

## **Political Islam: NEJS 187a**

(Summer I: 2008)

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Department of the NEJS

Class hours: M/T/TH: 8:45-11:15AM  
Classroom: TBA  
Office hours: TBA

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### **Course Description:**

This course traces the recent re-emergence of political Islam. It will review the factors for the revival of Islam as a political ideology by examining its position in modern Middle Eastern socioeconomic and political life. It will study Islam as a challenging force to secularism and Western-style democracy in the Islamic world. Contemporary radical Islam in Algeria, Egypt, Palestine, Iran, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia are explored as major test-cases.

### **Course Objective:**

The main objective of the course is to explore the fundamentalist current, whose strict interpretations of the Holy Qur'an has led it to declare war against the west, secular nations, and even members of its own religion whose lenient ideas are considered apostate, a sin punished by death.

The course will identify and examine the elements that have been contributing to the formation of Islam as a political and radical ideology throughout the history and at the present time. The course will begin by presenting the conditions and the reasons for Islamic fundamentalist views, beliefs and practices throughout its history. As the course continues, it shall introduce and examine the radical Islam in selected Islamic nations and the linkage among them today.

Understanding Islam and its fundamentalist views require asking and answering hard questions. As such, in addition to the other requirements listed below, an important part of this course is participation in class discussion.

### **Course Format and Instruction Method:**

There will be a combination of lectures, assigned readings, films, and discussion. All sessions will be conducted as informally as possible. I encourage you to break in at any time questions or contrasting perspectives arise. Analysis of current issues and events within the world of Islam are essential components of the course. Our objectives are to be able to identify the problems, being analytical, evaluate the options, make our own conclusions and argue logically with opposing views. As such, as stated above, your participation in class discussion is important. Your participation in class and in discussion will receive 20% of the final grade.

### **Course Requirements**

**There will be an in-class mid-term exam (multiple choice and essay) on Thursday of the week 3. There is no final exam.**

### **Undergraduate students**

**are required to write a 10 to 12 page research paper (typed double-space) and has to be presented in class (in the last week of the session). A draft version of the first 4 pages of the paper should be submitted for review before the beginning of the third week and a draft version of the second 4 pages should be submitted in the beginning of the fourth week and the draft version of the last 4 pages should be submitted in the beginning of the fifth week. Students should be prepared to make revisions on the draft versions as suggested by the instructor. The topic of the paper can be on any event, issue and/or the role of individuals, groups and/or leaders in shaping and/or having a significant determinant upon the growth and character of political and/or radical Islam in the modern times (within a movement and/or a society in the Islamic world). A paper proposal (including a bibliography) is required and is due no later than the end of week 2 and the completed paper on the last class of the session.**

### **Graduate students**

**are required to write a 15 page paper (typed double-space and to be presented in class at the end of the session) and to submit for review a draft version of the first 5, second 5 and the third 5 pages in the beginning of the third, fourth and fifth week of the session. Sources used for the paper have to include primary one(s) as well. In addition, graduate students are required to review and write a summery (3 pages) of a book which should be related to the subject of the course but not one of sources for the paper.**

The research paper should utilize appropriate style recommendations, including footnotes/endnotes and bibliography. For this purpose, please see Susan Hubbuch's Writing Research Papers Across the Curriculum, (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers (1996) or Diana Hacker's The Bedford Handbook, (5<sup>th</sup> Edition, Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 1998) (both available at the Reference Desk at the University's library) or any similar style manual.

Course grade will be based on the followings:

Mid-term.....	40%
Research Paper.....	40%
Class Participation.....	10%
Participation in Discussion.....	10%

**Required Textbook:**

Caesar E. Farah, "Islam", (7<sup>th</sup> edition, Barron's Educational Series, Inc. 2003).

**Schedule and Readings:**

**Week 1 Introduction to the course.**

(Chapter 1: An Introduction to Islam) (PP. 1-15)  
(Chapter 3: Mohammad the Prophet) (PP. 35-78)  
(Chapter 5: Foundation of Islam: The Quran) (PP. 79-103)

**Week 2 Formation of Islam**

(Chapter 7: The Fundamental of Islam: Obligations) (PP. 126-150)  
(Chapter 9: Heterodoxy and Orthodoxy) (PP. 174-201)  
(Chapter 11: Medievalism and the Dawn of Renaissance) (PP. 234-267)

**Research Paper Proposal Due**

**Week 3 Political and Radical Islam**

(Chapter 16: Perspectives on Activist Islam) (PP. 420-456)

**Draft Version of the 1<sup>st</sup> Four Pages of the Research Paper Is Due!**

**Mid-term Exam Review!**

**Mid-term Exam on Thursday!**

**Week 4 Iran**

(Chapter 15: Current Trends: The Challenge of the Islamic Revolution in Iran) (PP. 390-392)

**Egypt**

(Chapter 15: Current Trends: Countering Islamic Militancy in Egypt) (PP. 399-403)

**Afghanistan**

(Chapter 14: Islam in Transition: Afghanistan) (PP. 360-369)

**Draft Version of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Four Pages of the Research Paper Is Due!**

**Week 5 Palestine/Israel**

(Chapter 15: Current Trends: The Islamic Anti-Israel Resistance Movements) (PP. 395-396)

**Algeria**

(Chapter 14: Islam in Transition: Swing of the Pendulum in Algeria) (PP. 381-383)

**Turkey**

(Chapter 14: Islam in Transition: Reassertion of Islam in Turkey) (PP. 372-376)

**Saudi Arabia**

(Chapter 11: Wahhabism) (PP. 237-240)

**Draft Version of the Last Four Pages of the Research Paper Is Due!**

**Final Version of the Research Paper Is Due on Thursday!**

**Paper Presentation!**