

PSCI 3302A
Comparative Political Theory
Fridays, 14H35-17H25
404 Southam Hall

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The student will obtain a basic to intermediate knowledge of the historical origins and theoretical sources of Islamic political thought. The student will be invited to draw comparisons with Western political ideas on structural concepts such as the theory of the State, the ethical life of the polity, political sovereignty, freedom, democracy and others. In addition to developing a comparative theoretical framework, students can begin to shape a critical analysis of Islamic responses to current political events and issues.

Summary Course Description : The course will have as its focus Islamic Political Thought and its relationship to trends and concepts in Western Political Theory. The philosophical and religious base of Islamic law and its influences and parallels in Western thought will be examined. From the beginning, Islam played a political role and its historical evolution explains the contemporary struggle between ‘moderates’ and ‘Islamists’ in addition to profiling internal schisms such as the Sunni-Shia split. Here too, parallels can be drawn with Western political concepts such as rebellion, revolution and democracy.

Evaluation : The evaluation will be based on the following :

Spelling, grammar, punctuation and presentation will be taken into account for grading purposes. For citation format, please consult the University of Chicago format.

50% based on a 12 – 15 page double-spaced essay due Monday December 4th. The essay will take the form of an exegesis of a passage contained in the weekly readings. A list of ten topics will be handed out in class on October 13th.

30% based on a one hour mid-term in-class test to be held on November 3rd. It will be composed of five questions requiring narrative answers. Two out of the five questions must be answered.

20% based on participation in class discussions

The University policy on plagiarism will be strictly adhered to in this course. Please consult the policy for further details.

Required Readings:

(available for purchase in the Carleton Bookstore)

John Esposito, *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, Oxford University Press, US, 2001.

Khaled Abou El Fadl, *The Place of Tolerance in Islam*, Beacon Press, Boston, 2002.

Suggested Readings:

Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1996

John L. Esposito, *Political Islam*, Lynne Rienner, USA, 1997

Detailed Course Description

Week 1 – September 8 - *The Origins of Islam* (foreign influences?)

General discussion of course objectives, requirements, evaluation framework and *raison d'être* of the course and of each of its weekly components. Introduction to glossary of terms. An overview of pre-Islamic influences - Jewish, Greek, Christian and Roman origins of Islam and their influence.

J.Schacht, *Introduction to Islamic Law*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964 pages 1-22.

Week 2 – September 15 - *The Early Years* (the nature, limits and hierarchy of human knowledge – towards an Islamic theory of knowledge).

Overview of the Quran and its different messages. Analysis of the first epistemological break between the Mecca and Medina periods of the Prophet's life. Lead up to the selection of the four caliphes followed by the Sunni – Shia rift. Beginning of Umayyad period (651-750 AD). The early Islamic State – contrast with Plato and Aristotle on the nature of the State.

J.Schacht, *Introduction to Islamic Law*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964, pp. 23-48.

Suggested Reference: N.J. Coulson, *A History of Islamic Law*, Edinburgh: University Press, 1978.

Week 3 – September 22 – *What is Islamic Law?* (Knowledge and Politics – Quran, Sunna, hadiths, *usul al-fiqh* etc)

The spread of Islamic religion and traditions to conquered territory and the challenges posed by Islamic dissident thought such as *kharijism* and *mu'tazilism*. Emergence of Islamic schools of thought (*madhabs*) based on differing knowledge claims. Analysis of theoretical sources and their use of reason by analogy, consensus and public interest. Beginning of the Abbasid period from 750 AD – 1250..

J.Schacht, *Introduction to Islamic Law*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964.pp. 49-68.

Week 4 – September 29 - *Closing of the Gate of Ijtihad* (Political and Legal paralysis?)

What are paradigm shifts? Epistemological breaks in Islam and their philosophical and political consequences. Reasons for the declared end of legal reasoning and the reign of theoretical conformism (*taqlid*). The gate of *ijtihad* and the future of political reform in Islam. Compare with the doctrine of the 'end of history'.

J. Schacht, *Introduction to Islamic Law*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964, pp. 69-75.

Week 5 – October 13 –Ibn Taimiyyah – the father of Islamism (Islamic political theory as a function of the closing of the gate of *ijtihad* - rebellion, revolution and reform in Islam)

Salafism, Wahhabism and many contemporary Islamists identify Ibn Taimiyyah's intellectual legacy as the basis for their doctrines. An analysis of his views on rebellion within the caliphate notion of the state, the *taqlid-ijtihad* divide and his position on *jihad*.

See hand outs.

Week 6 –October 20- Islam and Europe (a choice between an ethical community *ummah* or Hegel's *Sittlichkeit* or the political State)

The rise of Christian Europe and the relations with Islam (reference to the political theories of Augustine and Aquinas). The Aristotelean legacy of Islam. Defeat of Islam in Europe. Europe's relations with the Ottoman Empire and the progressive retreat of Islamic Law up to 1919 and the Treaty of Versailles. Crisis in the caliphate. The impact of colonialism and the First World War on Islamic regional power. The foundation of the Muslim Brotherhood and the political legacy of Sufism.

Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1996 pp. 109-120, 174-183, 209-218.

Sayyid Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, Islamic Publications International, USA, 2000, pp. 19-35.

Suggested Reference - Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 1982.

Week 7 – October 27 -Reform and Rebellion in Islam (the problem of political sovereignty and legitimacy)

Role of Islamic law in the reform controversy. Is rebellion possible? Democracy and Islam. Reformist versus Islamist views. Can the *shari'a* be restored? Tariq Ramadan's *maslaha*, An-Na'im's use of *naskh*, Qutb's radical Islamism and anti-colonialism

Sayyid Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, Islamic Publications International, USA, 2000, pp.1-17, 37-126

Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, *Toward an Islamic Reformation*, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, 1996, pp. 1-100.

Week 8 – November 3 – (In-class Test) - Case Study – Florida Bureau of Motor Vehicles vs. Freeman (issues of collective security versus individual rights and religious freedom)

A look at post 911 arguments setting security concerns over and against claims of religious freedom. Is the Freeman case an example of the 'clash of civilizations'? An analysis of the courtroom battle as competing claims about Islamic traditions are debated.

See handout – Court Decision

Week 9 + Week 10 – November 10 + 17 (Of Islamic States)

Theories of the Islamic State – one Sunni (Afghanistan) and the other Shia (Iran). Parallels with Western political theories of the State – Rousseau and Marx.

M.J.Gohari, *The Taliban Ascent to Power*, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp.1-63, 98-143
Suroosh Irfani, *Revolutionary Islam in Iran*, Zed Books, London, pp. 1-242

Week 11 – November 24 - Islam To-day (Religious versus Man made laws)

Moderates versus Islamists and the closing of the gate of *ijtihad*. The changing role of Islam in to-day's world. Globalization and its effects on Islam. Discussion of contemporary Islamist *fatwas* and their authors.

Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Place of Tolerance in Islam*, Beacon Press, Boston, 2002, pp.1-117.
Tariq Ramadan – See handout

Week 12 – December 1 – Review

Academic Accommodations

For Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course are encouraged to contact the Paul Menton Centre (PMC) for Students with Disabilities (500 University Centre) to complete the necessary forms. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet with the instructor in order to discuss your needs **at least two weeks before the first in-class test or CUTV midterm exam**. This will allow for sufficient time to process your request. Please note the following deadlines for submitting completed forms to the PMC for formally scheduled exam accommodations: **November 6th, 2006** for fall and fall/winter term courses, and **March 9th, 2007** for winter term courses.

For Religious Observance: Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Instructors and students may contact an Equity Services Advisor for assistance (www.carleton.ca/equity).

For Pregnancy: Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *letter of accommodation*. Then, make an appointment to discuss your needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Plagiarism: The Undergraduate Calendar defines plagiarism as: "to use and pass off as one's own idea or product, work of another without expressly giving credit to another." The Graduate Calendar states that plagiarism has occurred when a student either: (a) directly copies another's work without acknowledgment; or (b) closely paraphrases the equivalent of a short paragraph or more without acknowledgment; or (c) borrows, without acknowledgment, any ideas in a clear and recognizable form in such a way as to present them as the student's own thought, where such ideas, if they were the student's own would contribute to the merit of his or her own work. Instructors who suspect plagiarism are required to submit the paper and supporting documentation to the Departmental Chair who will

refer the case to the Dean. It is not permitted to hand in the same assignment to two or more courses. The Department's Style Guide is available at: www.carleton.ca/polisci/undergrad/styleguide.pdf

Oral Examination: At the discretion of the instructor, students may be required to pass a brief oral examination on research papers and essays.

Submission and Return of Term Work: Papers must be handed directly to the instructor and will not be date-stamped in the departmental office. Late assignments may be submitted to the drop box in the corridor outside B640 Loeb. Assignments will be retrieved every business day at **4 p.m.**, stamped with that day's date, and then distributed to the instructor. For essays not returned in class please attach a **stamped, self-addressed envelope** if you wish to have your assignment returned by mail. Please note that assignments sent via fax or email will not be accepted. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

Approval of final grades: Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Course Requirements: Students must fulfill all course requirements in order to achieve a passing grade. Failure to hand in any assignment will result in a grade of F. Failure to write the final exam will result in a grade of ABS. FND (Failure – No Deferred) is assigned when a student's performance is so poor during the term that they cannot pass the course even with 100% on the final examination. In such cases, instructors may use this notation on the Final Grade Report to indicate that a student has already failed the course due to inadequate term work and should not be permitted access to a deferral of the examination. Deferred final exams are available **ONLY** if the student is in good standing in the course.

Connect Email Accounts: The Department of Political Science strongly encourages students to sign up for a campus email account. Important course and University information will be distributed via the Connect email system. See <http://connect.carleton.ca> for instructions on how to set up your account.