0ISSLX04 - Islam and the State: Paradigms, Practice, and Sociopolitical Change

Professor: Aurélie DAHER
Contact information:
aurelie.daher@dauphine.psl.eu

Department: International affairs
Semester: 1

Course level: L3 undergraduate, graduate
Domain: Social Sciences, Law, Political Science
Teaching language: English
Number of in-class hours: 33
Number of course sessions: 10 + Exam
ECTS: 6

Course description and objectives

The emergence of the Association of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt at the end of the 1920s, the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the attacks of September 11, 2001 on the USA, the attacks on the Bataclan and the Stade de France in 2015, the expansion of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, the reforms in Saudi Arabia by the Crown Prince Muhammad ibn Salman in the early 2010s, the Iranian-Saudi rivalry in the Middle-East ... The relationship between Islam and politics has been written about extensively over the last few decades. Observers – academics, experts, journalists, military and intelligence analysts – but also actors themselves – preachers, state officials, community leaders and militiamen, mere believers – all have a particular understanding and their own assessment of this link.

But interpretations, theoretical modelling and personal experiences compete with each other, producing a cacophony that is more often sterile than heuristic. Islam and Islamism on the one hand; Wahhabism, Salafism, jihadism, radicalism, fundamentalism on the other, are all concepts that generate amalgamations that have real and sometimes unfortunate impacts on the living together, public policies, the delimitation of public freedoms, as well as international relations and global security.

This course aims at providing an overview of empirical as well as analytical and theoretical knowledge on the subject of the interaction between Islam and the notions of state and power. The course will combine historical, sociological and anthropological approaches in order to provide students with a concrete knowledge of Islam as a religion and as a matrix of a series of political thoughts that are both sophisticated and different from Western European and North American models. But it will be just as much a question, through practical and empirical case studies, of engaging an advanced reflection on the theoretical models and systematic political rationalities carried by ideologies driven by values and history of Islam.

In doing so, this course is fully in line with a classical political science training, by encouraging students, in a comparative approach, to question and explore the limits of the elementary notions of the discipline, starting with that of the State, domination and government, deliberative decision-making processes, recourse to collective violence, mobilization, civil war, secularism, and regalian functions.

This course has three main objectives.

(1) At an empirical level, it aims at giving students a solid knowledge in the political history of Islam and the various forms of State and political power it has given birth to over more than ten centuries.

(2) The point is also to present a specific understanding of a practice of power far removed from what can be observed in Western democracies, and to help students being proactive actors at reinventing a possible relationship between a State and its citizens.

(3) By doing so, this course will also aim at triggering a shared reflection on theoretical concepts of political science, and a questioning of the universality of some of what western political science sees as basic elementary truths and laws in politics-in-practice.

Prerequisites

No prerequisite needed.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the course, the students enrolled will have an advanced understanding of

(1) Islam as a series of beliefs, ideas, paradigms, values;

(2) Islam as a matrix for different approaches of the notions of State and power;

(3) the main differences between major Islamic and jihadist movements;

(4) the role and weight of Islam within the institutional, political contemporary stakes in Middle-Eastern countries.

Assignments and grading

The assignments for this class are the following:

(1) A short report on a three-part documentary on the life of Prophet Muhammad (15%)
(2) 5 short papers on video lessons (30 minutes-long each) to be handed every other week (40%)
(3) One book report (reference given by instructor on first session) (45%)*.

* The paper, of roughly 2 500 words, should not only summarize the content of the assigned text, but also—and more importantly—assess the author's arguments critically, draw out the reading's relevance to the themes of the course.

The numerical grade distribution will dictate the final grade. The passing grade for a course is 10/20.

Class participation: Active class participation – this is what makes classes lively and instructive. Come on time and prepared. Class participation is based on quality of comments, not quantity.
Exam policy: In the exam, students will not be allowed to bring any document (except if allowed by the lecturer). Unexcused absences from exams or failure to submit cases will result in zero grades in the calculation of numerical averages. Exams are collected at the end of examination periods.

Course structure

Session	Topic
1	Introduction: What is Islam?
2	Islam and the State in Caliphate Times
3	Traditional Sunnism: Four Main Schools
4	Shiism: The 'Âshûrâ' Matrix
5	The Muslim Brothers: Roots of Modern Islamism
6	Salafism & Wahhabism
7	The Afghani Factor: Redefining the Jihad Notion
8	09/11 and the Sources of Jihadism
9	Lebanese Hezbollah: "Not Your Average Islamists"
10	Iraq and Syria: the Islamic State… & and Beyond
11	**Final Exam**

Bibliography

ADRAOUI Muhamed Ali, *Salafism Goes Global: From the Gulf to the French Banlieues*, Oxford University Press, 2020.
BUCHTA Wilfried, *Who Rules Iran? The Structure of Power in the Islamic Republic*, WINEP, 2002.
COLE Juan, *Muhammad: Prophet of Peace Amid the Clash of Empires*, Bold Type Books, 2018.
DAHER Aurélie, *Hezbollah. Mobilization and Power*, Hurst/Oxford University Press, 2019.
SAAD Amal, « Challenging the Sponsor-Proxy Model: the Iran-Hizbullah Relationship », *Global Discourse*, vol. 9, n°4, pp. 627-650.
ESPOSITO John, *What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam*, Oxford University Press, 2011.
KEPEL Gilles, *Away from Chaos. The Middle East and the Challenge to the West*, Columbia University Press, 2020.
KURZMAN Charles, *Iran. The Unthinkable Revolution*, Harvard University Press, 2005.
LACROIX Stéphane, *Awakening Islam: The Politics of Religious Dissent in Contemporary Saudi Arabia*, Harvard University Press, 2011.
MITCHELL Richard, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, Oxford University Press, 1993.
PISCATORI James, SAIKAL Amin, *Islam Beyond Borders: The Umma in World Politics*, Cambridge University Press, 2019.
ROY Olivier, *Globalized Islam. The Search for a New Ummah*, Columbia University Press, 2006.
ROY Olivier, *Secularism Confronts Islam*, Columbia University Press, 2007.

Lecturer's biography

Aurélie Daher is an assistant professor in political science and co-head of the Master's Programme in Peace Studies at Université Paris-Dauphine/PSL Research University, Paris, as well as being a lecturer at Sciences Po, Paris.
She was a Visiting Scholar at the University of Oxford, UK, St Antony's College (from 2010-2011, and from 2016-2017). In the US, she also held a postdoctoral research associate position at Princeton University, NJ (from 2012-2013).
Her work focuses on Hezbollah, Middle Eastern Shiism, Lebanese and Middle Eastern politics. She also works on the new aspects of Middle Eastern jihadism and its repercussions on European societies.

Moodle

This course is on Moodle: **No**

Academic integrity

Be aware of the rules in Université Paris Dauphine about plagiarism and cheating during exams. All work turned in for this course must be your own work, or that of your own group. Working as part of a group implies that you are an active participant and fully contributed to the output produced by that group