Islamists, Elections and Politics in the Middle East

MAAS 621
Center for Contemporary Arab Studies
School of Foreign Service
Georgetown University

Instructor: Samer Shehata       Seminar - Spring 2007
Office: ICC 251 (Center for Contemporary Arab Studies)  Locations: ICC 203
Office Hours: TBA      Class Meetings: Thursday 2:15-4:05
Tel: 202-687-0350
Email: sss32@georgetown.edu

WHAT? This course is about Islamists and elections in the contemporary Middle East. It will address at least three, sometimes related, topics: Islamist politics; Islamists and Elections; and Elections in the Middle East. Although these topics often overlap, this course will take a broader approach to these subjects and will not be limited to only those instances in which Islamists participate in elections. We will also be concerned with these topics when they do not overlap. And when examining elections in the Middle East, the course will attempt to integrate some of the theoretical literature on elections in non-democratic contexts (“authoritarian elections”).

WHY? From Morocco to Iraq and beyond, Islamist political parties, groups and movements are -- without doubt -- the most popular political forces in the region. And contrary to the focus in the United States and Europe, mainstream, non-violent and/or “moderate” Islamist groups (groups that participate in the political process) are much more popular and influential than the extremist, radical and violent groups that often receive a disproportionate share of media attention. Islamist groups have increasingly participated in electoral politics in the Middle East, from the Justice and Development Party (PJD) in Morocco, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, HAMAS, Hizballah, Jordan’s Islamic Action Front, Turkey’s AK Party, the Islamic Constitutional Movement in Kuwait and beyond. 2005, for example, has been called the year of elections in the Middle East. Legislative and/or presidential elections took place in Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Afghanistan and Iran. Municipal elections were held in Saudi Arabia. And at the end of 2004, Palestinians undertook a presidential election and in January 2006, they held a closely watched parliamentary election. In all of these cases, Islamist political groups, parties and candidates performed exceptionally well. This course, therefore, seeks to focus our attention on the intersection of these two interesting and increasingly important political phenomenon: Islamists and Elections in the Middle East.

HOW? The course will be conducted as a “research workshop.” The seminar will be based on the intense discussion of selected readings which all participants will complete before class meetings. Moreover, all seminar participants will be engaged in their own research projects
throughout the course of the semester. Seminar participants will present their ongoing research projects, in addition to being responsible for leading class discussion, throughout the term. Your ongoing research projects, which will form the basis of your final paper, need not be limited to the countries covered in the seminar. You will also be encouraged to conduct primary research (in addition, of course, to the use of secondary sources), including analyzing the documents, websites, electoral platforms, newspapers and other materials produced by Islamist political movements and parties.

Requirements: This is a “research workshop” based primarily on the close reading and focused discussion of set texts and regular presentations by seminar members. The success of such an enterprise depends on the active participation of everyone. Therefore, you are required to:

1) Come to class prepared -- having read the assignments carefully and ready to discuss them. Everyone will lead class discussion at least once during the semester.

2) Seminar participants are required to write weekly one page response papers that should be posted on Blackboard by Wednesday at 3:00 pm. These are not intended to be highly polished pieces of writing. Nor are they meant to summarize the week’s readings. Rather, they are your critical reactions and engagement to the readings and are intended to promote discussion, generate debate and raise critical questions about the topics to be discussed in class.

3) Seminar participants are required to attend as much of the 2007 CCAS Symposium (Thursday and Friday March 22-23) as possible. The two day symposium on the subject of “Islamist Politics in the Arab World” will cover many of the topics we will cover in class, and will include presentations by leading experts in the field.

4) You are required to write a final research paper on a topic of your choice. This is intended to be a substantive research exercise and should include the use of a wide range of sources. Please consult the instructor as you think about different topics.

Grading:  
20% Attendance & Weekly Response Papers  
20% Participation, Leading Class Discussion and Presentations  
40% Final Research Paper

Books to Purchase:

*Richard P. Mitchell, The Society of the Muslim Brothers (Paperback)  
Paperback: 392 pages; Publisher: Oxford University Press, USA; Reprint edition (July 29, 1993); ISBN: 0195084373

Optional Texts:


*Quintan Wiktorowicz (Editor) *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach* (Indiana Series in Middle East Studies); Paperback: 320 pages; Publisher: Indiana University Press (November 2003); ISBN: 0253216214


Readings:

At least one copy of all texts will be placed in reserve in the library. Readings marked with an asterisk (*) will be available through electronic reserves or Blackboard. Readings that include a web address beside them are available on the internet. All other readings are in the books to be purchased or available in the library (on reserve).

Thursday, January 11, 2007
Introductory Meeting:

Syllabus [Begin Reading for next week. Come to class on 1/18 prepared to discuss the readings]

Thursday, January 18
Topic 1: Islamists & Elections

  [http://meria.biu.ac.il/journal/1999/issue1/jv3n1a2.html](http://meria.biu.ac.il/journal/1999/issue1/jv3n1a2.html)

  [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v016/16.2nasr.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v016/16.2nasr.html)
cookieSet=1

  http://www.jstor.org/view/08992851/di011550/01p00292/0


**Supplementary:**


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**Thursday, January 25**

**Topic 2: The Development of the Muslim Brotherhood (I)**


• Judy Barsalou, *Islamists at the Ballot Box: Findings From Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait and Turkey*, USIP Special Report (July 2005)

**Supplementary:**

Thursday, February 1  
**Topic 3: The Development of the Muslim Brotherhood (II)**


**Supplementary:**


**Explore:**
{Official English language web site of the Muslim Brotherhood} Ikhwanweb.com  

{Official web site of the Muslim Brotherhood}  

Thursday, February 8  
**Topic 4: Turkey (I)**

- Jenny White, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey* (entire text)

Thursday, February 15  
**Topic 5: Turkey (II)**

  [http://www.jstor.org/view/00104159/ap020119/02a00050/0](http://www.jstor.org/view/00104159/ap020119/02a00050/0)

http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v014/14.2ozel.pdf

http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v014/14.2onis.pdf

http://taylorandfrancis.metapress.com/media/78u409rhl4qww1jxdfl/contributions/p/p/e/b/ppeblvqvqwpykn.pdf


Supplementary:
- Also see the “filmakers notes”:
  http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/shows/turkey/filmmaker.html

**Thursday, February 22**

**Topic 6: Jordan (I)**


Supplementary:


**Thursday, March 1**

**Topic 7: Jordan (II) & Yemen**


- Explore the official website of the Islamic Action Front: [http://www.jabha.net/](http://www.jabha.net/)

**Supplementary:**


- See Yemen Readings below.

**Thursday, March 8 -- Spring Break**

**Thursday, March 15**

**Topic 8: Morocco**


• Michael J. Willis, “Morocco’s Islamists and the Legislative Elections of 2002,” Mediterranean Politics, Volume 9, Number 1, Spring, 2004. http://taylorandfrancis.metapress.com/media/l2t6ddrhrl4rwjm7na9g/contributions/y/1/y/u/y1yupf6b58g0aar4.pdf


• Explore the official web site of the PJD: http://www.pjd.ma/sommaire_en.php

*Thursday, March 22-23 – Attend CCAS Symposium “Islam and Islamist Politics in the Arab World”

Thursday, March 29  
**Topic 9: Palestine & Lebanon**


Mona Harb & Reinould Leenders, “Know Thy Enemy: Hizbullah, “terrorism” and the politics of perception,” *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26, no. 1, pp. 173-197, 2005. [http://taylorandfrancis.metapress.com/media/ha03eap98lcttmee1xej/contributions/m/x/h/t/mxhtlena93n1fh0y.pdf](http://taylorandfrancis.metapress.com/media/ha03eap98lcttmee1xej/contributions/m/x/h/t/mxhtlena93n1fh0y.pdf)


TBA

**Supplementary:**


**Thursday April 5 – Easter Break**

**Thursday, April 12**

**Topic 10: Egyptian Elections Past & Present**


**Supplementary:**


**Thursday, April 19**

**Topic 11: Student Presentations**

Salwa Ismael, *The Paradox of Islamist Politics*
Thursday, April 26
Topic 12: Student Presentations

---------------------Additional Supplementary Reading---------------------

Yemen:

• Sheila Carapico, “Elections and Mass Politics in Yemen,” Middle East Report, No. 185, Despots and Democrats Political Change in Arabia (Nov. - Dec., 1993), pp. 2-6
  http://www.jstor.org/view/08992851/di011530/01p0015t/0

• Renaud Detalle, Joost Hiltermann, “The Yemeni Elections Up Close,” Middle East Report, No. 185, Despots and Democrats Political Change in Arabia (Nov. - Dec., 1993), pp. 8-12
  http://www.jstor.org/view/08992851/di011530/01p0016u/0


  http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v013/13.4schwedler.html

  http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2FCSS%2FCSS45_04%2FS001041750300032Xa.pdf&code=5f219a1a96ca6f98e4a6c55bf429b91c

  http://www.merip.org/mero/mero100306.html

Supplementary:

• Sheila Carapico, “Campaign Politics and Coalition Building: The 1993 Parliamentary Elections,” Yemen Update 33 (Summer/Fall 1993)


**Kuwait:**


Mary Ann Tétreault, “Kuwait's Parliament Considers Women's Political Rights, Again,” *MERIP*, September 2, 2004


**Theory:**


Marsha Pripstein Posusney chapter in M. Pripstein Posusney and M. Angrist edited volume on Authoritarianism in the Middle East.

*Journal of Democracy*, Special Issue: “Elections Without Democracy”

- Diamond, Larry Jay, “Thinking About Hybrid Regimes”
- Schedler, Andreas, The Menu of Manipulation
- Van de Walle, Nicolas, “Africa's Range of Regimes”