University of Alberta  
Department of Political Science

Fall 2016  
POLS 477/571  
Muslims/Islam, Modernity and Democracy

Instructor: Dr. Mojtaba Mahdavi  
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Mondays: 13:00-15:50  
Lecture room: T 10-4  
Office hours: Mondays 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM or by appointments

Seminar Description:

This advanced seminar is designed to examine the complex relationship between Muslims/Islam, modernity and democracy both in theory and the real world of Muslim countries.

The course is divided into four sections. The first section will problematize orthodox and modern theories of ‘Islam and politics’. We will historicize Muslims encounter with modernity by examining the way in which the traditional heritage has impinged on the development of modern ideas in the Muslim world. The second section will examine theoretical approaches to ‘Islam and the challenge of modernity/modernities’. We will study issues such as Muslims and Human Rights, Muslims and gender politics, Islamization of modernity, modernization of Islam, and Muslims multiple responses to multiple modernities. We will look at various forms of Muslim responses/approaches to modernity/modernities: traditional Islam, many faces of Islamism, post-Islamist discourses/movements, and liberal and/or progressive reformist Islam. The third section will examine the complex nature of Islamist violent actions and/or resistant movements vis-à-vis the national states and the West. We will also problematize the question of Muslims and/or the West. The fourth section will explore theoretical debates over the issue of Islam, secularism, public religion, and democracy. We will examine theories and practices of religion and democracy in general and Islam, secularism and democracy in particular. More specifically, we will problematize concepts/themes such as “Muslim Exceptionalism”, “Islamic State”, and “Islamic Democracy” and the binaries of Islam/Muslims and secularism.

The major goal of this course is to introduce a critical perspective on the relationship between Muslims/Islam, modernity and democracy. After completing this course, students will have developed their analytical skills and theoretical tools in a critical understanding of Islam, Islamist and post-Islamist movements, culture and politics of the Muslim World.

Seminar Requirements:

(a) Four reading-reflections and Seminar Participation 20%  
(b) Seminar Presentation 20%  
(c) Book review 20% Monday, Oct. 17  
(d) Term paper 40% Monday, Nov. 28
(a) Students will read and reflect on the *required* readings of all the sessions; an informed and active participation in the seminar discussion is required. Moreover, each student will be expected to submit four reading-reflections. Each reading reflection is a three-page (800-1000 words) summary and critical reflection of *three required readings of the session*, and must be submitted at the same sessions we examine the readings. You may choose any 4 out of the 11 sessions.

(b) Each session the class takes up a specific theme, based on the required readings, and one student or two will lead the seminar.

(c) A book review of 5 typed, double-spaced page from *One of the following books*, due *Monday October 17*:


(d) One term paper of 12-15 typed, double-spaced pages, due *Monday November 28*, on a topic of students’ choice that is relevant to the themes of the seminar. You need to discuss the paper’s topic with the instructor.

- **Seminar Materials:**

  - **Required:**
    6. Univ. of Alberta E Class: [https://ecllass.srv.ualberta.ca](https://ecllass.srv.ualberta.ca)

  - **Recommended:**
Seminar Topics and Schedule:

Part I: Islam and Politics: Relevance of the Past?

1. Islam/Muslims and Politics
(Mon. Sept. 12)

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings Sources:

* Islam: Empire of Faith (PBS Documentary): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHhbSvOcz4g


Reza Aslan, No god but God: The origins, Evaluation, and Future of Islam (random House Trade, 2005)


Part II: Muslims and the Challenge of Modernity: Theoretical Debates

2. “Mapping Modernities”: Islamic and/or Western?
(Mon. Sept. 19)

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:

* Farzin Vahdat, Islamic Ethos and the Specter of Modernity (Anthem Press, 2015)


* Said Amir Arjomand and Elisa Reis, Eds. World of Difference (Sage Publications, 2013)


Masoud Kamali, Multiple Modernities, civil society and Islam: The case of Iran and Turkey (Liverpool University Press, 2006)


3. Islamism: Concept and Pioneers?
(Mon. Sept. 26)

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings.


* Farzin Vahdat, Islamic Ethos and the Specter of Modernity (Anthem Press, 2015)

*Karima Bennoune, “Your Fatwa Does Not Apply Here,” TEDxExeter; Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLi6iYmnxGc


Tamara Cofman Wittes, “Three kinds of movements,” Journal of Democracy Volume 19, Number 3 July 2008, pp. 7-12


Aijaz Ahmad, “Islam, Islamism and the West,” Socialist Register 2008


4. Post-Islamism?
(Mon. Oct. 03)

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Monday Oct. 10: No Class**

5. Post-Islamist MENA Movements?
(Mon. Oct. 17)

**Required Readings:**


Recommended Readings:


* Bayat, Asef. Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East, 2nd Ed. (Stanford University Press, 2013).


Readings on Critical Study of the Social Movements in MENA:
https://upasconference.wordpress.com/organizers/sponsors/

6. Who are the Liberal and/or Progressive Muslims?
(Mon. Oct. 24)

Required Readings:


**Recommended Readings:**


* Farzin Vahdat, Islamic Ethos and the Specter of Modernity (Anthem Press, 2015)

* Shireen T. Hunter, Reformist Voices of Islam: Mediating Islam and Modernity; lecture available at: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-u5Jxq5XBrEM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-u5Jxq5XBrEM)


7. Muslims and Islamism on Gender and Human Rights
(Mon. Oct. 31)

**Required Readings:**


Arash Naraghi, “The Quran and Human Rights of Sexual Minorities” in *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights in Iran*, 2015, pp. 27-55. [https://www.outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/LGBTRightsInIran_0.pdf](https://www.outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/LGBTRightsInIran_0.pdf)

**Recommended Readings:**


**Monday Nov. 07: No Class**

**Part III. Muslims, Islamism, and Resistance**

**8. Islamism, Violence and Resistance**
(Mon. Nov. 14)

*Required Readings:*


*Recommended Readings:*

  *http://www.democracynow.org/2014/8/25/blowback_vijay_prashad_on_how_islamic_state*


9. Muslims and/or in the West? What is the Real Question?
(Mon. Nov. 21)

**Required Readings:**


Recommended Readings:


Part IV. Muslims and the Challenge of Secularism, Democracy, and Public Religion

10. Secularism, Public Religion, and the Question of the Islamic State
(Mon. Nov. 28)

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


Nader Hashemi, Islam, Liberalism and Democracy, 2008


An-Na'im, "The Interdependence of religion, secularism and Human Rights, prospects for Islamic societies" Common Knowledge 11:1, 2005

(Mon. Dec. 05)

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


Seminar Requirements:

1. Four reading-reflections and Seminar participation (20%)
   - You need to submit four reading-reflections. Each reading-reflection is a three-page (800-1000 words) summary and critical reflection of three required readings of the session, and must be submitted at the same sessions we examine the readings. You may choose any 4 out of the 11 sessions.
   - In addition to the reading-reflections, your input into class discussions, informed participation, and regular attendance will determine 20% of your grade.

2. Seminar Presentation (20%)
   - You must sign up for one class presentation. Each session the class takes up a specific theme, based on the required readings, and one or two student(s) will lead the seminar.
   - Presentations must critically examine the required readings and be focused on the main them of the session. You are recommended to discuss your presentation plan in advance with the instructor.
   - You are encouraged to consult materials outside of the required readings for your presentations. You may make your presentation interesting – include visual aides and have prepared discussion questions for the class.

3. Book review (20%) due Monday October 17
   - One book review of 5 typed, double-spaced pages, due Monday October 17, from the list provided by the instructor.
   - Please summarize the book’s central argument and critically examine the strengths and weakness of the author’s argument.
   - You are not allowed to use “book reviews” published by others but you may use other books and/or journals to evaluate the author’s argument.
   - You must consistently use one appropriate system for citing references.
   - Late book review will receive a penalty of 5% per day including weekends. Book review more than two weeks late will not be accepted.

4. Term paper (40%) due Monday November 28

One term paper of 12-15 typed, double-spaced pages, due Monday November 28, on a topic of students’ choice that is relevant to the themes of the seminar.
   - The paper’s topic must be discussed in advance with the instructor.
   - This assignment requires a critical evaluation of the themes discussed in the course. You need to incorporate the course materials into your paper.
   - In your paper you could examine case studies, or theoretical concepts related to the course. In either case, you must write a critical term paper.
   - Pay particular attention to the clear organization of your ideas. Ensure that you state your main argument/thesis in your introduction. In the body of the paper, you need to support your argument with evidence, cite any contrary views/evidence as relevant, and develop
your own argument. In the conclusion summarize your findings and suggest what questions remain unanswered and require further research.

- You should consistently use one appropriate system for citing references.
- You must include a bibliography containing all items used in the preparation of the essay. Do not pad the bibliography with items you did not actually use.
- If you use another’s words, you must enclose them in quotes and cite the source. If you use another’s ideas, you must cite the source. Paraphrasing large sections of another’s ideas without giving credit to that author is plagiarism.
- Your paper should make use of a minimum of six sources drawn from books, book chapters and/or academic journal articles. Additional material such as book reviews and online research can be used but do not substitute for these six sources.
- Late term paper will receive a penalty of 5% per day including weekends. Term papers more than two weeks late will not be accepted.

❖ Grading Scheme:

Grading scale and Equivalence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Grade Point</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>89-92</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>84-88</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>79-83</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>74-78</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>70-73</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>66-69</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>63-65</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>59-62</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>54-58</td>
<td>Poor</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>50-53</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Below-50</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

❖ Seminar Prerequisite: POL S 380 or POL S 240 or consent of Department

Students without the course prerequisite should speak with the instructor before registering. At the request of an instructor, the Department may cancel your registration if you do not have the required course prerequisites. Policy about course outlines, grading and related matters can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar.

❖ Feeling Overwhelmed? (In Need Of Student, Social, Financial Or Security Services?):

The Student Distress Centre is there to listen, offer support, supply information and provide services:

- Call: 492-HELP (492-4357)/Drop in: 030-N in the S.U.B.
- Visit: <www.su.ualberta.ca/sdp>; Chat: <http://www.campuscrisischat.com>

❖ Specialized Support & Disability Services:

Students with disabilities or special needs that might interfere with their performance should contact the professor at the beginning of the course with the appropriate documentation. Every effort will be made to accommodate such students, but in all cases prior arrangements must be made to ensure that any special needs can be met in a timely fashion and in such a way that the rest of the class is not put at an unfair disadvantage. Students requiring special support or services should be registered with the office of Specialized Support & Disability Services (SSDS): <http://www.ualberta.ca/ssds/>. This is particularly important for students requiring special exam arrangements. Once you have registered with
SSDS. It is your responsibility to provide the instructor with a "Letter of Introduction" and, if necessary, an "Exam Instruction & Authorization" form.

- **Plagiarism & Academic Honesty:**

Excerpts from the *Code of Student Behaviour* (Updated Effective May 12, 2006)

| 30.3.2(1) Plagiarism | 30.3.2(2) e No Student shall submit in any course or program of study any academic writing, essay, thesis report, project, assignment, presentation or poster containing a statement of fact known by the Student to be false or a reference to a source the Student knows to contain fabricated claims (unless acknowledged by the Student), or a fabricated reference to a source.

| 30.3.2(2) a No Student shall submit the words, ideas, images or data of another person as the Student’s own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, project, assignment, presentation or poster in a course or program of study. |
| 30.3.2(2) b No Student shall represent or attempt to represent him or herself as another or have or attempt to have himself or herself represented by another in the taking of an examination, preparation of a paper or other similar activity. See also misrepresentation in 30.3.6 (4) |
| 30.3.2(2) c No Student shall represent another’s substantial editorial or compositional assistance on an assignment as the Student’s own work. |
| 30.3.2(2) d No Student shall submit in any course or program of study, without the written approval of the course instructor, all or a substantial portion of any academic writing, essay, thesis, research report, project, assignment, presentation or poster for which credit has previously been obtained by the Student or which has been or is being submitted by the Student in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere |

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**Plagiarism & Academic Dishonesty:**

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at [www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm](http://www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm)) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University. An important excerpt from the Code of Student Behaviour is appended at the end of this syllabus. Additional information and resources are available through the UofA’s Truth in Education project: [http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/](http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/) and resources are available through the UofA’s Truth in Education project: [http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/](http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/).

- **Additional Recommended Texts:**

  a) **Background:**


b) Advanced studies:

* A. Mousavili, The Islamic Quest for Democracy, Pluralism and Human Rights (Uni Press. Florida, 2001)
* John Esposito and Azzam Tamimi eds., Islam and Secularism in the Middle East (NY Univ Press, 2000)
* Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Islamic philosophy from its origin to the present: philosophy in the lend of prophecy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006)
* Clifford Geertz, Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia (Yale Univ. P 1968)
* Farzin Vahdat, God and Juggernaut: Iran’s Intellectual Encounter with Modernity (Syracuse Unv. 2002).*
* J. Beinin and Stork, eds., Political Islam: Essays From Middle East Report (Univ. of Califomia P, 1997).
* Leila Ahmad, Women and Gender in Islam (New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1992)
* Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na’im, Muslims and Global Justice (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011)

❖ Some Recommended Websites and online journals:

Human Rights Quarterly <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/human_rights_quarterly/>
Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org>
Ali Shariati Website <http://www.shariati.com>; < http://drshariati.org>
Mohsen Kadivar Website <http://www.kadivar.com/index.asp>
Abdolkarim Soroush Official Website <http://www.drsoroush.com/English.htm>
Muhammad Iqbal website <http://www.allamaigbal.com>
Amendments to the Code of Student Behaviour occur throughout the year. For the most recent version of the Code, visit http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/

NOTICE TO INSTRUCTORS REGARDING PLAGIARISM, CHEATING, MISREPRESENTATION OF FACTS AND PARTICIPATION IN AN OFFENCE

The U of A considers plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation of facts and participation in an offence to be serious academic offences. Plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation of facts and participation in an offence can be avoided if students are told what these offences are and if possible sanctions are made clear at the outset. Instructors should understand that the principles embodied in the Code are essential to our academic purpose. For this reason, instructors will be fully supported by Departments, Faculties and the University in their endeavours to rightfully discover and pursue cases of academic dishonesty in accordance with the Code.

At the beginning of each term, we ask you to review with your students the definitions of plagiarism and cheating. We are now also asking you to review with your students the definition of Misrepresentation of Facts and Participation in an Offence. Your co-operation and assistance in this matter are much appreciated.

30.3.2(1) Plagiarism

No Student shall submit the words, ideas, images or data of another person as the Student's own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, project, assignment, presentation or poster in a course or program of study.

30.3.2(2) Cheating

30.3.2(2)a No Student shall in the course of an examination or other similar activity, obtain or attempt to obtain information from another Student or other unauthorized source, give or attempt to give information to another Student, or use, attempt to use or possess for the purposes of use any unauthorized material.

30.3.2(2)b No Student shall represent or attempt to represent him or herself as another or have or attempt to have himself or herself represented by another in the taking of an examination, preparation of a paper or other similar activity. See also misrepresentation in 30.3.6(4).

Cheating (Continued)

30.3.2(2)c No Student shall represent another's substantial editorial or compositional assistance on an assignment as the Student's own work.

30.3.2(2)d No Student shall submit in any course or program of study, without the written approval of the course Instructor, all or a substantial portion of any academic writing, essay, thesis, research report, project, assignment, presentation or poster for which credit has previously been obtained by the Student or which has been or is being submitted by the Student in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.

30.3.2(2)e No Student shall submit in any course or program of study any academic writing, essay, thesis, report, project, assignment, presentation or poster containing a statement of fact known by the Student to be false or a reference to a source the Student knows to contain fabricated claims (unless acknowledged by the Student), or a fabricated reference to a source.

30.3.6(4) Misrepresentation of Facts

No Student shall misrepresent pertinent facts to any member of the University community for the purpose of obtaining academic or other advantage. This includes such acts as the failure to provide pertinent information on an application for admission or the altering of an educational document/transcript.

30.3.6(5) Participation in an Offence

No Student shall counsel or encourage or knowingly aid or assist, directly or indirectly, another person in the commission of any offence under this Code.

More information can be found at: http://www.osja.ualberta.ca/en.aspx
EXCERPTS FROM THE CODE OF STUDENT BEHAVIOUR
FOR REVIEW WITH EACH CLASS AT THE BEGINNING OF EVERY TERM

Procedures for Instructors Regarding

Plagiarism, Cheating,

Misrepresentation of Facts and Participation in an Offence

The following procedures are drawn from the Code of Student Behaviour as approved by GFC and the Board of Governors. The guidelines summarize what instructors must do when they have reason to believe that a student has plagiarized, cheated, misrepresented facts or participated in an offence. If you have questions about these guidelines, or about the policies, please talk with the senior administrator in your Faculty responsible for dealing with student discipline—usually an Associate Dean—or the Appeals and Compliance Officer (Appeals Coordinator), University Governance (2-2655).

30.5.4 Procedures for Instructors in Cases Respecting Inappropriate Academic Behaviour

30.5.4(1) When an Instructor believes that a Student may have committed an Inappropriate Academic Behaviour Offence [30.3.2] or that there has been Misrepresentation of Facts [30.3.6(4)] or Participation in an Offence [30.3.6(5)] in cases respecting Inappropriate Academic Behaviour in the course that he or she instructs, the Instructor will meet with the Student. Before such a meeting, the Instructor shall inform the Student of the purpose of the meeting. In the event that the Student refuses or fails to meet with the Instructor within a reasonable period of time specified by the Instructor, the Instructor shall, taking into account the available information, decide whether a report to the Dean is warranted.

30.5.4(2) If the Instructor believes there has been a violation of the Code, the Instructor shall, as soon as possible after the event occurred, report that violation to the Dean and provide a written statement of the details of the case. The instructor may also include a recommendation for sanction.

Possible Sanctions

One or more of the following sanctions given in 30.4.3 (2) and (3) of the Code are commonly used for plagiarism, cheating, participation in an offence, and misrepresentation of facts:

30.4.3(2) a.i a mark reduction or a mark of 0 on any term work or examination for reason of Inappropriate Academic Behaviour
30.4.3(2) a.ii Reduction of a grade in a course
30.4.3(2) a.iii a grade of F for a course
30.4.3(2) a.iv a remark on a transcript of 8 (or 9 for failing graduate student grades), indicating Inappropriate Academic Behaviour, in addition to 30.4.3(2)a.i, 30.4.3(2)a.ii or 30.4.3(2)a.iii
30.4.3(3) b Expulsion
30.4.3(3) c Suspension

The following sanctions may be used in rare cases:

30.4.3(3) e Suspension of a Degree already awarded
30.4.3(3) f Rescission of a Degree already awarded

30.6.1 Initiation of an Appeal

30.6.1(1) When a Student has been found to have committed an offence under the Code of Student Behaviour or an Applicant is found to have committed an offence under the Code of Applicant Behaviour, whether or not that Student or Applicant has been given a sanction, the Student or Applicant may appeal that decision, except in the case of a decision of the Discipline Officer under 30.5.6(2)e.i, which remains final and is not subject to appeal. In cases where a severe sanction has been recommended to the Discipline Officer, once the student receives the final decision of the Discipline Officer, the student can appeal the decisions of both Dean and the Discipline Officer at the same time. The written appeal must be presented to the Appeals Coordinator in University Governance within 15 Working Days of the deemed receipt of the decision by the Student or Applicant. The finding that an offence has been committed, the sanction imposed or both may form the basis of appeal. The written appeal must also state the full grounds of appeal and be signed by the Appellant. The appeal shall be heard by the UAB.

PROFESSOR STEVEN PENNEY
CHAIR, CAMPUS LAW REVIEW COMMITTEE

DR STEVEN DEW
PROVOST AND VICE-PRESIDENT (ACADEMIC)

* The Campus Law Review Committee is a standing committee of General Faculties Council (GFC) responsible for the review of the Code of Student Behaviour and of student disciplinary procedures.

Updated: 27/08/2015