

Course Description, Objectives and Policies



REL 373R - Special Topics in Religious Studies - Fall 2018

MW 4:00-5:15 p.m. (Pierce Hall 239)

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Office: Seney Hall 115B

Hours: TTh 3:00-4:00 p.m., or by appointment



Course Description

This course explores the role of Islam in the public sphere and its relation to liberal democracy. Following Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979 and the collapse of the former Soviet Union in the early 1990s, religion has returned to international and domestic political arenas. We will examine the presumed compatibility

(or incompatibility) of some tenets of Islam with modern democratic principles of governance, individual freedom, human rights, justice, the equality of all before the law, multiculturalism, and pluralism. The course is divided into three larger units: The first unit of the course lays out the conceptual tools for analyzing the relationship between Islam and Politics. The second unit focuses on country studies and examines significant moments in each related to the trajectory of the debate over Islam and Politics. The final unit consists of round-table discussions on comparative issues in fields such as gender and globalization studies.



Course Objectives

The goals and objectives for you as a student in this course are:

- to gain a broader understanding of the concepts and theories of Islam and Politics,
 - to familiarize yourself with patterns, commonalities, and differences on a number of significant national and international issues concerning Islam and Politics;
 - to develop the ability to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view that have religious presuppositions or implications; and
 - to further develop skills in expressing yourself orally and in writing within and beyond the academic study of religion.
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Readings

- Textbook: Mandaville, Peter G. Islam and Politics. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2014.
 - All other required and optional readings for the course will be accessible to you electronically through our Canvas site. Often you will find pdf files of a specific journal article or section from a book you are required to read for a class session. In other instances, you will be taken to the Library's Electronic Reserve site or to sites such as JSTOR, Proquest, MUSE or Lexis-Nexus—all useful research tools for scholarly journals.
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Canvas Learning Technology

This course will involve using the online communication tools on Canvas as well as readings and documents located there. You would do well to acquaint yourself with the features Canvas offers and different usages and use them as frequent points of entry and exploration around many of the issues we will be discussing as well as in preparation for the assignments.



Course Requirements and Grading

The Final Grade will be calculated as follows:

1. Preparation and Participation (10%)
2. Reading Responses (15%)
3. Lecture Presentation (15%)
4. Midterm Essay (20%)
5. Research Project (40%)
 - 5.a. First Paper (20%)
 - 5.b. Revised Paper (20%)

1. Preparation and Participation (10%)

Preparation: I expect you to keep up with all readings and assignments and to get the notes for missed class sessions from your peers. Appropriate preparation means reading the material several times, making notes, and coming to class with specific questions; part of this preparation should include consultation with recommended readings and standard reference works in order to understand fully the argument in the text.

Participation: There will be ample opportunity for you to participate in our class. Apart from my lectures you will be involved in activities such as class discussion, group work with subsequent presentations, and in-class writing assignments. Additional activities and assignments including peer assessments on written and oral work will also count toward your participation grade. While I will call on you often and ask about the content of assigned readings you are strongly encouraged to ask questions and suggest topics for discussion in class on your own.

Class Discussion: While I will lecture from time to time, the class will be conducted much more on a seminar model of examining your informed responses to the reading material. High-quality participation is key to the overall success of our class discussion. This means I expect you to: raise thoughtful questions, analyze relevant issues, build on others' ideas, synthesize across readings and discussions, expand the class' perspective, and appropriately challenge the texts' and each other's assumptions and perspectives. We will use a number of different techniques to prepare and conduct class discussion throughout the semester. All place a premium on mastering the content of a reading, evaluating it, and preparing cogent ways to convey your ideas before class. All also rely on public performance and evaluation.

1. *Short oral reports:* In the first unit of the semester we will begin each class session with short oral reports. Reports should cover the highlights or main points of the readings and offer a question for

the class. In class, we draw the names of a few students to present their talks that day. The rest of the class and I evaluate the presentations aloud, examining strengths and weaknesses in content and delivery. After presenters and evaluators finish, we will have a whole-class discussion of the readings.

2. *Student discussion leaders*: In the second unit each of you will be responsible to formulate key questions and be prepared to lead the class in a discussion on the day's readings. We will select discussion leaders during the previous class session to allow time for preparation. Discussion leaders also will meet with me before class to discuss their insights and questions for leading our discussion. At the end of the discussion, the rest of the class will discuss strengths and weaknesses of the leader's performance. I will usually remain silent for the first minutes to allow free rein to your ideas and then join as a co-discussion leader later.
3. *Round Table Discussions*: The final course unit will address comparative issues in Islam and Politics related to gender and globalization. You will all participate in Round Table Discussions as a team to explore the issues at hand.

2. Reading Responses (15%)

For this class you are asked to write short analytical responses to the assigned readings (250-300 words). This task is designed to encourage you to keep up with your reading, keep you engaged with the material, enrich class discussion (as you will already have something to say), help you practice your skills in thinking critically and writing fluidly, and, finally, provide a log of your thoughts at this state in your studies. [See Canvas for more details \(https://canvas.emory.edu/courses/50168/assignments/146826\)](https://canvas.emory.edu/courses/50168/assignments/146826).

3. Lecture Presentation (15%)

During the semester we will be discussing a wide range of concepts, events, or people in the history and contemporary Political Islam. Frequently we will benefit from additional information and analysis that goes beyond what our readings offer. Therefore, you will be assigned a particular topic for which to develop expertise through additional out-of-class research. You will be responsible for an **eight-to-ten-minute lecture presentation** based on your topic in order to deepen the class' understanding of the subject. Furthermore, everybody will write one peer assessment for another class member's lecture presentation over the course of the semester. [See Canvas for more details \(https://canvas.emory.edu/courses/50168/assignments/146962\)](https://canvas.emory.edu/courses/50168/assignments/146962).

4. Midterm Essay (20%)

The midterm will be take-home essay that ask you to study a specific topic related to our class discussion carefully and in its context. You will write an essay of 1,000-1,2000 words. I will post in advance essay prompts as well as guidelines on how to write the essay. I will be looking for two things in your writing: a) evidence of your knowledge and understanding of class material and b) your ability to use or apply the material in ways that go beyond what you have read or heard in class. This second part can be done in many ways: you can critique the material, apply it to something else, or even just explain it in a different way. Regardless of your particular approach to the topic, you must have a specific point or claim to argue in your essay. I encourage you to write a thesis paragraph ahead of time and to discuss it

with me. Many students have found that it improves the quality of their writing. [🔗 See Canvas for more details \(https://canvas.emory.edu/courses/20702/assignments/4732\)](https://canvas.emory.edu/courses/20702/assignments/4732).

5. Research Project (40%)

The research paper is an opportunity to engage more deeply with a particular topic of your choice related to this course. It is of greatest importance that you choose a topic of interest to you. The research paper must be between 3,000 and 4,000 words and should ideally use both primary source material and appropriate secondary and theoretical studies to focus more closely on your subject. Your paper must not merely summarize the position maintained by another, but present your own argument, scholarly analyses and reflections. Your argument must be amply supported by the data reviewed. You cannot expect to produce your best writing when you first get started. Thus, revising your work is an integral part of successful writing. Revising is a process of rethinking your paper and differs from simple proofreading. As you revise your paper you will have to reconsider your argument, review your evidence, refine your purpose, and reorganize your presentation. You will find that I indicated different dates and deadlines for these activities on the course schedule at which I expect you to present and discuss your results to date with your peers and me. [See Canvas for more details \(https://canvas.emory.edu/courses/50168/assignments/146963\)](https://canvas.emory.edu/courses/50168/assignments/146963).



Policies

Attendance

You must be present for class meetings to do well in the course. You should aim to arrive to class meetings a couple minutes early having read the assignment and taken notes, including at least two questions or observations to contribute to discussion. Latecomers will be counted absent at the very beginning of class. Should you be late, you are permitted to enter the classroom only if you do so silently and without disturbing class proceedings. You are **allowed to be absent from a total of three (3) class sessions**. With every additional absence, your final grade for this class will go down 5%. This means you should plan ahead with your allowance of three absences. Talk to me ahead of time if you foresee any difficulties for yourself with this policy. [My expectations](#) of professionalism extend to classroom etiquette. This includes such behavior as arriving on time, staying in the classroom until an official break or the end of the class period, and packing up only when class has finished.

Religious Holidays Arrangements

Instructors are encouraged, not required, to accommodate students' academic needs related to religious holidays. Please make every effort to negotiate your religious holiday needs within the first two weeks of the semester; waiting longer may compromise your instructor's ability to extend satisfactory arrangements. If you need guidance negotiating your needs related to a religious holiday, the College Chaplain, Rev. Lyn Pace, [ppace@emory.edu \(mailto:ppace@emory.edu\)](mailto:ppace@emory.edu), Candler Hall 202, is willing and available to help. ***Please be aware that Rev. Pace is not tasked with excusing students from*

classes or writing excuses for students to take to their professors. Emory's official list of religious holidays may be found at http://www.religiouslife.emory.edu/faith_traditions/holidays.html (http://www.religiouslife.emory.edu/faith_traditions/holidays.html).

Devices in Class

You may utilize laptops and tablets in their capacity as learning aids during class. You may not use them for communicating, browsing, gaming, doing schoolwork for other courses, or otherwise departing from the task at hand during the brief periods of the week we will spend together. Your phone(s) should be powered down, or in airplane mode, and stowed during class. If you find yourself needing to access the day's reading on your phone, or are expecting a time-sensitive call, announce it before class begins.

Office Hours and Opportunities for Conferencing about Your Writing

Peer reviews, class discussion, and written feedback that I give you on your assignments are meant to help you reflect on your writing and to enhance your written work through a series of revisions. In addition to these formal procedures, I also encourage you to see me during my office hours for us to reflect together on how to improve your writing. If my office hours conflict with your schedule, I will be happy to make an appointment with you at a more convenient time.

Writing Center (Pierce Hall 117)


The Writing Center usually opens in the third or fourth week of the semester. Consultants in the Oxford Writing Center are available to support Oxford College students as they work on any type of writing assignment and/or text, at any stage of the composing process. Consultants can assist with a range of projects, from traditional papers and presentations to websites and other multimedia projects. They take a similar approach as they work with students on concerns including idea development, structure, use of sources, grammar, and word choice. They usually do not proofread for students. Instead, they discuss strategies and resources students can use as they write, revise, and edit their own work. All students, monolingual and multilingual, are welcome to visit the Writing Center tutors. Learn more and make an appointment by visiting the WOnline website of the [Writing Center](https://oxford.mywconline.com/) (<https://oxford.mywconline.com/>). Please review tutoring policies before your visit.

Academic Integrity

All students deserve an atmosphere of fairness, honesty and maturity. All of us at Oxford College live by the standards set forth in the Honor Code, which includes the "responsibility for maintaining standards of unimpeachable honesty in all academic work." The Honor Code also indicates that we cannot tolerate actions in others that violate this code, so we (and you) are obligated to report violations. Oxford College takes this honor code very seriously, as do I, and penalties for violations are severe. The Honor Code applies to all assignments, in and out of the classroom. All work in this course must be entirely your own. Please read the Honor Code carefully; I will trust you to conduct yourselves accordingly. See the Honor Code: <http://oxford.emory.edu/catalog/regulations/honor-code.html> (<http://oxford.emory.edu/catalog/regulations/honor-code.html>).

Access, Disability Services, and Resources

It is the policy of Emory University to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Students with any condition such that the requirements of this class present a problem should make this known to their instructors as soon as possible and contact the [Office of Accessibility Services \(http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu\)](http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu) (OAS):

- If you have a documented disability and have anticipated barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, or presume having a disability (e.g. mental health, attention, learning, vision, hearing, physical or systemic), and are in need of accommodations for this semester, we encourage you to contact the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) to learn more about the registration process and steps for requesting accommodations at oas_oxford@emory.edu (mailto:oas_oxford@emory.edu).
- If you are a student that is currently registered with OAS and have not requested or received a copy of your accommodation notification letter, please notify OAS immediately. Students who have accommodations in place are encouraged to coordinate sometime with your professor, during the first week of the semester, to communicate your specific needs for the course as it relates to your approved accommodations. Accommodations are not implemented until the instructor is provided an accommodation letter and discusses the accommodation plan for this course face to face with the OAS student. All discussions with OAS and faculty concerning the nature of your disability remain confidential. For additional information regarding OAS, please visit the website: <http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu> (<http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu>)  . (<http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/access>)

Title IX Reporting

All persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by university policies. Discrimination against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, gender, sexual orientation, or veteran status is unacceptable.

Every Emory employee who is informed about an allegation of sexual misconduct involving any student is required to notify a Title IX Coordinator either directly or through their relevant reporting structure. However, employees who serve in a professional role in which communications are afforded confidential status under the law (e.g., medical providers, therapists, and professional and pastoral counselors) are not bound by this requirement but may, consistent with their ethical and legal obligations, be required to report limited information about incidents without revealing the identities of the individuals involved, to a Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinator. All members of the Emory community are encouraged to promptly report incidents of sexual harassment and discrimination. For more information, visit: <http://sexualmisconductresources.emory.edu/policies/index.html>. (<http://sexualmisconductresources.emory.edu/policies/index.html>)