

GOVT 277, Islamic Movements and Parties

Winter 2025
M/T/W/R/F- 10:00 AM - noon &
2:00 - 4:00 pm
ONLINE

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Student hours (virtual): M/W/F 4:00 - 4:45
pm

Course Description

This is an upper-division Comparative Politics course that examines the diversity of movements and political parties that take Islam as a reference point, and situates these discussions within broader debates on social movements, party politics and religion and politics. The course investigates a variety of cases, spanning from the Middle East and North Africa to Southeast Asia. Through the readings, discussions and assignments, the goal of the course is to help you gain a deeper understanding of political Islam and Islamic activism, as well as to enhance your speaking, research and analytical skills.

The course begins by investigating the concepts of political Islam and Islamism, and examining their history. After briefly considering the notion of an Islamic state and cases of “Islamization from above,” we move on to look at “Islamization from below,” and discuss how we can categorize different Islamic movements. Here we consider, for instance, the rise of Salafism in Nigeria, and Shia’s activism. We then move on to examine the dynamics of Islamist political parties in a variety of settings. Through discussions of Islamist parties and movements in Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, and Indonesia, we will investigate how Islamist groups mobilize and organize, how they navigate the tensions between the needs of the party and the needs of the movement, how they respond to shifting political terrains, and how they impact local, national and regional politics.

The last part of the course addresses a series of special topics, such as Islamic movements in conflict settings, post-Islamism, and Islamist activism in exile. We conclude by considering what the future of Islamic movements and parties might look like.

Class Format

This course is designed as an online course that will center around online synchronous classroom discussions, which will be held over Zoom. This is an intensive course that will cover the material of an entire semester in the span of ten days. Every day covers a different theme, and there is a morning session and an afternoon session, each with a different set of readings. Students are expected to do the assigned readings before each session, and submit a discussion question for both the morning readings and the afternoon readings.

Required Readings

Mandaville, Peter. 2020. *Islam and Politics*, 3rd edition. New York: Routledge.

Hamid, Shadi and William McCants. 2017. *Rethinking Political Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Both books are available for purchase, for rent or through the library. The Hamid and McCants reading is on reserve at Olin Library, and the Mandaville book is available as an ebook through the library. All other readings will be uploaded on Moodle, or are available online.

In addition to the course readings, you are also encouraged to follow prominent figures or scholars of Islamism on Twitter, and to stay up to date on current events in the country that you are researching throughout the semester (more details under assignments).

Assignments and Grades

Grading

The grades for this class will be based on a total of 100 possible points, broken down as follows:

Attendance	10 points
Participation	10 points
Daily discussion questions	10 points
Paper 1	15 points
Paper 2	5 points
Midterm Exam	15 points
Final research project	25 points
Presentation	10 points

Attendance & Participation

For this class to be successful, everybody should be ready to engage in meaningful discussions and intellectual debates with one another during our online sessions. You should come to class prepared to discuss the readings, and to engage with both the course material and with your colleagues. Meaningful participation requires that you treat everybody with respect, regardless of whether you agree or disagree with their views. Given the topic of the course, we will discuss some controversial issues, and disagreement is bound to emerge. It is never appropriate for critiques to degenerate into personal attacks, and it is crucial that debates are civil, respectful and grounded in intellectual arguments.

In order to create a safe space online, no one may post any images, videos or recordings from the class on any social media outlets without explicit permission, or share any student's name and class comments on social media without explicit permission. You may not share the zoom link with anyone not enrolled in the class, record zoom sessions without permission, or share recordings with anyone not enrolled in class.

Please be fully present during the online discussions – that means, have your camera on at all times, refrain from checking your email, social media, chatting with friends or doing unrelated work on your computer during the class session. If you find yourself getting distracted and need a break, please ask for a break in the Zoom chat.

Daily Discussion Questions

Before every session, you should submit a discussion question in the discussion forum on Moodle by 9 am for the morning session, and 1 pm for the afternoon session. The questions may critique particular claims or question underlying assumptions, draw connections to other topics or texts discussed, relate the readings to current events, raise questions about policy implications, or draw attention to problematic concepts and arguments that we should clarify or discuss in greater detail in class. You may also ask clarifying questions, or post comments on an assigned text or film. In order to receive full credit, your questions have to be submitted on time and reflect a serious engagement with the readings. You are also encouraged to read and engage with the questions submitted by your colleagues.

Midterm Exam – in class, morning session of Wednesday, Jan. 15th

The midterm exam will consist of an essay question that will ask you to reflect on the materials from the course.

Case Study

In addition to the groups covered in class, every student will also choose a country and a movement/party to research throughout the semester. Over winter break, students will first select a Muslim-majority country to study, and then an Islamic movement/party from that country to investigate more in-depth. You will write your case study in 3 stages.

Paper 1 (10 points) – due Monday, January 6th, 9 am, via TurnItIn on Moodle

The first paper should be in the form of a 3-4 page double-spaced background brief that discusses the role of religion in the politics of the country, and provides an overview of the Islamic movements and parties that exist. This report should be well-researched, and present information in a clear, well-organized and concise manner. The paper should provide information about:

- 1) The role of religion in the state (constitution, legislation, courts)
- 2) the type and size of Islamic movements that exist in the country
- 3) the number and strength of Islamic parties that exist
- 4) the salience of religious/sectarian cleavages in society.

Paper 2 (5 points) – due Friday, January 10th by midnight via TurnItIn on Moodle

The second paper consists of a short one-page reflection that should engage class readings and discuss how we should categorize the movement/party that you will research for the remainder of the term.

Final research paper (25 points) – due via TurnItIn on Moodle by midnight, Jan. 22nd

The third paper should be in the form of a 7-10 pages double-spaced research paper that will focus on one of two possible questions:

- 1) What explains the growth/decline of the movement/party?
OR
- 2) What explains the change in the tactics and/or the ideological tenets of the movement?

This paper should be empirically rich and theoretically nuanced, draw on a wide variety of academic sources, provide a clear and well-written argument that is supported by convincing evidence, and display an in-depth knowledge of the case at hand. Your paper should be clearly written, well-organized and original. Please include page numbers, cite ALL your sources appropriately (in-text citations or footnotes), and include a bibliography at the end. ***Please note that the bibliography is not included in the page count.***

Presentation (10 points) – in class, afternoon session of Jan. 20th

Before turning in your final paper, you will present your main findings and argument in a conference-style presentation on the last day of class.

Other Policies

Unless you have an emergency or we make arrangements in advance, late assignments will be penalized, and you will lose 3% of the grade for each day that it is late. If you think you need flexibility with a deadline, please contact me as early as possible before the due date.

If you need to miss class discussions because of a religious observance, please notify me as early as possible so we can make arrangements in advance.

Please note that I reserve the right to make changes and adjustments to the syllabus throughout the semester. Should such changes happen, you will be notified during the online class sessions and via Moodle.

Grading Rubric

97-100 points	A+	70-72 points	C-
93-96 points	A	67-69 points	D+
90-92 points	A-	63-66 points	D
87-89 points	B+	60-62 points	D-
83-86 points	B	57-59 points	E+
80-82 points	B-	53-56 points	E
77-79 points	C+	50-52 points	E-
73-76 points	C	Under 50 points	F

Academic Honesty

Please note that in this course, no form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Infractions can result in you failing the entire course. All students of Wesleyan University are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [Honor Code](#) of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council – Office of Student Affairs. Students who are found to be in

violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). [The Office of Student Affairs](#) has more information.

If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please visit:

<http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/standardsregulations/plagiarism.html>

If you want to learn more about how to properly use citations, you can read the guidelines offered by the Wesleyan library at: <http://libguides.wesleyan.edu/citing>. I prefer that you use the Chicago Manual of Style author-date format. Here is a guide:

https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html

The use of AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Bing, Elicit, etc.) is prohibited for any part of this class including, but not limited to, the generation of ideas, writing of text, or rewriting your own work. If you have any questions about a particular AI tool or use, please consult with me before using. Unauthorized use of AI tools in this class will be considered a violation of Wesleyan's Honor Code.

Accessibility and Accommodations

Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a disability as defined by the ADA. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible. If you have a disability, or think that you might have a disability, please contact [Accessibility Services](#) in order to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. Accessibility Services is located in North College, rooms 021/218, or can be reached by email (accessibility@wesleyan.edu) or phone (860-685-2332).

Religious/Spiritual Observance Resources:

If you anticipate that your religious/spiritual observance may conflict with academic obligations such as attending class, taking examinations, or submitting assignments, you can work directly with your professor to make reasonable arrangements. Should you require additional support or guidance, please feel free to reach out to Rabbi David Teva, Director of the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life at dleipzig@wesleyan.edu or any of the chaplains in the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life at <https://www.wesleyan.edu/orsl/index.html>. For a list of a religious holidays celebrated by members of the Wesleyan community, go to Wesleyan's Multifaith calendar which can be found at: <https://www.wesleyan.edu/orsl/multifaith-calendar.html>.

Title IX Resources:

If trauma inhibits your ability to fully participate in class, please contact Debbie Colucci, Title IX Coordinator, at dcolucci@wesleyan.edu, or your class dean. Additionally, and if you are comfortable, you can work directly with your professor to make reasonable arrangements. If you would like to talk with a confidential resource about all of your

options for care and support under Title IX, you can contact Johanna DeBari (SHAPE Office Director) at jdebari@wesleyan.edu.

Discrimination and Harassment

Wesleyan University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment and does not tolerate identity-based discriminatory harassment and/or sexual misconduct against students, faculty, staff, trustees, volunteers, and employees of any university contractors/agents. For purposes of this Wesleyan policy, identity refers to one's race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and gender expression. The Office for Equity and Inclusion serves students, faculty, administrators and develops policies and procedures regarding issues of diversity and equal opportunity/affirmative action. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against should contact the Office for Equity and Inclusion at 860-685-4771.

Other Services and Policies

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [the student code](#).

You are encouraged to take advantage of the many services available to you at Wesleyan. The writing workshop offers remote tutoring – for more information, you can visit <https://www.wesleyan.edu/writing/writingworkshop/resourcesforstudents/index.html>

For assistance with your research for the case studies, you may also want to schedule a virtual appointment with a librarian. You can do so online at:

<https://www.wesleyan.edu/libr/research/prs-form.html>

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

[Subject to change]

Case study paper 1 due Monday, Jan. 6th by 9 am via Moodle

Tuesday – Jan. 7		What is political Islam?
MORNING SESSION	•	Mandaville, ch. 1 “Introduction: Thinking about Islam and politics in global perspective”
AFTERNOON SESSION	•	Mandaville, Ch.2 “Islam and politics: History and key concepts”

Wednesday – Islam and the State	
Jan. 8	
MORNING SESSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandaville, Ch. 3 “State formation and the making of Islamism,” read pages 64-88 & 108-118 [skip the section on the Muslim Brotherhood]
AFTERNOON SESSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandaville, Ch. 5 “Islam as the system: Islamic states and ‘Islamization’ from above,” read pages 210-254 [stop at the section on Iran]
Thursday – Shi’a Islamism and Sectarianism	
Jan. 9	
MORNING SESSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandaville, Ch. 5 “Islam as the system: Islamic states and ‘Islamization’ from above,” pages 254 - 280
AFTERNOON SESSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abdo, Geneive. 2017. <i>The New Sectarianism: The Arab Uprisings and the Rebirth of the Shi’a-Sunni Divide</i>. Ch.4 & Ch.6. New York: Oxford University Press.
Friday – Categorizing Islamist movements	
Jan. 10	
<i>Paper 2 due by midnight, via Turnitin on Moodle</i>	
<i>Study questions for midterm handed out in class</i>	
MORNING SESSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandaville, ch. 4, pages 121-134. • Yavuz, Hakan. 2004. “Opportunity Spaces, Identity, and Islamic Meaning in Turkey.” Ch. 11 In <i>Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach</i>, edited by Quintan Wiktorowicz.
AFTERNOON SESSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thurston, Michael. 2016. <i>Salafism in Nigeria</i>, Ch. 1 “Introduction: Defining Salafism, Analyzing Canons.” Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Book available online through Wesleyan library website.
Monday – The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood	
Jan. 3	
MORNING SESSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandaville, ch. 3, 89-108 • Mandaville, ch.4, 134 – 160
AFTERNOON SESSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brooke, Steven. 2017. “Egypt.” Ch. 1 in <i>Rethinking Political Islam</i>, edited by Shadi Hamid and William McCants. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Darrag, Amr. 2017. "Politics or Piety? Why the Muslim Brotherhood Engages in Social Service Provision." Ch. 13 in *Rethinking Political Islam*, edited by Shadi Hamid and William McCants. New York: Oxford University Press

**Tuesday –
Jan. 14**

Tunisia & Turkey

MORNING
SESSION

- Marks, Monica. 2017. "Tunisia." Ch. 2 in *Rethinking Political Islam*, edited by Shadi Hamid and William McCants. New York: Oxford University Press
- Ounissi, Sayida. 2017. "Ennahda from Within: Islamists or 'Muslim Democrats'?" CH. 14 in *Rethinking Political Islam*, edited by Shadi Hamid and William McCants. New York: Oxford University Press

AFTERNOON
SESSION

- Mandaville, ch. 4, pages 161 – 177
- Bayulgen, Oksan, Ekim Arbatli and Sercan Canbolat. 2018. "Elite Survival Strategies and Authoritarian Reversal in Turkey." *Polity*, 50(3).

**Wednesday –
Jan. 15**

Modernism and Traditionalism in Indonesia

MORNING
SESSION

IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM

AFTERNOON
SESSION

- Bush, Robin. 2009. *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power within Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, pages 1-23. Singapore: ISEAS.
- Ricklefs, M.C. 2008. "Religion, Politics and Social Dynamics in Java: Historical and Contemporary Rhymes." In *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*, edited by Greg Fealy and Sally White. Singapore: ISEAS.

**Thursday –
Jan. 16**

Islamist movements & conflict

MORNING
SESSION

- Mandaville, ch. 6, pages 281-317 [stop at section on the Taliban]

AFTERNOON
SESSION

- Mandaville, ch. 7, pages 343-377 [stop at section on Sociology of Radical Islam]

Friday – Jan. 17	Islamist movements between the local and the Global
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MORNING
SESSION

- Mandaville, Ch. 8

AFTERNOON
SESSION

- Wolfe, Anne. 2017. “The Islamist Politics of Exile: Tunisia’s al-Nahda in France and the UK (1989-2011).” In Muslims in the UK and Europe, edited by Paul Anderson and Julian Hargreaves. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dazey, Margot and Mathilde Zederman. 2017. “Long-Distance Islamist Oppositions.” *Revue française de science politique*, 67(5).

Monday – Jan 20	The Future of Islamist Movements
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MORNING
SESSION

- Mandaville, Ch. 9
- Anjum, Ovamir. 2017. “Do Islamists Have an Intellectual Deficit?” Ch. 20 in *Rethinking Political Islam*, edited by Shadi Hamid and William McCants. New York: Oxford University Press.

AFTERNOON
SESSION

- **SMALL GROUP PRESENTATIONS**

Final paper due via TurnItIn on Moodle by midnight, Jan. 22nd