

NS 4320
ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM: THEORY AND PRACTICE
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NS 4320 is an advanced seminar dealing with arguably the most important security issue confronting the United States in the Middle East: Islamic Fundamentalism, or Islamism. In the wake of 9/11, an inordinate amount has been said on Islamism (and Islam), generally in the form of ill-informed “instant books” and dis-informing “talking heads.” This course will eschew the soundbite-approach in favor of actual analysis. In order to understand Islamism more fully we will examine it as both ideology and praxis. Thus, we will deal both with the writings of some of Islamism's leading proponents – from Khomeini to Bin Ladin -- in order to comprehend its various ideological manifestations, and with the actual contexts in which Islamism is manifested by examining selected case studies in key countries. We will concentrate in particular on Islamists who employ violence to further their political ends, with less attention devoted to ‘legal Islamism.’ The Islamist movements we will focus on are those in Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Palestine.

There are six required books for this course, all but one of which should be available in paperback from the campus bookstore. The books are:

Ervand Abrahamian, *Khomeinism*, University of California, 1993.
Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, Harvard, 2002.
Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, ATP, 1994.
Guilain Denoeux, *Urban Unrest in the Middle East*, Oxford, 1993.
Shaul Mishal & Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas*, Columbia, 2000.
Mamoun Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, Palgrave, 1999.

Other articles can be found in a Reader, two complete sets of which are on reserve at the Knox Library. Books by Khomeini and Shariati are found in separate binders. Thus, each complete set of readings consists of three binders. Articles found in the Reader are marked ®.

Students are required to write a high quality research paper of approximately 20-25 pages in length. The topic will be selected by the student, but it must be approved by the instructor. On **23 October** each student will hand in a 1 page abstract of the argument which they will be making. The format will be as follows: at the top of each page write - in a single sentence - the question

which is being asked; then, in one or two sentences, state your hypothesis (that is, your working thesis - the tentative answer to your question). You must include your dependent variable (that which you are trying to explain) and your (tentative) independent variable - i.e., that which causes the dependent variable. Finally, write a paragraph which outlines the importance of the question, the logic of your hypothesis, and the structure of your argument. A one-page sample is attached to this syllabus. Remember, *your research paper needs to make a causal argument* - it is not an "overview" of a topic, or "background report". Please attach a one-page bibliography to your abstract. Where feasible, students are encouraged to write a paper which benefits their thesis research. Papers done for other courses will not be accepted.

Grades will be based on the quality of class participation, including presentations of readings, and, most importantly, the research paper itself. There is no midterm or final.

READINGS:

I. Islamism in Perspective

- Benjamin Barber, "Jihad vs. McWorld",[®]
- Robert Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy" [®]
- Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" [®]
- Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," [®]
- John Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, selections [®].
- Dale Eickelman, "Inside the Islamic Reformation" [®]

II. Islamism: Some General Characteristics

- Kepel, Introduction and chapters 1 & 2.
- Alan Richards, *Toward a Political Economy of Islamism: Grievances and Collective Action*, unpublished manuscript. [®]
- Guilain Denoex, *Urban Unrest in the Middle East*, entire
- Sadik J. Al-Azm, "Is Islam Secularizable?" [®]
- Daniel Pipes, "The Western Mind of Radical Islam" [®].

III. Ideology and Practice: Case Studies

A. Egypt

- Kepel, chapters 4 & 12.

Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, entire
Yvonne Haddad, "Sayyid Qutb" ®
Muhammad Faraj, "*Al-Farida al-Gha'iba*" [*The Neglected Duty*] ®
Hamied Ansari, "The Islamic Militants in Egyptian Politics" ®
Mamoun Fandy, "Egypt's Islamic Group: Regional Revenge?" ®

B. Iran

Kepel, chapter 5.
Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution*, pp. 9-166.
Hamid Dabashi, "Ayatollah Khomeini" ®
Ali Shariati, *Man and Islam*, entire
Hamid Dabashi, "Ali Shariati" ®
Michael Fischer, "Islam and the Revolt of the Petite Bourgeoisie" ®
Theda Skocpol, "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam" ®
Abrahamian, *Khomeinism*, entire

C. Palestine

Kepel, chapters 6 & 14
Mishal & Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas*, entire
Yvonne Haddad, "Islamists and the 'Problem of Israel': the 1967
Awakening" ®
Charter of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) of Palestine ®
Glenn E. Robinson, "Hamas as Social Movement" ®
Glenn E. Robinson, "The Logic of Palestinian State-building after Oslo" ®

D. Saudi Arabia

Kepel, chapters 3 & 13.
Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent*, entire.
Usama Bin Ladin, "Declaration of War" against the US
Usama Bin Ladin, et. al., *Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders*
Lawrence Wright, "The Man Behind Bin Laden" ®

IV. Whither Islamism?

Kepel, Conclusion
Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, Introduction ®

Graham Fuller, "The Future of Political Islam" ®