

Poli 4090: Islamic Political Thought

Tu-Th: 300pm-420pm

Instructor: Alexander Orwin

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Content and Objectives:

This course examines the history of Islamic political thought, from the scattered political statements of the Quran to the often virulent contemporary debates over the meaning of Islam. It focuses mainly but not exclusively on three pivotal figures: Alfarabi (870-950), the founder of political philosophy within medieval Islam, Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), an Indian philosopher-poet who may have been the most articulate Muslim modernist, and Ibn Khaldun (1338-1406), a philosophic historian who bridges the medieval and modern period. The great medieval philosophers Avicenna and Averroes, as well as modern activists such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Sayyid Qutb, will also be included.

The course aims to convey both the great variety of thinking about politics that has taken place within the Islamic world and a sense of how that thinking has evolved in response to different historical influences and challenges. In the long run, it hopes to develop a curriculum for the teaching of Islamic political thought. The instructor therefore regards the syllabus as somewhat experimental and welcomes all feedback with regard to the effectiveness of the various assigned readings.

Bibliography:

Medieval Political Thought: A Sourcebook. 2nd Edition. Eds. Joshua Parens and Joseph C. Macfarland. Cornell University Press: 2011.

Ibn Khaldun. *Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*. Trans. Franz Rosenthal, ed. N.J. Dawoud. Princeton University Press, 2015.

Afghani, Jamal al-Din. *A Muslim Response to Imperialism: The Political and Religious Writings of Jamal al-Din Afghani*. Ed. Nikkie Keddie. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968.

Iqbal, Muhammad. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Ed. M Saeed Sheikh. Stanford University Press, 2012.

-*Speeches, Writings, and Statements of Iqbal*. Ed. Muhammad Latif Sherwani. Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 2005.

-Qutb, Sayyid. *Milestones*. New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, 2002.

Excerpts from www.almuslih.org.

Syllabus

Aug. 22: Introduction

- Aug. 24: Alfarabi, *Political Regime*, pp. 37-46 in Sourcebook.
- Aug. 29: Alfarabi, *Political Regime*, pp. 46-55
- Aug. 31: Alfarabi, *Attainment of Happiness*, pp. 56-63 in Sourcebook
- Sep. 5: Alfarabi, *Attainment of Happiness*, pp. 63-71
- Sep. 7: Alfarabi, *Enumeration of the Sciences and Book of Religion*, pp. 19-27 in Sourcebook
- Sep. 12: Alfarabi, *Book of Religion*, pp. 27-35
- Sep. 14: Avicenna, *On the Divisions of Rational Science and Healing: Metaphysics 10*, pp. 75-82 in Sourcebook
- Sep. 19: Avicenna, *Healing: Metaphysics 10*, pp. 82-88
- Sep. 21: Averroes, *Decisive Treatise*, pp. 124-30 in the Sourcebook
- Sep. 26: Averroes, *Decisive Treatise*, pp. 130-39
- Sep. 28: Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddima*, pp.
- Oct. 3: Ibn Khaldun, pp.
- Oct. 5: Ibn Khaldun, pp.
- Oct. 10: Ibn Khaldun, pp.
- Oct. 12: Ibn Khaldun, pp.
- Oct. 17: Ibn Khaldun, pp.
- Oct. 19: Fall holiday
- Oct. 24: Ibn Khaldun, pp.
- Oct. 26: Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, *An Islamic Response to Colonialism*, pp.
- Oct. 31: Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, pp.
- Nov. 2: Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 1-22, 99-115
- Nov. 7: Iqbal, pp. 116-42

Nov. 9: Iqbal, *Speeches and Writings*, pp.

Nov. 14: Iqbal, pp.

Nov. 16: Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, pp. 7-13, 45-77. 147-60

Nov. 21: Abu Ali Mawdudi, *Toward Understanding Islam*, pp.

Nov. 23: Happy Thanksgiving

Nov. 28: Selections from www.almuslih.org

Nov. 30: Selections from www.almuslih.org

Dec. 6: Final Exam

Grading

10%: Attendance

Attendance is essential to overall success in the course, so all enrolled students are expected to sign in every class. Attendance will be required after the final drop date has passed. Only one unexcused absence is permitted for each student. Every additional absence will cost one attendance mark.

10%: Participation

Participation is expected in a small, upper-level course: students who attend but do not participate will receive 5/10, while regular participation is required to achieve 10/10. Students who participate inconsistently will be graded somewhere in between.

35%: Midterm Exam

45%: Final Exam

Further details about the grading of exams will be discussed, in speech and in writing, as the time approaches.

Grading scale:

90-100: A 97-100: A+ 93-96: A 90-92: A-

80-89: B 87-90: B+ 83-86: B 80-82: B-

70-79: C 77-80: C+ 73-76: C 70-72: C-

60-69: D 67-70: D+ 63-66: D 60-62: D-

Under 60: F

Class Rules:

For attendance, see the official policy at <https://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/policiesprocedures/policies-procedures/22/>

Please turn off all electronic devices in class. Exceptions may be granted in certain circumstances: please feel free to ask.

Please do not eat during class: however, drinking non-alcoholic beverages is permitted. Do not leave during class except for an emergency.