This advanced graduate course explores the interface of Islam and politics from the perspective of comparative political science and broader social theory. Through a sequence of case studies—focused on particular countries, movements/groups, themes, and issues—it surveys the origins, evolution, and contemporary transformation of modern Islamism. The class will be structured around a series of key texts in the study of Muslim politics—a combination of “classic” treatments of political Islam as well as more recently published books and articles that represent the cutting edge of contemporary research on Islam and politics.

**Class format & expectations**
Our class meetings will involve a combination of lecture, discussion, and close reading work. Some of our sessions will deal with largely theoretical material whereas at other points in the semester we will be focused on the empirics of specific countries, movements, events, and personalities. Students are expected to arrive at class with all required readings completed, critically analyzed, and prepped to discuss the week’s material. While firmly based in social science approaches, the class also draws heavily on historical, sociological, and anthropological material and students will be expected to develop a strong interdisciplinary orientation.

**Communications & office hours**
The best way to reach me is always by e-mail, and this will also always be my default mode for contacting you. Please note that per university policy I will only send official class communications to your GMU e-mail account, so you are expected to check this very regularly.
I will generally be available to you in my office per the indicated office hours, and would appreciate an e-mail ahead of time letting me know if you are planning to come by. You are also very welcome to make an appointment with me for other days and times during the week, but these may have to be held on the Arlington campus or in downtown Washington DC.

**Attendance and absences**
As mentioned above, attendance at all class sessions is mandatory. If for some reason it is absolutely necessary for you to be absent (sickness, family emergency, etc.), or if you are experiencing difficulties that impact your class performance, please let me know as far ahead of time as possible. I will always try to work with you and, within reason, to be as accommodating as possible. In an absolute emergency where you do not have time to give notice, I would appreciate an e-mail at your earliest convenience after class.

**Assessment and graded work**
Your grade for the class will be determined by the following pieces of assessed work:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 1: Metatheory &amp; methodology</td>
<td>Sep 13</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Paper 2: Islam, politics and social science theory</td>
<td>Oct 11</td>
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<td>Paper 3: Comparative movement/country analysis</td>
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<td>Paper 4: Final research paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Review</td>
<td>see below</td>
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**Paper 1: Metatheory and methodology in the study of Islam & politics (1500 words)**
Write an essay answering one of the following questions:
1. What are the pros and cons associated with using “political Islam” and/or “Islamism” as social scientific concepts?
2. Critically assess the legacy of Edward Said’s critique of Orientalism for the study of Islam and politics
3. What are the implications of the Enlightenment legacy of secularism for the analysis of contemporary political Islam?

**Paper 2: Islam, politics and social science theory (3000 words)**
Write a paper arguing for the superior explanatory value of one of the theoretical approaches to the study of Islam and politics we have covered in class. You may also elect to compare and contrast two or more theories, but should still ultimately make the case for one.

**Paper 3: Comparative movement/country analysis (3000 words)**
Write a paper that does one of:
1. Analyzes and explain the interface of Islam and politics in a country we have not covered in detail in class, identifying relevant comparative angles with other cases and theories we have explored; or
2. Compares the role of religion in politics in a Muslim-majority country to a country in which a different religious tradition is dominant.
Paper 4: Final research paper (5000 words)
This capstone research paper may be written on a topic of your choice, to be decided in consultation with the course instructor.

Book review (500-750 words)
Over the course of the semester we will read several research monographs. Choose one and write a critical analysis in the form of a traditional academic book review. Book reviews will be due the week following our use of the relevant text in class.

References and citation
Unless otherwise specified, it is expected that your written work will make proper use of standard academic conventions as regards references and citations.

For this class, I require you to use citation and referencing system prescribed by the American Political Science Association (which is based on the Chicago Manual of Style). This involves in-text parenthetical citations and an accompanying list of references at the end of your paper. Full details of this citation apparatus can be found on pp. 17-33 of the 2006 edition of the APSA Style Manual available at:


All written assignments for this class must be uploaded to Blackboard as Microsoft Word attachments. Please make sure that your name and assignment title are both clearly indicated on the first page of your paper. It is your responsibility to ensure that your files have uploaded properly.

Required and recommended texts
The required texts for this class are as follows:


We will also be making extensive use of online resources and journal articles, and all of the latter will be made available to you in PDF format via Blackboard (details to be provided in class). On the schedule of class topics and readings below, articles/sources accessible via Blackboard are marked with (*). They will generally have filename matching the author’s last name (e.g. hirschkind.pdf). These files can also be accessed online at: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/cq33wssux0qwzcv/AAAApCsVW2m5w_K5MDFNXIKJa?dl=0

**SCHEDULE OF CLASS TOPICS AND READINGS**

**August 30**

Course introduction & history/background

**September 6**

Theory and methodology in the study of Islam & politics

*Note:* we will be meeting in a combined session with MEIS500 for this class.

**Readings**


3. Peter Mandaville, "Islam and Exceptionalism in American Political Discourse," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 46:2, April 2013. (*)


**September 13**

Islamism & social movement theory

**Readings**


**September 20  Authoritarianism, political participation & Islamist adaptation**

**Readings**


**September 27  Political economy approaches to the study of Islamic activism**

**Readings**


**October 4  The debate on post-Islamism**

**Readings**


October 11  Case study: the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood

Readings


October 18  Case study: Turkey and the AKP

Readings


October 25  Case study: the Iranian Revolution

Reading


November 1  Case Study: to be confirmed
Guest lecturer: to be confirmed

Readings
To be confirmed
November 8  Case study: Morocco

Reading

November 15  Case study: Hizbullah

Reading

November 22  NO CLASS: Thanksgiving recess

November 27  Case study: Militant Islamism, ISIS & Al-Qaeda

Readings


December 6  Islam & politics after the Arab Uprisings

Readings
