

Political Science 568

Muslim Political Philosophy: The Traditional Era

I. Catalog Description. Islamic political thinking at the time of the Prophet Muhammad, in the Islamic Golden Age and at the beginning of the nationalist era. Basic belief system, the ends and purposes of society and ideal political models.

II. Expected Learning Experience. The student may be expected to gain the following learning experiences from this course:

1. Appreciate the cultural mainsprings of Islamic civilization and their manifestations in the political thinking of several historical epochs.
2. Gain a knowledge for the conceptual framework of Islamic thinking regarding the “ideal person,” “the best society,” the guidelines of scriptures relating to human political and societal endeavor and the “stewardship” for the world at large. Become acquainted with the technical words, phrases and concepts inherent in such considerations.
3. Understand, through contrast, the relationship between political thinking and actual political life in several eras of Muslim history and to what extent political thinking translated itself into actual political and societal activity. Contrast those understandings with similar developments in the Western world.
4. Relate the philosophical Islamic political legacy to the contemporary Muslim world and gain insight as to how influential that legacy is in framing the political thinking of contemporary Muslim leaders.
4. Express a knowledge of some key reference works on Islamic political thought.

III. Grading. There are eight ingredients to the grading system.

2 papers on class assignments (50 points each)	100
1 major essay on a leading political thinker	200
1 major essay on Islamic culture and civilization	200
1 class grade (3 x attendance, 10 x 4 papers on time)	100
Total	600

IV. Formats for Papers and Essays. In preparing their reports student use the following points and in their own reports should include the number and heading, in bold, given below.

A. Class assignments (all students: two reports, between 1000 and 1500 words, worth 50 points each) Students will be expected to do two papers from the first topic listed in the daily schedule. The first of the two assignments is to be prepared for submission by the end of the third week and the other by the end of the sixth week.

- 1. Bibliographic data.** Begin with a standard bibliography entry according to a style sheet. Assess the author as to the purpose of his or her writing and the probable audience to which the writing is aimed.
- 2. Major points of discussion.** Be concise, but explore the range of the writing.
- 3. Comparison** with one other article covered to date and with one presentation made by the course instructor.
- 4. Evaluation.** Rate the effectiveness of the article in presenting the material under discussion and give your own response to the points raised by the article.

B. Essay on a major Islamic political thinker in the time frame covered by this course. Choose any major Muslim thinker covered in this class. Use material from the course and selected sources.¹ The report should be from 10 to 15 double-spaced, typed pages in length, should follow the format below (include headers), and follow standard academic practice in providing footnotes and a bibliography according to a standard style sheet. The paper is due just before the Thanksgiving break.

- 1. Brief Biography.** A brief description of the person being considered, particularly where he was from, his education, and his major writings.
- 2. Major Themes.** Briefly stated, what is the gist and direction of the thinker being described.
- 3. Terminology.** Identify three major terms employed by the writer to frame his thinking. Assess to what extent these terms are common to other Muslim thinkers or unique to this person.
- 4. Comparison with other information in the course.** How does the material in this writing fit with the information available about the course so far? Does the writing have a clear relationship with what is already known?
- 5. Evaluation.** Standing within your own time and culture, is the thinker worth considering? What do you personally think of this thought and its intention?.

C. Comparative Essay on Islamic political thinking. Select the thinkers of a particular historical era against the entire historical development of Islamic civilization and tell why their work was unique and showed insight into the nature of the problems that Islamic civilization faced. The report should be from 10 to 15 double-spaced, typed pages in length, should follow the format below (include headers), and follow standard academic practice in providing footnotes and a bibliography according to a standard style sheet.² Use materials from the course and only limited outside sources.³ This paper is due Finals week.

- 1. Era and Its Thinkers.** Describe briefly the chief characteristics of the historical era and the importance of its political thinkers.
- 2. Comparison.** In your estimation what are the major lines of societal and political thinking that transcend eras in the march of Islamic civilization. To what extent did the era and thinkers you chose influence Islamic civilization in general and to what extent were the era and thinkers unique?
- 3. Evaluation.** Standing within your own time and culture are the thinkers you chose of significance? What do you personally think of their work?

V. Course Materials. There is a prepared reader for this class, assembled from leading sources on historical Islamic philosophy. It is available from the SBS Bookstore. (Students unfamiliar with Islam may want to read one or more of the following for an overview of the religion and its history)

Karen Armstrong. 2002. *Islam, a Short History*. (New York, Random House)

Thomas W. Lippincott. 1995. *Understanding Islam: An Introduction to the Muslim World* (New York, Meridian)

¹ .See course bibliography.

² Students use one of the following, depending on their college: 1) *APA Stylesheet*; 2) *University of Chicago Stylesheet*; 3) *MLA Stylesheet*; or 4) *Turbian, Stylesheet*.

³ Examples of such literature are Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago, 1974), 3 v; *Encyclopedia of Islam* (New Series) (Leiden and London, 1958 ----); Cyril Glassé, *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam* (New York, 2000), 2); John A. Williams, *Themes of Islamic Civilization* (Berkeley, 1971); Andrew Rippin, *Muslims*, vol. I Classical Islam (London, 1993); Fazlurrahman, *Islam* (New York, 1966); Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (Princeton, 1957).

Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair. 2000. *Islam: A Thousand Years of Faith and Power* (New York, TV Books)

VI. Special Accommodations Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs.

VII. Lectures and Daily Reading Assignments

September 20 (R) 1. Introduction

Background

An Overview of Islam

September 26 (T) 2. Common Concepts

An outline of Muslim History (Hodgson, *Venture* I, 96; Mahmud, *Islam* 1-12)

Conceptual Terms – Instructor

Background Reading: Denney, *Introduction*, 92-126

September 28 (R) 3. Qur'an

Political Concepts in the Qur'an (Jomier, *Themes*, 93-107; Ansari, *Institutions*, 341-357)

Gradations of Muslim Society: early, middle and late – Instructor

Background Reading: Denney, *Introduction*, 153-173

October 3 (T) 4. Hadith and Law

The "Generations of Early Muslims" (Schacht, *Jurisprudence*, 11-20; Watt, *Surveys*, 46-63)

Biography and Thought: Ibn al-Muqaffa – Instructor

Background Reading: Denney, *Introduction*, 174-189

October 5 (R) 5. Rule of the Prophet

The Charter of Madinah and other concepts (Sherwani, *Studies*, 9-33)

Biography and thought: Hasan al-Basri – Instructor

Background Reading: Hodgson, *Venture* I, 158-186.

October 10 (T) 6. Quarrels in the Early Community

Kharajite Thought (Lambton, *State*, 21-42)

Biography and thought: Ibn al-Azraq – Instructor

Background Reading: Watt, *Formative*, 9-37

October 12 (R) 7. The Free Thinkers (Mu'tazilites)

Mu'tazili Political Concepts (Watt, *Formative* 209-250)

Biography and thought: Abd al-Jabbar al-Asadabari – Instructor

Background Reading: Denney, *Introduction*, 190-214

[*First reading assignment paper due by this date]

October 17 (T) 8. The Asharite Standard

al-Baqillani's Political Conceptions (Lambton, *State* 69-82)

Biography and thought: al-Ghazali – Instructor

Background Reading: Watt, *Formative* 279-318

October 19 (R) 9. The Philosophers

Ibn Sina's understanding of Plato (Butterworth, *Philosophy* 42-65)

Biography and thought: al-Farabi – Instructor

Background Reading: Hodgson, *Venture* I, 410-443

October 24 (T) 10. The Philosophers

Ibn Abi Rabi's version of the ideal state (Sherwani, *Muslim*, 35-51)

Biography and thought: al-Bajjah – Instructor

Background Reading: Majid Fakry, *Philosophy*, 38-62

[* Second reading assignment paper due by this date]

October 26 (R) 11. Andalusia

Ibn Tufayl's perceptions of the "ideal person" (Colville, *Andalusian*, 54-67)

Biography and thought: Ibn Khaldun – Instructor

Background Reading: Majid Fakhry, *Philosophy*, 85-112

October 31 (T) 12. Advice to Princes

Nizam ul-Mulk's Advice (Al-Sayed, *Social*, 77-84; Lambton, *State*, 43-68)

Biography and thought: al-Mawardi – Instructor

Background Reading: Hodgson, *Venture II*, 12-21

November 2 (R) 13. Sunni Jurists

Muftis and their opinions (Masud, *Legal*, 1-26)

Biography and thought: al-Tusi – Instructor

Background Reading: Hodgson, *Venture I*, 315-335

November 7 (T) 14. Pre-Modernists

Ibn Khaldun's historiography (Lambton, *State*, 152-177)

Biography and thought: Ibn Taimiyyah – Instructor

Background Reading: Fazlurrahman, *Revival*, 132-165

November 9 (R) 15. Shiah Schools

Doctrines of the Shiah Imamate (Sachedina, *Just*, 89-117)

Biography and thought: Ibn al-Arabi – Instructor

Background Reading: Peters, *Reader*, 120-141

November 14 (T) 16. Shiah Schools

Doctrines of the Ismailis (Lambton, *State*, 288-306)

Biography and thought: Brothers of Purity – Instructor

Background Reading: Khuri, *Imams*, 113-130

November 16 (R) 17. Mughals and Later

Approaches of Akbar and Aurangzeb (Mujeeb, *Indian*, 236-264)

Biography and thought: Wali Ullah – Instructor

Background Reading: Richards, *Power*, 139-157

November 21 (T) 18. Ottomans

The Tanzimat Reforms of the late 19th Century (Holt, *Cambridge*, 1A, 364-373)

Biography and thought: Ziya Gokalp – Instructor

Background Reading: Hodgson, *Venture III*, 99-133

[* Essay on a major Islamic political thinker is due by this date]

November 28 (T) 19. The Early Modernists

Al-Afghani and Pan-Islamism (Keddie, *Response*, 36-45; Glasse, *Encyclopedia* 29)

Biography and thought: Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan – Instructor

Background Reading: Fazlurrahman, *Modernity*, 43-83.

November 30 (R) 20. Nationalists

Mustafa Kamil and the Egyptian Approach (Hourani, *Arabic*, 193-221)

Biography and thought: Sukarno (Instructor)

Background Reading: Hodgson, *Venture III*, 272-293

Finals Week

[* Comparative Essay on Islamic political thinking due at the time of the scheduled final exam].

Prepared by HMFederspiel

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Bibliography

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