

# Islam in the Modern World

(SOCI 158)

University of California, San Diego; Spring 2026

Location: SOLIS, Room 105

Thursdays 5:00 – 7:50 pm

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Office Location: Social Sciences Building (SSB) #465

Office Hours: : By appointment; either in-person (Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00 – 4:00 pm) or via Zoom.

## Course Description:

The Islamic world in the Middle East has been, and remains, one of the most volatile regions in the world since the end of the First World War in 1918. It was a little over one hundred years before, however, that the arrival of the Napoleonic forces into Egypt proved to be a turning point in the relations between the Islamic world and Europe. Despite the French being forced to leave the Arab land after only three years, this did not terminate Western imperialist ambitions in the region and beyond. Within the next hundred years, nearly all Muslim countries from the Middle East to Indonesia and western Africa came to varying degrees under the control of European powers. The mounting military, political, cultural, and economic challenges from the West in turn provoked multiple intellectual and political responses in the region and brought about a new era defined by top-down modernization, constitutional revolutions, authoritarian state-making, and the rise of fundamentalism.

This course will attempt to provide students with a general overview of some of the critical themes and issues that the Islamic world has experienced since the incursion of the European colonialism into its lands. We will begin with a brief overview of the history of the formation of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula in the 7<sup>th</sup> century through its rapid territorial expansion and the attainment of its Golden Age while Europe was ensnared in the Middle Ages. The bulk of the course will then focus on the different paths that various Islamic societies took in their attempt to enter the modern world as defined by the European model since the Age of Enlightenment in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. We will look at the cases of Egypt, Algeria, the Ottoman Empire (later being reduced to Turkey), Iraq, the occupied territories of Palestine, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India.

We will explore some of the main topics of the large-scale transformations that the members of the Islamic nations have experienced in the past two-hundred years; topics such as European colonialism & imperialism, the rise and fall of the liberal-nationalist states, the emergence of authoritarianism, revolutions and wars, and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and theocratic regimes. Having looked at some of the main topics in recent history, we will then be looking at the state of the Middle East at present time and discussing some of the main parameters that have

given rise to the current conflict/war in the region. By the end of the course, you will have gained some in-depth historical knowledge to help you better understand the contemporary Middle East and the Islamic world.

## **Course Format:**

The structure of the course will consist of weekly reading assignments that you are expected to keep up with, some lecturing by me on the readings and related topics, your questions, concerns, and comments to encourage class discussions and regularly, some audio-visual material related to the topic of the week.

Although this course will be held in-person for the most part, a few of the sessions will take place remotely and via Zoom. Those will be announced to class at least one week ahead of time.

## **Course Requirements:**

### **Required Books:**

The following textbooks should be purchased:

- Mandaville, Peter, 2020. *Islam and Politics* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) London & New York: Routledge. (ISBN-13: 978-1138486980)
- Halliday, Fred, 2005. *100 Myths about the Middle East* (0<sup>th</sup> ed.) University of California Press. (ISBN-13: 978-0520247208)

The next set of textbooks will be provided to you in pdf format:

- Esposito, John L., 2011. *What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Oxford: Oxford University Press. (ISBN-13: 978-0199794133)
- Lapidus, Ira M., 2001. *A History of Islamic Societies* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press ---(A pdf version of this book will be posted on Canvas -no need to purchase this one)

The Mandaville book will be the main textbook for the course. The Esposito and the Halliday books address numerous specific questions and/or misconceptions regarding Islam and the Muslim world among not just Westerners but many Muslims themselves.

The Lapidus book is an invaluable classic reference on the history of Islam and Islamic societies. Though we will use only a few selected chapters of the book during this course, you should save the pdf version as a future reference for your own education and studies -at least until the

problems in the Middle East are resolved one day and humanity could pride itself by that success.

There may occasionally be additional readings related to the topic discussed in class. Those will be posted on Canvas at least one week ahead of the session when the readings are due for class discussions. I will inform everyone via email when this happens.

**Weekly Memos:** Starting with the readings for Week 2 and ending and including with the readings for Week 10, you are required to turn in a 3-page summary of what we had covered the previous week (i.e. on Week 2) including the reading assignments, videos we watched, and major topics we discussed in class. Each memo is due 48 hours after the end of the corresponding class and should be emailed to me. If you miss this deadline, you may have an extension for another 48 hours; however, your memo will then get only 50% of the credit.

The purpose of these assignments is to help you review what has just been covered in the readings and class discussions and organize your thoughts about it more clearly and coherently. Your memos will comprise 20% of your overall grade.

Format: Please include your **NAME, COURSE #, DATE, and "MEMO for WEEK\_\_"**.

**Mid-Term Exam:** There will be one mid-term exam, scheduled to be held in Week 7 (May 14). It will be open-book, and administered via Zoom, starting at 5:00 P.M. It will consist of a combination of short answers and paragraph-long essays related to the assigned readings, my lectures, and the other material covered during the preceding class sessions.

**Final Paper:** There will be a 7-to-9-page final paper due at the end of the quarter on a topic related to the material we will have covered in class. You will choose what to research and write about. So, it will be a good idea to keep this question in the back of your mind as we go through this course to see which issue you decide to dedicate more time and effort to research about.

Your paper will be evaluated for the clarity of your writing as well as that of your argument. This will be an opportunity to learn more comprehensively about a subject that you will have found interesting and to find out/understand more about it. A short synopsis of what you intend to write about -and how you plan to go about doing it- will be due on **June 4<sup>th</sup>** to be emailed to me. Your Final Paper will be due on **June 12<sup>th</sup>** by midnight. Any 24 hour-segment past this deadline will subtract five (5) points from your paper grade.

## **To Succeed in This Course**

In order to gain from and succeed in this course, the bulk of the responsibility rests on you. I play the role of the facilitator, but your part is primary and without fulfilling that you cannot expect to gain fully from this course. You would need to keep up with the weekly reading assignments, pay

close attention to the video documentaries we will be watching and discussing during our sessions, and complete and turn-in your weekly memos on time. Do your best to ask questions and make informed comments. Use the opportunity to excel this quality in yourself. Do all this properly and with sincerity and you should be getting the most out of this course.

**Academic Integrity**

It should go without saying that all written work must represent your original work. All other intellectual content must be cited using a professionally-recognized citation style of your choice (e.g., MLA or Chicago). Do not give in to temptation: plagiarism will not be tolerated; it will also be counterproductive to you in the long run. Not limited to “copying” and “pasting” sources from one document into your own, it is also considered plagiarism in cases of un-cited paraphrases from online, unpublished, or published writings of any kind (blogs, articles, Wikipedia, other student papers, etc.).

**Grading:**

Attendance and Participation.....	20%
Weekly Memos.....	20%
Mid-Term Exam .....	30%
Final Paper .....	30%

The ratios indicated above are a close approximation that will be used to arrive at your final grade. The number grade will then be translated into a letter grade as follows:

<u>Points</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
97-100	A+
94-96	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-66	D
60-63	D-
59 and below	F

## Course Schedule:

### Week 1 – April 02\_\_ **Introduction to the Course and to One Another**

What is “Islam”? What is “the Modern World”? How can these phenomena be studied?

Videos to watch in class and discuss:

Akbar S. Ahmed on “Islam and the Modern World”(30 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwWTxOykhqM>

10 Books Recommended by Akbar Ahmed to Read to Understand Muslim History (12 min.): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xl2QU-8VfiU>

Islam, Empire of Faith, Part 1:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IU474AW-mdg&t=666s>

### Week 2 – April 09\_\_ **Islam, from Its Inception up to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

A brief overview of the formation of Islam and the expansion of its empire until its encounter with modernity and the “West”.

Readings: Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, pp. 3-98

Halliday, *100 Myths*, read Myths 1-10.

Videos to watch in class and discuss:

Islam, Empire of Faith, Part 2:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D\\_mqO910jUQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_mqO910jUQ)

### Week 3 – April 16 \_\_\_ **Muslim Intellectuals Encounter Modernity**

Readings: Mandaville, *Islam and Politics*, Chapters 1 & 2 (pp. 1-62);

Esposito, *What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam*, pp. xiii-25;

Halliday, *100 Myths*, read Myths 11-20.

Video to watch in class and discuss:

Islam – Empire of Faith, Part 3:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ggd53dbOSEQ&t=901s>

### Week 4 – April 23\_\_\_ **Secular Nationalism, State Formation, and the Making of Islamism**

Readings: Mandaville, Chapter 3 (pp. 64-118);  
Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, pp. 453-468;  
Esposito, *What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam*, pp. 25-50;  
Halliday, *100 Myths*, read Myths 21-30.

Videos to choose from and watch/discuss in class:

Week 5 – April 30 \_\_\_ **Avenues of Participation: The Evolution of Islamism as Political Strategy: The Case of Egypt and Tunisia**

Readings: Mandaville, pp. 121-164 (in Chapter 4);  
Lapidus, Ira M., *A History of Islamic Societies*, pp. 512-534;  
Esposito, *What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam*, pp. 51-71;  
Halliday, *100 Myths*, read Myths 31-40.

Videos to choose from and watch/discuss in class:

On Seyyed Jamal-ed Din Al-Afghani:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuxBZ3z\\_Vyc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuxBZ3z_Vyc)

On Muhammad Abduh (9 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SC5da4Ogh4I>

On Rashid Ridha: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8ggKochEzE&t=5s>

Origins of the Muslim Brotherhood (17 min.):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=psxHVpZIV44>

On Hassan al-Banna and the origins of the Muslim Brotherhood:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-94R2Ufj2w&t=265s> and

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NMilm9kf\\_4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NMilm9kf_4)

On Seyyed Qutb: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWwgXj2bI-I>

& <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBw8EI2t4M8>

On the Arab Spring:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2020/12/19/remembering-the-arab-spring-in-films>; Ten years later:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2X7SWCuSyPA> &

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2wZYvG14MU>

Week 6 – May 07 \_\_\_ **The Birth of Secular Turkey;**

**On Islamic States and “Islamization” from Above: The Cases of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan**

Readings: Mandaville, pp. 164-178, and 197-204 (in Chapter 4);  
and pp. 210-254 (In Chapter 5)

Lapidus, Ira M. *A History of Islamic Societies*, pp. 501-511;

Videos to choose from and watch/discuss in class:

Ataturk – Father of Turks Documentary:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YPuTsfjZkg>

Ataturk and the birth of Turkey (30 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrN2aKf9RYE>

About the Armenian genocide under the Ottoman empire (9 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQrXxO6FN3w>

Timeline of the July 15, 2016 coup attempt: Turkey's longest night:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Uu8DwF8Hm8>

Who are the Kurds and why don't they have their own country?:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IxsYpUCD4M0>

A Short History of Saudi Arabia (11 min. & 12:20 min.):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkcYAOs9W-E> &

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-pHKrIxxvbs>

On the 1979 Seizure of the Grand Mosque (8 min.):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6lehRHf-OI>

A Short History of Pakistan (10:37 min.):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swITSTncx6c&t=568s> &

The Creation of Modern India & Pakistan (6 min):

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w\\_FSUcZfcx0&t=38s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_FSUcZfcx0&t=38s)

All about the Kashmir Conflict (5 min.):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgHFGx1F-5U>

Week 7 – May 14 \_\_\_ **Mid-Term Exam**

Week 8 – May 21 \_\_\_ **Islamism in Weak and Failed States: The Cases of Lebanon and Afghanistan;**

**Radical Islamism: The Case of Al-Qaeda**

Readings: Mandaville, Chapters 6 & 7 (pp. 281-386);

Esposito, *What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam*, pp. 72-94.

Videos to choose from and watch/discuss in class:

The State of Lebanon (26 min.):

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YthC\\_hRw3g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YthC_hRw3g)

What is Sectarianism in Lebanon (5 min.):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDxbG6wXtqY>

On the Origins of the Taliban (16 min.):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zzBVvyBWDD4&t=3s>  
The Return of the Taliban to Afghanistan in 2021 (3 min.):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JjtpQ0VHViA>

Week 09 – May 28\_\_ **From Mobilization to Revolution: Understanding the “Islamic” Aspect of the 1979 Iranian Revolution**

Readings: Mandaville, in Chapter 5 (pp. 254- up to 265)

*The Turban for the Crown*, Said Amir Arjomand, pp 91-174 (to be posted on Canvas);

Halliday, *100 Myths*, read Myths 46-50.

Videos to choose from and watch/discuss in class:

Iran's Revolution, A Crash Course:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8w4Ku6l7OEI>

Blowback: The 1979 Revolution and the 1953 Coup:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wyHpVZoMlbc>

What Had Happened between Iran and the US:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5BPrTJ0iuOE>

The 1979 Revolution Part 1:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJzuRf3Pyjk>

The 1979 Revolution Part 2:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtdMFE3gGAA&t=120s>

Week 10 – June 04\_\_ **Topic to be determined.**

***June 04: Due Date to Submit Your Final Paper Topic***

Week 11 \_\_ **Final Paper Due by Friday, June 12<sup>th</sup>** (by 11:59 PM)