Welcome to my course, Political Islam. In the context of the post-9/11 political developments, both at home and abroad, and the growing numbers of immigrants from various cultural and religious backgrounds in the Western and European nations, our interactions with – and interest in – Islam and the Muslim world have grown immensely. However, many issues and questions about them are still poorly understood. Why do Muslim-majority states tend to be authoritarian and seem to be unable to make democracy work? Does Islam really encourage violence against nonbelievers? How does religion and politics interact in Muslim-majority states in comparison with other secular states? Who are the Muslim Brotherhoods? Why are they so popular and politically successful in the Arab nations? Why do militaries not like them? Will our liberal democratic model – and secularism in particular – be practical and ideal for Muslim-majority states in order to achieve more peaceful social and political order?

This course addresses and explores these contentious questions from a comparative perspective in order to achieve three primary goals. First, students will learn broader issues of politics and religion. Against the conventional wisdom in the orthodox liberal democratic model and thought, secularism, and separation between state and church in particular, is not the norm or rule in many parts of the developing (especially Muslim) world, as well as advanced democracies including Europe. By taking some prominent country examples, we comparatively scrutinize various patterns of state-religion relations. In doing so, the course will allow students to learn and evaluate unique institutions, practices, rules and norms that have been established in other parts of the world. Second, students will learn a variety of
political activism, phenomena, and transformations across Muslim-majority states. Media and policy-makers tend to draw more attention to sensational behaviors (e.g., *jihadism*, suicide bombing) and catastrophic events (e.g., revolution, coup, civil war) in those states. Although we will look into the underlying causes and contexts against which such behaviors and events occur as well, the course will allow students to study a wider scope of political events, actions and organizations that are as equally important in Muslim societies. The topics which students will study include: democracy and religion, religious movements and civil society, religious parties and elections, revolutions, theocracy and secularism, religious minorities, freedom and multiculturalism, and gender and women’s rights. Third, through studying those topics, the course will allow students to gain a better empirical understanding of various foreign states and societies. The country cases selected to this end include (in alphabetical order): Bangladesh, Egypt, France, Indonesia, Iran, Libya, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Turkey, the UK, and the US. The list is long but not exhaustive or exclusive. Students are encouraged to elect and study more closely some of the country cases of their preference through course assignments and lectures.

Lastly, the course invites speakers to class, and shows a number of visual materials such as documentaries and international news to facilitate students to gain a deeper understanding of the complex social and political issues and questions mentioned above. Students are not only required to complete assignments but also strongly encouraged to actively participate in class discussion to develop critical and analytical thinking.

Course Schedule:

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<th>Week 1 (Aug 28/30)</th>
<th>Introduction: What is Political Islam?</th>
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<td>Religious Radicalism and Violence</td>
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<td>Week 12 (Nov 13/15)</td>
<td>Religious Minorities in Muslim-Majority States</td>
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Week 13 (Nov 20/22)  Thanksgiving Holidays
Week 14 (Nov 27/29)  Islam and Human Right
Week 15 (Dec 4/6)  Review/Catch-up  **Term Paper Due (Dec 4)**
December 11  Final Exam

**Textbooks for Purchase**

All the books are ordered and available at the NIU Book Store. Students should at least obtain the required textbook. Additionally, they are recommended to select and read any one (or more) of the recommended books for reference in order to complete a term paper assignment depending on their selection of case studies (see 5 in Course Requirement). All the books are also reserved in the reserve section at the NIU library so that students could borrow them for a limited time in order to complete their assignments. Students are free to look for an alternative outlet (e.g., Amazon) to purchase them according to their needs and budget. All the other assigned readings are available online in the E-reserve section on Blackboard.

**Required Textbook:**

**Recommended Textbooks:**

**Course Requirements:**

1. **Class Attendance (10%)**
   a. Students are *required* to attend all the classes. More than three consecutive unexcused absences will jeopardize your entire Class Attendance grade. The instructor reserves full discretion to decide students’ final grade. Please notify and provide credible supporting document to your TA in advance if you must miss a class.
   b. Class attendance is evaluated as follow (# of missed classes without an excuse):
10% (0-2); 9% (3-4); 8% (5-6); 7% (7-8); 0% (9 and more).

c. You are expected to participate actively in class discussions. If you make a significant point to contribute to class discussion, you will be given a point equivalent of a class attendance added to your Class Attendance grade.

d. If you are deemed to be causing a disturbance to class, you will lose a point equivalent of a class attendance from your Class Attendance grade.

2. Readings:
   a. All the sections are assigned with required readings and recommended readings. Students are expected to come to class having read all the required readings.
   b. Recommended readings are to help students to write an essay assignment (see 5 in Course Requirements below).
   c. Students are expected to do all the required readings and actively participate in class discussion. It is important to approach the readings with the following questions in mind: (a) what is the central issue/debate? (b) what is the main argument/point? (c) what is the evidence for the argument? (d) what are the problems with the argument? (e) can you think of counterarguments or alternative perspective? Students should also address these questions in writing as well as in assignments.
   d. Both required and recommended readings are available (in alphabetical order) in the E-reserve on Blackboard. Please make sure to refer to the required reading list in Course Outline below before reading them.

3. Quizzes (2% x 5 = 10%)
   a. A handful (4-5) of brief quizzes will be given every 3-4 week throughout the semester. They will focus on the required readings. The purpose of this component of the evaluation is to encourage the students to do the assigned readings, and to come to class prepared to discuss the materials. The date of quizzes will be announced in class before they are due.

4. Two in-class Exams (20% + 40%)
   a. The Mid-term Exam: consists of a short-answer section and essay questions. The exam will cover the first half of the course. Students will be expected to write clear and coherent essays.
   b. The Final Exam: consists of a short-answer section and essay questions. The exam will primarily cover materials from the second half of the course, but will test your overall understanding of the materials covered in the course.
c. **A study guide with sample questions** will be provided in advance of each exam.

5. **One Term Paper (20%)**
   a. Students will be required to write a short term paper (7-8pp). The paper topic and guideline is provided in class and attached below in Appendix B. It is also posted in the Assignment in the Black Board.
   b. **The paper due is Monday, December 4, 2017.** A hard copy must be submitted to the instructor in class **after posted in the Safe Assign section on Blackboard.**
   c. The paper must be typewritten (12 font), double-spaced, and properly footnoted.
   d. Your paper is evaluated according to the assessment rubric attached below in Appendix C.

**Grade Distribution:**

1. Class attendance (10%)
2. Quizzes (10%)
3. Exams (20%+40%)
4. Term paper (20%)

Final course grades will be translated into the letter grades as follows:

- A: 93-100%  A-: 90-92.9%  B+: 87-89.9%  B: 83-86.9%  B-: 80-82.9%
- C+: 77-79.9%  C: 73-76.9%  C-: 70-72.9%  D+: 67-69.9%  D: 63-66.9%
- D-: 60-62.9%  F: 0-59.9%

**Course Rules and Penalties:**

1) **Late submission** will result in grade reduction for a 1/3 the letter grade per day (e.g., “A” will be lowered to “A-” if submission is a day late). No paper will be accepted that is more than one week late.

2) **Plagiarism Policy:** According to the NIU Undergraduate Catalogue “Students are guilty of plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging them. Students guilty of, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university.” In short, all ideas that are not your own or are well-known must be
footnoted. A general rule is that if the information cannot be found in three or more commonly available sources it should be footnoted. All direct quotations must be placed in quotation marks. If you are unsure as to what should be footnoted either play it safe and footnote, or ask for assistance. Failure to adhere to the University’s plagiarism policy will result in punishments ranging from a failed course grade to suspension and even expulsion, depending on the egregiousness of the infraction.

3) **Make-up assignments (exams, quizzes):**

a) A make-up exam is permitted only under a justifiable circumstance. If you have to miss an exam on a given due date, you will have to request permission from the instructor to make up the missed exam on an alternative date at the department. Submit a supporting document to seek permission in order to make an arrangement with the instructor. You have to make an arrangement no later than one week after a due date.

b) In case of you have to miss a quiz, students should contact TA or the instructor to seek permission to make up the missed quiz. Otherwise, the same rule with the exams applies.

4) **Basic Classroom Rules:**

a) TURN OFF all your electronic devices unnecessary to participate in class (e.g, smartphones, iPad, cell phones)

b) NO crossword/sudoku, or any other game or activity is permitted.

c) Students are NOT permitted to leave the classroom without prior permission.

d) RESPECT the instructor and other people: NO chatting is permitted when other people are talking. Students are expected to express their views in a civil manner and respect other people’s views.

f) Under any reasonable circumstances, the instructor retains full discretion to advise whether students could stay in the course.

g) See Appendix A “Classroom Decorum” for further information.

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*Useful Resources and Links:*

If you wish to know more about countries and events relevant to the course and your assignments, the following sources are useful:
Course Outline:

1. **Concepts and Issues: What is Political Islam?**
   **There is no class on 08/30/17 – Instructor attending a conference**

   a. How does Islamism/political Islam differ from Islam?
   b. Is politicized religion unique in Islam?
   c. Is religious fundamentalism always radical or violent?

   **Required Readings:**

   **Recommended Readings:**

2. **Approaches to Political Islam: Origin and Expansion**
   **09/04 Labor Day Holiday – NO CLASS**

   a. Under what conditions does political Islam/Islamic activism emerge, thrive and/or fail?
   b. What are the ideological foundations and origins of political Islam?

   **Required Readings:**
   Kepel, chaps.1-2.
**Recommended Readings:**


**3. Popular Islam: Islamic Fundamentalism and Islamic Activism**

a. Why do Muslims resort to religion to express their grievances?
b. Cases: Egypt, Indonesia and Malaysia
c. Film: Ayatollah Khomeini “Holy Terror”

**Required readings:**

Kepel, chaps.3-4.

**Recommended Readings:**


**4. Political Islam and State: Various State-Religion Relations**

a. Cases: Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey

**Required Readings:**

Kepel, chap.5.

**Recommended Readings:**


Kepel, chap.15.


5. **Democracy and Religion 1: Cultural Claims and Critiques**

   a. Is Islam and Democracy compatible?
   b. Does Islam facilitate authoritarianism?

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


6. **Democracy and Religion 2: Muslim Democracies**

   a. How does political Islam facilitate democratization?
   b. Under what conditions does Islamist gain power in a Muslim-majority democracy?
   c. Cases: Indonesia and Turkey

**Required readings:**
Kepel, chap.15.

**Recommended Readings:**

7. **Mid-Term Exam Review (Week 7-1)/Mid-Term Exam (Week 7-2)**

8. **Political Islam and Party Politics: Religious Parties and Elections**
   a. Under what conditions do religious parties win elections?
   b. Do religious voters always vote for religious parties?
c. Cases: Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia

Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:

9. The Arab Spring: Challenges of Democratic Transitions in the Arab World

a. What were the roles of political Islam in the mass uprisings against Muslim autocrats?
b. Why has political Islam succeeded in the process of democratic transition in some states but failed in others?
c. Cases: Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia
d. Invited Lecture

Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:


10. Muslim Minorities in Secular Democracies (1): Western Europe

a. Why are some secular democracies able to accommodate Muslim minorities peacefully while others are not to do so?

b. Where do the different approaches to Muslim minorities among European democracies come from?

c. Cases: France and Britain

**Required readings:**
Kepel, chap.8.


**Recommended Readings:**


YouTube, Coca Cola Commercial – “Beautiful America” at the Super Bowl 2014 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=443Vy310gJs

11. Religious Minorities in Muslim-Majority States: Bangladesh and Indonesia
Required readings:

Recommended Readings:

12. Religious Radicalism and Violence: Egypt, Indonesia and Taliban’s Afghanistan
   a. Jihadism
   b. Radical Islam

Required readings:

Recommended Readings:
Kepel, chap.6, 9, 11.


13. Thanksgiving Holidays


a. Cases: Malaysia, Turkey

**Required readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**
“Arizona Governor Vetoes Bill on Refusal of Service to Gays,” *New York Times*, February 26, 2014


15. Review and Reflection

**December 4 – Term Paper Due**

16. Final Exam (December 11)
In class

* The final exam is strictly administered according to the University’s final exam policy. No unjustifiable exception is allowed. Please check the university website (http://www.niu.edu/regrec/dates/finalexam.shtml) for the final exam date and relevant policy.
Appendix A: Tips for Doing Well in this Class

1. **Do the readings AND come to class.** Lectures will refer to the assigned readings but they will not summarize them and they are not an adequate substitute. Likewise, lectures will cover material that is not in the readings, and that may appear on the exams.

2. **Read critically.** As you read, note questions that you would like to raise in lecture or section, and think critically about the author's evidence and arguments.

3. **Think comparatively.** Ask yourself how the particular case you are reading about compares with similar developments in other countries, regions, or periods.

4. **Participate actively in discussion sections and in lecture.** Take notes on lectures, and be engaged in the question and discussion periods that will be held during the final minutes of class.

5. **Keep up with current events.** If you do not already do so, read the international pages of at least one major national / international paper every day. Examples include The New York Times, The Chicago Tribune, The Washington Post, The Financial Times, and The Wall Street Journal. Think about how contemporary events relate to the themes and cases studied in class.

6. **Know the locations of the countries and regions we cover.** Geography is critically important for understanding a nation's historical development and importantly influences national security interests and many other areas of political life. If a name of a country is mentioned that you can't pinpoint on a map (a vague sense of where it is located is insufficient!), locate it on a map. Also note what its neighboring countries and regions are. Maps of the countries and regions of the world we will cover can be found in the *Essentials of Comparative Politics* text.

7. **Follow up on topics you find particularly interesting by reading beyond the assigned texts.** Look for hints of where to find additional materials by looking at footnotes and references in the readings or by asking your T.A. or me for suggested additional readings.

8. **Take advantage of office hours.** The T.A.s and I are here to help if you're having trouble understanding concepts or if you are simply interested in further discussing topics covered
in class (see #7 above).

Other Important Information

Academic Dishonesty
Regarding plagiarism, the NIU Undergraduate Catalog states: "Students are guilty of plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging them. Students guilty of, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university." The above statement encompasses a paper written in whole or in part by another; a paper copied word-for-word or with only minor changes from another source; a paper copied in part from one or more sources without proper identification and acknowledgment of the sources; a paper that is merely a paraphrase of one or more sources, using ideas and/or logic without credit even though the actual words may be changed; and a paper that quotes, summarizes or paraphrases, or cuts and pastes words, phrases, or images from an Internet source without identification and the address of the web site.

Statement Concerning Students with Disabilities
Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NIU is committed to making reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Those students with disabilities that may have some impact on their coursework and for which they may require accommodations should notify the Disabilities Resource Center on the fourth floor of the Health Services Building. The Disabilities Resource Center will assist students in making appropriate accommodations with course instructors. It is important that the Disabilities Resource Center and instructors be informed of any disability-related needs during the first two weeks of the semester. The Disability Resource Center is located in the 4th floor of the Health Services Building, and can be reached at 815-753-1303 [v], 815-753-3000 [TTY] or email at drc@niu.edu.

Department of Political Science Web Site
Undergraduates are strongly encouraged to consult the Department of Political Science web site on a regular basis. This up-to-date, central source of information will assist students in contacting faculty and staff, reviewing course requirements and syllabi, exploring graduate study, research career options, tracking department events, and accessing important details related to undergraduate programs and activities. To reach the site, go to http://polisci.niu.edu
Undergraduate Writing Awards
The Department of Political Science recognizes, on an annual basis, outstanding undergraduate papers written in conjunction with 300-400 level political science courses or directed studies, such as independent studies or honors theses. Winners are expected to attend the Department’s spring graduation ceremony where they will receive a certificate and a check for $50.00. No more than two papers may be submitted by a student. There is no requirement as to the length of papers submitted for the award. Often the Department awards prizes for both an outstanding short paper and an outstanding long paper. The number and types of award is dependent upon the papers submitted for consideration in any given year. Authors do not have to be political science majors or have a particular class standing. Only papers written in the previous calendar year are considered for the award. However, papers completed in the current spring semester are eligible for the following year’s competition even if the student has graduated. Papers can be submitted by students or faculty and must be supplied in triplicate to the undergraduate secretary. All copies must have two cover pages – one with the student’s name and one without the student’s name. Papers are not to be stapled or bound. Instead, please use paper clips. Papers are generally due in March and notice of call for papers and submission deadlines will be published in the department e-announcements. You may also contact the department for information at 753-1015.

Classroom Decorum
Students are to arrive at class on time. Two tardy arrivals are equivalent to one class absence. Students are to remain for the entire session unless excused by the professor beforehand or confronted with a serious personal emergency. For instance, it is not acceptable to students to walk in and out of class to answer cell phones, take casual bathroom and smoking breaks, or attend to other personal matters. Cell phones, pagers, or any electronic devices that make noise must be turned off during class unless the instructor has been notified beforehand of a special circumstance (e.g., sick family member, pregnant wife, special childcare situation, etc.). No one should talk while someone else is talking; this includes comments meant for a classmate rather than the entire group. What may seem like a whisper or a harmless remark to one person can be a distraction to someone else, particularly in a small room. Overall, classroom dialogue and behavior should always be courteous, respectful of others, and consistent with the expectations set forth by the university.
Appendix B: Term Paper Guideline

Choose a particular Islamist organization/movement and discuss the evolution, success and/or failure of the organization. In writing an essay, please consider the following questions/aspects:

- Why did it emerge, when and where it did?
- Its goals and tactic over time.
- Analyze how state strategies and/or policies have affected its goals and tactics.
- Whether and why it has (or has not) competed successfully in elections.

Writing Guideline:
- The paper should be 7-8 pages in length. No papers shorter or longer than this page limit will be accepted.
- Hand in a hard copy to the instructor in class before the deadline. A soft copy is acceptable only under an extraordinary circumstance with prior permission from the instructor.
- Post your essay in the Safe Assign section on Blackboard before submission.
- The paper must be typed in 12 font, double-spaced, and properly cited.
- Refer also to the reading guideline in the course syllabus.
Appendix C: Assessment Standards for Term Paper and Writing Assignments

A: The argument is clearly articulated and logically developed, using relevant evidence. The research is of high quality, cleverly ordered to support the argument with an original and creative synthesis of materials and displaying understanding of wider issues. The presentation is of high standard.

B: The argument is well proposed but the structure is not fully developed. The research is quite extensive but sources are not fully utilized which limits the ability to be creative and deal with a full range of issues. The presentation is solid but can be improved.

C: The argument is satisfactory, with some limitations, but the structure is not well thought out. The research used is just adequate, but insufficient to fully develop the argument or display much originality. The presentation is adequate but could be improved.

D: While the essay displays a basic understanding of the subject, the argument lacks coherence and logical development. The research is basic and the use of evidence does not sufficiently support the argument nor display originally or understanding of wider issues. The presentation is not of sufficient standard.

F: The presentation is well below acceptable standard. The essay is incoherent with glaring misunderstandings.