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Topics in Sociology: contemporary Islam
Spring 2018
Monday 4.00-5.20 and Wednesday 4.00-5.20
Room CPS-104

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Course description
This course explores contemporary Islam(s) and Muslim communities from a sociological and anthropological perspective providing a critical understanding and analysis of Muslim intellectual, religious, and cultural productions and traditions, as well as social, economic and political realities and experiences related to Islam and Muslims. It will further analyse the imbrication of Islam and ‘Muslimness’ with race, ethnicity, class, gender etc. The course will provide contextual, multilayered and complex understanding of social, political and intellectual movements related to Islam and Muslims such as Muslim reformisms, Islamisms, Islamic feminisms etc. in Muslim majority contexts such as in Arab countries, in the Middle East, parts of Asia and the African continent as well as in contexts where Muslims are a minority such as in North America, Europe and Latin America. The course encourages students to investigate central questions in sociology in relation to contemporary Islam(s) and Muslims such as the relationship between religion and secularism, postcolonialism and orientalism.

The course will consist of lectures, seminars and workshops using texts, images and videos. Each Monday session will begin with a lecture providing the essential theoretical and conceptual material followed by a class discussion, while each Wednesday session will be a seminar consisting in student-led discussions often starting with group work around several research questions, texts, images or videos. We will be using Blackboard (BB) to access course documents, and the power-point of the course will be accessible after the session. We will also use BB for occasional online discussions on specific topics as well as to exchange relevant information, resources and links.

Course goals
The general aim of this course is to contextualize, historicize, and approach through a complex and multi-layered lens contemporary Islam(s) and Muslim communities. At the end of the term, students should be able to:
- demonstrate essential knowledge and understanding of Muslim intellectual, religious, and cultural productions and traditions, and how experiences of Islam(s) are thought, built and shaped through social, political, economic realities and their imbricated dynamics.
- understand essential conceptual ideas and theories related to Islam(s) and Muslims.
be equipped with a sociological approach of contemporary Islam(s) and Muslim communities that can be used to broaden understanding of the world from everyday interactions to transnational realities.

be able to identify and explain several main theoretical perspectives about Islam(s) and Muslim communities and their interactions with concepts of race, class, gender, ethnicity, etc.

discuss different ways to think about Islam and Muslims and formulate theoretical questions.

begin exploring research horizons and relating research questions to broader sociological concerns.

**Course Requirements**

Learning is a collaborative experience of mutual sharing and learning. It is important to read all assignments before class in order to be able to benefit from the lecture, discussion and seminar fully. The weekly seminar readings will be posted on Blackboard. No need to buy the books, all the course material will be made available on Blackboard. You must check it regularly since assignments on the hard copy syllabus are subject to change. This course will test students on material presented in lectures, class discussions, texts, images and films. Again, you are expected to read the weekly assignments carefully and to come to class prepared to discuss the readings.

**Academic integrity**

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. The Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy will apply to all course work. If you have any doubt about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, ask me and/or consult the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy: [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml). Take precautions by always referencing the materials you have read by adding a footnote, endnote, or citing your source text in parenthesis. Referencing shows you have done serious research, and that you have acknowledged the work of other scholars and engage critically with their work and ideas. It is important not to rely on one or two sources exclusively, and diversify your sources that can include books, academic articles, newspaper articles, online or printed magazines, internet websites, films etc.

**Grading**

15% **class participation**: your active presence and your participation to the class dynamic and discussion

15% **oral presentation**: you will give a 10 mn max. presentation on one session topic (based on the lecture, seminar, text, class discussion or film)

15% **short reaction paper**: you will write a short paper -between 400 and 600 words- reflecting on a text, film or research questions of the lecture or seminar of the week (the deadline will be Saturday 4pm of the same week)

30% **class test**: throughout the term, the class will start with a few questions about the topic and readings that students will have to answer during the first 25 mn of the class, a selection of three of these class tests (the best ones) will constitute 30% of the general grade.

20% **essay**: you will write an essay of between 600-800 words answering one question in the list of available questions given at the end of the term.
**Policy on late submission of course work**
Papers submitted late will be marked down 3% percent for each day past the deadline, and will not be accepted after ten days past the deadline. Please contact me in advance if you have difficulty meeting a deadline for health or personal reasons.

**Important semester dates**
Please check these important dates (last day to drop a class, last day to add class etc.) to avoid any penalty: [https://registrar.newark.rutgers.edu/office-registrar-academic-calendar](https://registrar.newark.rutgers.edu/office-registrar-academic-calendar)

**Learning resources available**
Rutgers Learning Center (tutoring services)
Room 140, Bradley Hall
973 353 5608
[http://ncas.rutgers.edu/rlc](http://ncas.rutgers.edu/rlc)

Writing Center (tutoring and writing workshop)
Room 126, Conklin Hall
973 353 5847
[nwc@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:nwc@newark.rutgers.edu)
[http://ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter](http://ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter)

**Disability services**
We welcome students with disabilities, in order to receive consideration you can complete and submit the Registration Form, schedule and complete an intake meeting. If you request for reasonable accommodations is approved, you will receive a Letter of Accommodations (LOA), which you should present privately to me as early in the semester as possible. You can begin the process through the following links:

- **Applying for Services**: [https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/applying-for-services](https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/applying-for-services)
- **Documentation Guidelines**: [https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines](https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines)
- **Letter of Accommodations (LOA)**: [https://webapps.rutgers.edu/student-ods/Forms/LOA](https://webapps.rutgers.edu/student-ods/Forms/LOA)
- **Office of Disability services (ODS)**: Suite 219, Paul Robeson Campus Center
973 353 5375
[odsnewark@rutgers.edu](mailto:odsnewark@rutgers.edu)

**Schedule Spring 2018**

**Important note:** Assignments are subject to change, please rely mainly on Blackboard postings and not on the hard copy of syllabus. No need to buy the books, the readings will all be made available on Blackboard.

The course will rely on selected excerpts from the following list: