and the “Arab Spring”

\*Selected Articles

**Tuesday, December 13 Final Paper Due by Email only by 5PM\*\*\***

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