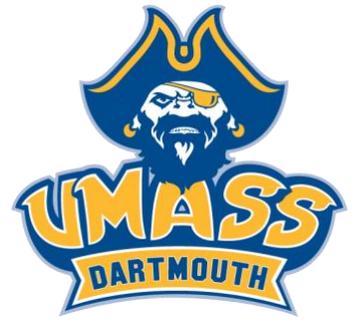


Global Religion Research Initiative (GRI)
Curriculum Development Grant Project
Course Syllabus

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Political Islam and Democracy in the Middle East (PSC-450*-Seminar)

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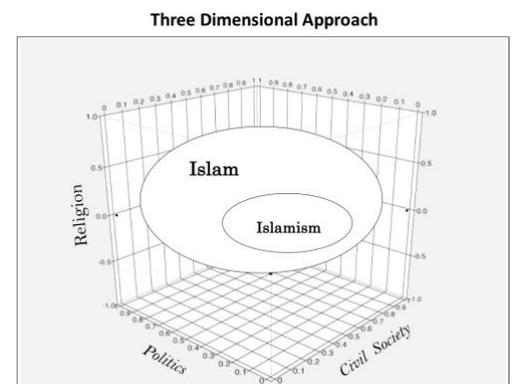


Course Description

This course will explore three-dimensional dynamics of religion, civil society, and democratization in the Middle East and North African (MENA) countries from a comparative perspective. Students will define and critically apply key concepts, dominant theories, and empirical cases to understand and explain current socio-political issues pertaining Political Islam (Islamism), democratization/authoritarianism, civil society/social movements in the cross-national context. Specifically, the students will closely examine the following questions through a critical engagement of reading materials and active in-class discussions:

What are the main sources of Islam? What is Shariah? What is Political Islam (Islamism)? Can Islam and democracy coexist in the 21st century? How do Muslims negotiate the tensions between Islamic religiosity and active political engagement?

In doing so, students will analyze the “patterns and trends of political change” in the MENA region over the last two decades. This course assumes no prior background knowledge of the region and is thus suitable for all students.



Learning Outcomes

Students are expected to master the following learning outcomes:

- *attain a nuanced and contextualized understanding of Islam as a religion in the Muslim world*
- *define and comprehend the nuances of Political Islam*
- *analyze diverse Islamist actors in the region from a comparative perspective*
- *identify the historical (colonial) roots of state formation (and current implications thereof)*
- *comprehend, distinguish, and compare/contrast the political systems of the MENA region*
- *examine and interpret the “patterns of political change” with respect to religion and politics*
- *comprehend and analyze the dynamics of civil society (and emergent social movements)*
- *identify current pressing issues & critically analyze the prospects for democratization in the MENA region*

Required Texts

- (1) Rethinking Political Islam, by L. Hamid & W. McCants, 2017, Oxford University Press [ISBN: 978-0-19-064919-7]
- (2) Shariah: What everyone needs to know, by J. L. Esposito & N. J. Delong-Bas, 2018, Oxford University Press [ISBN: 978-0-19-932506-1]
- (3) Additional reading materials will be available online (MyCourses)

Attendance Policy

Attendance is important to achieve all course learning objectives. Students are expected to contribute their ideas, to ask questions, and to participate in class activities. Students are expected to have completed the designated reading assignments prior to attending each class. Students with perfect attendance will receive a 5% credit toward the final exam/paper grade. The first unexcused absence is exempt from penalty. Students must sign the attendance sheet. Minute-paper assignments or reflection papers may also be used for attendance. Students who leave class early are counted as absent for the entire class. Students must bring a documentation to justify an excused absence. No extra credit assignments will be given to make up absences. Missing 7+ classes (i.e., unexcused absence) will result in an automatic failing grade for entire course.

Grading

| | |
|---|-----|
| Attendance & engagement | 15% |
| Minute Papers & Debates | 20% |
| Midterm Exam | 25% |
| Research Paper - PechaKucha Presentation (10%) - Final Paper (30%) | 40% |

Reading assignments: All students are required to complete all assigned reading assignments *before* each class.

Attendance & engagement: Showing up to classes and actually participating in class discussions are not the same thing. All students are expected to read all assigned readings before each meeting and be prepared to discuss them in class.

Minute Paper assignments: Students will write a total of six short (mini) minute papers (3-4 paragraphs) in reaction to assigned readings. Students will present their analytical assessment(s) into the following three questions (note: there are no right or wrong answers).

- (1) *What are the 2-3 most significant (or surprisingly insightful) things you have learned during this session?*
- (2) *What questions remain in your mind? Any disagreements or counter-arguments?*
- (3) *Is there anything you did not understand?*

Midterm Exam: This exam will measure the comprehension of substantive course materials (e.g., concepts, theories, major findings, competing arguments) covered in the course. A study guide for this exam will be provided.

Boston Model Arab League (BMAL): BMAL is a regional chapter of the national Model Arab League (MAL). MAL is the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations' flagship student leadership development program. The Models are similar in organization and format to the older and more widely recognized Model United Nations (MUN), with its 193 member states. An important difference between the two is that the MAL focuses only on the 22 member states that comprise the League of Arab States. BMAL organizes annual conference in April. All students are encouraged to attend this simulation conference. Extra credit will be given to student delegates representing one Arab nation at BMAL. More details will be given during class. (URL: <https://ncusar.org/modelarableague/conferences/bmal-summit/>)

Research Paper: Students will write a research paper engaging an original research question. The paper must address a specific socio-political issue in at least one MENA country. The research puzzle (i.e., question) and the narrative must be explanatory, not be merely descriptive, and involve a causal mechanism (i.e., explanations rooted in a cause-and-effect relationship). [e.g., *Following the Arab Spring of 2011, what explains the relative success of Tunisian revolution and a failure of Egyptian uprising from a comparative perspective?*]. The paper must be no less than 15 (and no longer than 20) pages long and can be formatted in any citation style (e.g., APA, MLA). Students must (a) demonstrate critical thinking, (b) showcase

their subject-matter knowledge, and (c) apply the concepts and theories covered/learnt in class. This assignment will be due in three stages:

- Outline & first draft is due in mid-semester
- In-class presentation of the main findings (using the *PechaKucha* format, see page 7)
- Final draft is due at the end of semester.

Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions! You have to upload your research paper to the MyCourses. See *page 8* for a sample paper outline. Using this outline is strongly encouraged (but not required).

Late Assignments: Late work/assignments will be accepted for up to one week at a cost of a letter grade.

Incomplete Policy

According to the university catalogue, an incomplete may be given only in exceptional circumstances at the instructor's discretion. The student must be passing at the time of the request or be sufficiently close to passing. If the work is not completed within one year of the recording of the incomplete grade, the grade will become an F(I). The incomplete policy for this course is that at least 70% of the course must be already completed and an exceptional circumstance (i.e. medical issue) must exist. If you feel you require an incomplete for an exceptional reason, you need to email me and state your reasons for the incomplete in writing. We will then decide on a course of action

Course Conduct

UMass Dartmouth policies regarding equal opportunity, discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence apply to all learning environments wherever they are located and from wherever they are taught. This applies to all UE face-to-face, off campus, blended, and online courses. Please see the Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion brochure for information at

<http://www.umassd.edu/studentaffairs/departments/studentconductanddisputeresolution/studentcodeofconduct/>.

Student Academic Integrity Policy

All UMass Dartmouth students are expected to maintain high standards of academic integrity and scholarly practice. The University does not tolerate academic dishonesty of any variety, whether as a result of a failure to understand required academic and scholarly procedure or as an act of intentional dishonesty.

*For additional information on violations, infractions, and consequences visit:

<https://www.umassd.edu/policies/activepolicylist/academicaffairs/academicintegritypolicyandreportingform/>

Center for Access and Success

In accordance with University policy, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, please meet with the instructor at the beginning of the semester and provide the appropriate paperwork from the [Center for Access and Success](#). The necessary paperwork is obtained when you bring proper documentation to the Center, which is located in Pine Dale Hall, Room 7136; phone: 508.999.8711.

Key Due Dates to Remember

| Assignment | Due Dates |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Minute Papers | TBA |
| Midterm Exam | TBA |
| Research paper draft due | TBA |
| Pecha-Kucha presentations (in-class) | TBA |
| Final Research Paper | TBA |

COURSE OUTLINE

IMPORTANT: All assigned readings must be read PRIOR to each class.

| Date | Course Topic | Reading Assignments (*indicates available in MyCourses site) |
|--------|--|--|
| Week 1 | Course Introduction: policies & expectations Introduction: MENA region facts and demographics. | Syllabus review Fawsett: Introduction to MENA region* |
| Week 2 | Introduction to Islam: Main sources, tenets, and brief history | Esposito (Islam): Chapter 1 Esposito (Islam): Chapter 2 VIDEO: Biography of Muhammad [History Channel] Due: Minute paper #1 |
| Week 3 | Who are Muslims? Diversity of the Ummah (Muslim community); Distinction of Sunni & Shi'a Islam | Esposito & Mogahed: Who are Muslims?* |
| Week 4 | What is the Shariah: Myths & Realities Diverse sources and theological evolution of the Shariah Law in the Muslim world | Esposito & Delong-Bas: Chapter 1 Esposito & Delong-Bas: Chapter 2 Fish: Are Muslims Distinctive? [introduction]* Due: Minute paper #2 |
| Week 5 | Caliphate, Sharia Courts, and Governance in Islam | Esposito & Delong-Bas: Chapter 3 Esposito & Delong-Bas: Chapter 6 Due: Minute paper #3 |
| Week 6 | Women (gender dynamics), Individual Freedoms, & Human Rights in Islam | Esposito & Delong-Bas: Chapter 5 Esposito & Delong-Bas: Chapter 7 Due: Minute paper #4 |
| Week 7 | State formation in the Middle East: Impact of European Colonial Legacy and the Cold War | Fawcett: Introduction to ME state formation* Historical (original) documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sykes-Picot Agreement http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/sykes.asp ▪ Hussein McMahon Correspondence http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-hussein-mcmahon-correspondence-july-1915-august-1916 |
| Week 8 | Resurgence of Religion in Politics: What is Political Islam (Islamism)? Evolution of the ideology | Esposito: Chapter 5 (Islamic Resurgence) Hamid & McCants: Introduction Achilov: Got Political Islam?, <i>Intern. Pol. Science Review</i> * Hamid: What most people get wrong about Political Islam? |

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|---------|---|--|
| TBA | Midterm Exam | |
| Week 9 | Islam and Democracy: Can Islam coexist with liberal democracy? | Stepan: Religion, Democracy, and Twin Tolerations, <i>Journal of Democracy</i> * Khan: Islam, Democracy, and Islamism after the counterrevolution in Egypt, <i>Middle East Policy</i> * Kuru: Authoritarianism and Democracy – Rentier Model, <i>Political Science Quarterly</i> * |
| Week 10 | The Arab Spring or Winter? Associational & Contestational Civil Society dynamics in the Middle East | Achilov: Social Capital, Islam, and the Arab Spring in the Middle East, <i>Journal of Civil Society</i> * Jamal and Hoffman: Religion in the Arab Spring: Between two competing narratives, <i>Journal of Politics</i> * Hawthorne: Is Civil Society an answer? * |
| Week 11 | Analyzing Gender Gap and Assessing Global Support for Shari’ah Law | Coffe & Dilli: The gender gap in political participation in Muslim countries* TED: What do you think when you look at me? Achilov: Islam, Political Islam, and Collective Pol. Action* Due: Minute paper #5 |
| Week 12 | The Rise and Fall of ISIS in the Middle East: Causes & Implications | Lebovich: How religious are ISIS fighters? * Williams: Chapter 6 (The New War on ISIS)* Hamid & McCants: Chapter 19 VIDEO: The Secret History of ISIS (PBS Frontline documentary) |
| Week 13 | Cases in focus: Egypt & Tunisia | Hamid & McCants: Chapter 1 (Egypt) Hamid & McCants: Chapter 2 (Tunisia) Ghannouchi: From Political Islam to Muslim Democracy, <i>Foreign Affairs</i> * |
| Week 14 | Cases in focus: Saudi Arabia & The Arab Gulf | Hamid & McCants: Chapter 7 (Egypt) Hamid & McCants: Chapter 8 (Kuwait) |
| Week 15 | Cases in focus: Turkey & Iran | Esposito, Sonn, Voll: Chapter 2-3* BBC: The Iranian Islamic Revolution Achilov: Islam, Innovation, and Democracy: Evidence from Turkey* |
| Week 16 | Future of Islam, Islamism, and Democracy in the 21st Century: Contemporary challenges and opportunities | Bayat: Post-Islamism? * Esposito & DeLong-Bas: Chapter 11 Hamid & McCants: Chapter 20 Esposito (Islam): Chapter 6 Due: Minute paper #6 |

Project Presentation Instructions

In this oral presentation, you will present your final research paper project.

- **Timeframe:** 10 minutes.
- **Format:** Pecha-Kucha (the art of concise presentations)
 - You will use 20 slides of images/graphs/data/short-text @ 30 seconds each (normally 20x20)
 - May use PowerPoint (or Keynote) slides; keep text font (in your slides) size at 22+.
 - For more information, visit: <http://www.pechakucha.org>
 - Record your presentation digitally; we will play it in class. Q&A will follow.
- **Content:**
 1. The puzzle: your central research question(s) [10%]
 2. Research design: Your data and analysis. [15%]
 3. Key Findings & implications. [75%]

Sample Research Paper Outline (PSC 450)

I. Introduction (1-2 pages)

- Statement of the problem
 - ✓ What is the puzzle, problem or issue that motivates this study?
- Purpose and significance of your study: why should we care about this question?
 - ✓ Indicate the purpose of your paper
- Concept definitions
 - ✓ Define your key terms, including your dependent and independent variables

II. Review related sources (1-2 pages)

- Literature review (review of past research).
 - ✓ In broad terms, what do we already know about this topic (literature)?
 - ✓ What are the major findings and most significant studies pertinent to your topic? (including class readings/textbook)
 - ✓ Must use at least 4 peer-reviewed journals and 1 book (excluding textbooks).

III. Research Design (1 page)

- How are you answering your question(s)?
- What evidence (data) do you have? How did you analyze it? How are you going to present it?
 - ✓ Describe your data (collection, type, descriptive stats if applicable) and the mode of analysis

IV. Analysis (3-5 pages)

- Analysis, findings and discussion
 - ✓ Examine the facts; connect the dots; analyze.
 - ✓ Explore and present alternative explanations (counter-arguments to your thesis);
 - ✓ Utilize data graphs/tables (only if relevant; highly encouraged but not required)
 - ✓ Acknowledge the limitations of your paper
 - ✓ What are the emerging patterns of your findings?

V. Conclusion (1-2 pages)

- Implications of findings
 - ✓ Inferences you draw from your analysis
 - ✓ Discuss the implications of your findings (What policy prescriptions can be derived [what lessons can be learnt?] from your paper?)

VI. References (works cited) (1 page)

- Must cite at least 4 journal articles (peer reviewed) and 1 book (excluding class textbooks).

Questions? Email me at dachilov@umassd.edu