RGST 190MI/292MK

SHI’ISM BEFORE AND AFTER THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

WEDNESDAY 6:00-8:50

HSSB 3041

Professor Janet Afary

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Office Hours: Thursdays 12:30-1:30

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will examine a century of evolution of Iranian Shi’ism. Readings will include primary and secondary sources on the following subjects: The early 20th century secular Iranian thinkers who formulated a new discourse on rationalist Shi’ism; the mid-twentieth century lay writers and religious thinkers who moved to a more militant discourse of Islamism; and a generation of clerics and theologians who have articulated a more tolerant and hermeneutic interpretation of Shi’ism in the last two decades in an attempt to reconcile Shi’i doctrines with social and economic modernities. All readings are in English.

REQUIRED TEXTS


Available on Gaucho Space

The additional required and supplemental readings for the course are available on Gaucho Space

COURSE REQUIREMENT

Membership in the class involves participation in its discussions, analysis, and debates. Students will be evaluated based on their written and oral contribution to the class, their ability to engage other students and the faculty in the discussions, and their participation in our analysis of the material we discuss.
**Grading**
There will be one midterm (1/3 of your grade). 1/3 of your grade will be based on your class participation, including student presentations and the submission of written commentary (preferably as power point) on the readings in three seminar sessions, and quizzes. The final 1/3 will be based on your final essay examination. Exams will be short essay format. Other details about the exams will be discussed in class.

**Attendance Policy**
Students are expected and required to be present at every class session and to be prepared for class. Daily preparedness and participation in discussion is mandatory. If you know that you will have trouble arriving to class on time and/or staying for the entire session, I counsel you not to enroll in the course. More than two excused, or unexcused, absences will affect your grade. Regular attendance may enhance your final grade in some cases.

All cellular phones, pagers, and alarms must be turned off during class.

Class sessions will be discussion focused. Please bring appropriate readings and texts to class with you. Give yourself sufficient time to complete the reading and prepare before coming to class. It is important to raise difficulties you are having understanding the readings during seminar. The class is a place to learn, not to feign knowledge. But please seek help if you are having difficulties.

**Class Discussion**
Each week two students will be assigned to facilitate discussion. Each will turn in a power point summary/commentary on the assigned readings to the instructors by email before class. In class they will summarize their findings and help the instructors facilitate discussion. Other students are also expected to write a short critical comment or question on the readings, to discuss in class. Each student will be assigned at least two readings. All such readings are marked as (P), presentation, in the syllabus.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**Week I: (January 8)**
Presentation on Shi‘ism and Globalization


**Week II (January 15)**

Quiz on Halm

**Week III (January 22): Dehkhoda, Kasravi, and the Case for a Rationalist Islam**


**Week IV (January 29)**

MIDTERM

Film

**Week V (February 5) Al-Ahmad and the Construction of a Militant Islam**


Quiz on Al-Ahmad

**Week VI (February 12) Shariati and Martyrdom**


Quiz on the readings for this week

**Week VII (February 19) Khomeini and Islamic Government**


Amir Arjomand, *After Khomeini* (2009), Introduction and Chapters 1-3 (3 P)

Quiz on the readings

SUPPLEMENTAL READING


Quiz on the readings

**Week VIII (February 26) Reformist Shi’ism: Soroush and Khatami, Kadivar**

Amir Arjomand, *After Khomeini* (2009), Chapters 4-7 (4 P)


Quiz on the readings

SUPPLEMENTAL READING


Khatami, M. “In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,” in *Hope and Challenge: The Iranian President Speaks*. IGCS (1997), pp. 71-86

**Weeks IX (March 5)**

Kadivar “Human rights and Intellectual Islam” in New Directions in Islamic Thought (2009), pp. 47-74 (1 P)


Kurzman “Critics within Islamic Scholars’ Protests against the Islamic State in Iran” International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society 15/2 (2001), pp. 341-35 (1 P)

Quiz on the readings

SUPPLEMENTAL READING


Week X (March 12)

Amir Arjomand, After Khomeini. Chapters 8-Conclusion (2 P)

Abbas Amanat, Apocalyptic Islam. Chapter 10: “Messianic Aspirations in Contemporary Iran” (2009), pp. 221-251 Read only Chapter 10 of this pdf (2 P)

Select reading on President Rouhani (1 P)

Discussion of Final Exam

Bibliography on Religion and Modern Iranian History

(in English)


http://www.religiousleftlaw.com/page/10/#sthash.5J98ngO9.dpuf

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1 See Houchang chehabi’s bibliography on Iran: http://web.mit.edu/isg/iranica.html