Course Description

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 approaches 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; 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 Policy

Smartphones and cellular phones should be shut during class. Laptops are allowed.

Course Requirements (see attached document including examination guidelines)

Mid Term Exam: 15%
Take Home Exam 85%
Active participation will grant a bonus.

Attendance and Participation:

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.

1: Islam and Politics: Introduction
2: Early Islamic Reformers

3: Religion and State in Iran


4. The Muslim Brethren


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-Qaeda and Trans-National Terrorism


11. Islamism and Democracy: Compatibility or Conflict


12. The Islamic Republic of Iran: Islamism or Populism
Mohsen Milani, "The Transformation of the Velayet-e Faqih Institution: From Khomeini to Khamene’i, The Muslim World 82 (1992), 175-190


13. Religion and Politics in Iraq

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

14. Islamism and the Arab Spring