Islam: Politics and Terrorism
Professor Meir Litvak
Fall Semester 2020

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Office Hours: Appointment by mail or telephone
Course Credits: 3 TAU Semester Credits

For course times/days and location, please visit the TAU International web site (Study Abroad Course Offerings and Schedules). Please note that all information below is subject to change and/or adjustment as necessary.

Course Description (Summary)
The course will deal with the interaction between Islam and politics in the modern Middle East (19th and 20th Centuries). It will analyze the formation of religious attitudes to politics and government from the pre-modern period till the present, with an emphasis on the modern period; it will discuss the impact of political processes on the evolution of religious ideologies, particularly the impact of western-dominated modernity on the Muslim countries of the Middle East; the use of religion for political mobilization and alternatively as a source of political identity. Among others, the course will discuss the Muslim Brothers movements in various countries; the rise of the radical Salafi-jihadist movement; relations between clergy and state in Iran; the attitude of Islamist movements towards gender issues; the role of religion in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the dilemma of religious movements and democracy.

Course Requirements and Expectations
Students are expected to read the course material ahead of classes in order to be able to take an active part in class discussions. The use of cellphones in class is unwelcomed.

Learning Outcomes
Students will come out of the course with a better understanding of the complexity of social, political and cultural processes and developments in the Middle East in which religion often serves as the medium through which the world is understood, society is organized and politics are conducted.

Evaluation Criteria
Mid Term Exam: 20%
Take Home Exam 80%
Active participation in class discussion will grant a bonus.
Absence Policy

Attendance to class is mandatory. Students who will miss more than three classes without a valid excuse will not be allowed to take the exam. See below for further TAU International absence policies.

Course Schedule, Course Readings and/or Required Materials

1: Islam and Politics: Introduction

2: Early Islamic Reformers

3: Religion and State in Iran

4. The Muslim Brethren

MIDTERM EXAM

5. What is Fundamentalism

6. Sunni Radicalism
7. Shi`i Radicalism and the Iranian Revolution

8: Hizballah: The Party of God in Lebanon

9. Islam and the Arab-Israeli Conflict

10. Al-Qaida and Trans-National Terrorism

11. Islamism and Democracy: Compatibility or Conflict
12. The Islamic Republic of Iran: Islamism or Populism
Mehran Tamadonfar, "Islam, Law, and Political Control in Contemporary Iran," Journal for the

Walter Posch, The Third World, Global Islam and Pragmatism: The Making of Iranian Foreign

13. Religion and Politics in Iraq
Søren Schmidt, "The role of religion in politics the case of Shia Islamism in Iraq." Nordic Journal

Nimrod Raphaeli, "Understanding Muqtada al-Sadr," Middle East Quarterly Fall 2004, pp. 33-42

14. Islamism and the Arab Spring
3, Fall 2017

Hassan Mneimneh, "The Spring of a New Political Salafism?" Current Trends in Islamist Ideology no.
12(2011), pp. 21-36

Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi, "The Dawn of the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham," Current Trends in
Islamist Ideology no. 16(2014), pp. 5-15.

Instructor Biography
Meir Litvak (Ph.D, Harvard 1991) is Associate Professor at the Department of Middle Eastern
History and former Director of the Alliance Center at Tel Aviv University. He works on Modern
Shi‘i and Iranian History as well as on modern Islamic movements and anti-Semitism in the Arab
world. Among his publications: Shi‘i Scholars of Nineteenth Century Iraq: The ‘Ulama’ of Najaf
and Karbala‘ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Co-author with Moshe Aharonov,
Iran: From a Persian Empire to an Islamic Revolution (Tel Aviv: Open University of Israel, 2014,
Hebrew); Co-author with Esther Webman, From Empathy to Denial: Arabic Responses to the
dition Jerusalem: Magnes and Yad Vashem press, 2015). He is co-editor with Meir Hatina,
Concepts of Martyrdom in Modern Islam: Social and Political (London: I.B Tauris, 2017) and
editor of Constructing Nationalism in Iran: From the Qajars to the Islamic Republic (London:
Shi‘i Thought and Practice is to be published by Brill in early 2021.

TAU International Academic Guidelines
Students may only attend classes which they are officially registered for. No auditing of courses
is permitted. Students are responsible for reading and adhering to all policies and procedures in
the TAU International Academic Handbook posted here at all times. Below is a summary of some
of these relevant policies and procedures.

Learning Accommodations
In accordance to University guidelines, TAU International may be able to accommodate students
with learning disabilities or accommodation requests if these requests are also honored at the
student’s home university or home school. To be considered, students must submit official
documentation from their home school or university (if not in English, a notarized official copy translated into English is required) to TAU International in advance of arrival describing in detail any specific needs and how these are accommodated at the home school or university. Students must also bring a copy of this documentation with them on-site and give it to their faculty on the first day of class while introducing themselves so that the faculty know who they are and what sorts of needs or accommodations they may have. **Without official documentation from the home school submitted on or before the first day of courses, TAU will not be able to honor accommodation support.**

With supporting documentation and by following the correct procedure as outlined above, TAU International and its faculty will do the best it can to make any suitable accommodations possible. However, we cannot guarantee that all accommodations received at the home school can be similarly met at TAU. For example, TAU is usually not able to offer note-taking services in English, private testing rooms, or advance viewing of classroom presentations, exams, or assignments.

It may be an option to provide a student with additional tutoring or support outside the classroom as needed. Students should be aware that this additional support cannot be guaranteed and is based on teacher availability in the subject as well as the specific student level. If available, the cost of additional tutoring or support will be the sole responsibility of the student.

**In-Class Exams**

TAU does not permit, under any circumstances, taking any in-class (including mid or final) exams early or later than the scheduled exam day. When selecting courses, it is thus very important to note if there is an in-class midterm or final exam as this date/exam cannot be changed. It is also the student’s responsibility to clarify exam dates with the professors at the beginning of a course, with the understanding that not all exam dates can be decided up front as it can sometimes depend on the pace of the course and class learning. It is the student responsibility to plan to be present for all courses including the final day of class for this reason. Early departures from the program are not approved, nor are early or exception in-class exams.

**TAU International Absence Policy**

Attendance is mandatory in all of the courses including Hebrew Ulpan. Faculty can and will take attendance regularly. Missing classes will be reflected in the final grade of the course. Up to three justified and properly documented absences from classes may be accepted (for example: emergency matter or illness, both of which will require a doctor’s note). Such cases of absence should be reported to the faculty immediately and again, a doctor’s note is required. Teachers are entitled to treat any lateness or absence without documentation as unexcused. Some of our courses such as Service Learning or the Internship Seminar require more practical in-class work; thus, attendance policies may be stricter in some courses and students then must adhere to the stricter attendance policy as outlined by the faculty/syllabus.
Students are required to arrive on time for classes. Teachers are entitled to treat any single case of lateness and/or repeated lateness as an unjustified absence.

Please note that according to official TAU Academic Policy, if a student's behavior or attendance during is disagreeable his/her course participation may be cancelled at the discretion of TAU with no due refund.

Grade Appeals
Students are responsible for checking grades once posted or distributed by faculty. The limited grade appeals window and the detailed procedure for appealing a grade – whether a graded assignment, exam or final grade – is outlined clearly in the policies and procedures in the TAU International Academic Handbook posted here.