Course Description

This course is designed as an advanced overview of the study of Islam and Politics. The course begins by critically examining current debates used to study the relationship between Islam and politics in both policy and academic circles including recent developments associated with the uprisings in the Arab world. It then presents a broad overview of the different analytical approaches used to study Islamic politics across different countries. We will consider the merits and deficiencies of the cultural, political economy and social movement perspectives utilized to understand of political Islam. The second section examines the trajectory of Islamist movements in the Middle East, Africa and beyond. The third section of the course focuses on some of the causes (e.g. the cold war, geo-political rivalries) and the consequences of the War on terrorism in the Muslim world.

Note: Add/Drop Deadline is Tuesday, 17 September

There are four core course requirements:

- One in class mid-term exam, worth 20% of the final grade on Wednesday, October 23rd
- One 10 to 15 pages term paper, worth 35% of the final grade, due in class on Wednesday, November 27th. Late papers will lose 5 points per day, including weekends. Extensions will be granted only in exceptional circumstances, with a medical note.
- A final take-home exam, worth 25% of the final grade. Instructions to be provided on WebCT. This should be handed in by 4pm on Wednesday, December 11th in the Institute of Islamic Studies on the 3rd floor of Morris Hall.
- Attendance and participation in conferences are required and worth 20% of the final grade.

Term Paper: A major objective of this course is to have students improve their research, analytical and writing skills through the development of an original research paper related to the topic of this course. The research question must be narrow but based on comparing and contrasting different approaches to the study of political Islam (i.e. cultural, political-economy, social movement theory, etc.). Students can either choose to study a particular country or compare two or more Islamist movements across cases.

Note: Each student must individually schedule a meeting with the TA to discuss a research question before writing the paper. The paper should be between 10 to 15 double spaced pages and no longer.

Final grades will be calculated as follows: participation and attendance (20%), term paper (35%), in class midterm (20%), and final take home exam (25%).
Class Policies

Paper Policy: Late papers will be penalized at the rate of 1/3 grade per day (e.g. an A- will be downgraded to a B+). All papers should be titled. Papers must be typed, double spaced with one-inch margins, twelve point font. Extensions will not be granted.

Exam Policy: The midterm must be taken at the announced date and time.

Office Hours: Students are strongly encouraged to come to office hours with or without specific questions. I am available at regular office hours as well as by appointment. Kindly schedule an appointment with your TA to discuss research paper proposals as soon as possible.

Final Grades: Students are required to complete all assigned course work in order to receive a passing grade. No incompletes will be given except in cases of genuine emergency.

Please Note:

"McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information)

"L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l’honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/"

“In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.”

"Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue)."
Readings

The following required texts are available for purchase in the Paragraph Bookstore. All three books are also on reserve at the Islamic Studies Library. All other readings are on WebCT.


Online Reference

http://www.merip.org

http://www.jadaliyya.com/

About the Schedule:

Although it is my intent to cover the material outlined in the following schedule, it is possible that unforeseeable events will necessitate minor changes to, or deletions from, the schedule. However, I will not change due dates or exam dates.
Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction (Sept. 4, 6)

Discussion of Course Content and Objectives


Mahmoud Mamdani, Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror (Three Leaves Press, 2005). Chapter. 1.


Note: Follow the latest news events on merip.org and jadiliyya.com

Week 2: Islam and Politics: Historical Background and Contemporary Consequences (Sept. 9, 11, 13)

Mahmoud Mamdani, Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror (Three Leaves Press, 2005). Read chapters 3 and 4. The Conclusion is Optional.


Friday, 13th September: Guest Lecture on the resources in the Islamic Studies Library for your research papers.

Week 3: Understanding Islam and Politics in the Context of the Arab Protests (Sept. 16, 18) (Discussion conferences begin this week in place of Friday lectures)


Keep updated on the important events in Syria and Egypt on Jadaliyya at: http://syria.jadaliyya.com/ and http://egypt.jadaliyya.com/
Week 4: Approaches to Conceptualizing Islamic Activism: Social Movement, Post-Islamism and the Role of Ideas (Sept. 23, 25)


Week 5: Post-Islamism and Divergent Politics: Turkey, Morocco, Indonesia, and Sudan (Sept. 30, Oct. 2)


Khalid Mustafa Medani, “Between Grievances and State Violence: Youth and Islamist Activism Beyond the Arab Spring.” *Middle East Report* (Summer 2013). On WebCT.

Week 6: Islamist Activism: Moderates and Militants (Wednesday, Oct. 16)

Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Islamist Activism: A Social Movement Approach*. Read Chapters 1, 2 and 11.


THANKSGIVING MONDAY, OCTOBER 14th

Week 7: Where does the support for Political Islam come from? Part I (Oct. 7, 9)


Week 8: The Reluctant Fundamentalist: Where does support for Political Islam come from? Part II (Oct. 21, 23)
Class discussion of Mohsin Hamid’s *the Reluctant Fundamentalist* (Anchor Canada, 2008).


(In Class Midterm Wednesday October 23rd, Week 7 inclusive)

**Week 9 Islam and Politics in Iran and Saudi Arabia (Oct. 28, 30)**


**Week 10: Political Islam in Africa: Local and International Factors (Nov. 4, 6)**


**Week 11: Identities, and Social Networks: Framing Islamism before and after the Uprisings (Nov.11, 13)**


**Week 12: Islamist Activism: Gender and Informal Networks (Nov. 18, 20)**


**Week 13: Motives and Strategies of Transnational Militant Movements (Nov. 25, 27)**


Term papers due on Wednesday, November 27th in class.

**Week 14: Last Lecture (Monday Dec. 2)**


Review for the Final Exam

*FINAL EXAM DUE BY 4PM ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11th*

Final Exams must be handed in at the Islamic Studies Institute, 3rd Floor, Morris Hall