

The Politics of Islam in Africa
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POS 6933, Section 06BG
AFS 6905, Section 06H8
CBD 216

Course Description:

This graduate seminar will examine the range of political dynamics of Islam in continental Africa taken as a whole. Although recent years have seen a significant scholarly—and policy—interest in the political and social dynamics of the Muslim world, the literature on Islam and Politics has paid only limited attention to Muslim societies in Africa, and especially to sub-Saharan Africa. This omission is particularly striking given the importance of Islam south of the Sahara: 9 predominantly Muslim countries, another 10 with Muslim populations of near or over 50%, and at least 12 more with significant Muslim minorities. A significant portion of our attention will thus be focused on the sub-Saharan portions of the continent. In the wake of the “Arab Spring” and the efforts at democratization in the five arabophone countries of North Africa, we have also seen a resurgence of Islamic political movements. Taking the continent as a whole, this course will thus explore both the increasing connections and parallels in Islam and politics across the Sahara, as well as consider what light the experiences of Islam in politics south of the Saharan might shed on the likely evolution of countries to the north.

Given both the significant diversity in the political impact of Islam on the continent, and the rapidly changing situation within given national political contexts, understanding and explaining requires both conceptual tools and careful analysis of the specific political and sociological configuration of any given case. This course is thus organized to attempt to help us meet both of these challenges. We will start with thematic consideration of some core questions and issues (though these will often be raised in the context of specific cases) before moving on to a consideration of the dynamics of a set of the more important countries (in which we will again consider the utility of the conceptual issues).

This is a graduate course in Comparative Politics and African Studies, and is open to graduate students in Political Science as well as to interested students in from other social science disciplines in the field of African Studies.

Readings:

Readings for the course will be available on the UF Library Course Reserve system, Ares, which can be accessed at: <https://ares.uflib.ufl.edu/ares/>. Books on the list can be consulted at Library West, and I will try to make all articles available in electronic form, via PDF or library link. Additions to the reading list will be made over the course of the semester, and will be announced in class or by email.

Either for convenience in this course or to build up your own personal library on this topic, the

following books may be of interest for you to purchase. (I have also requested that all of these be included on the Library reserves list.)

- An-Naim, Abdullahi Ahmed. *African Constitutionalism and the Role of Islam*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006. (216 pp., Cloth. ISBN 978-0-8122-3962-1. \$65.00 new)
- Badran, Margot, ed. *Gender and Islam in Africa: Rights, Sexuality, and Law*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, and Stanford UP, 2011.
- De Waal, Alex, ed. *Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa*. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2004. (\$24.95 paper)
- Filiu, Jean-Pierre. *The Arab Revolution: Ten Lessons from the Democratic Uprising*. Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Harnishfeger, Johannes. *Democratization and Islamic Law: The Sharia Conflict in Nigeria*. Campus Verlag, 2008.
- Miles, William F. S., ed. *Political Islam in West Africa: State-Society Relations Transformed*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007.
- Ostien, Philip, Jamila M. Nasir, Franz Kogelmann, eds. *Comparative Perspectives on Shari'ah in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books. Ltd. 2005. (Available on amazon.com, \$32 new).
- Robinson, David. *Muslim Societies in African History*. Cambridge University Press, 2004. (240 pp. \$19.99 new.
- Soares, Benjamin F. and René Otayek, eds. *Islam and Muslim Politics in Africa*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2007.
- Volpi, Frédéric. *Islam and Democracy: The Failure of Dialogue in Algeria*. London: Pluto Press, 2003.
- Volpi, Frédéric. *Political Islam Observed: Disciplinary Perspectives*. Columbia UP, 2010.
- Westerlund, David, and Eva Evers Rosander. *African Islam and Islam in Africa: Encounters between Sufis and Islamists* (London: Hurst and company / Athens: Ohio University Press, 1997. 347 pp.)

Course Requirements:

1. The first and primary requirement for this course is to attend class regularly, having done all required readings, and to be prepared to ask questions and engage critically in our discussions. Unexcused absences will have significant negative consequences on your final grade.

2. Secondly, I will ask each of you to choose one country from the list of cases we will consider, and to research both the political facts about that country, and the relevant literature that covers the issue of Islam and politics in that case. Specifically, I will ask you to:

- Research the literature and prepare a bibliography of key works on the country. This should include the 10-12 books, articles, or chapters that seem most important contributions to the scholarly literature on that country. The bibliography should be briefly annotated, with two or three sentences telling us what the major argument is, or the specific focus and approach. I will ask you *to meet with me on either 4 October* (For those presenting in first three case study sessions) *or 11 October* (for those presenting on the second three) and *bring me a draft of the bibliography to discuss*. I will also ask for your input on a common reading for the class on your case.

- On the day in which we are scheduled to discuss your case, I will ask you to both present your bibliography and, most importantly, to present the specific case in detail: I will expect you to be the class “expert” on that case, and be able to explain the relevant political trajectories, actors, and events.

3: Finally, you will write an article-length (i.e. about 10,000 words) research paper, framed as a question, which considers an important thematic issue within the context of your country case. The idea here is to go beyond the factual expertise you will develop for class presentation to present a more analytic discussion of an issue presented by the case, but of broader interest. I will of course be more than happy to discuss potential topics with you, and will ask you to bring a brief statement on a possible topic or approach to our meeting on 4 or 11 October. **Final papers will be due to me, in both electronic and hard copy format, by Thursday December 13 at 4 PM.**

You should feel free to consult closely with me in preparing these assignments; I will be glad to give you as much help as possible.

Your final grade for the course will be calculated on the following basis:

- Class attendance and discussion: 25%
- Class presentation and bibliography: 25%
- Final paper : 50%

Academic honesty:

Academic dishonesty, notably plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Any student engaging in such activities will be dealt with in accordance with University policy. It is your responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism, and what the university policies are. If you have doubts, I would be happy to discuss with you.

Students with disabilities:

If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this class, you should contact the Dean of Students Office (www.dso.ufl.edu/drp/) so that special arrangements can be made to accommodate you. It is your responsibility to do so at the beginning of the semester.

Course schedule:

27 August: *Course introduction*

3 September: *Labor Day, no class*

Part I: Thematic Perspectives:

10 September: *Perspectives on Islam and Politics in Africa*

Recommended: If your knowledge of Islam or its history in Africa is limited, I would recommend that you read one of the many available brief introductory works. A good one by a South African scholar is: • Abdelkader Tayob: *Islam: A Short Introduction*. A good introductory history of Islam in Africa is that by David Robinson: *Muslim Societies in African History*.

Readings:

- Volpi, Frédéric. *Political Islam Observed*. Chapters 1 (pp. 1-21) & 5 (pp. 101-121)
- Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics*. Chapters 1, 2, & 3. pp. 1-79.
- Robert W. Hefner, "Introduction: Modernity and the Remaking of Muslim Politics," in R. W. Hefner, ed. *Remaking Muslim Politics: Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization*. pp. 1-36.
- Hunwick, John. 1997. "Sub-Saharan Africa and the Wider World of Islam: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives," in David Westerlund and Eva Evers Rosander, eds., *African Islam and Islam in Africa: Encounters between Sufis and Islamists*, pp. 28-54.
- Joffé, George. "Maghribi Islam and Islam in the Maghrib: The Eternal Dichotomy," in David Westerlund and Eva Evers Rosander, eds., *African Islam and Islam in Africa: Encounters between Sufis and Islamists*, pp. 55-78
- Villalón, L. A. "Muslim Politics in West Africa." In the *Routledge Handbook of African Politics*, edited by David Anderson and Nic Cheeseman. London: Routledge Publishers. Forthcoming July 2012.
- Villalón, L. A. "Islam, the State, and Politics in sub-Saharan Africa." In *The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics*, edited by John L. Esposito and Emad El-Din Shahin. Oxford University Press, forthcoming, 2012.

17 September: *The Politics of Islamic Diversity: Sufis and Reformists*

Readings:

- Brenner, Louis. "Introduction: Muslim Representations of Unity and Difference in the African Discourse," in Louis Brenner, ed., *Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993, pp. 1-20.
- Brenner, Louis, "Sufism in Africa", Jacob K. Olupona (ed.), *African spirituality*, 2000, New York, The Crossroad Publishing Company, pp. 324-349
- Roman Loimeier, "Patterns and Peculiarities of Islamic Reform in Africa," in *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33:3 (2003), pp. 237-262.
- Mandaville, Peter. "Sufis and Salafis: the Political Discourse of Transnational Islam," in R. W. Hefner, ed. *Remaking Muslim Politics: Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization*. pp. 303-325.
- David Westerlund, "Reaction and Action: Accounting for the Rise of Islamism," in Westerlund and Rosander, eds. *African Islam and Islam in Africa*, pp. 308-334.
- Gerholm, Tomas. "The Islamization of Contemporary Egypt," in Westerlund and Rosander, eds. *African Islam and Islam in Africa*, pp. 127-161.
- Muhammad Sani Umar, "Changing Islamic Identity in Nigeria from the 1960s to the 1980s: From Sufism to Anti-Sufism," in L. Brenner, ed. *Muslim Identity and Social Change in sub-Saharan Africa*. 1993. pp. 154-178.

24 September: *Islam and the State: Constitutionalism and Democracy in Muslim Contexts*

Readings:

- Stepan, Alfred. "The World's Religious Systems and Democracy: Crafting the 'Twin Tolerations,'" chapter 11 of *Arguing Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2001.
- An-Naim, Abdullahi Ahmed. *African Constitutionalism and the Role of Islam*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006.
- Bratton, Michael. 2003. "Briefing: Islam, Democracy and Public Opinion in Africa." *African Affairs*, 102, pp. 493 – 501.
- Stepan, Alfred, with Graeme B. Robertson. "An 'Arab' more than a 'Muslim' Electoral Gap." In, *Journal of Democracy* 14:3 (July 2003).
- Driessen, Michael D. "Public Religion, Democracy, and Islam: Examining the Moderation Thesis in Algeria." *Comparative Politics*, January 2012.
- Kendhammer, Brandon. "The Sharia Controversy in Northern Nigeria and the Politics of Islamic Law in New and Uncertain Democracies." Forthcoming in *Comparative Politics*.

1 October: *The Politics of Gender, Islam, and the Law*

Readings:

- Badran, Margot. "Introduction: Gender and Islam in Africa—Rights, Sexuality, and Law." In Badran, M., ed. *Gender and Islam in Africa: Right, Sexuality, and Law*, pp. 1-16.

- Jeppie, Shamil, Ebrahim Moosa, and Richard Roberts, "Introduction: Muslim Family Law in Sub-Saharan Africa." In, Jeppie, Moussa and Roberts, eds. *Muslim Family Law in Sub-Saharan Africa: Colonial Legacies and Post-Colonial Challenges*. Amsterdam UP, 2009, pp. 13-60.
- Leonardo A. Villalón, "The Moral and the Political in African Democratization: The *Code de la Famille* in Niger's Troubled Transition." In *Democratization* 3:2 (Summer 1996), pp. 41-68.
- Dorothea E. Schulz, 2003b. "Political Factions, Ideological Fictions: The Controversy over Family Law Reform in Democratic Mali." *Islamic Law and Society*, 10 :1, pp. 132-164.
- Soares, Benjamin. "Family Law Reform in Mali: Contentious Debates and Elusive Outcomes." In Badran, M., ed. *Gender and Islam in Africa: Right, Sexuality, and Law*, pp. 263-290.
- Fortier, Corinne. "Women and Men Put Islamic Law to Their own Use: Monogamy versus Secret Marriage in Mauritania." In Badran, M., ed. *Gender and Islam in Africa: Right, Sexuality, and Law*, pp. 213-232.
- Hashim, Abdulkadir. 2005. "Muslim personal law in Kenya and Tanzania: Tradition and Innovation," in *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 25 (3), 449-460.

8 October: Intercommunal Politics: Muslim-nonMuslim relations.

Readings:

- Pew Charitable Trusts. 2010. "Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa." 331pp. A publication of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. Available at: <http://features.pewforum.org/africa/>. [note: this publication is largely tables of survey results: I'd like you to spend some time looking through it and reading the introductory discussions and analyses.]
- Soares, Benjamin, "Introduction: Muslim-Christian Encounters in Africa" in Soares. B. ed. *Muslim-Christian Encounters in Africa*, Leiden:Brill, 2006.
- Voll, John. "African Muslims and Christians in World History: : The Irrelevance of the "Clash of Civilizations," in Soares. B. ed. *Muslim-Christian Encounters in Africa*, Leiden:Brill, 2006.
- Michael Twaddle, "The Bible, the Qur'an and Political Competition in Uganda," in Niels Kastfelt, ed, *Scriptural Politics: The Bible and the Koran as Political Models in the Middle East and Africa*. London: Hurst, 2003, pp. 139-154.
- Donal B. Cruise O'Brien, "Coping with the Christians: the Muslim Predicament in Kenya," in Holger Bernt Hansen and Michael, Twaddle, eds. *Religion and Politics in East Africa: The Period Since Independence*. London: James Currey, 1995, pp. 200-221.
- Ostien, Philip, "An Opportunity Missed by Nigeria's Christians: The Sharia Debate of 1976-78 Revisited," in Soares, ed. *Muslim-Christian Encounters in Africa*, Leiden:Brill, 2006.
- Leinweber, Ashley, "The Muslim Minority of the Democratic Republic of Congo: From Historic Marginalization and Internal Division to Collective Action." *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 52: 2/3, 206-207 (2012), pp. 517-544.

15 October: Militant politics: Salafism, Jihadism and other radicalisms

Readings:

- Volpi, Frédéric. *Political Islam Observed*. Chapter 7, pp. 149-174.
- Meijer, Roel, “Introduction” in Meijer, R. ed, *Global Salafism: Islam’s New Religious Movement*. Columbia UP 2009.
- Haykel, Bernard, “On the Nature of Salah Thought and Action,” in Meijer, R. ed, *Global Salafism: Islam’s New Religious Movement*. Columbia UP 2009.
- de Waal, Alex, ed. *Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa*, Chapters 1 and 2.
- Ould Ahmed Salem, Zakaria. “The Paradoxes of Islamic Radicalisation in Mauritania.” In *Islamist Radicalization in North Africa: Politics and Process*. George Joffe, ed. London: Routledge. 2011.
- Turner, S. 2009. “These Young Men Show No Respect for Local Customs—Globalisation and Islamic Revival in Zanzibar”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 39. pp 237-261.
- Østebø, Terje. “Growth and Fragmentation: The Salafi Movement in Bale, Ethiopia,” in Meijer, R. ed, *Global Salafism: Islam’s New Religious Movement*, pp. 310-331.

Part II: Local Manifestations of Islam and Politics in Africa

Note: There will be some common reading(s) for each of the case studies which we will all read. The presenters will of course have read much more. The final selection of readings will be made partially in discussion with the class experts, and will be announced subsequently.

22 October: Algeria: Aborted democracy and radicalization

In many ways the tragic outcomes of the aborted effort at democratization in Algerian in 1991 have continued to have a direct impact on Muslim politics in Africa, and indeed beyond. The major question raised in 1991 about the participation and commitment of Islamist parties to democracy continue to be central today. Understanding the Algerian case is key to understanding much of Islam and politics in Africa.

29 October: Nigeria: Democracy and Sharia

Following a return (again) to democracy in 1999, and as a direct consequence of that process, 12 of Nigeria’s 36 states moved quickly to adopt (or return to) Sharia law, sparking intense and ongoing debates. With the province of Aceh in Indonesia, northern Nigeria thus presents a perhaps unique case of democratization and sharia-zation going hand in hand. We will explore this case and the debates it has raised.

5 November: The Sahel: Islam, democracy and the Secular State in Senegal, Niger, and Mali (1991-2012)

The former French colonies of the Sahel—especially Senegal, Mali and Niger—are 95% Muslim countries that have also maintained both secular states and (until the collapse of

the system in Mali on 22 March 2012) had also known 20 years of experimentation with democracy. We will examine how these different forces—Muslim societies, secular states, and democracy have been negotiated in these countries.

12 November: Veteran's Day, no class

19 November: Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco : Islamic politics and democracy in North Africa's "Spring"

The democratic uprisings in Arab North Africa that came to be known as the "Arab Spring" were marked initially by a striking absence of religion in these movements. With the move towards democratization, however, religious parties have moved center stage in politics, to much controversy. We will attempt to sort out what the experiences of Tunisia, Egypt, and Morocco have to tell us about the future of Islamic parties in democracies.

26 November: The Horn of Africa: Religious Transformations in Somalia and Ethiopia

The Horn of Africa is a troubled region, marked by strong regional tensions among countries. Nevertheless, for a long time religion did not appear to be particularly central to either the political dynamics of the 100% Muslim collapsed state of Somalia, or to its religiously divided neighbor, Ethiopia. The rise of Al-Shabab and other radical movements, and increasing religious tensions in Ethiopia, however, raise new and important questions, which we will explore.

3 December: East Africa: The politics of Muslim Minorities in Kenya and Tanzania

In the two important East African countries of Kenya and Tanzania, Muslims constitute important minorities, and perhaps close to half in Tanzania. Relations among communities have historically been largely peaceful, but there are intense debates on questions of political access and of legal and social status of Muslims. We will explore these two important cases of Muslim minorities.