

**UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS**  
**Department of Political Science**  
*Islamic Politics*  
**Political Science 407O**

Spring, 2008  
TR: 8:30-9:45 a.m.  
WRI, C 235

Professor Mehran Tamadonfar  
Office: WRI 225  
Office Hours: M, W:  
8:00-11:30 a.m.  
T, R:  
10:00-11:30 a.m. and  
by appointment  
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**PURPOSE AND SCOPE:** This area study course in Comparative Politics is designed to:

- Survey the classical and contemporary Islamic political thought.
- Assess the impact of Islam as a political force on the contemporary social, economic and political institutions and practices in Muslim societies.
- Analyze the role of Islam in the contemporary global politics

In this course, Islam is treated as a comprehensive and integrated cultural component in Muslim societies and as an ideological force that governs all facets of Muslims' lives. While this course does not focus on the theological dimensions of Islam, it is imperative to examine the main theological underpinnings of Islamic politics, laws, and economics.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- Alam, M. Shahid, *Challenging the New Orientalism; Dissenting Essays on the "War Against Islam,"* New Jersey: Islamic Publications International; 2006.
- Karen Armstrong, *Islam, a Short History,* New York: Modern Library Chronicles; 2002.
- Hussain Haqqani, *Between Mosque and Military,* Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Foundation for International Peace; 2005.
- Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival,* New York: W. W. Norton & Company; 2007.
- Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah,* Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press; 2007.
- Ali Shari'ati, *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies,* Berkeley: Mizan Press; 1980.

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**

- Mehran Tamadonfar, *The Islamic Polity and Political Leadership: Fundamentalism, Sectarianism, and Pragmatism*, Boulder: Westview Press; 1989.
- Mehran Tamadonfar, “Islam, Law and Political Control in Contemporary Iran,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 40, No. 2, 2001. pp. 205-220.
- Mehran Tamadonfar, “Islamism in Contemporary Arab Politics: Lessons in Authoritarianism and Democratization,” in Jelen and Wilcox (ed.), *Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; pp. 141-165.

**COURSE CONDUCT AND EVALUATION POLICY:**

All students are required to attend class lectures regularly and participate in discussions effectively. To be an effective participant, you must read your assignments before each class session. Tardiness and unexcused absences adversely impact your grades. The instructor reserves the right to administratively drop a student in cases of chronic tardiness and/or abstention. Students are strictly prohibited from using any electronic devices in class without the explicit consent of the instructor. Under no circumstance, tape recording of lectures is allowed.

Course grades will be determined as follows:

- Attendance and participation in class discussions ..... 10 points
- Mid-term examination on Feb. 21 ..... 30 points
- Research paper due on April 22.....30 points  
(all research topics must be finalized with the instructor by February 19)
- Final examination on May 15( 8 a.m.) .....30 points

Failure to take the exams on the scheduled dates and/or submit the research paper on the due date will result in failing grades for the missed assignments. Those who miss the mid-term exam for **legitimate and compelling excuses** will be allowed to take oral make-up exams. No make up exams for the missed final exams. Those who do not finalize their research topics by February 19 will automatically forfeit their right to this assignment and will be given a failing grade for this assignment.

**COURSE OUTLINE:**

January 22

**INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

January 24

**ISLAM IN CONTEMPORARY  
SCHOLARSHIP: Orientalism and Beyond**

**Required Reading:**

- Alam, section One

January 29 & 31

**ISLAM AND POLITICS**

**Secularism, Universalism, and Centrality**

**Suggested Reading:**

- Tamadonfar, *The Polity*, Chapter 2

Feb. 5, 7 & 12

**THE ISLAMIC POLITY IN COMPARTIVE  
PERSPECTIVE:**

**Islam and Secular ideologies (Marxism,  
Democratic Capitalism and Pluralism,  
nationalism, and Socialism)**

**Required Reading:**

Shari'ati, pp. 7-122

**The Islamic State:**

Feb. 14 & 19

**Historical context**

**Required Reading:**

- Armstrong: Chapters 1-4

- Haqqani, Chapters 1,2,3,4 & 8

- Nasr, Chapter 7

**Feb. 21**

**MID-TERM EXAMINATION**

Feb. 26, 28 & March 4

**Sectarianism and Factionalism**

**Required Reading:**

- Nasr, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6

**Suggested Reading:**

-Tamadonfar, *The Polity*, Chapter 3

March 6, 11 & 13

**Political Authority (monarchism,  
Republicanism and populism)**

**Required Reading:**

- Armstrong: Chapter 5
- Nasr, Chapter 4
- Haqqani, Chapter 6

**Suggested Reading:**

- Tamadonfar, "Islamism", pp. 141-165
- Tamadonfar, *The Polity*, Chapter 4

March 25 & 27

**WESTERNISM, MODERNISM, AND  
DEVELOPMENT:**

**The Politics of Modernization and  
Development in the Muslim World:  
Political and Social Development, Economic  
Growth**

**Suggested Reading:**

- Tamadonfar, "Islam, Law," pp. 205-219

**ISALM IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

April 1, 3 & 8

**Regional Conflicts and the rise of Islamism**

**Required Reading:**

- Alam, Section Two
- Norton, Chapters 4 & 6

April 10, 15 & 17

**Islamist Terrorism: A never-ending war**

**Required Reading:**

- Haqqani, Chapters 5 & 7
- Alam, Section Three
- Norton, Chapters 1, 2 & 3

**April 22**

**RESEARCH PAPER DUE**

April 24, 29 & May 1

**The Future Trends:**

**Required Reading:**

- Nasr, Chapters 8 & 9
- Norton, Chapter 5 and conclusions
- Haqqani, Chapter 8

May 5	<b>CONCLUDING REMARKS</b>
Dec. 8	<b>REVIEW SESSION</b>
May 15 (8 a.m.)	<b>FINAL EXAMINATION</b>

**Normally, I do hold extended office hours. If my regular hours are not convenient for you, please feel free to call or e-mail me for an appointment. Your questions, comments, and criticisms are always appreciated. I do enforce any and all university and system rules and regulations including rules pertaining to religious observances, disabilities, privacy, and academic dishonesty. Please familiarize yourself with these rules by consulting student handbooks.**

**“If you have a documented disability that may require assistance, you will need to contact the Learning Enhancement Center (LEC) for coordination of your academic accommodations. The LEC is located in the Reynolds Student Services complex in RM 137. The phone number is 895-0866 (TDD 895-0652) and [www.Drcssc@unlv.nevada.edu](mailto:www.Drcssc@unlv.nevada.edu)”.**