

**RGST 190MI/292MK**  
**SHI'ISM BEFORE AND AFTER THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION**  
**WEDNESDAY 6:00-8:50**  
**HSSB 3041**

Professor Janet Afary

Office: HSSB 3047

Office Hours: Wednesday 2:00-2:45 pm and by appointment

[afary@religion.ucsb.edu](mailto:afary@religion.ucsb.edu)

TA: Eric Massie

Office: HSSB 3226

[emassie@umail.ucsb.edu](mailto:emassie@umail.ucsb.edu)

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 20<sup>th</sup> 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**

Amir Arjomand, Saïd. *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-19-539179-4

Halm, Heinz. *The Shiites: A Short History*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2007. ISBN-10: 1-55876-437-2

**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

Adam Shatz, "A Little Feu de Joie," *London Review of Book* 35: 8 (April 25, 2013), pp. 6-8.

### **Week II (January 15)**

Halm, *The Shiites: A Short History*. Pp. 1-85

Quiz on Halm

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

"Answer of Jamal ad-Din to Renan," *Journal des Debats* (1883) in Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism*. University of California Press (1983), pp. 181-187 (1 P)

Afary, “The Place of Shi’i Clerics in the First Iranian Constitution.” *Critical Research on Religion* 1:3 (2013), pp. 327-346

Dehkhoda, Ali Akbar, *Charand o Parand*. Originally published in 1907-1908. Edited by Janet Afary & John R. Perry. Yale University Press, forthcoming. Selections (2 P).

Ghanoonparvar, M. R. “Introduction to Ahmad Kasravi” in Kasravi, *On Islam & Shi’ism*. Translated by M.R. Ghanoonparvar. Costa Mesa: Mazda Press (1990), pp. vii-x (3 P)

Kasravi, Ahmad. “On Islam” in *On Islam & Shi’ism*. (1943/1944), pp. 61-133 (2P)

#### **Week IV (January 29)**

MIDTERM

Film

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

Al-Ahmad, Jalal *Gharbzadegi [Weststruckness]*. Lexington, KY: Mazda Press (1962/1982), vii-xviii, 3-186 (4P)

Quiz on Al-Ahmad

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

Shariati, Ali. “Shahadat” and “A Discussion of Shahadat” (1970) in *Jihad and Shabadat: Struggle and Martyrdom in Islam*, edited by Mehdi Abedi and Gary Legenhausen. Houston, TX: The Institute for Research and Islamic Studies, (1986), pp. 153-243 (3P)

Taleqani, Muhammad. “The Characteristics of Islamic Economics,” in *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives*, edited by John Donohue and John Esposito. Oxford University Press (1982), pp. 229-235 (1P)

Afary, Janet, “Shi’i Narratives of Karbalâ and Christian Rites of Penance: Michel Foucault and the Culture of the Iranian Revolution, 1978-1979. *Radical History Review* 86 (2003), pp. 7-35

Quiz on the readings for this week

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

Khomeini, R., “A Warning to the Nation” (1941) in *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*. Translated and Edited by Hamid Algar. Mizan Press (1981), pp. 169-173 (1 P)

Khomeini, R., “The Form of Islamic Government” (1970) in *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, pp. 55-63 (1 P)

Amanat, Abbas, *Apocalyptic Islam and Iranian Shi’ism*. Chapter 9: “Khomeini’s Great Satan” London: I.B. Touris (2009), pp. 199-219 **Read only Chapter 9 of the pdf (1 P)**

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

Quiz on the readings

#### SUPPLEMENTAL READING

Khomeini, R., “The Incompatibility of Monarchy With Islam” (1971) in *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, pp. 200-208 (1 P)

Khomeini, R., “New Years Message” (1980), in *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, pp. 286-294 (1 P)

Taleqani, M. “Taleqani’s Last Sermon,” in *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook*. Edited by Charles Kurzman. Oxford University Press (1998), pp. 46-47 (1 P)

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)

Soroush, A. “The Changeable and the Unchangeable,” in *New Directions in Islamic Thought: Exploring Reform and Muslim Tradition*. Edited by Kari Vogt, Lena Larsen, and Christian Moe. London: I.B. Tauris (2011), pp. 9-15 (1 P)

Soroush, A. “Reason, Freedom, and Democracy in Islam,” in *The New Voices of Islam: Rethinking Politics and Modernity—A Reader*. Edited by Isabella Steer and Mehran Kamrava. London: I.B. Tauris (2009), pp. 243-261(1 P)

Khatami, M. “Our Revolution and the Future of Islam,” in *Islam, Liberty, and Development*. Global Academic Publishing (1998), pp. 49-80 (1 P)

Quiz on the readings

#### SUPPLEMENTAL READING

Soroush “The Evolution and Devolution of Religious Knowledge” in *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook*. (1998), pp. 244-251

Khatami “Religious Belief in Today’s World” (1999) in *Islam, Liberty, and Development*. (1998), pp. 81-96

Khatami, M. “Tradition, Modernity, and Development,” in *Islam, Liberty, and Development*. (1998), pp. 17-37

Khatami, M. “Reason and Religion,” in *Islam, Liberty, and Development*. (1998), pp. 39-48

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 “Revisiting Women’s Rights in Islam” in *Gender and Equality in Muslim Family Law: Justice and Ethics in the Islamic Legal Tradition*. Edited by Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Kari Vogt, Lena Larsen and Christian Moe. London: I.B. Tauris (2013), pp. 213-234 (1 P)

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

Sadri, Mahmoud. “Sacral Defense of Secularism: The Political Theologies of Soroush, Shabestari, and Kadivar.” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 15: 2 (Winter 2001), pp. 257-270 (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

Kadivar “Theories of Government in Shi’i Fiqh” in *Shi’ism: Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies* (2008), 267-282

Kadivar “The Innovative Political Ideas and Influence of Mulla Muhammad Kazim Khurasani” *Annals of Japan Association for Middle East Studies* 21-1 (2005), pp. 51-73

Kadivar “From Traditional Islam to Islam as an End in Itself” *Die Welt des Islams* 51 (2011), pp. 459-484.

Kadivar “Freedom of Religion and Belief in Islam” in *The New Voices of Islam: Reforming Politics and Modernity – A Reader* (2006), pp. 119-142

Kadivar “The Freedom of Thought and Religion in Islam” in *The New Voices of Islam: Reforming Politics and Modernity* (2006), pp. 119-142

Sadri, Ahmad. “The Varieties of Religious Reform: Public Intelligentsia in Iran” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 15/2 (2001), pp. 271-282

#### **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)**

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- Abrahamian, Ervand. *Khomeinism: Essays on the Islamic Republic*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993.
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- Aghaie, Kamran Scot. *The Women of Karbala: Ritual Performance and Symbolic Discourses in Modern Shi'i Islam*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2005.
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- Arjomand, Said Amir. *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1988.
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Wright, Robin. *The Last Great Revolution: Turmoil and Transformation in Iran*. New York: Vintage Books, 2001. - See more at:  
<http://www.religiousleftlaw.com/page/10/#sthash.5J98ngO9.dpuf><sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Houchang chehabi's bibliography on Iran: <http://web.mit.edu/isg/iranica.html>