Political Islam in the Modern Middle East
University of Pennsylvania, Summer Session II, 2017
Monday, Wednesday, & Thursdays, 12:00pm-2:30pm.

INTR 290
Instructor: Dr. Samuel Helfont
Office Hours: Wednesday 2:30 to 4:30 or by appointment most days

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Overview:
This course explores the rise of political Islam in the modern Middle East. It covers groups ranging from Muslim Brotherhood to Al-Qaida and ISIS, as well as significant events such as the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the Arab Spring. The course will discuss the manner in which these groups/events have shaped regional politics as well as the relationship between the Middle East and the West.

The core of the course will focus on reading and contextualizing the intellectual thought of leading Muslim intellectuals and political leaders who write about the relationship between Islam and politics. In addition to this intellectual history, we will explore various Islamist movements that have emerged in the modern Middle East. When possible we will compare and contrast the intellectual foundations of these movements with their actual practices.

Grades:
Class Participation – 25%
Responses to Readings – 15%
Midterm – 20%
Final Paper – 40%

[Please note that failure to complete any of these assignments will result in failure of the class. For example, if a student does not complete the midterm, he or she will fail the course regardless of his or her grades on the other assignments. Also, more than two unexplained absences will result in a lower grade.]

Responses to Readings:
Each student will be required to submit 8 brief responses to the readings throughout the semester. Students are free to choose which 8 of the 13 sets of readings to submit responses. The responses should be ~150-200 words. Often, a specific question will be provided. Students are encouraged
to address this question, but are free to respond to a different issue raised by the weekly readings if they feel particularly inspired to do so. Responses will be submitted by midnight before class.

**Take-Home Midterm:**
Due on Monday, July 24th. Students will write a 1,500 word essay on one of four questions. The questions will be broad and theoretical.

**Final Paper:**
Students will write a narrative or analytical paper on some aspect of Political Islam. Students should consult with the instructor to find additional outside sources. The paper should be 10-12 pages in length.

**Readings:**
Book for Purchase:

- Other readings will be provided on Canvas.
- Readings marked with an * are primary sources.

**Class Schedule**

**Week 1**
*Friday, June 30* – Introduction. Cover Syllabus. Basics of Iraq and the course

**Week 2**
*Monday, July 3* – Islam as a Political Force

**Readings:**
- Patricia Crone, *God’s Rule*, 3-32

*Wednesday, July 5* – Reactions to Western Modernity

**Readings:**
- Sylvia Haim, *Arab Nationalism: An Anthology*, 3-34
  https://books.google.com/books?id=1nX9yUjoxesC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Arab+Nationalism:+An+Anthology&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjP1-p74oDSAhUF1oMKHevxCvgQ6AEjHDAAY#v=onepage&q&f=false


*Friday, July 7* – Muslim Brotherhood I

**Readings:**
- Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of Muslim Brothers*, 1-34
Week 3

Monday, July 10 – Muslim Brotherhood II
Readings:

Wednesday July 12 – The Politics of Islam and Gender
Readings:
*Princeton Readings, 275-301.

Friday July 14 – Qutb
Readings:
*Princeton Readings, 129-154

****Mid Term Exam Handed Out in Class****

Week 4

Monday July 17 – Iranian Revolution
Readings:
*Princeton Readings, 155-80.

Wednesday July 19 – Derivative Movements: Hamas and Hezbollah
Readings:
*Princeton Readings, 356-86.

Friday July 21 – Salafism and Politics
Readings:
-Stéphane Lacroix, *The Politics of Religious Dissent in Contemporary Saudi Arabia*, 37-81
Week 5

Monday July 24 – Al-Qaida
Readings:
-Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower*, 60-144
*Princeton Readings, 425-72

****Midterm Exam Due****

Wednesday July 26 – Rethinking the Politics of Islam
Readings:
*Princeton Readings: 207-49

Friday July 28 – Islam and the Arab Spring
Readings:

Week 6
Monday July 31 – ISIS
Readings:

Wednesday August 2 – Interpreting Political Islam; Class Wrap-up.
Readings: TBD

Friday August 4 – No Class; Work on Papers