

Gender and Islamic Activism

REL 6201.80/WGSS 6270.80

REL 3990.81/WGSS 3170.85

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Kelly Pemberton

email: kpembert@email.gwu.edu

office: 2106 G St. NW, Dept of Religion

office phone: (202) 994-6363

classroom: virtual

meeting times: W 12:45-3:15

office hours: TBA

Course description

This course looks through the lens of social movement theory to evaluate the meanings and manifestations of Islamic activism in a global context. We begin by addressing some common understandings of Islamic activism in light of recent developments in Social Movement Theory. Then, we will briefly examine the trajectory of Social Movement Theory studies and the applications of current developments in Social Movement Theory to Muslim-majority societies and Islamic contexts. In this respect, we will highlight regional variations of gender-based Islamic activism to determine its broad characteristics in each region. Finally, we will look in depth at particular cases of Islamic social movements in six countries, arranged thematically: Bangladesh (NGOs & Development); Egypt (Feminism and Political Mobilization); Indonesia (Grassroots Activism); Morocco (Legal Reform), Kuwait (Women and Corporate Social Responsibility/CSR), and Turkey (Socio-political Mobilization). We end with a discussion of some of the global Islamic movements that have emerged within the past century and that represent three different manifestations of mass mobilization under the banner of Islam, including extremist movements. This seminar course is open to upper-level undergraduates and graduate students only. Previous study of Islam and/or Muslim-majority societies beyond the introductory level is required.

Course requirements and grades

- Your attendance and participation are essential and weigh significantly upon your grade.
- Although there will be some lecture by the professor at the beginning of the term, class sessions focus heavily on discussions and in-depth analyses of the texts we read
- Assignments and their grade percentages are detailed below

Learning Outcomes:

at the end of this course, students will be able to

1. demonstrate a basic comprehension of Islamic activism in its varied meanings and regional contexts
2. apply social movement theories to particular examples of Islamic activism in its 20th and 21st century contexts
3. reflect and write analytically about major social movements in contemporary Muslim-majority countries and communities
4. articulate some of the major material, political, and/or ideological developments that have shaped recent social movements in Muslim countries and communities

Required texts for purchase

1. Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach* (2004)
2. Elora Shehabuddin, *Reshaping the Holy: Democracy, Development, and Muslim Women in Bangladesh* (2008)
3. Margot Badran, *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences* (2009)
4. Zakia Salime, *Between Feminism and Islam: Human Rights and Sharia Law in Morocco* (2011)
5. Pieterella van Doorn-Harder, *Women Shaping Islam: Reading the Qur'an in Indonesia* (2006)

Additional Required Reading is located on Blackboard, in the folder marked "Files" (**Bb**: = reading located on Blackboard)

...You are responsible for completing all assigned reading listed in the syllabus on or before the day it is listed.

Assignments and grade percentages:

Percentage of total grade	Assignment	Due date
30%	Three 2-3 page concept assessment papers (worth 10% each)	
30%	Three 1-paragraph identifications of author's theory or theories (worth 5% each)	
15%	Final paper: 10-15 page analytical paper on a single major social movement	see scheduled date of final exam
15%	Presentation/Lead the discussion in class	Varies
10%	General Participation	

Papers:

A) Three (3) two to three (2-3) page "concept assessment" papers. Each of these consists of 3 stages: first, you will choose 2 out of 3 concepts the professor provides and **define** them, second, **assess** their relationship to our reading, and third, **evaluate** their relationship to one or more developments the professor identifies beforehand.

B) Three (3) theory identifications: you will identify the author's main theory/argument (or theories, in the case of more than one reading assigned for that day). This should be no more than a paragraph long. Please write in complete sentences!

C) Analytical paper (final paper): 10-12 pages (for undergraduate students) or 12-15 pages (for undergraduate students) on a single major social movement. Must be one that we have discussed in class. This assignment integrates the objectives and skill sets of the two assignments above, as well as the presentation (below).

Presentations: When you lead the discussion for the class, your presentation should be posted to the discussion tab, "presentation" folder, on Blackboard *at least one day* (24 hours) before the scheduled readings. For example, a presentation on the readings for March 24th must be posted to Blackboard March 23rd. We will discuss the ideas brought up in these presentations in class on the day of the readings, but they will also provide ongoing material for discussion in relation to other readings in the class. A sign-up sheet will be provided for presentations after the second week of class.

The presentation should NOT include a summary of the author's or authors' work, but rather, a critical evaluation of the work(s) being read for the day. The responsibility of the presenter is to jump start the discussion for the rest of the class. This evaluation may include but is not limited to, a) extracting the author's/authors' thesis idea or key ideas and comparing and contrasting this (these) against ideas that have emerged from our other readings b) offering suggestions for questions or avenues of inquiry that will push the boundaries of what the author has already presented, or (*for the more ambitious among you...*) c) critiquing the author's views in light of other readings, whether from this class or another d) synthesizing – not just summarizing – the observations of two or more assigned readings for this class e) presenting new information (i.e. a newspaper article, you tube video, film excerpt) that pushes the boundaries of our previous or current discussions of social movements and Islamic activism. Each presenter **must** upload an (abbreviated) written copy of the presentation to the discussion board on Blackboard. If you choose to show a film or video clip as part of your presentation, please limit that clip to 20 minutes or less.

Participation: General participation grades will be based on four criteria: a) communication in general class discussions b) overall content mastery c) enthusiasm and interest.

COURSE OUTLINE

Introductory remarks and orientation to the course

Wed., Jan 14

I. Islamic Activism in light of Social Movement theory: Characteristics

Wed., Jan 21

Bb: Diani 1-20

Bb: Bayat, 891-908

II. Islamic Activism in light of Social Movement theory: Modalities

Wed., Jan 28

Wiktorowicz in Wiktorowicz, 1-33

Kurzman in Wiktorowicz, 289-98

III. Bangladesh

Wed., Feb 4

Shehabuddin, *Reshaping the Holy*, chs. 1-3

Wed., Feb. 11

Shehabuddin, *Reshaping the Holy*, chs. 4-6

****1st theory identification due****

IV Egypt

Wed., Feb. 18

Badran, *Feminism in Islam*, chs. 1, 2, 3 (*optional*: ch. 4)

****first concept paper due****

Wed., Feb. 25

Badran, *Feminism in Islam*, chs. 5, 6, 7

V. Indonesia

Wed., Mar 4

Van Doorn-Harder, Intro-ch. 3

****2nd theory identification due****

SPRING BREAK: Mar 9-15 (Mon.-Sun.)

Wed., Mar 18

Van Doorn-Harder, chs. 4-7

****second concept paper due****

VI. Morocco

Wed., Mar. 25

Salime, *Between Feminism and Islam*, chs. Introduction, 1, 2 (pp. xi-68)

Wed., Apr 1

Salime, *Between Feminism and Islam*, chs. 3-5 (pp. 69-148)

VIII. Turkey

Wed., Apr 8

Yavuz in Wiktorowicz, 270-88

Bb: Cihan Tuğal, 423-58

Bb: Oner & Paker, 375-94

OPT: Badran, *Feminism in Islam*, ch. 9

****3rd theory identification due****

IX. Extremist Islamic Actors

Wed., Apr 15

Gonzalez-Perez, 50-65

Raghavan, S. V., and V. Balasubramaniyan, 197-211

Zakariya, 118-25

****third concept paper due****

X. Global Movements, Networked Movements

Wed., Apr 22

Bb: Abdellatif and Ottaway, 1-13
Singerman in Wiktorowicz, 143-63

****final paper: due on date of scheduled final exam****

Bibliography for Blackboard Materials

1. Mario Diani, "Social Movement Theory and Grassroots Coalitions in the Middle East." Unpublished paper for the 2008 American Sociological Association Meeting, Boston, August 1-4. Pp. 1-20.
2. Asef Bayat, "Islamism and Social Movement Theory." *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 6, July 2005. Pp. 891-908.
3. Cihan Tuğal, "Transforming Everyday Life: Islamism and Social Movement Theory." *Theory and Society*, vol. 38, no. 5, Sep., 2009. Pp. 423-458.
4. Salih Bayram, "Reporting Hijab in Turkey: Shifts in Pro and Anti-Ban Discourses." *Turkish Studies*, vol. 10 iss 4, 2009. Pp. 511-38.
5. Nora Fisher Onar & Hande Paker, "Towards Cosmopolitan Citizenship? Women's Rights in Divided Turkey." *Theory and Society*, vol. 41, no. 4, July 2012. Pp. 375-94.
6. Margaret Gonzalez-Perez, "The False Islamization of Female Suicide Bombers." *Gender Issues*, vol. 28, iss. 1-2, June 2011. Pp 50-65.
7. Raghavan, S. V., and V. Balasubramaniyan. "Evolving Role of Women in Terror Groups: Progression or Regression?" *Journal of International Women's Studies* vol. 15, no. 2, 2014. Pp. 197-211.
8. Rafia Zakaria, "Women and Islamic Militancy." *Dissent*, vol. 62, no. 1, winter 2015. Pp. 118-125.
9. Omayma Abdellatif and Marina Ottaway, "Women in Islamist Movements: Toward an Islamist Model of Women's Activism." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. *Carnegie Papers* no. 2, June 2007. Pp. 1-13.