

Muslim Political Theology in the 20th and 21st Centuries (TH-692)

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Office: Budd Building, Room 5

Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:00 pm to 2:30 pm

(Note that, although this is an online course, I will be available to speak with individual students by phone, via Skype or Zoom either during my office hours or by appointment. The best way to set up an appointment is via email.)

Course Description

This course offers an in-depth exploration of case studies, arranged geographically and thematically, that address Muslim theological approaches to politics in the 20th and 21st centuries. Our case studies will include political discourses from Egypt, Iran, India, Pakistan, and the United States. Our thematic exploration will range from theories of withdrawal from official politics to strategies of shaping of modern political systems. Particular attention will be paid to the analysis of discourses on modernity, gender, memory and uses of tradition, and Muslim minorities' participation in public life. Familiarity with modern world and Muslim history is helpful. Please note that this course is a seminar, which means that all students must contribute to each class discussion. The format of analyzing case studies has the specific aim of refining each student's written interpretative skills.

Learning Outcomes:

- To demonstrate foundational and critical knowledge of one's own religion (MARS #1)
- To demonstrate the knowledge, capacities, and willingness to respectfully engage other religions and world views (MARS #2)
- To demonstrate knowledge and skills for dialogical and constructive engagement with diversity (MARS #4)
- To demonstrate the ability to relate theory and practice in the social contexts in which a religion's communities exist (MARS #5)
- Demonstrate foundational and critical knowledge of the Islamic tradition as relevant to Muslim chaplains (ICP #1)
- Develop an appreciation of living in a pluralistic world and dialogical skills needed to work in multi-faith and diverse settings (ICP #2)
- To acquire a comprehensive knowledge in Islamic Studies, Christian-Muslim Relations, and Interreligious Engagement/Interfaith Dialogue (PhD #1)
- To develop the competence to produce original research and written works to advance the scholarship on Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations for the benefit of religious communities, academy, and society (PhD #2)

Evaluation

Grading will be based on

1. Weekly reflections and Participation in Discussions (30%)
2. Mid-term essay (30%) – **due date TBD (email to yuskaev@hartsem.edu)**
3. Final essay (40%) – **due date TBD (email to yuskaev@hartsem.edu)**

Logistics

- 1) Weekly Reflections and Discussion Forum:

You will need to participate in the class discussion forum **each week**. In an online course, the discussion forum functions in a way that is similar to face-to-face classroom discussions: these are your opportunities to test your ideas by engaging with other students and the instructor.

Your participation in the discussion forum is mandatory. It should consist of three components:

- Your reflections on the assigned material
- One question about the readings
- Your short answers to fellow classmates and respectful comments on their ideas.

Your weekly reflections should address one of the discussion questions I will post at the end of each lesson. These assignments are designed to help you analyze the material and generate class discussion.

The reflections should be **at least 300 words** in length, but no longer than 600 words.

Each reflection should end with a question that relates to the assigned texts. Your question may or may not relate to the subject of your reflection. It is just an opportunity for you to talk with other students, as well as your instructor, about something in the texts that stirred your interest. It is very important that you keep up this routine of asking questions. We will use them to jump start our discussions.

In most cases, you will be expected to complete the readings and post your reflections by **Wednesday**. By **Thursday**, you will have to read other students' reflections, find a question that they ask that intrigues you most, and answer it in the discussion forum. If someone answers your question, try to respond to their answer. If nobody answers your question, try to engage in a discussion that addresses another student's inquiry. You must post all of your consequent responses (ongoing discussion, as in when you would like to respond to more than one reflection, or respond to somebody's comments on your reflection) by 11:59 pm on Sunday each week.

Your reflections will be graded as either acceptable (check) or unacceptable (minus). All you have to do to receive a check is to briefly but substantively answer one of the discussion questions. This means that you will have to

- Formulate your answer
- Provide brief reference to something in the texts that supports your answer.
- Make sure that your reflection is at least 300 words in length
- Make sure to submit your reflection on time.

The grading scale for the reflections is:

A = 12 acceptable entries

B = 11 acceptable entries

C = 10 acceptable entries

F = fewer than 10 acceptable entries

Once you post your reflections on the discussion forum, I will comment on it on our class website. In some cases, I will e-mail my response to you directly. This will be in cases where your reflection is going off track, or if I have some further suggestions for your personal progress in the course.

Note that your reflections by themselves will amount to 20% of the overall grade. Your participation in the general discussion (answers and comments) will count toward 10%.

2) Midterm and Final Essays:

You will have to submit two essays during the semester. The midterm essay should be 5-7 pages in length. The final essay should be 10-12 pages.

I will assign the topic for the midterm paper. However, you will be responsible for selecting the subject of your final essay.

Please feel free to contact me with your ideas for both papers at any stage of preparation.

Grading standards for the essays will be:

A = Excellent. Excellent presentation and analysis that demonstrates original interpretation.

B = Good. Solid command of facts and good attempt at analysis.

C+ = Adequate in the sense of doing minimal compliance with the assignment.

C = Poor; did not complete the assignment adequately but shows some effort.

F = Failing; did not complete the assignment.

Texts

The following books are to be purchased, borrowed or accessed for free via Digital Theological Library (DTL):

- Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology* (University of Chicago Press, 2005) ISBN: 0-226-73889-2
- Ibrahim Abu-Rabi`, *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World* (SUNY Press, 1996) ISBN: 0-7914-2664-5
- Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam* (Princeton University Press, 2002) ISBN: 978-0-691-13070-5
- Ziba Mir-Hosseini, *Islam and Gender: The Religious Debate in Contemporary Iran* (Princeton University Press, 1999) ISBN: 0-691-01004-8
- Albert J. Bergesen, *The Sayyid Qutb Reader: Selected Writings on Politics, Religion and Society* (Routledge, 2008)
- Yahya Michot, *Ibn Taymiyya: Muslims Under Non-Muslim Rule* (Interface Publications, 2006)
- Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford University Press, 2003)
- Timur Yuskaev, *Speaking Qur'an: An American Scripture* (University of South Carolina Press, 2017)

*Additional primary and secondary literature will be assigned. These texts will be available in CANVAS.

Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

- “Religion and Political Theory,” in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/religion-politics/>

Week 2: Introduction

- Khaled Abou El Fadl, “Islam and the Challenge of Democracy: Can individual rights and popular sovereignty take root in faith?” <http://bostonreview.net/BR28.2/abou.html>

Week 3: Theory

- Carl Schmidt, *Political Theology*, Preface, Ch 1 - Ch 3 (pp. 1-53)
- Revisit Abou El Fadl's article (analyze as a primary text)

Week 4:

- Carl Schmidt, *Political Theology*, Ch. 4 (pp. 53-67)
- Eickelman, "Who Speaks for Islam? Inside the Islamic Reformation," pp. 18-27
- Ebrahim Moosa, "Muslim Political Theology: Defamation, Apostasy and Anathema."

Week 5: Arab Middle East: Ideologies of Resurgence

- Abu-Rabi, *Intellectual Origins*, pp. ix-91
- Muhammad Abduh, "The Sociological Laws of the Qur'an," in Mansoor Moaddel and Kamran Talattof, *Contemporary Debates in Islam*, pp. 41-42.
- *The Sayyid Qutb Reader*, an excerpt from *Milestones*, pp. 35-42.

Week 6:

- Abu-Rabi, pp. 92-219
- *The Sayyid Qutb Reader*, Prologue, from *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, Vol. 7: Surah 8, Al-Anfal (the spoils of war), pp. 43-80
- Mahmud Shaltut, "Socialism and Islam," pp. 126-133

Week 7: Case Study: Ibn Taymiyya and His Modern Interlocutors

- Malika Zeghal, *Religion and Politics in Egypt: The Ulema of al-Azhar, Radical Islam, and the State* (1952-94).
- Yahya Michot, *Ibn Taymiyya on Muslims under non-Muslim Rule*, pp. ix – 132.
- Qaradawi, "Extremism," from Charles Kurzman, *Liberal Islam*, pp. 196-205.

Week 8: Case Study: Women - Interpreters and Interpreted

- Moosa, Ebrahim. "The Poetics and Politics of Law after Empire: Reading Women's Rights in the Contestations of Law." *UCLA Journal of Islamic and Near Eastern Law* 1 (2001-2002): 1-46.
- Zainab al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh: Memoir in Nasir's Prison* (look through the entire text, **but read it selectively – details on this particular assignment to be posted**).

- Timur Yuskaev, Introduction and Chapter 2, “Justice,” from Yuskaev, *Speaking Qur’an: an American Scripture* (No need to read “Introduction” closely. However, pay attention to section IV, which explains theory that is relevant to this course.)
- Amina Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad*, Chapter 6

Week 9: Iran: Gender Politics

- Ziba Mir-Hosseini, *Islam and Gender: The Religious Debate in Contemporary Iran*, pp. 1- 280

Week 10: Iran: Political Theology

- Fischer and Abedi, “Qur’anic Dialogics,” from Fischer and Abedi, *Debating Muslims: Cultural Dialogues in Postmodernity and Tradition*, pp. 95-149.
- Khomeini, “Introduction” and “The Necessity for Islamic Government” from *Governance of the Jurist*, pp. 7-28.
- Shariati, “Humanity and Islam.”
- Taleqani, “Last sermon.”
- Bazargan, “Religion and Liberty”

Week 11: Theoretical Reflections

- Asad, *Formations of the Secular Modern*

Week 12: South Asia: Political Theology – Overview

- Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam*, pp. 1-192

Week 13: Iqbal and Rahman

- Yuskaev, Chapter 1, “Time,” from *Speaking Qur’an: an American Scripture*.
- Preface, Chapter 1 and Chapter 6 from Iqbal, *Reconstruction* (Download a PDF version of the book here: <http://www.feedbooks.com/userbook/14177/the-reconstruction-of-religious-thought-in-islam>)
- Introduction and Chapters 1, 2, and 3 from Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur’an*: http://www.geocities.ws/islamic_modernist/Major_Themes_of_the_Quran.pdf

Week 14: American Muslim Politics

- Yuskaev, Chapter 4, “Politics,” from *Speaking Qur’an*

- View two online videos by Hamza Yusuf
 - a) “Making Sense of Our Past” (There are many places one can find it. One of them is on <http://www.aswatalislam.net/FilesList.aspx?T=Video&C=Lectures&T1=Hamza%20Yusuf>)
 - b) “Give and Take for God’s Sake” (you can find this one easily on YouTube and elsewhere)