COURSE OVERVIEW
In this course, we will investigate the relationship between modernization, politics, and Islam in Muslim-majority countries. This course provides a unique overview of the historical and religious developments from the end of World War II to the Arab Spring that have made Islam a major political force, and discusses Islam’s impact on emerging democracies in the contemporary Middle East.

We will systematically analyze the status of Islam within modern nation-states through several case studies Iraq, Pakistan and Turkey, as well as Egypt and Tunisia. Such case studies will show how Islamic references have been central to building modern national narratives and institutions, and how collective Islamic discourses and actions will influence post-authoritarian regimes and democratic transitions. The analysis of each country will be based on a discussion of the theories of modernization as well as on a comparison with other similar developments in other parts of the world. It will also discuss and present current sociological approaches to the concept of religion and apply it to Muslim-majority countries.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
1. To reconsider the theories of modernization by introducing the role of Islam in particular and religion in general
2. To reconsider the theories of secularism and religion in the light the cultural and religious changes in Muslim countries
3. Discuss the gap between theological work and social interpretation of the Islamic religion in different national contexts

Materials:
- Readings for each session will be scanned and uploaded onto the course website.
- The following book is required as a resource that we will use in the course in addition to the materials provided for each session:

Class Requirements:
- Each student is expected to read the materials before each class and to participate actively in the class discussions.
- Midterm Paper will be an assigned topic. (10-15 pages)
- Final Paper is on a topic of students’ choice – 15 (minimum) to 20 pages. (After approval by the professor)

The assignments aim to evaluate students’ understanding about the contemporary discussions on the Islamic religious tradition in different cultural contexts and their ability to compare with parallel discussion in other religious traditions.

Grading:
- Class Participation: 20%
- Midterm Paper: 35%
- Final Paper: 45%

COURSE SCHEDULE

Session 1/2


Session 3: State and Religion in the West


Session 4: STATE AND RELIGION IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES I


Session 5:
STATE AND RELIGION IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES II (Comparative perspective)


Session 6 ASSESSING THE GAP BETWEEN POLITICAL ISLAM AND ISLAMIC THEOLOGY


Session 7 WHEN DOES RELIGION MATTER


Session 8
STATUS OF SHARIA’ IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE


SESSION 9/10 WOMEN RIGHTS, RELIGION AND DEMOCRACY


Jenkins, Philip. 2013. A secular Latin America? Christian Century 130 (6) (03/20): 45-


SESSION 11/12 FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND RELIGION


March, Andrew F. "Speech and the Sacred: Does the Defense of Free Speech Rest on a Mistake about Religion?" Political Theory 40, no. 3 (June 2012): 319-346.

SESSION 13 SEXUAL RIGHTS


