

## **Washington Semester Contemporary Islam Syllabus**

**This course is intended for students who have already completed an introductory course on Islam. If this is your first course on Islam, a separate recommended reading list will be made available.**

### **Course Objective:**

This course is primarily designed to (1) survey the diversity of thought in contemporary Islam and the scope of Islamic social movements in the Muslim world, and also to (2) understand the methodologies, dominant frames of reference, challenges, limitations and opportunities informing social change in Islamic societies, and (3) how these influence and shape the specific political and cultural context of Muslim communities in the West, and more specifically in the United States today.

This course is designed to complement the internship opportunities available to Washington Semester students in Washington, D.C., allowing students to bring to class experiences and insights to the classroom. At the same time, students learn about the range of thought in Muslim communities and the various ‘toolboxes’ available in social change dynamics.

This eight-credit course meets three times a week, and students will be expected to keep their schedules flexible on these dates in order to conform to the schedules of guest speakers. Guest speakers form a core part of the Contemporary Islam learning experience, and preparation through completing required reading is essential for maximizing the opportunities associated with guest speakers.

### **Grading:**

Class attendance and participation are crucial elements of the classroom experience, and being prepared by keeping up to date with your readings are essential to getting the most from the guest speakers and class lectures. The Midterm and Final will both be take-home, and will emphasize comprehension of the required reading. A research paper allows students to address a topic of interest and situate it within the larger discourse and literature.

Grades will be broken accordingly:

Midterm:	30%
Final:	30%
Research Paper:	20%
Participation/Attendance:	20%

### **Required Texts:**

1. Omid Safi, ed. 2003. Progressive Muslims: On Gender, Justice, and Pluralism. NY: Oneworld.
2. Charles Kurzman, ed. 1998. Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook. NY: Oxford University Press.
3. Said, AbdulAziz, Mohammed Abu-Nimer and Meena Sharify-Funk, eds. 2006. Contemporary Islam: Dynamic, not Static. NY: Routledge.

## **Week 1: Introduction & Overview: Islam Today**

### **Required Reading:**

Ceric, Mustafa (2006). "The Many Voices of Islam", in Contemporary Islam: Dynamic, Not Static. Said, AbdulAziz, Mohammed Abu-Nimer and Meena Sharify-Funk, eds, pp. 17-23.

Karamustafa, Ahmet (2003). "Islam: A Civilizational Project in Progress" in Omid Safi eds. *Progressive Muslims on Justice, Gender, and Pluralism*, pp. 98 – 110.

Research "Islam" and "Muslims" on  
PIPA values surveys: [www.pipa.org](http://www.pipa.org) and  
Pew Surveys: <http://pewresearch.org/>  
Zogby polls: [www.zogby.com](http://www.zogby.com)

### **Recommended Readings:**

Said, Abdul Aziz, Nathan Funk and Ayse Kadayifci. 2001. Introduction, in Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam: Peace and Practice. New York, NY: University Press of America.

### **Web Sources:**

The Islam Page <http://www.islamworld.net/>  
Al-Islam.org homepage <http://www.al-islam.org/>

## **Week 2: Islam, Globalization and Diversity**

Said, Abdul Aziz and Meena Sharify-Funk, "Dynamics of Cultural Diversity and Tolerance in Islam," in Cultural Diversity and Islam. MD: University Press of America, 2003, pp. 17-29.

Akbar, Ahmed. Chapter One: "Anthropological Excursions into the Muslim World," in Journey into Islam: Crisis of Globalization. Brookings Institution Press. 2007.

### **Recommended:**

Moussalli, Ahmad. Chapter 12: "Islam, Democracy, and Pluralism", in *Progressive Muslims*.

AbdulAziz Sachedina: "The People are One Community," in The Democratic Roots of Islamic Pluralism, pp. 22 – 62.

## **Week 3: Islam and West**

Hodgson, Marshall. "Before the Deluge: The Eighteenth Century" and "The Impact of the Great Western Transmutation," in The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization, Vol. 3. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974, pp. 134-161 and pp. 176-205.

Esack, Farid. Chapter 2: "In Search of Progressive Islam Beyond 9/11", in *Progressive Muslims*

**Recommended:**

Emran Qureshi and Michael Sells, eds. (2003) The New Crusades: Constructing the Muslim Enemy": Introduction

Menocal, Maria Rosa (2003) Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain. Back Bay Books.

Bulliet, Richard W. The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization. NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 2004; Chapter One.

**Week 4: The Politics of Interpretation**

Enayat, Hamid. "Introduction: the Relevance of the Past," in Modern Islamic Political Thought. London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2005, pp. 1-17.

Soroush, A. "The Evolution and Devolution of Religious Knowledge" in Kurzman, *Liberal Islam*, pp. 244 – 251.

Abdullahi An-Na'im, "Toward an Islamic Hermeneutics for Human Rights," in Abdullahi A. Na'im, Jerald D. Gort, Henry M. Vroom, editors, Human Rights and Religious Values: An Uneasy Relationship? (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Editions Rodopi; Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995)

USIP: "Ijtihad: Reinterpreting Islamic Principles for the Twenty-First Century" Special Report 125; August, 2004. Online at <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr125.pdf>

**Recommended:**

"Shari'a and basic human rights concerns," in Charles Kurzman, pp. 222-38.

S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana. "Hermeneutics of Truth: Religion and Violence Reconsidered" *Identity, Morality and Threat*. (Lexington, forthcoming)

Wael Hallaq, A History of Islamic Legal Theories: an introduction to *Sunni usul al-fiqh*, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Safi, Omid. Introduction: "The Times They are A-Changin': A Muslim Quest for Justice, Gender Equality and Pluralism. In *Progressive Muslims*.

Case Study looking at *Riba*: <http://people.virginia.edu/~aas/article/article7.htm>

Lawrence Rosen, The Justice of Islam: Comparative Perspectives on Islamic law and Society, Oxford University Press, 2000.

R. Martin, M. Woodward, D. Atmaja, *Defenders of Reason in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications) Chapters 1, 2 and 4.

### **Weeks 5, 6 & 7: Tradition and Modernity: Crisis or Opportunity?**

#### **Week 5: “Modernity as Crisis”\***

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. “Prologue: What is Traditional Islam?” in Traditional Islam in the Modern World. NY: Metjuen Inc., Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987, pp. 11-25.

Tiibi, Bassam. 1992. “Islamization as a Claim to De-Westernization: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Challenge of Cultural Modernity” in van Gelder, Geert J. & de Moor, Ed (eds.). *Orientations* 1, 167-178.

Robert Lee. 1997. Overcoming Tradition and Modernity: The Search for Islamic Authenticity, 166-71, 174.

#### ***Recommended:***

Nasr, Seyyed H. 2001. Ideals and Reality of Islam. Islamic Texts Society.

Yvonne Haddad, "Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue of Islamic Revival," *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito (1983), 67-98.

Yusuf al-Qaradawi, "Extremism," *Liberal Islam*, ed. Charles Kurzman (1998), 196-204.

#### **Week 6: “Modernization without Westernization”\*: Revivalism**

Al-Alwani, Taha Jabir. “The Reconstruction of the Muslim Mind: The Islamization of Knowledge,” “The Islamization of Knowledge: Yesterday and Today,” and “Taqlid and the Stagnation of the Muslim Mind,” in Shaykh Taha Jabir Al-Awani: Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thought. Washington, DC: IIIT Publishers, 2005, pp. 21-25, pp. 26-48, and pp. 70-81.

“Taleqani’s Last Sermon”, in Charles Kurzman, ed., *Liberal Islam*, pp. 46-8.

#### ***Recommended***

“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.

“The Political Vision”, by Charles Tripp, in *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*, edited by Ali Rahnama, pp. 154-83.

*Taqlid*: <http://people.virginia.edu/~aas/article/article5.htm>

Voll, John O. 1994. Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World. NY: Syracuse Univ. Press.

#### **Week 7: “Modernity as Opportunity”\***

Iqbal, Mohammed. "The Principle of Movement in the Structure of Islam," in *Liberal Islam*, pp. 255-69.

Arkoun, Mohammed. "Rethinking Islam Today," *Liberal Islam*, Charles Kurzman (1998)

Rahman, Fazlur. "Islam and Modernity" in *Liberal Islam*, pp. 304-318.

Article "Islah" [Reform] (A. Merad), *Encyclopedia of Islam II*

### ***Recommended***

Soroush, A. (2002). "Islamic Revival and Reform," in *Reason, Freedom and Democracy in Islam*. By Sadri, M & A. Sadri, eds. pp. 26-38.

Rahman: Wael Hallaq, *A History of Islamic Legal Theories* (1997), 241-45, 253-54.

Rahman, Fazlur. *Islam and Modernity* (1982), 141-45, 155-57.

### ***Web Sources***

<http://www.unc.edu/~kurzman/LiberalIslamLinks.htm>

### **Week 8: Affairs of State: Democracy and the Politics of Power**

About El Fadl, Khaled. "Islam and the Challenge of Democracy," in Islam and the Challenge of Democracy. NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004, pp. 3-46.

Esack, Farid. "The Contemporary Democracy and Human Rights Project for Muslim Societies," in Contemporary Islam: Dynamic, not Static. NY: Routledge Publishers, 2006, pp. 117-128.

Hashmi, Sohail. "Interpreting the Islamic Ethics of War and Peace," in *Islamic Political Ethics*, pp. 194-216

About El Fadl, Khaled. "Islam and the Theology of Power," *Middle East Report* 221, Winter 2001; pp. 28 – 33.

### ***Recommended:***

Binder, L. "Al-Ghazali's Theory of Islamic Government", *Muslim World*, 45: 229 - 41 (1955)

About El Fadl, Khaled. *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority, and Women* (2001), 1-7, 25-34, 50-57, 128-33, 141-45, 170-83, 264-271 (and notes).

Arkoun, "The Concept of Authority in Islamic Thought: La hukma illa li-illah," *The Islamic World: From Classical to Modern Times*, eds. C.E. Bosworth et al. (1989), 34-54.

Hashmi, Sohail. 2002. *Islamic Political Ethics: civil society, pluralism and conflict*, ed. Sohail H. Hashmi (Princeton University Press).

Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina, *The Just Ruler (al-sultan al-adil) in Shiite Islam: The Comprehensive Authority of the Jurist in Imamite Jurisprudence* (1988), 29-43.

On the use of Jihad: <http://people.virginia.edu/~aas/article/article8.htm>

“The Islamic Law of Apostasy and its Modern Applicability,” *Religion* (1986) 16, pp. 197- 224.

“Islamic Foundations of Religious Human Rights,” in J. Witte Jr & J. van der Vyver *Religious Human Rights in Global Perspective* (The Hague, 1996), pp. 337-59.

“Religious Minorities under Islamic Law and the Limits of Cultural Relativism,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 9, 1987, pp. 1-18

#### **Web resources**

Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy (CSID) Website:

<http://www.islam-democracy.org>.

#### **Week 9: Paradigms of Social Change: Conflict Resolution & Nonviolence**

Abu-Nimer, Mohammed. “Framework for Nonviolence and Peacebuilding in Islam,” in *Contemporary Islam: Dynamic, not Static*. NY: Routledge Publishers, 2006, pp. 131-172.

Chaiwat Satha-Anand. “Core Values for Peacemaking in Islam: The Prophet’s Practice as Paradigm.” In *Building Peace in the Middle East: Challenges for States and Civil Society*, ed. Elise Boulding. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Pubs., 1994.

#### **Recommended:**

Abu-Nimer, Mohammed. “Conflict Resolution in an Islamic Context: Some Conceptual Questions.” *Peace and Change*, vol. 21, no. 1 (January 1996): 22-40.

Paul Salem, ed. *Conflict Resolution in the Arab World: Selected Essays*. Beirut, Lebanon: American University of Beirut, 1997. \*Preface, Chapter 1 (Jeffrey Rubin), and Chapter 2 (Paul Salem).

Abou el Fadl, Khaled. “Commentary: Terrorism is at odds with the Islamic Legal Tradition” Available at:

<http://www.muslim-lawyers.net/news/index.php3?aktion=show&number=78>

Islamic Statements against Terrorism:

<http://www.unc.edu/~kurzman/terror.htm>

Irani, George and Nathan C. Funk. “Rituals of Reconciliation: Arab-Islamic Perspectives,” in *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 4, Fall 1997, pp. 53-7

AbdulAziz Said, Nathan Funk and Ayse Kadayifci: (2001) Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam: Precepts and Practice: Introduction and "Peace in the Sufi Tradition: Ecology of the Spirit"

Abu-Nimer, Mohammed. Nonviolence and Peacebuilding in Islam: Theory and Practice. FL: University Press of Florida, 2003.

Said, Abdul Aziz, Nathan C. Funk and Ayse Kadayifci, eds. Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam. MD: Univ. Press of America, 2001.

## **Week 10: Islam in the West: Minority Muslim Communities in the United States**

### **Part One: Immigrants and Transnationalism**

McCloud, Aminah. Transnational Muslims in American Society, pp. 80-110

Yvonne Haddad, "The Dynamics of Islamic Identity in North America," In Haddad and Esposito, eds., Muslims on the Americanization Path, pp. 19-46.

Wadud, Amina. Chapter 11: "American Muslim Identity: Race and Ethnicity in Progressive Islam", in *Progressive Muslims*

### **Recommended:**

Abdulaziz Sachedina, "A Minority Within a Minority: The Case of the Shi'a in North America," in Yvonne Haddad and Jane Smith, eds, Muslim Communities in North America, pp. 3-14

Peter Mandaville, "Towards a Critical Islam: European Muslims and the Changing Boundaries of Transnational Religious Discourse," in Stefano Allievi and Jorgen Nielsen, Muslim Networks and Transnational Communities in and across Europe, pp. 127-145.

Leonard, Karen Isaksen, *Muslims in the United States*, chapter one

Mattson, Ingrid. "How Muslims use Islamic paradigms to define America," in *Becoming American: Immigration and Religious Life in the United States*," eds. John Esposito, Yvonne Haddad and Jane I. Smith (Altimira Press, 2003).

Ramadan, Tariq. To Be a European Muslim, Part II

Haddad, Yvonne: "Muslims in the West: from Sojourners to Citizens" (2002) (part II)

Abdo, Geneive. 2007. Mecca and Main Street: Muslim Life in America after 9/11

## **Week 11: Part II: Minority Muslim Communities - Women's and Youth Rights and Issues**

Wadud-Mushin, Amina. "Qur'an and Woman," *Liberal Islam*, ed. Carles Kurzman (1998).

Mernissi, Fatima. "A Feminist Interpretation of Women Rights in Islam," in *Liberal Islam*, pp. 112-26.

Haddad, Yvonne and Jane Smith, 2006. Muslim Women in America: The Challenge of Islamic Identity Today; pp. 3 - 20.

Hermansen, Marcia. Chapter 13: "How to put the genie back in the bottle: 'Identity' Islam and Muslim youth cultures in America," in *Progressive Muslims*.

***Recommended:***

Asifa Qurayshi and Najeeba Syeed-Miller, "No Altars: a survey of Islamic Family Law in the United States," ( <http://www.law.emory.edu/IFL/index2.html> )

Shaikh, Sa'diyya. Chapter 6: "Gender Justice: Muslim Women's Approaches to Feminist Activism", in *Progressive Muslims*.

Amina Wadud, "The Role of Women in the American-Muslim Community and Their Impact on Perceptions of Muslim Women Worldwide," in Philippa Strum, ed., Muslims in the United States, pp. 191-202

Gwendolyn Zohara-Simmons, "Are we up to the challenge: The need for a radical re-ordering of the Islamic discourse on women," in *Progressive Muslims*, 235-48.

Hasan, Asma. "American Muslims: Next Generation,"

Leila Ahmed: <http://uwacadweb.uwyo.edu/MKamp/UwyoW&I/W&ISyl.htm>

**Week 12: Minority Muslim Communities: Part Three: Interfaith Dialogue**

Hussain, Amir. Chapter 10: "Muslims, Pluralism, and Interfaith Dialogue", in *Progressive Muslims*.

Sulayman Nyang, 1995. "Challenges Facing Christian-Muslim Dialogue in the United States," in Haddad and Haddad, eds., *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, (Hartford Seminary Publications).

Darroll Bryant, "Overcoming History: On the possibilities of Muslim-Christian Dialogue," in Bryant and Ali, Muslim-Christian Dialogue, Promise and Problems.

Muhammad Abu-Nimer, "The Miracles of Transformation through Interfaith Dialogue," in David Smock, ed., *Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding*, USIP.

***Recommended:***

Kenneth Cragg, "Isma'il al Faruqi in the Field of Dialogue," in Haddad and Haddad, *Christian-Muslim Encounters*

Jaco Cillers, "Building Bridges for Interfaith Dialogue," in Smock, *Interfaith Dialogue*

Muhammad Arkoun, "Is Islam Threatened by Christianity?" in Kung and Moltmann, *Islam: A Challenge*

Kate Zebiri, "Factions Influencing Muslim-Christian Relations," in Zebiri, *Muslims and Christians Face to Face*

**Week 13: Minority Muslim Communities: Part Four: Politics, Advocacy, Civil Liberties and Society**

M.A. Muqtedar Khan, "Living on Borderlines. Islam Beyond the Clash And Dialogue of Civilizations," in Zahid Bukhari and Sulayman Nyang, eds., *Muslims' Place in the American Public Square*, pp. 84-113.

Al Alwani, Taha Jabir. *Fatwa* on "The Participation of Muslims in the American Political Process." (from [www.amconline.org](http://www.amconline.org); 2000).

Abu Nimer, Mohammed. "American Muslim Organizations: Before and After 9/11, in Philippa Strum, ed., *Muslims in the United States*, pp. 5-17

Gerges, Fawaz. "Islam and Muslims in the Mind of America: Influences on the Making of U. S. Policy," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 26, no. 2; Winter 1997, pp. 68-80.

***Recommended:***

Noor, Farish. Chapter 14: "What is the victory of Islam? Towards a different understanding of the *Ummah* and Political Success in the Contemporary World", in *Progressive Muslims*.

An-Na'im, *Toward an Islamic Reformation: Civil Liberties, Human Rights, and International Law* (1966), 46-68, 97-100.