Religious Studies 146/SAST 146
Islam in the Modern World

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Description: The purpose of the course is to achieve an understanding of events occurring in the Islamic world by studying how Muslims view themselves and the world they live in. Beginning with a discussion of the impact of colonialism, we will examine Islamic ideas and trends from the late colonial period until the present. Readings will include religious, political and literary writings by important Muslim figures. Movements, events and central issues (e.g. the changing status of women and relations between the Islamic world and the West) will be examined in the context of modern nation states. Special attention will be paid to contesting forms of Islam in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries and to developments in Islam in the United States, both among converts and immigrants. One of the main objectives is to show that what appear to be similar movements in the Islamic world are, in fact, widely disparate in their origins and goals.

Course Requirements:

Class Participation (15%)
Despite being introductory, this course will not be conducted with a pure lecture format. Rather, class discussion will be frequent and you will be expected to engage both with the material and with your classmates. As a result, attendance and punctuality are expected. More than two unexcused absences will adversely affect your grade. Readings are to be completed before class.

Two one-page Responses (5% each)
You will be asked to write two short response papers to the audiovisual assignments over the course of the semester. These one-page responses are informal in style and can be submitted as emails (as an attachment). Responses are due, at the latest, by midnight on the Sunday after they are assigned.

One 3-page Essay (10%)

Two 4-5 page Essays (15% each)
Assignments dates for these papers are on the syllabus. For these essays you will respond to assigned questions that will be given to you at least one week prior to the due date. The questions will be broad and will allow you to show how you have assimilated the range of topics discussed in class and in the readings. Extensions will be granted with prior approval, otherwise late papers will effect your grade.
Final Exam (30%)

The take home final will be an essay exam (including a map quiz). You will be given a series of questions in advance and asked to synthesize as well as apply the material from class.

Syllabus: The syllabus is arranged according to topics. There are two class periods per week. Readings are to be completed before class.

Required Readings:
(All books are at the Penn Book Center at 34th and Sansom Street)

Khaled M. Abou El Fadl, The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists
Mohja Kahf, The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf
Aminah Beverly McCloud, African American Islam
Ahmed Rashid, Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia
Tayeb Salih, Season of Migration to the North

Xerox and Audiovisual Materials on Blackboard are marked “Bb” on the syllabus. The majority of readings are on Blackboard.

September 8th: Introduction

September 13th: Islam Today
Required: Tariq Ali, "Letter to a young Muslim" (Bb); "A short-course history of US imperialism" (Bb) [we won't be discussing the second reading in detail until the following week, but I'll be referring to it briefly].

September 15th: Islam in the Modern World
Required: “What is Moderate Islam?” (Bb); John O. Voll, “Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: Tajdid and Islah” (Bb); John J. Donahue, “Islam and the Search for Identity in the Arab World” (Bb); Edmund Burke III, “Islam and Social Movements: Methodological Reflections” (Bb).

*Assignment: Write a one-page reaction paper to the classroom discussion of “What is Moderate Islam?” Submit it over email to jjelias@sas.upenn.edu and to dkhan@sas.upenn.edu.

September 20th: Islam in the Modern World
Required: John O. Voll, “Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: Tajdid and Islah” (Bb); John J. Donahue, “Islam and the Search for Identity in the Arab World” (Bb); Edmund Burke III, “Islam and Social Movements: Methodological Reflections” (Bb).
September 22nd to 27th: Pan-Islam and Anti-colonialism: the Case of Afghani  
**Required:** N. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism* (Bb).

September 29th to October 4th: Egypt and Islamic Liberalism  

October 6th: Egypt and Extremism  
**Required:** Charles Wendell, *Five Tracts of Hasan al-Banna*, (Bb); J.G. Jansen, *The Neglected Duty: The Creed of Sadat’s Assassins and Islamic Resurgence in the Middle East*,(Bb).  

*Assignment:* 4-5 page essay assigned on September 29th; due October 6th at beginning of class.

October 13th: Literature and the Legacy of Colonialism  
**Required:** Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North*

October 18th: Iran: Jihad and Revolution  
**Required:** Ali Shariati; *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies* (Bb), *Martyrdom: Arise and Bear Witness* (Bb); Shahadat (Bb); "A Discussion of Shahid" (Bb).

October 20th: Khomeini's Thought and Iran Since the Revolution  
**Required:** Khomeini, *Islamic Government* (Bb)

*Assignment:* 3 page essay assigned October 25th; due November 1st at the beginning of class.

October 25th to 27th: Islam in the Secular State: Turkey  
**Required:** Serif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey* (Bb); Ali Bulaç, "The Medina Document" (Bb); Michael E. Meeker, “Oral Culture, media culture, and the Islamic resurgence in Turkey” (Bb).

November 1st to 3rd: Islam as Nationalism in Pakistan  
**Required:** Abul A'la Mawdudi, *Human Rights in Islam*, (Bb); *The Islamic Movement* (Bb).

November 8th: Afghanistan and the Taliban  
**Required:** Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban* [entire]
November 10th to 15th: Feminist and Neotraditionalist Interpretations of Women's Roles


*Assignment*: 4-5 page essay assigned on November 15th; due November 22nd at beginning of class.

November 17th: The Veiling Controversy and Muslim Minorities Today

Required: Nazira Zein-ed-din, “Unveiling and Veiling” (Bb); more readings tba.

November 22nd: Islam in America through Literature


November 29th: Islam in America post 9/11

Required: List of websites to be studied listed on Bb; Fred Denny, “Church/sect Theory and Emerging North American Muslim Communities” (Bb); Amina Wudud, “Qur’an and Woman” (Bb)

December 1st: Islam in the African American Community

Required: McCloud, African American Islam; videos listed on Bb.

December 6th: Tensions in Islam Today: Popular Culture

Required: Videos on Bb (the response essay is to these videos)

*Assignment*: 500-word response essay due December 7th at 6 am.

December 8th: Tensions in Islam Today

Required: Abou El Fadl, The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists (entire)

*Assignment*: 10-page Final Paper/Exam assigned December 8th, due Thursday, December 15th, at 5 pm.