

Islam and Politics in Africa

Syllabus

POS 4931, Section 4626
AFS 4935, Section 2040

Professor: Leonardo A. Villalón

Course Description:

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 relatively little attention to Muslim societies in sub-Saharan Africa. This omission is particularly striking given the importance of Islam on the continent: 9 predominantly Muslim countries, another 10 with Muslim populations of near or over 50%, and at least 12 more with significant Muslim minorities.

This seminar will examine the range of political dynamics of Islam in the region, with attention to both Muslim majority and Muslim minority countries. Rather than a straightforward country by country survey, the course will be thematically focused, and organized around several primary arenas of Islam and political action:

1. Intra-Muslim political debates: including the tensions between Sufi Islam and “reformist” movements, the politics of competing authority to speak for Islam in the modern context, and the role of Muslim women’s voices.
2. Muslims and the state: including state efforts to structure Muslim politics, debates on family law and personal issues, Muslim politics in newly democratized contexts, and Islam in the politics of weakened or collapsed states.
3. Inter-confessional politics: Muslim—non-Muslim relations and the politics of Islam in multi-religious countries.
4. The politics of Islamism or Jihadism, and the question of terrorism

The goal of this course is to allow you to understand and analyze complex current political dynamics in little-known regions of the world. Given the number of countries and movements involved, the materials for this course can be challenging. It will thus require serious commitment from you as a student to invest the time needed to master the materials we will read.

This is a course in comparative politics and African Studies, and is open to students in Political Science as well as to interested students from various fields of African Studies.

Readings: required materials

The following books will be assigned in their entirety or extensively, and you are encouraged to

purchase them if possible. They will also be available on reserve in the Smathers Library.

In addition, a significant package of articles and selected other readings will be available for purchase.

- De Waal, Alex, ed. *Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa*. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2004. (\$24.95 paper)
- 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. (220 pp. \$19.99 new)
- Soares, Benjamin F. and René Otayek, eds. *Islam and Muslim Politics in Africa*. New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2007. \$26.95
- Tayob, Abdulkader. *Islam: A Short Introduction*. Oneworld Publications: 1999. (Paperback, 224 pages. ISBN 1-85168-192-2. \$15.95 new)

Recommended book: Another recent book in English specifically on the politics of Islam in Africa, and that you might also want to consult, is the following:

- William F.S. Miles, ed. *Political Islam in West Africa: State-Society Relations Transformed*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner publishers 2007

NOTE: A bibliographic resource: The African Studies Center of Leiden University has a very useful on-line searchable database of citations on “Islam in Contemporary sub-Saharan Africa.” It is available at: <http://www.ascleiden.nl/Publications/Bibliographies/IslamInAfrica/>

Course Requirements:

1. The first and very important 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. Attendance will be taken at each class period, and any unexcused absences will reduce your attendance grade. You may request an excused absence only for legitimate academic reasons, via requests made in writing in advance, or in cases of emergency by written request with documentation presented as soon afterwards as possible.

2. You will be asked to sign up as a discussion leader for one week of the course. Discussion leaders will be required to come to class with the following prepared materials to facilitate our discussions and to serve as “study guides” for that week’s materials:

1. A list of at least 6-10 significant names, terms, organizations or events from the readings, with a brief identification and/or discussion of these items that you will prepare to help

guide us. Since much of the material in this course will be unfamiliar to many of you, the idea here is to help us compile a list of key organizations/individuals/terms with which we should all be familiar in mastering this subject.

2. Two analytical questions for general discussion. You should think carefully about what are the interesting issues raised by the readings that week, and work on carefully crafting these questions in an interesting and provocative format.

- You are encouraged to coordinate with other discussion leaders for the same week so as to get better coverage of the materials, perhaps by agreeing to divide the readings from which you will draw the terms and names for identification.

- You are required to come to class with sufficient copies of these materials to be distributed to everyone in the class. If you would like, you can email me the material *by noon on the Monday before class*, and I will be happy to make the copies. Otherwise, you should bring the copies to class yourself. NOTE: *You will be graded here not only on doing this exercise, but on the quality of the materials you prepare.*

3. Two exams, of two hours each. The first of these will be held in class on 3 March, and the second at the scheduled time for the final exam: 10-12 AM, Tuesday 28 April. These exams will be a combination of identification-type questions and essays, and you will have a study guide in advance to help you prepare. These study guides will be composed largely of the materials prepared by the discussion group leaders, although I may add or edit these as necessary. There will be no make-up exams, and an exam can only be rescheduled in case of a fully documented real emergency.

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

- Class attendance and discussion leader role: 30%
- Exam #1 30%
- Exam #2 40%

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 very beginning of the semester.

Course schedule:

Week 1: 1/06 Course introduction:

PART I: Contexts

- Week 2: 1/13** **Background: Islam as religion; perspectives on religion and politics**
Readings:
- Abdelkader Tayob: *Islam: A Short Introduction*. Oxford: One World publications, 1999.
 - Kenneth D. Wald, Adam L. Silverman and Kevin S. Fridy, "Making Sense of Religion in Political Life," In *Annual Review of Political Science* 2005, 8: 121-143.
 - Robert W. Hefner, "Introduction: Modernity and the Remaking of Muslim Politics," in R. W. Hefner, ed. *Remaking Muslim Politics: Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization*. Princeton University Press 2005. pp. 1-36

- Week 3: 1/20** **The context: Islam in Africa.**
Readings:
- David Robinson: *Muslim Societies in African History*, chapters: 1-6, 8, 10, 12, and 13.
 - 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*. London: Hurst & Company.
 - L. A. Villalón, "Islam in sub-Saharan Africa: Local Dynamics in a Globalized Context," in *Africa Contemporary Record*, Volume 28, pp. A37-A53.
 - René Otayek and Benjamin F. Soares, "Introduction" in Soares and Otayek, eds. *Islam and Muslim Politics in Africa*. New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2007.

PART II: Muslim politics: authority and the community

- Week 4: 1/27** **Sufis and their critics**
Readings:
- Brenner, Louis, "Sufism in Africa", Jacob K. Olupona (ed.), *African spirituality*, 2000, New York, The Crossroad Publishing Company, pp. 324-349
 - Roman Loimeier, "Sufis and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa." In Paul L. Heck, ed. *Sufism and Politics: the Power of Spirituality*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers 2007.
 - Roman Loimeier, "Patterns and Peculiarities of Islamic Reform in Africa," in *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33:3 (2003), pp. 237-262.
 - Sessemann, Rudiger. "Between Sufism and Islamism: The Tijaniyya and Islamist Rule in the Sudan." In Paul L. Heck, ed. *Sufism and Politics: the Power of Spirituality*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers 2007.
 - 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.

• Leonardo A. Villalón, “Senegal: Shades of Islamism on a Sufi Landscape?” in William F.S. Miles, ed. *Political Islam in West Africa: State-Society Relations Transformed*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner publishers 2007, pp.161-182.

Week 5: 2/3 **Professor out of town: no class**

Week 6: 2/10 **Who speaks for Islam? The politics of authority and modernity**

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.

• Ibrahim, Abdullahi Ali. “A Theology of Modernity: Hasan al-Turabi and Islamic Renewal in Sudan.” *Africa Today* 46: 3/4 (Summer/Autumn 1999), pp. 195-222.

• Mahmoud Mohamed, “Mahmud Muhammad Taha’s Second Message of Islam and his Modernist Project.” In John Cooper, R. Nettler and M. Mahmoud, eds. *Islam and Modernity: Muslim Intellectuals Respond*. London: I. B. Tauris, 1998

• George Packer, “The Moderate Martyr: Interpreting Islam for the Modern World,” in *The New Yorker*, September 11, 2006. pp. 60-69. [not in reading package: available electronically via UF library site]

Week 7: 2/17 **Education and social change in Muslim society**

Readings:

• Muhammad Sani Umar, “Education and Islamic Trends in Northern Nigeria: 1970s-1990s”. In *Africa Today* 48:2 (Summer 2001), pp. 127-150. [e]

• Galilou Abdoulaye, “The Graduates of Islamic Universities in Benin: a Modern Elite Seeking Social, Religious and Political Recognition,” in Thomas Bierschenk and Georg Stauth, eds. *Islam in Africa* (Yearbook of the Sociology of Islam 4, 2002). pp. 129-146.

• Brenner, Louis. 2007. “The Transformation of Muslim Schooling in Mali: the Madrasa as an Institution of Social and Religious Mediation.” In Robert W. Hefner and Muhammad Quasim Zaman, eds. *School Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

• Adeline Maquelier, “Negotiating Futures: Islam, Youth and the State in Niger,” in René Otayek and Benjamin F. Soares, eds. *Islam and Muslim Politics in Africa*. New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2007, pp. 243-262.

Week 8: 2/24 **The emergence of gendered politics: women’s voices**

Readings:

• Alidou, Ousseina and Hassana Alidou. 2008. “Women, Religion, and the Discourses of Legal Ideology in Niger Republic.” *Africa Today* 54:3, pp. 21-36

- Erin Augis, “Dakar’s Sunnite Women: The Politics of Person,” in Muriel Gomez-Perez, ed., *L’Islam politique au sud du Sahara: Identités, discours et enjeux*. Paris: Karthala, 2005, pp. 309-326
- Mbow, Penda. 2006. “The Secular State and Citizenship in Muslim Countries: Bringing Africa into the Debate.” *Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML)*, Dossier 28. Available online at: <http://www.wluml.org/english/pubs/pdf/dossier28/penda-en.pdf> (Originally delivered as a lecture at the National Endowment for Democracy, Washington DC. 26 January 2006.)
- Niezen, R. W. and Barbro Bankson. 1995. “Women of the Jama’a Ansar al-Sunna: Female Participation in a West African Islamic Reform Movement.” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 29:3, pp. 403-428.

Week 9: 3/3 Exam #1

Week 10: 3/10 Spring break, no class

PART III: Muslims and the state in Africa

Week 11: 3/17 The Era of democratization: Muslim voices in liberalized arenas

- Readings:*
- Karatnycky, Adrian. 2002. “The 2001 Freedom House Survey: Muslim Countries and the Democracy Gap.” *Journal of Democracy* 13:1, pp. 99-112.
 - Stepan, Alfred, with Graeme B. Robertson. “An ‘Arab’ more than a ‘Muslim’ Electoral Gap.” In, *Journal of Democracy* 14:3 (July 2003).
 - Bratton, Michael. 2003. “Briefing: Islam, Democracy and Public Opinion in Africa.” *African Affairs*, 102, pp. 493 – 501.
 - Brégand, Denise, “Muslim Reformists and the State in Benin, in Soares and Otayek, eds.
 - Sounaye, Abdoulaye. 2007. “Instrumentalizing the Qur’an in Niger’s Public Life.” *Journal for Islamic Studies* 27, Thematic Issue: “Islam and African Muslim Publics,” pp. 211-239
 - Villalón, Leonardo. “Negotiating Democracy in Muslim Contexts: Sahelian experiments.” Ms. 2008. [*not in reading package; to be distributed in class*]

Week 12 3/24 The politics of person: family law, public morality, human rights

- Readings:*
- 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.
 - Hashim, Abdulkadir. 2005. “Muslim personal law in Kenya and Tanzania: Tradition and Innovation,” in *Journal of Muslim Minority*

Affairs, 25 (3), 449-460. [not in reading package; available electronically via UF library site]

• An-Na'im, Abdullahi Ahmed. "Islam and Human Rights in Sahelian Africa," in David Westerlund and Eva Evers Rosander, eds., *African Islam and Islam in Africa: Encounters between Sufis and Islamists*. London: Hurst & Company, 1997, pp. 79-94.

Talk: 3/30 Prof. Lamin Sanneh, Yale University: "The return of religion in Africa" time and place TBA

Week 13: 3/31 Official Islam and the State: The Sharia debate in Nigeria.

Readings:

- Suberu, Rotimi, "Continuity and change in Nigeria's Shari'a debates", Muriel Gomez-Perez (ed.), *L'islam politique au sud du Sahara: identités, discours et enjeux*, 2005, Paris, Karthala, pp. 209-226.
- Ostien, Nasir and Kogelman, eds: Comparative perspectives on Shari'ah in Nigeria. Read: Introduction: (pp. ix-xli)
Tayob, Alli, Elaigun (pp. 27-73)
Durham, Gaiyu, Sada (pp. 144-177)
Sanusi, Danfulani, Oloyade (p. 251-302)
An-Naim, Ahmad, Walls (p. 327-382)

Talk: 4/3: Prof. Philip Ostien, "Implementing Shari'a in Northern Nigeria." 3:30 PM in 404 Grinter

PART IV: Inter-confessional politics: Muslim--non-Muslim relations

Week 14 4/7 The politics of numbers: Minorities and Majorities

Readings:

- Rosalind Hackett, "Radical Christian Revivalism in Nigeria and Ghana: Recent Patterns of Intolerance and Conflict," in Abdullahi A. An-Na'im, *Proselytization and Communal Self-Determination in Africa*. Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 1999.
- François Constantin, "Muslims and Politics: The Attempts to Create Muslim National Organizations in Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya," In Holger Bernt Hansen and Michael, Twaddle, eds. *Religion and Politics in East Africa: The Period Since Independence*. London: James Curray, 1995, pp. 19-31.
- 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 Curray, 1995, pp. 200-221.
- Loimeier, Roman, "Perceptions of Marginalization: Muslims in Contemporary Tanzania," in René Otayek and Benjamin F. Soares, eds. *Islam and Muslim Politics in Africa*. New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2007, pp. 137-156.

- 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.

PART V: The transnational politics of Islamism/Jihadism/Terrorism

Week 15 4/14 Resurgent religion and weakened states: Focus on the Horn, part I

Readings: • De Waal, Alex, ed. *Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa*. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2004, chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6

Talk: 4/17: Prof. Sean Hanretta, Stanford University, “Dying Muslim: Struggles over Burial Practices in Ghana.” 3:30 PM in 404 Grinter.

Week 16 4/21 US Policy in Muslim Africa: The question of “terrorism”

Readings:

- De Waal, Alex, ed. *Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa*. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2004, chapter 7
- Stephen Ellis, “Briefing: the Pan-Sahel Initiative” in *African Affairs* 103/412, pp. 459-464.
- Princeton N. Lyman and J. Stephen Morrison, “The Terrorist Threat in Africa,” *Foreign Affairs* 83:1 (January/February 2004), pp. 75-86.
- Jeremy Keenan, “The Collapse of the Second Front,” September 26, 2006. “FPIF Commentary” from Foreign Policy in Focus. Available at <http://www.fpif.org/pdf/gac/0609sahara.pdf>
- International Crisis Group, “Islamist Terrorism in the Sahel: Fact or Fiction?”. Africa Report No. 92, 31 March 2005. Available on the ICG website at: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3347&l=1> [e].
- Dickson, David. 2005. “Political Islam in sub-Saharan Africa: The Need for a New Research and Diplomatic Agenda.” United States Institute of Peace, Special report no. 140. Washington, May.

Final Exam: 10-12 AM, Tuesday 28 April