

Islam and Modernity (RLST 325: Spring Term 2004)

Class Meetings: 9:00-10:50 AM, Tuesdays and Thursdays

Location: 104 Main Hall, Lawrence University

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The aim of this course is to systematically explore an intra-Muslim debate that has often been sensationalized and oversimplified in popular media, particularly in the aftermath of the tragedy of 9/11, i.e., *whether or not Islam is compatible with modernity*.

The course will start by exploring the multiple meanings and complex usages of the contested terms *Islam* and *modernity*, before examining the modern predicament of religion from the perspectives of intellectual history and sociology of religion. The secularization thesis will be placed in the historical context of Enlightenment's critique of religion and the subsequent approaches of Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and Weber towards the meaning, function, and future of religion. The late twentieth century resurgence of religion will be discussed with reference to the unintended consequences of modernization, as well as the forces favoring and opposing globalization.

The bulk of the course will examine the works of a selected group of major Muslim thinkers and activists, as they struggled to deal with the issue of Islam's compatibility with modernity. The course will pay close attention to the colonial and postcolonial contexts within which these contributions were—and are being—made. Through this examination, some of the central questions that emerged in the context of Islam's encounter with modernity will be explored in detail, such as those related to epistemology, life-style, political authority, revival and reform of Shari'ah, the nature and meaning of Jihad, the limits of secularism, and the socio-legal status of women. Geographically, this course will focus on India, Egypt, Iran, Turkey, and Algeria, as well as the ideas being developed by Muslim scholars in Europe and North America.

Students will be expected not only to creatively engage with the main theme of this course, but also to critically think about the issues of faith, tradition, identity, meaning, modernization, and the public role of religion in the 21st century.

Class Schedule

First Week

Tuesday, March 30: Introduction to the Course

Islam & Modernity: What? Why? Where? How?

Thursday, April 1: Faith, Rationality, and Disenchantment

Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation"

Second Week

Tuesday, April 6: Roots of Secularism & the Vertigo of Modernity

Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, pp. 105-125; *The Heretical Imperative*, pp. 1-31.

Thursday, April 8: Between "Dreaming Innocence" and the "Secular City" I

Robert Bellah, "Islamic Tradition and the Problems of Modernization" (from *Beyond Belief*)

Third Week

Tuesday, April 13: Between "Dreaming Innocence" and the "Secular City" II

Robert Bellah, "Islamic Tradition and the Problems of Modernization" (from *Beyond Belief*)

Thursday, April 15: Muslims Meeting Modernity

S. V. R. Nasr, "European Colonialism & the Emergence of Modern Muslim States" (from *The Oxford History of Islam*)

Fourth Week

Tuesday, April 20: Overview of Islam in the 20th Century

John L. Esposito, "Contemporary Islam: Reform or Revolution?" (from *The Oxford History of Islam*)

Thursday, April 22: Movie Time

PBS Frontline, "Muslims"; Please watch the video in the library. Class time will be used for discussion.

Fifth Week

Tuesday, April 27: Classical Modernism in Egypt

Albert Hourani, "Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798-1932" pp. 103-192.

'Abduh, "Laws should Change in Accordance with the Conditions of the Nations"

Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani, "Answer to Renan" (from *Modernist Islam*)

Thursday, April 29: Classical Modernism in India

Aziz Ahmad, "Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan: 1857-1964" pp. 1-56.

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, "Lecture on Islam" (from *Modernist Islam*)

Sixth Week:

Tuesday, May 4: The Politics of Islamism

Ibrahim Abu-Rabi, *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World*, pp. 92-165.

S. V. R. Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*, pp. 49-106.

Thursday, May 6

No Class: Midterm Reading Period

Seventh Week

Tuesday, May 11: Religion and Secularism in Turkey

Marshall Hodgson, "Modernism in Turkey" (from *The Venture of Islam, III*)

Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, pp. 431-503.

James G. Mellon, "Islamism, Kemalism, and the Future of Turkey" (www.cpsa-acsp.ca)

Thursday, May 13: The Cycle of Civilizations

Malek Bennabi, *Islam in History and Society*, pp. 3-59.

Fawzia Bariun, *Malik Bennabi: His Life and Theory of Civilization*, pp. 113-186.

Eighth Week

Tuesday, May 18: Reconstructing the Muslim Self

Muhammad Iqbal, "Satan's Advisory Council" and "Lenin: In the Presence of God"

R. A. Nicholson, "Introduction" to *Secrets of the Self* (English Translation of *Asrar-i Khudi*)

Robert Lee, *Overcoming Tradition and Modernity*, pp. 57-82.

Thursday, May 20: Islamic Modernism from Karachi to Chicago

Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity*, pp. 13-42 and 130-162.

Fredrick Denny, "The Legacy of Fazlur Rahman" (from *The Muslims of America*)

Ninth Week

Tuesday, May 25: State & Revolution in Iran

William H. Blanchard: *Neocolonialism American Style: 1960-2000*, pp. 11-49.

Ayatollah Khomeini, "The Pillars of an Islamic State" and "The Necessity of Islamic Government" (from *Fundamentalist and Modernist Debates in Islam*)

Ali Shari'ati, *On the Sociology of Islam* (selected lectures)

Thursday, May 27: Islamic Traditionalism in the Modern World

Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam*, pp. 1-37 and 144-181

Maryum Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, pp. 1-48.

Tenth Week

Tuesday, June 1: Religion, Change, and Pluralism

Abdolkarim Soroush, "The Sense and Essence of Secularism"

Abdolkarim Soroush, "The Responsibilities of the Muslim Intellectual in the 21st Century"

(www.muslimwakeup.com)

Valla Vakili, "Abdolkarim Soroush & the Critical Discourse in Iran" (from *Makers of Contemporary Islam*)

Thursday, June 3: Progressive Islam

Asma Barlas, "Islam, Women, and Equality" (www.ithaca.edu/faculty/abarlas)

Khaled Abou El Fadl, "Islam and the Theology of Power" (*Middle East Report*, Winter 2001)

Farid Esack, *Qur'an, Liberation, and Pluralism*, pp. 49-113.