Overview: This course looks at the historic relationship among Islam, Judaism and Christianity and what they have to say about the nature of government, the state’s treatment of religious minorities, and the relations among states. We will consider the impact of religion on domestic and foreign policy in selected Middle Eastern countries, the role of religion in fueling conflicts, the phenomenon of religious fundamentalism, the challenge and opportunity this presents to the United States, and the potential for religion to help advance Middle East peace. No previous academic experience in Middle East or Religious Studies is required.

Requirements: Classroom attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to have read the assignments prior to each class meeting and be prepared to discuss them. The final grade will be based upon a several short essays, a series of film reviews, a take-home mid-semester essay, a final exam, classroom attendance and participation. Film review schedule is attached at the end of this syllabus.

Readings: Textbooks are available at the University Bookstore, or from most on-line booksellers. If you order on-line, do so ASAP so you can keep up with assigned readings. Some of the required readings are on-line or posted as e-reserve readings at www.library.cmu.edu (Click on “cameo” and “course reserves.” Type in “Eisenberg” and select the list of reserve readings for 79-397)

Required Texts:


Middle East Review of International Affairs [MERIA], an on-line journal. Familiarize yourself with the site and sign up for a free, on-line subscription. Go to: http://meria.idc.ac.il

Search for Common Ground: Please sign up for a free on-line subscription: http://www.sfcg.org/cgnews/middle-east.cfm
INTRODUCTION

14 January  Introduction: What is Religion? What is Politics?
Two maps of the Middle East (posted)

ISLAM

Islam in History


Beliefs and Practices

19 January  Lippman, Chaps. 1 and 3.

Islam as Empire

21 January  Lippman, Chaps. 4 and 5.

Islamic Perspectives on Jews and Christians

Muslims and Jews

23 January  Lippman, pp. 45-47, 50-51, 114, 120-121
Bat Ye'or, The Dhimmi, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1985, pp. 43-50, 122-126. (posted)

Muslims and Christians


Islam and Politics

28 January  Lippman, Chap. 7, and 146-149.
**The Qur’an: War and Peace**

30 January  

2 February  
Harun Yahya, “The Pacifism of Islam”  
http://www.islamdenouncesterrorism.com/p_the_pacifism_of_islam.html


The Qur’an – Go to www.beliefnet.com; go to “find,” “holy texts” and “Islam.” Look up some of the verses mentioned in the articles above; read them in context. Print out 1-2 pages to bring to class.


**ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM**

4 February  

6 February  
George W. Bush, Address to the Nation, 7 October 2001 (posted)

Osama bin Laden, Videotaped Address, 7 October 2001 (posted)

Laurie Goodstein, *New York Times* article (posted)
ISLAM IN THE DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY OF MIDDLE EASTERN STATES

Egypt

11 February
13 February Appleby, Chap 5.
Lippman, Chap 6, 157-165.

"The Islamic State in Egypt is Approaching" - Interview with an official from Jama’a Islamia, Nida’ul Islam (The Call of Islam) magazine (April-May 1997) http://islam.org.au/articles/18/egypt.htm

Click on “Egypt” at www.arab.net/

16 February President’s Day – NO CLASS

Saudi Arabia

18 February Lippman, Chap 6, pp. 149-154.
Joseph Kostiner, "State, Islam and Opposition in Saudi Arabia"
MERIA Journal 1:2 (May 1997)


Click on “Saudi” at www.arab.net/

Turkey

23 February Ustun Reinart, "Freedom Under Wraps: Islamic Garb on Turkish Campuses" MERIA Journal 2:3 (September 1998)


Browse: www.turkishdailynews.com
The Palestinian Community

27 April  Appleby, Chap. 4.


Website of the Palestinian Islamic movement, Hamas: http://www.hamasonline.com/
Hamas Charter: http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/mideast/hamas.htm
PLO Charter: http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/mideast/plocov.htm
Click on “Palestine” at www.arab.net/

SHI'A ISLAM

Shiism

3 March  Lippman, Chap. 6, pp. 136-145.

Alan Cowell, "In Ancient Shrines, Prayers and the Seeds of War," NYT, 2 February 1988, p. 4. (posted)

5 March  Mid-Semester Break – No Class

8 March  Spring Break – No class

10 March

12 March

Iran: The Islamic Revolution

15 March  Appleby, Chap. 1
(Iran: The Islamic Revolution, continued)


Select “Iran” at http://lexicorient.com/e.o/index.htm

19 March  No class

Lebanon: Musa al-Sadr


Click on “Lebanon” at www.arab.net/

Lebanon: Hizballah

24 March  Appleby, Chap. 2

26 March  Laurie Eisenberg, "Do Good Fences Make Good Neighbors? Israel and Lebanon after the Withdrawal" MERIA Journal, 4:3 (September 2000)

Eyal Zisser, "Hizballah: New Course or Continued Warfare?" MERIA Journal, 4:3 (September 2000)

Browse: http://www.hizbollah.org
JUDAISM AND JEWISHNESS IN ISRAEL

Judaism

29 March
Dan Cohn-Sherbok, Judaism, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1999, Chaps 1, 2, 3 (pp. 56-64) 4.


31 March
Browse http://www.israel.org

Zionism

2 April
Cohn-Sherbok, Chaps. 3 (pp. 64-74), 5.


Jewishness

5 April
Alan Dowty, "Israeli Foreign Policy and the Jewish Question" MERIA Journal, 3:1 (February 1999)


Religion and State

7 April

Select “Index,” “R,” “religion,” “Jewish Society” at www.israel.org/mfa/home.asp

9 April

Jewish Fundamentalism

MONDAY NIGHT MOVIE – “Hahesder” (Time of Favor)

12 April
Appleby, Chap. 7
14 April


Browse: Website of the Rabin Center for Israel Studies at www.Rabincenter.org.il/

website of the Kahane Chai organization:
http://www.kahane.org/

Jewish settlers’ website: www.israelnationalnews.com

16 April

**Carnival – no class**

CHRISTIANITY AND/IN THE MIDDLE EAST

*Christian Zionism*

19 April

Appleby, Chap. 8

Browse *The International Christian Embassy*, Jerusalem, on-line at:
http://www.intournet.co.il/icej

*Palestinian Christians*

21 April


Maronites in Lebanon

23 April

26 April

Browse the Maronite Research Institute at http://www.mari.org/ http://www.freelebanon.org/ Pro-Israel, anti-Syrian Lebanese

Religion in the Middle East and US Foreign Policy: A “Clash of Civilizations”? 

28 April


Conclusion

30 April
Appleby, Conclusion.

### Semester Overview, 79-397, Spring 2003

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Spring 2004

Religion and Politics in the Middle East: Video Essays

You must turn in a total of five (5) video essays over the semester. You may select among any five of the following six, available in the CMU video library (basement, Hunt Library). You will have the opportunity to earn extra credit for film analyses of relevant films from the Jewish-Israeli Film Festival or other films relevant to the topic of religion and politics in the Middle East which come to town or which you come across. Heads Together video rental in Squirrel Hill has some subtitled Arab and Israeli films for rental; Blockbuster and West Coast may have some as well. Please alert me to other relevant films playing in the area as you become aware of them.

Video essays are 2-3 pages long, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, with 1 inch margins. There are thought questions, below, to help you frame your essays. If you are struck by other relevant observations, feel free to expound upon them.

Please make note of the due dates for the video essays:

a. 23 January
   Hajj: The Pilgrimage
b. 13 February
   Authority and Change
c. 3 March
   60 Minutes: Hamas Suicide Bomber (ask to borrow it from the secretary in the History dept)
d. 17 March
   Beyond the Veil
e. 26 March
   Islam and War
f. 9 April
   Whose State?

ESSAY QUESTIONS for videos – use specific examples from the films to support your opinions.

a. Do you see political ramifications arising from the Hajj? For Saudi Arabia? For Muslim countries? For Muslims in non-Muslim countries? For relations among states, either regionally or locally?

b. How does the Mufti’s definition of terrorism and fanaticism compare with the one espoused by the Bush administration? What is the Mufti’s response to those who demand an Islamic state in Egypt? Do you detect contradictions between Islamic practice and modern governance, or are the two compatible? What would you like to ask the mufti which the interviewer did not?
c. Is the Hamas campaign against Israel, particularly regarding the suicide bombers, religiously or politically inspired? Is the desired outcome religious, political or a combination of both?

d. Twenty years after the Islamic Revolution, how successful has Iran been in creating an Islamic theocracy? Does religion play more of a role in governance and daily life than it does elsewhere in either the Islamic or western world? Is there such a thing as “Islamic politics” or does Iran operate pretty much as does any other state with strong cultural features?

f. Can one distinguish between Hizballah’s campaign to drive Israel out of south Lebanon (successful, May 2000) and its political aspirations within Lebanon itself? What drives Hizballah’s actions more – religion or politics? Its war to end the Israeli presence in the south succeeded; do its plans for continuing activity within Lebanon seem likely to succeed? What would you like to ask Sheikh Fadlallah that the interviewer did not?

g. Does this film seem to tilt in favor of either the ultra-orthodox or secular community in Israel? What appears to be the biggest bone of contention between the two groups? Is their conflict over religion, religious expression, political rights, social norms, or something else entirely?