

## Islam and Global Forces

INTL 323, Fall 2015

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10-11:20 pm, 128 Chiles Hall

<http://www.uoregon.edu/~aweiss/IslamGlobalForces/index.html>

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### Course Syllabus

This course is an introduction to the general salience of the Islamic religion in contemporary global politics, the pivotal role the religion plays in Muslim societies, and the effects of global forces (e.g., globalization processes, the global economy, mass media, and global political institutions) on the political economy of countries with major Muslim populations. Within the Muslim world today, Islamist discourse has come to set a growing number of political agendas although, as we have seen in response to recent global events, the nature of this discourse — and in particular, the diversity within it — is rarely understood, both in the global arena and within most Muslim majority countries themselves. We will probe key questions, arguments and debates concerning the role of Islam as a rubric for identity and mobilization in the global system and its responses to the realities and pressures of that global system. Indeed, events from the Iranian revolution of 1978-79, the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, to the attacks of September 11, 2001, have led some to conclude that the United States is on a collision course with Islam, the religion of one-fifth of the world's population. In probing these views further, this course intends to contextualize and enrich the study of the interactions between global influences and political, social and economic concerns in Muslim societies as we transcend the essentialism that often cloaks the study of Islam and Muslim society prevalent in the West.

We begin with an overview of the Islamic religion, emphasizing those factors that create a sense of community and cohesiveness and the ideal role the state is to play in facilitating these processes. We then address the distinctiveness of Islam as a world religion in the public sphere and the political realm by situating specific political concerns of Muslim communities and states in various world regions in the past as well as address how these concerns manifest today. Important in this context is studying how prevailing processes of globalization are affecting Muslim communities in cultural dimensions as well as political and economic ones. We then turn our attention to distinct issues in Muslim societies today, focusing on efforts to articulate a transnational Islamic identity and the particular effects this has had on women's rights, associations and actions in response to global economic and political forces, and the influence of the global media on the Muslim world as well as on how the west views the Muslim world. We conclude by studying the rise of political parties and other formal groups with Islamist agendas.



**Course Objectives:**

1. To obtain a general understanding of Islamic history and the importance of law in Islamic political contexts;
2. To gain a fairly in-depth understanding of the influence of global political and social forces in Islamic contexts, and local responses to these forces;
3. To gain a fairly in-depth understanding of how global forces (e.g., capitalism, new global political configurations, media) are affecting Muslim areas of the world, and the range of responses to these forces;
4. To gain a fairly in-depth understanding of various theories (as well as critiques of the logic and assumptions of some of these theories) seeking to explain why we have witnessed, over the past forty years or so, the rise of Islamist groups in the Muslim world.
5. To understand the complexity of the Muslim world, its interactions with the global system, question what your understandings were prior to the class, and find your voice to interject into the global conversation.

<b>How to succeed in this course</b>	<b>Participation (15% of grade) Attendance</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assessments</b>
<p>If you do an outstanding job in participation, keeping up with the reading, and do well on the midterms and final essay, you will earn a good grade. Here's a guide for success.</p> <p><b>Come see me or Nicole Kessell.</b> Drop in and say hi, ask questions or discuss the class. My office hours are Wednesdays 10-12, in 307 PLC; Tariq's office hours are TBA, in 306 PLC.</p>	<p>You have to be in class and your discussion section to participate; there's just no way around this. At least 3 questions will be provided in each discussion section to guide your reading and comprehension of the course materials.</p> <p><b>Active Participation</b> Jump in with both feet and participate in class by making comments and asking questions. I expect you to keep up with the readings and be prepared to discuss them, points made in the lectures and videos, and your own ideas.</p>	<p><b>There's a lot!</b></p> <p>We'll be reading between 75-100 pages per week, emphasizing concepts and making connections. To do well in the course, you need to keep up with the readings.</p> <p><b>Required Texts:</b>            *Mohsin Hamid <i>The Reluctant Fundamentalist</i> Harcourt Books, 2007.            *Harris Irfan <i>Heaven's Bankers: Inside the Hidden World of Islamic Finance</i> Overlook Press, 2015.            *Peter Mandaville <i>Islam and Politics</i> Routledge, 2nd edition, 2014.            *Philip Seib (ed.) <i>Al Jazeera English: Global News in a Changing World</i> Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.            *Robin Wright (ed.) <i>The Islamists are Coming: Who they Really Are</i> Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2012.</p>	<p><b>Two in-class midterm examinations, on October 22 and November 19. (25% each)</b></p> <p>These will be based on the lectures and discussion section questions.</p> <p><b>Essay assignment (15% and 20%; total 35%)</b></p> <p>Please turn to the last two pages of this syllabus for a complete description of this assignment. It has two due dates: The initial Brief is <b>due Friday November 13 (15%)</b>, and the Research Op Ed essay is due in the final discussion section on <b>Friday December 4<sup>th</sup> (20%)</b>.</p>

### *The Fine Print*

<p><b>About Plagiarism:</b> Doing your own work on the midterms and final essay is essential. It's easy to avoid plagiarism – all you have to do is properly cite information/ ideas/thoughts that aren't yours.</p>	<p><b>Technology in class:</b> <b>Laptops</b> are encouraged for note taking and to access relevant information during class. Using a laptop inappropriately will result in an IT penalty (see below)</p>	<p><b>Diversity Statement</b> It is the policy of the UO to support and value cultural diversity. Diversity here includes culture, religion/faith, gender, ethnicity, race, nationality, sexual orientation, among other things.</p>
<p><b>Cheating</b> during the midterms is bad. If caught, you will experience not only my complete disdain and disappointment, but you will automatically receive an F for whatever you were cheating on. You may also face inquisition by the Student Conduct Committee, who may not be lenient with you. Bottom line: don't cheat.</p>	<p><b>Cell Phones:</b> Simply put, you may not use them for any reason, whatsoever, in class. They need to be either off or silent. Using a cell phone or having your cell phone go off during class will result in an IT penalty (see below)</p>	<p><b>To do so requires that we respect one another and:</b> *respect the dignity and essential worth of all individuals; *promote a culture of respect throughout the University community; *respect the privacy, property and freedom of others;</p>
<p>You should be familiar with the UO's rules about plagiarism: <a href="http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index/html">http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index/html</a></p>	<p><b>IT penalty:</b> any infraction will result in you having to bring treats for the entire class at the next lecture.</p>	<p>*Reject bigotry, discrimination, violence or intimidation; *Promote the diversity of ideas, opinions and backgrounds.</p>

### Course Outline

**Week I** September 29 - October 1

Introduction: the Scope of the Islamic World

Required Readings:

Mandaville, pp. 1-26

Wright, pp. 1-12

John Esposito *Islam: the Straight Path* (Oxford University Press, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, 2005), pp. ix-xi, xiii-xvi, 1-31 (accessible via the course website)

**Week II** October 6-8 The Community, the State and Political Power

Required Readings:

Mandaville, pp. 28-63

Wright, pp. 13-19

Esposito, pp. 32-47, 57-67, 78-84 (accessible via the course website)

**Week III** October 13 - 15 Islamic Revival and Reform: Responding to Colonialism and Modernity

Required Readings:

Irfan, TBA

Mandaville, pp. 64-118

Wright, Egypt (pp. 21-30, 31-37), Tunisia (pp. 39-48), Palestine (pp. 81-89)

**Week IV** October 20 Islam and the Global System in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Required Readings:

Mandaville, pp. 121-144

Discussion of Syed Qutb and his influence

**Week IV** October 22 Mid-term I (*October 23<sup>rd</sup> discussion sections cancelled*)

**Weeks V & VI** Islam and Global Forces: Muslim Responses after 9/11

October 27-29, November 3

Required Readings:

Hamid, entire (will discuss October 29)

Mandaville, pp. 144-198

Wright, Algeria (pp. 57-69), Syria (pp. 71-79), Yemen (pp. 119-126), Turkey (pp. 127-135)

The head of OIC speaks about Islamophobia (accessible via the course website)

**Weeks VI-VII** Islam and Global Forces Today: Responding to the Global Economy

November 5, 10-12

Required Readings:

Irfan, TBA

Mandaville, pp. 203-268

**Week VIII** Mid-term II

November 17

**Weeks VIII & IX** Islam and Global Forces Today: Responding with “Muslim” Media

November 19, 24

Required Readings:

Seib, entire

*Through the course website, we are requesting you access a media source from the Muslim world; please feel free to use other media resources from the Muslim world not on this list. Be prepared to talk about the site a bit in class on either November 19,20 (in discussion section) or 24. What was the publication and the story you read, did it seem to present the facts accurately or with a bias, and what makes you think this?*

**Week X** Islam and Global Forces Today: Case Studies of Politics,

December 1-3 Social Movements and Divisions among Them

**Note for December 4 discussion sections: they will meet today. They will provide a final opportunity to discuss the course as well as submit and discuss your final Op Ed essay.**

Required Readings:

Mandaville, 328-366, 369-398

Wright, pp. 137-154

## *Final Essay Assignment*

The purpose of this assignment is to provide you an opportunity to explore further any issue raised in this class – particularly the engagement of some aspect within the Muslim world with the global community – and write an Opinion Editorial (Op Ed) about it. This can take one of two forms: either an essay intended for publication in a newspaper, or a commentary intended for broadcast (i.e., on Al Jazeera or CNN). You are encouraged to incorporate issues raised in the lectures, readings and discussions into this. The assignment is divided into two parts:

a) **Issue Brief:** This first part of the essay assignment is worth 15% of your total grade. It provides you an opportunity to analyze your chosen issue or problem, and to receive feedback before drafting your final Op Ed essay. At this stage, you are to describe the issue you are exploring, explaining its causes and effects, and appraising the strengths and weaknesses of two different approaches to addressing it. Although you are not yet recommending or advocating for a particular position – the Issue Brief should be written in a neutral manner – one of the approaches you appraise, if possible, should be one that you will later advocate for in your Op Ed essay.

**Due Date:** This assignment is due in discussion section on Friday, November 13.

**Document Format Requirements:** This should be 3-4 pages, double-spaced, nicely proofread for spelling and grammar. It should include 1-2 paragraphs for each of the following five sections in which you provide concise summaries or explanations that answer the questions. Be sure to use a standard citation style when citing references within your text and when listing references at the end of your brief.

**Note:** Two different approaches should be discussed in this section, one of which you will later advocate for in the Op Ed; for now, though, you are not adopting a stance about either position. In addition, your answers can be summaries, including enough information or details to make sense, but they don't need to be overly detailed descriptions.

i) **Problem:** What is the problem? Why is it important or significant?

ii) **Context:** What is happening? Where is it occurring? Who is involved? What interests or aims do the various parties have (as far as you can ascertain)?

iii) **Causes:** what are the most significant immediate causes of the problem? Is there an historical or systemic cause that contributes to it today? How are these causing or contributing to causing the problem? What evidence supports your explanation?

iv) **Effects:** what is at least one significant political or economic consequence of the problem? Is there a second compelling one as well? Who or what is benefitting from the prevailing situation? Who or what is being hurt or exploited in the situation? What evidence supports your explanation?

v) **Action suggested:** What is the primary or dominant approach being used (or proposed) to address the problem? What are its strengths and what are its weaknesses? What alternative approach might be used (or proposed) to address the problem? How might that work, and what might be its weaknesses? What are some of the obstacles to adoption of this alternative?

**Grading rubric for Brief:** Points will be allocated according to the following: Identification of Problem (10 pts); Context (15 pts); Causes (15 pts); Effects (15 pts); Proposed Action (20 pts); Grammar/Spelling (5 pts); Source Citations (5 pts); Consistent style (5); On-time submission (10 pts)

b) **Research Opinion Editorial Assignment:** this is the second part of the final essay assignment, and is worth 20% of your total grade. The purpose is to provide you with an opportunity to advocate for or recommend a particular position to address the issue you have been researching in the first part of the assignment. While you will be using your own voice and can be creative in your use of language, the position for which you advocate should be based on research, not mere opinion. This means that the claims you make and any facts you might cite need to be supported by evidence and documented by sources.

**Due Date:** This assignment is due in discussion section on Friday, December 4.

**Document Format Requirements:** This should be 4-6 pages, double-spaced, and nicely proofread.

Your essay should include a title, answer the prompts given below, and should include properly documented sources for any claims you make or facts you cite. Use your own voice, and include no more than one brief quotation *if* you feel it is necessary so as to articulate something you cannot say by yourself. Note if you are writing this for print publication or a broadcast commentary.

Your Op-Ed should include the following:

- \* Identify the problem, describe it briefly, and indicate why it is significant;
- \* Explain the most relevant cause of the problem that your proposed approach will address;
- \* Propose a way of understanding the problem that an uninformed reader or viewer can comprehend;
- \* Propose a solution to the problem or issue and explain why it is feasible (your position should directly address the relevant cause of the problem you have explained).

**Citing Sources:** you must document any claims you make or facts you cite using footnotes or endnotes (*not* in-text citations in parentheses) and indicate your source at the end of the essay. It is fine to reference an author in your text (e.g., "According to Muhammad Shah . . ."), but you still need to use your own voice and document the source to which you are referring.

**Four Important Tips to Keep in Mind:**

a. Be careful not to make claims that you cannot support with evidence. For example, avoid statements such as "Every Malaysian Muslim" or "Every Muslim government" unless you have clear, documented evidence indicating this to be true. Using rhetoric and passionate language does not mean making exaggerations that cannot be supported. In general, keep asking yourself as you write, "where did I get this idea for information or fact or knowledge?" Unless you can provide a source to answer this question, you should probably rethink making the claim.

b. Remember to indicate the specific place or community where your problem is occurring and for whom you are recommending this alternative you are proposing. Specific details matter, and no problem – however entrenched or widespread it may seem to be – or proposed alternative occurs without unique places and actual people involved.

c. Use an active voice as much as possible; this forces you to indicate who or what is taking this action. Use of the active voice allows you to specify the subjects or agents that are doing things. Please note, too, that countries or communities, such as the United States or Saudi Arabia, or Arabs, do not do things – governments (or particular government agencies) or companies or organizations or people do things.

d. *A quality Op-Ed is not mere opinion but often passionate advocacy based on research.* The best Op Ed writers wield the tools of critical reasoning and evidence with rhetorical flair, in their own voice. They are presenting research and evidence in a concise, compelling manner so as to influence public thinking and/or inspire action. You should aim to do the same, with a larger public audience in mind. Therefore, as already noted, your writing should be reasonable and supported by evidence, even as you get creative in your use of rhetoric. Moreover, your proposed position to address the problem needs to be realistic and feasible, which means it is *either* something already proven through use in limited contexts or is based on ideas, models or research that are sound but have not yet been developed due to lack of opportunity, support or even funding. In other words, you should not just complain about a problem or propose a utopian solution, but instead put forth a reasoned analysis and constructive, solution-oriented approach that can make a real difference if adopted with enough support.

**Grading rubric for Research OP Ed essay:** Points will be allocated according to the following: Identification of Problem (15 pts); Causes (15 pts); How to understand the Problem and associated circumstances (15 pts); Proposed Solution or Action (20 pts); Convince us: why would we agree with your Proposed Solution or Action? (10 pts); Writing Conventions – compelling and clear (5 pts); Citations and Works Cited (5 pts); Consistent style (5); On-time submission (10 pts)