

**The History of Political Islam in the Middle East**  
University of West Georgia

CRN 10773 - HIST 4385 – SPRING 2018  
Tuesday/Thursday 2-3:15  
Room: Pafford 204

Instructor: Dr. Aimee Genell  
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Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 10-11 AM, 12:30-1:30 PM and by appointment  
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**Anti-Shah demonstration at Shahyad Tower, December 10, 1978, in Tehran, Iran**

**Course Description:**

This course examines the development of Islamic intellectual thought and political movements from the late eighteenth century through the present. The course will focus primarily on the Middle East, but will also consider events and ideas in the wider Muslim world. A number of contemporary commentators view the rise of Islamic political movements as a recent development, which appeared only in the 1970s coincident with the Iranian Revolution. This course takes a longer view. The first third of the semester considers the growth of Islamic political movements within the Ottoman Empire, as well as responses to European domination of the Middle East from the mid-nineteenth until the end of the Ottoman Empire in 1923. The second part of the course traces the

consequences of the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate and the struggle between Islamic social movements and post-imperial secularizing states in the Middle East. Finally, the class considers the influence of the Iranian Revolution and Cold War violence on Islamic movements from the 1970s-the present. We will examine texts produced by Muslim intellectuals, state officials and various religious groups throughout the region and will consider the role they ascribed to religion in political life. Subjects covered include: Islamic revivalism, institutional and political reform, the Caliphate as an Islamic institution, religion in political and social life, secularism, Jihadist ideology, and terrorism. We will study the role of religion in post-colonial state building practices, as well as the way in which European colonialism and later American oil interests in the region influenced the conflict between Islamic social movements and state elites in the Middle East. The course will focus primarily on political, social and intellectual history. It is not intended to provide a history of Islam nor Islamic doctrine and theology – though at points we will refer to such subjects as necessary.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand and distinguish various trends in Islamic intellectual thought as well as political and social movements for the modern period
- Demonstrate knowledge of key debates among Muslim intellectuals and political groups in the Middle East regarding historical processes such as imperialism, nationalism, decolonization, and globalization
- In both written and oral work, practice building historical arguments from primary sources and analyzing the historical arguments made by other scholars

**Attendance and Participation:** Attendance is mandatory. Late students will be marked absent. All students are expected to have completed the week's readings prior to each lecture. If you are unable to attend a discussion section, send me an email before class. Three or more **unexcused** absences will result in automatic failure.

**Additional Issues:** The use of **cell phones**, especially text messaging, is strictly prohibited. If you are found to be text messaging during class you will be asked to leave the classroom for the remainder of the day and marked absent. I prefer that students take notes by hand, if you require the use of a computer please see me.

**Academic Honesty:** Students are required to abide by the University's Honor Code. Plagiarism or cheating will result in the automatic failure of the course. The code can be found here:  
<https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpsa/assets/docs/2016-2017-code-of-conduct.pdf>

**Student Resources:** Students should meet with me at least once during the semester to discuss your final papers. If you have any questions about the readings, material covered in lectures or the written assignments, please send me an email or visit me in my office. For assistance with writing, please make use of the University Writing Center (UWC) located in TLC 1201: <https://www.westga.edu/academics/coah/writing/>. For assistance with developing study skills and time management please visit the Center for Academic

Success (CAS) located in UCC 200: <https://www.westga.edu/student-services/cas/index.php>.

**Evaluation:**

Class participation: 20% (includes participation, reading responses and quizzes)

Research project on Pan-Islam: 20%

Midterm: 30%

Final research project: Islamic Movements / Secular States: Competing Visions of Governance, 1950-1980: 30%

**The Following books are available for purchase at the bookstore:**

Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History*

John Buchan, *Green Mantle*

**All other readings will be available on CourseDen. Please check the CourseDen site for any changes in assigned readings.**

**Weekly Syllabus**

**Tuesday, Jan. 9 – Introduction: What is political Islam?**

Syllabus review

**Thursday, Jan. 11 – Background: Muhammad and Early Islam**

Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, chap. 1 “Muhammad and the Quran: Messenger and Message,” 1-35

**Tuesday, Jan. 16 – Background: The Idea of the Muslim World and the Institution of the Caliphate**

Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World*, intro., chap.1 “An Imperial Ummah before the 19<sup>th</sup> century”

**Thursday, Jan. 18 – From Imperial Islam to Islamic Revival: The Wahhabi Movement in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century**

David Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia*, chap. 1 “Islam Began as a Stranger and will Return as a Stranger,” p. 7-39 (focus on pages 10-30)

**Tuesday, Jan. 23 – The Tanzimat: Nineteenth-Century Reform in the Ottoman-Arab World**

Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World*, p. 35-58

**Thursday, Jan. 25 – The Young Ottomans and Critiques of the Tanzimat**

Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World*, p. 58-64

Namık Kemal, “Progress” 1872

**Tuesday, Jan. 30 – Sultan Abdülhamid II and the Revival of the Caliphate**  
Cemil Aydın, *The Idea of the Muslim World*, p. 65-82

Introduction to mini-research project on Pan-Islam (details available in class)

**Thursday, Feb. 1 – Islam, Empire and Pan-Islam: Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad ‘Abduh**  
Cemil Aydın, *The Idea of the Muslim World*, p. 82-98

The Al-Afghani-Renan debate on Islam and Science

Continue reading John Buchan, *Green Mantle*

**Tuesday, Feb. 6 – Inter-imperial Rivalries and the Hajj**  
Christopher Michael Low, “Ottoman Infrastructures of the Saudi Hydro-State: The Technopolitics of Pilgrimage and Potable Water in the Hijaz,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 57, 4 (2015): pp. 942-974

Continue reading John Buchan, *Green Mantle*

**Thursday, Feb. 8 – World War I and the Ottoman Declaration of Jihad**  
Cemil Aydın, *The Idea of the Muslim World*, 99-122

Film (in class) - “Jihad,” episode from Strachan’s documentary series, *The First World War*

Finish reading John Buchan, *Green Mantle* for in-class discussion

**Tuesday, Feb. 13 – Atatürk and the Making of the Secular State in Turkey**  
Cemil Aydın, *The Idea of the Muslim World*, 122-132

Halide Edib Adivar, “Turkey Faces West,” in *Modernist Islam: A Sourcebook*

**First research project due in class!!!**

**Thursday, Feb. 15 – After the Ottoman Caliphate: Debates in India and the Middle East**  
Cemil Aydın, *The Idea of the Muslim World*, p.133-163

Shakib Arslan, *Our Decline: Its Causes and Remedies*, selection

**Tuesday, Feb. 20 - The Consequences of the Abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate and the establishment of Saudi Arabia**  
Henri Lauziere, *The Making of Salafism: Islamic Reform in the Twentieth Century*, chap. 2 “Rashid Rida’s Rehabilitation of the Wahhabis and its Consequences”

Rashid Rida, "Renewal, Renewing and Renewers," in *Modernist Islam: A Sourcebook*, 77-85

**Thursday, Feb. 22 – Hasan al-Banna and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt**

Hassan al-Banna, "Toward the Light," in *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to Bin Laden*, 49-78

**Tuesday, Feb. 27 – Midterm Exam**

**Thursday, Mar. 1 – The Secular Twentieth Century? Nasser and the Muslim Brotherhood**

Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World*, 163-191

**Tuesday, March 6 - NO CLASS**

**Thursday, March 8 – The Ascendency of Islamic Ideologies: Sayyid Qutb**

Sayyid Qutb, "Signposts along the Road" and "In the Shade of the Qur'an," in *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought*, chap. 5

**Tuesday, March 13 – Gender and Political Islam**

Zaynab al-Ghazali, "Days of My Life" in *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to Bin Laden*, p. 275-311

Recommend:

Sabah Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, chap. 2

**Thursday, March 15 - The Pahlevis, the CIA Coup and the Making of the Iranian Revolution**

Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlevi, *Mission for my Country*, selection

Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World*, p. 191-211

**March 17-24 – Spring Break**

**Tuesday, March 27 - The Iranian Revolution and its Consequences in Saudi Arabia**

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, "Islamic Government," in *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to Bin Laden*, 155-180

Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World*, p. 211-226

**Thursday, March 29 – Writing Workshop**

Introduction to final writing assignment "Islamic Movements / Secular States: Competing Visions of Governance, 1950-1980" (details available in class)

**Tuesday, April 3 – Political Islam and the Arab-Israeli Conflict**

Gelvin, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: 100 Years of War*, p. 166-198

**Thursday, April 5 - Exporting the Iranian Revolution? The Lebanese Civil War and Hezbollah**

Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, 11-46

**Tuesday, April 10 – Exporting the Iranian Revolution? From Fatah to Hamas**

Hroub, *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice*, chap. 1-2

Documents: Fatah's foundational documents vs. the Hamas Charter

**Thursday, April 12 – The Global Cold War: Afghanistan and the Making the Taliban and Al-Qaeda**

Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, chap. 3-4

**Tuesday, April 17 - Al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden**

Usama bin Laden, "Declaring War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places," in *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought*, chap. 18

**Thursday, April 19 - A Short History of Bombing and Violence in the Middle East**

Faisal Devji, "Accounting for Al-Qaeda," in *Political Islam: A Critical Reader*, p. 317-323

**Tuesday, April 24- From the Arab Spring to the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq**

Roger Owen, *The Rise and Fall of Arab Presidents for Life*, chap. 10 "The Sudden Fall," p. 172-191

Recommended: Abdel Bari Atwan, *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate*, chap. 8

**Thursday, April 26 - Conclusions**

Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World*, p. 227-237

**April 30 – Final paper due!!!!**