

**POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY IN ISLAM:**

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WWS556d / POL588

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Princeton University: Department of Politics/Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs and Institute for Trans-regional Studies

TIME: Monday, 9:00 am-12:00 pm

DESCRIPTION: This course addresses key questions about political philosophy in the writings of major thinkers in the Islamic tradition. Background information about the historical context is provided as part of the course and prior familiarity with Islam, although desirable and helpful, is not required. Fundamental philosophical issues such as conceptions of power, legitimacy, nature of the state, law, human rights, gender, etc will be discussed. The material is thematically organized, the historical context is duly addressed, and policy implications of the ideas are discussed.

REQUIREMENTS: Ten page paper for mid-term; twenty page paper for final; four page paper/in-class presentation. (All papers should be typewritten: size 12 font, double-spaced)

**PART I: BACKGROUND INFORMATION & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

**Weeks I & II:** Introduction to Islam

The political role of Prophet Muhammad in Mecca and Medina; political teachings in the Qur'ān and in Muslim tradition; from Arab tribes to Muslim community (*umma*); succession to Muhammad; the institution of the caliphate; early political schisms in the Muslim community: Shi'ites, Kharijites, Murji'ites; Islamic law and jurisprudence (*sharī'a*)

F. Rahman, *Islam*; W. M. Watt, *Islamic Political Thought*; J. Van Ess, SUNNITES AND SHIITES: THE STATE, LAW AND RELIGION, in Hans Küng, *Christianity and World Religions*; Abul Ala Maudoodi, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL TEACHINGS OF THE QUR'ĀN, in M. M. Sharif (ed.), Vol. One/pp. 178-198;  
Further Reading: W. Madelung, *Succession to Muhammad*, M. Rodinson, *Mohammed*, W. M. Watt, *Muhammad as Statesman*; A. Black, *History of Islamic Political Thought*;

**Week III:** What is Political Theory?

INTRODUCTION: SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY-SORTING OUT THE ISSUES, in *The Blackwell Guide to Social and Political Philosophy*, edited by Robert L. Simon, 2002; s. v. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL THEORY, in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Paul Edwards, 1967, Vol. Six, pp. 370-92; Chapter I, THE ISLAMIC STATE, pp. 1-24, in A. Hourani, *Arabic Thought*; Charles Kurzman, LIBERAL ISLAM AND ITS ISLAMIC CONTEXT, in Kurzman (ed.), *Liberal Islam*, pp. 3-28; Leo Strauss, HOW FĀRĀBĪ READ PLATO'S LAWS, Chapter v in *What Is Political Philosophy?* pp. 134-54;

**PART II: CLASSICAL MUSLIM THINKERS AND POLITICAL QUESTIONS**

**Week IV:** Greek Elements in Islamic Political Thought: Mu'tazilites vs. the Ash'arites; early philosophical questions: ideas of Good and Evil, source of authority, etc;

Chapters 1, 2, and 4 in Richard C. Martin et al., *Defenders of Reason in Islam: Mu'tazilism from Medieval School to Modern Symbol*, Chapters 1, 2 and 4; Mir Valiuddin, MU'TAZILISM, in M. M. Sharif (ed.), *History of Islamic Philosophy*, Vol. One/pp. 199-219; M. Abdul Hye, Ash'arism, *ibid*, pp. 220-43; Chapters 3 and 4 in Majid Fakhry, *Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Mysticism*;

**Week V:** Greek Elements in Islamic Political Thought Continued: Al-Fārābī and Utopianism

M. Mahdi, ALFARABI, in *History of Political Philosophy*, edited by Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, Third Edition, 1987: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 206-27; Richard Walzer, AL-FĀRĀBĪ, in *Encyclopedia Islam*; Muhsin Mahdi, s. v. FĀRĀBĪ, in *Encyclopedia Iranica*; Appendix, pp. 316-25 in A. K. S. Lambton, *State and Government*;

Further Reading: Leo Strauss, PLATO, in *History of Political Philosophy*, edited by Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, Third Edition, 1987: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 33-89; F. Rahmān, *Prophecy in Islam*; Butterworth, *Alfarabi*; M. Mahdi, *Alfarabi and the Foundation of Islamic Political Philosophy*;

**Week VI:** Theories of Political Power: Al-Ghazzālī and the Caliphate Leonard Binder, AL-GHAZĀLĪ, in M. M. Sharif (ed.), *History of Islamic Philosophy*, Vol. One/pp. 774-87; G. Böwering, s. v. GAZĀLĪ, in *Encyclopedia Iranica*; Chapter 7 in A. K. S. Lambton, *State and Government*; L. Binder, "al-Ghazali's Theory of Islamic Government", *Muslim World*, 45: 229-41 (1955);

**Week VII:** Theories of Political Power Continued: The Jurists Chapters 4, 6, 9, 14 from A. K. S. Lambton, *State and Government*;

**Week VIII:** Sufism and the Negative Theory of Power

Rūmī's parable of the serpent and the snake-charmer: in *Mathnawī of Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī*; Chapter 3 in Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis*; Chapters 6 and 9 in Majid Fakhry, *Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Mysticism*;

**Week IX:** Theorizing about History and Civilization: Ibn Khaldūn

Required Reading: Aziz Azmah, *Ibn Khaldūn*, pp. 48-62; Chapter III, pp. 133-70, in Muhsin Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy of History*; M. Talbi, s. v. IBN KHALDŪN, in *Encyclopedia of Islam*; Chapter 10 in A. K. S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam*;

**PART III: VARIETIES OF FUNDAMENTALISM & REVIVALISM:**

**Week X:** South-Asian Islam, India and Beyond: Shah Walī-Allāh of Helhi, Mohammad Iqbal, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Abu al-'Alā Mawdūdī, and others

Marcia K. Hermansen's Introduction to her translation of Shāh Walī-Allāh Dehlavī's *Conclusive Argument of God*; Chapter vi, pp. 146-80, THE PRINCIPLE OF MOVEMENT IN THE STRUCTURE OF ISLAM, in Muhammad Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*; A. Schimmel, s. v. IḲBĀL, in *Encyclopedia of Islam*; LECTURE ON ISLAM by Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Chapters 40, 41, 43, 44 in Charles Kurzman, *Modernist Islam, 1840-1940*; Mawdudi and Jama'at-i Islami: THE ORIGINS, THEORY AND PRACTICE OF ISLAMIC REVIVALISM, by Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, in *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*, edited by Ali Rahnama, pp. 98-124; Chapter 5 in J. Esposito, *Voices in Resurgent Islam*; Chapter 6 in Richard C. Martin et al., *Defenders of Reason in Islam*;

**Week XI:** Egypt and the Arab World: Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muhammad 'Abduh, Sayyid Qutb, 'Alī 'Abd al-Rāziq, and Others

Chapter V, JAMAL AL-DIN AL-AFGHANI, pp. 103-29, Chapter VI, MUHAMMAD 'ABDUH, pp. 161-92, and Chapter VII, 'ABDUH'S EGYPTIAN DISCIPLES: ISLAM AND MODERN CIVILIZATION in A. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*; Chapter 6 in Charles Kurzman, *Modernist Islam*, pp. 77-85; Sayyid Qutb: The Political Vision, by Charles Tripp, in *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*, edited by Ali Rahnama, pp. 154-83; 'Alī 'Abd al-Rāziq, MESSAGE NOT GOVERNMENT, RELIGION NOT STATE, in Charles Kurzman (ed.), *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook*, pp. 29-36; Muhammad Shahrour, ISLAM AND THE 1995 BEIJING WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN, in Charles Kurzman (ed.), *Liberal Islam*, pp. 139-44; Chapter 4 & 5 in Leonard Binder, *Islamic Liberalism*; Chapter 10 in Martin et al, *Defenders of Reason in Islam*; Chapters 4 & 8, in J. Esposito, *Voices of Resurgent Islam*;

**Week XII:** Iran: The Constitutional Revolution, Tāleqānī, Khomeini, Sharī'atī,

Chapters II & V, 55-108 & 165-97, in A. Hairi, *Shi'ism and Constitutionalism in Iran*; GOVERNMENT IN THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE BY MUHAMMAD HUSAYN NA'INI, Chapter 13 in Charles Kurzman, *Modernist Islam*, pp. 116-25; TĀLEQĀNĪ'S LAST SERMON, in Charles Kurzman (ed.), *Liberal Islam*, pp. 46-8; Chapters 14 & 19, pp. 193-211 and 297-311, in Ali Rahnama, *Islamic Utopian: A Political Biography of Ali Shari'ati*; Chapter TEN, pp. 450-79, in Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*; Hamid Algar, *Roots of the Islamic Revolution*;

**Week XIII:** Contemporary Debates in Iran

F. Jahanbakhsh, *Islam, Democracy and Religious Modernism in Iran, 1953-2000: from Bāzargān to Soroush*, E. J. Brill, 2001; A. Soroush, Author's Introduction, in *Islam, Freedom and Democracy*, Oxford University Press, 2002; Soroush on the EVOLUTION AND DEVOLUTION OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE, in Charles Kurzman (ed.), *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook*, Oxford University Press, 1998, 244-54; Chapter 7 in John L. Esposito, John O. Voll. *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, Oxford University Press, 2001;