

Attention!

This is a representative syllabus. The syllabus for the course you are enrolled in will likely be different.

Please refer to your instructor's syllabus for more information on specific requirements for a given semester.

*Islamic Revival and Social Justice:
Utopian Ideals and Lived Realities*

Near Eastern Languages & Cultures (NELC) 4597

Course Syllabus: The Ohio State University,
fulfills GE Cross-Disciplinary Seminar

Meeting Time:
Meeting Location:

Instructor:
Email:
Phone:
Office Hours:
Office Location:
Mailbox:
Personal Website:

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

An Islamic revival is happening throughout the Muslim world promoting Islam as the supreme guide for the political, economic, moral, and cultural organization of societies. Despite media images of extremism, these Muslims wish to bring *social justice* to poverty, oppression, and corruption. We will examine the *utopian ideals* and *lived realities* of Islamic revival across the world today, by looking at ideological texts, ethnographic accounts, and films showing how revival communities actually live. Do Islamic revivalists actually have a viable vision of virtuous & just society for the modern world? Do they offer a credible alternative to the Western model founded on freedoms, consumer capitalism, and democracy?

We will examine Islamic revival movements throughout the world today. Our focus is both *utopian ideals* (in the religious manifestos of influential Islam revivalist leaders about society and justice), and *lived realities* (in ethnographies and films showing how revival communities actually live). We consider how and why these ideals translate to realities, or fail to do so. *Do Islamic revivalists actually have a viable vision of good society for the world today founded on justice and virtue? Does their vision pose a credible alternative to the Western model founded on individual freedom, consumer capitalism, and democracy?* Is there a clash of civilizations between Islam & West? ? **And what now for Islamists after the “Arab Spring”**, which began as non-religious justice movements? These are some of the most urgent global questions underlying the contemporary world’s political and social dilemmas at the start of the 21st century.

Course materials deal with on-the-ground views of Egypt, Turkey, and Iran; excerpts from writings of Islamic revivalist thinkers; newspaper articles covering the Muslim world, analytic articles, and films. Students write papers and prepare discussions.

Course Assessment:

Course requirements include regular readings, regular Short Quizzes on the readings, Small Group projects, and one Individual Project, and active participation in the classroom. Each project involves choosing a topic from professor-provided guidelines, researching on own, presenting to class, and writing a short paper. The class presentations, discussions, and regular participation, will be evaluated according to the student’s ability to formulate clear questions and arguments, and to articulate them to students of different majors and intellectual backgrounds.

GE Goals & Expected Learning Outcomes: If you do the work, by the end of the term you should:

- Grasp what Islamic societies and Islamic movements in various places around the world are like, how daily life operates, what people want out of Islam, government, community, and the future.
- Learn *how to think analytically about culture and politics*.
- Synthesize information from a variety of sources and disciplines, including ethnographic and cultural studies, the religious manifestos of influential Islamic revivalist thinkers, analytical articles on key figures and movements; newspaper articles with accounts from across the Muslim-majority world; documentary films, and fiction films.
- *Think critically* about global issues and be able to express methodical arguments in writing and speech. *Learn how to grasp an issue's big picture and recurrent themes*, and how specific facts connect to them.
- This course fulfills requirements for GE Cross-Disciplinary Seminar

PREREQUISITES & AUDIENCE:

- Rank 3 or 4 recommended.
- Ability to read academic writing critically and express themselves clearly. One or two undergraduate courses in any subject in the Humanities or Social Sciences are highly recommended for the critical thinking skills.
- No special background in Islam is presumed. Those with prior knowledge or background in those would still benefit from the course's wide view of the region and its analytic approach to culture.
- All readings are in English, and films subtitled in English.
- *Email me if you are interested in the course but have questions about your preparedness.*

REQUIREMENTS & GRADING:

Participation:	15%
Short Quiz Average (SQ):	30%
Individual Investigation – One (II-1):	10%
Individual Investigation – Two (II-2):	15%
Individual Investigation – Three (Bigger) (II-3):	30%

- ❖ **Participation** is the key to doing well in the course. It means:
 - *Do the assigned readings.* I cannot overstress the importance of this.
 - Pace yourself between our class meetings. Don't do last minute reading.
 - Read "proactively" and selectively. Refer to my handout, "[How to Read an Academic Book or Article](#)", on course website under Contents tab.
 - *Actively participate in class discussion.*
 - Be **prepared to talk about the reading in class**. Jot down notes as you read, and bring them to class. Write down in your notes (not required to hand in, but to help your talking):
 - A statement of the reading's *main point(s)* or argument.
 - A brief description of *how the author demonstrated or discussed* the point(s).
 - 1 or 2 *questions you have* on the reading, an answer to which would let you understand the issues discussed in the reading much better. These can include questions about the larger context of the reading or parallels to other parts of the world.
 - Our goal is to interpret the material critically together and respond to others' arguments. Much of our learning in this course will come from class interactions. **You'll be graded for your conscientious engagement with the material and other students**, not how much you already know, or how smart you appear in discussion.
 - I realize some students naturally don't talk much in class. But try to speak up a few times during the quarter, ask questions, or talk to me outside of class – show me you are engaged with the material and with other students on the issues: that's participation.
- ❖ **Short Quizzes (SQ):**
 - *One Short Quiz happens about every 2 classes.* They are *in class*, at start of class, and short (5-6 min).
 - *Covers the readings due that class day and all readings not covered since last SQ.*
 - The SQ checks *if you've grasped the key points or ideas* of readings. It may ask you to give a brief example or two from the readings. But will NOT ask for nitpicking detail, no trivial facts or figures. We want concise, accurate answers. **The quiz is about basic comprehension, not memorization.**

- **I will allow up to 2 make up SQs** in the course should you miss class (email me to arrange to come to my office). You are responsible for asking *promptly* for a makeup – it won't happen automatically.
- I'll drop the lowest SQ grade when I compute your quiz average.

❖ Individual Investigation (II)

- Individual Investigations are short research projects that have a written part and an oral part. They allow you to pursue topics of your own interest related to the course and to share them to the class.
- You choose from a given range or list of topics, and have over 2 weeks to investigate & write about that.
- *Write a short paper about it*, and post on CARMEN, Discussions Tab, by due date (see Class Schedule). II-1 and II-2 are to be 5-7 pp. II-3 is a bigger project and is 8-10 pp. (total of 18+ pages of writing over semester).
- *Prepare a 10-15 minute presentation* about that topic for the class. Highlight your main findings and argument. You can use Powerpoint if you wish. **Your grade for II is based on the paper, not the oral presentation.** So no pressure about the presentation itself. The point of the presentation is to share your investigation and to get a discussion going in the class.
- *Read the papers of all other students*, and be prepared to make comments, critiques, raise questions.
- II-3 is longer, you'll have more time to do it, and the topic is entirely of your choice, subject to the professor's approval. Right after Spring Break, turn in an **Essay Proposal for II-3, where you outline in 1 page the topic, its significance, background, and sources** you may use (books, articles, webpages, etc.). The Essay Proposal needs to be approved by the professor by email ASAP after Spring Break.
- All writings for this course should be a coherent, well-organized essay in formal English, and include a brief introduction, clearly-presented body, conclusion, and bibliography. Your paper will be graded according to the following criteria. Please pay attention to these as you write, and talk to me if you're not clear on these criteria:

- **Argument Strength: Coherence of central argument, motivation of its significance, and strength of its justification with evidence** – 40%
- **Analysis & Insight: Methodical and insightful analysis of course materials & chosen articles** – 40%
- **Writing: clarity, effectiveness, and organization** – 20%

- Format: 1.5 vertical spacing, 12 pt font, 1" margins. Name on every page, use page #s.
- Late submissions will be downgraded for each day late. If a legitimate circumstance prevents timely submission, contact me as soon as possible. Valid reasons will be penalized less.
- Note how the II's count for an increasing percentage of the final grade, with II-3 counting much more.
- Talk to me after class, or email me, if you'd like help on any of the IIs. Do that well before they are due!

❖ Grading Scale for Investigations & Quizzes:

- If this scale looks different from what you are used to, don't worry. All our grading will be on this scale, and your final grades will also be computed on this scale. So if you do "A" work on a Quiz, you'll get a 95-100 on it. That'll put you on the road to an "A" for the course if you also do the same level of work on the other parts of the course. And so forth.

A = 95 – 100%	C+ = 78 – below 81%
A- = 91 – below 95%	C = 75 – below 78%
B+ = 88 – below 91%	C - = 71 – below 75%
B = 85 – below 88%	D+ = 68 – below 71%
B- = 81 – below 85%	D = 65 – below 68%
	E = below 65% (fail)

POLICIES:

- **Absences:** *you are allowed 2 absences to class without penalty.* This is meant to cover illness, family situations, job interviews, etc.
 - **Beyond that, absences will negatively affect your overall grade, up to 5% per unexcused. This is a lot! Just one absence beyond the 2 allowed can make an A- into a B+, for example. You can fail just by missing a few classes!**
 - For absences after the 2nd one, email me (ahead of time if possible) with your reasons. Email me even if you tell me verbally in class, because I need a record. I will use my discretion to decide how much grade penalty (up to the 5% per incident) applies, but probably at least some penalty will apply.
 - If an unusual, lasting situation arises, you are responsible to let me know as soon as possible (or have someone else contact me). Disappearing (even with good reason) without telling me does not look good for you in terms of getting a reduced penalty.
 - Also, let me know now about expected absences from *religious holidays ahead of time.* These are excused without counting to the no-penalty limit of 2.
 - The GA and I will take attendance with a sign-in sheet. Make sure I know you're here if you're late. Perfect attendance may get a grade boost!
- **Missed Exams:** please do not miss the Exams, because it would mean failing the course. If an emergency arises, contact me ASAP. If there is an adequate reason for missing an Exam, I may allow a makeup at my discretion, but *there will be some grade deduction*, no matter what the reason.
- **Lateness:** repeated lateness (every 3 or 4 instances) will be counted as absence. *Leaving class early* (without telling me ahead verbally) is treated as lateness. *Doing inappropriate activities during class* is treated the same (see below on class conduct).
- **Incompletes:** I don't like to give incompletes. But if feel you need one, you must request this *before* the Second Exam, and give good reasons. I have discretion about whether to grant this. If granted, it would come with a late penalty on any missed Exams or other work that is lacking at the end of the term.
- **Class Cancellation:** In the unlikely event of class cancellation due to emergency, I will contact you via email and request that a note be placed on the classroom door. Afterwards, I'll email you about what I expect you to do for the following class. It is a good idea always to check your email the morning before each class.
- **Cheating & Plagiarism:** I take *very* seriously plagiarism and cheating on any coursework
 - **Academic Misconduct Policy:** All suspected cases will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct, in accordance with university rules. The Committee on Academic Misconduct investigates or establishes procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp).
 - *Substantiated cases would mean a failing grade in this course*, and possibly expulsion, according to university rules.
 - I may use new anti-plagiarism software to check for undocumented source material.
 - Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own. It includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas.
 - **Collaboration and sharing ideas** from others, however, is a *good thing*. We learn by building on each other's ideas. Just make sure you *acknowledge* your sources with footnotes in your writings, or orally in class. (Also *do something* with the ideas of others: evaluate them, relate them to other ideas, argue for or against them, give your own examples illustrating them, etc. Don't just cite them.)
- **In-class conduct:** I expect your full, thoughtful attention. We will all treat each other with respect.

- **NO DIGITAL DEVICES permitted in class**, not even for note taking. *No texting during class.* If it's a true emergency, step outside, just like at the movies.

- The GA and I may check what you are doing and confiscate devices that violate this for the remainder of the class. WE CAN TELL IF YOU ARE LOOKING AT YOUR PHONES, whether or not we tell you to stop, and are keeping track throughout the semester. If you persist, YOU WILL SUFFER A GRADE DEDUCTION FOR BOTH PARTICIPATION AND PENALTY FOR ABSENCE for that class.
- No newspapers, non-course books, email, websites, etc. during class.
- I reserve the right to ask students whom I judge is disrupting the classroom environment (or repeatedly texting) to leave, resulting in an instant absence deduction of 5% of total grade.
- *Why so strict? I need your full engagement during the class time. That goes toward your Participation grade, and you'll get more out of the class.* I realize some take notes on their computers, but I'll have to ask you to go with paper for this course. (You can transcribe it later to computer).

- **Students with disabilities**, please make your needs known to me as soon as possible. The Office of Disability Services offers services for students with documented disabilities. Contact the ODS in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>

SUGGESTIONS:

- **Check email & course website announcements** on Carmen for any updates on assignments. I post all my emails to class on CARMEN announcements.
- I suggest you **download all course handouts and readings** under the “Contents” tab soon onto your own medium, rather than wait until you need it. “I couldn’t download the readings” will not be an excuse later.
- Some readings are from the *New York Times* website, which requires students to get a *digital* subscription to them. See **Readings**, below. Once you are paid up on NYTimes.com, links to those required *NYT* articles are on the CARMEN website (and on the Course Schedule).
- Contact me by email, (liu.737@osu.edu). I try to reply to email within 24 hours. You can also see me right before/after class. If you missed class, ask a friend in class, or ask me.
- Email me questions about what we did in class or read. “No question is stupid” – I mean it. I can answer them at the beginning of next class, because probably other students have the same question.
- Get the phone/email of 2 others in the class, for notes or updates in case you miss class. It’s great to talk about the course material outside of class and share insights.
- I don’t give your grade “so far in the semester”, you can always check with me about my records for your quiz grades, project grades, and attendance. You can do the math to estimate your performance.
- Clear, concise, **effective writing** in the essays is key to doing well in this course. I highly encourage you to use the free services of the Writing Center, which works with you one-on-one, confidentially, to improve your writing. Check them out at: <http://cstw.osu.edu>, 614-688-4291.
- **Do come see me in my office hours** during the term. I’ll be glad to chat with you about questions, or any topics of your interest. *You don’t have to have a “problem” to see me!* But **please email me to tell me you’re coming**, so that you don’t come when other students are talking with me.

DISCLAIMER:

I have intentionally chosen readings & films that offer a range of different interpretations and viewpoints, some of which argue against each other. *The points of view expressed in the course material do not necessarily reflect my views or those of the University.*

This course is *not* trying to advocate any particular political or religious point of view, nor to evaluate the rightness of official policy (like the recent U.S. war in Iraq and Afghanistan). Rather, we are trying to understand the Middle East and its people, whom we will listen to, but not necessarily agree with.

Our common task is to evaluate everything thoughtfully, because an opinion you disagree with is instructive to all of us. You are NOT required to agree with what you read or hear (including from me), but ARE required to give every idea careful consideration and respect for those expressing them.

You are welcome to argue for your own point of view in a constructive manner. You will be graded NOT for which side you take, but how well you argue for it (using well-documented facts, materials from our course, methodical argument, etc.). This applies for what you say in class and what you write in your exams.

READINGS:

Course readings & other materials can be found on CARMEN, under the Content tab, as posted PDFs and as links to external websites. Some links go to the *New York Times*, which allow 10 articles free per month.

The **Class Schedule for reading assignments** is in a separate document on the course website. It shows what you need to read for which class, and the theme of the day. Please see that now.

Some optional readings are posted on our CARMEN website, under a separate Topics, under the Content tab. Here are other resources too:

Recommended Optional Readings for your research or curiosity:

- Barfield, Thomas. 2005. An Islamic state is a state run by good Muslims : religion as a way of life and not an ideology in Afghanistan. In *Remaking Muslim politics*, ed. RW Hefner, pp. 213-239. (**How the Taliban fit into the Muslim world. On our CARMEN Website under “Optional”.**)
- Bayat, Asef. 2007. *Making Islam Democratic : Social Movements and the Post-Islamist Turn*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Calhoun, Craig J., Paul Price, and Ashley S. Timmer. 2002. *Understanding September 11*. New York: New Press ; Distributed by W.W. Norton.
- Eickelman, Dale F., and James P. Piscatori. 1996. *Muslim Politics*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Hefner, Robert W. (Ed.). 2005. *Remaking Muslim Politics : Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Kepel 2002, “Introduction” (pp. 1-20), in *Jihad : the trail of political Islam*. (**Survey of Islamism since 1970s. On our CARMEN Website under “Optional”.**)
- Nasr, Seyyed Vali Reza. 2006. *The Shia Revival : How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future*. New York: Norton.
- Roy, Olivier. 1994. *The Failure of Political Islam*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Roy, Olivier. 2004 (2002). *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*. London: Hurst & Company.
- Scherer, Ron. 2010. Who is 'Imam Feisal'? *Christian Science Monitor* 102(41):16-17. (**The man behind the Ground Zero Mosque controversy. On our CARMEN Website under “Optional”.**)
- Volpi, Frédéric. 2010. *Political Islam Observed : Disciplinary Perspectives*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Volpi, Frédéric. 2011. *Political Islam : A Critical Reader*. London ; New York: Routledge.
- Wiktorowicz, Quintan. 2004. *Islamic Activism : A Social Movement Theory Approach*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press.

Specific Regions & Countries

- Hefner, Robert W. 2000. *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kepel, Gilles. 2003. *Muslim Extremism in Egypt : The Prophet and Pharaoh*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- McGlinchey, Eric Max. 2011. *Chaos, Violence, and Dynasty : Politics and Islam in Central Asia*. Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Mottahedeh, Roy. 2000 (1985). *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran*. Oxford, UK: Oneworld Publications.
- Rashid, Ahmed. 2002. *Jihad : The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Rashid, Ahmed. 2008. *Taliban : Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia*. London ; New York: I.B. Tauris.