

# **School of International Studies**

Islam and Human Rights  
Spring 2014

**Name of Instructor:** Dr. Zaid Eyadat

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## **Course Description:**

This course aims to explore various aspects of the debate over the relationship between Islam and human rights. The center concern of this course is the study of the genealogy of human rights in Islamic theorizing. The course starts with providing a broad overview of the theoretical and methodological approaches in studying Islam as well as human rights. It proceeds to examine several dimensions of Islamic theorizing on politics, ethics, state, and justice. After introducing the general trends in Islamic thought, the course will take up the following debatable issues in the field: Minority and citizenship, woman's rights, Islamic Feminism, proceeding to the Arab Spring and the transformation of political Islam. Class time will be divided between lecture and discussion and students are expected to be prepared to contribute based on their understanding of the reading material.

## **Learning outcomes for the Course**

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Identify the various methods and approaches to the study of Islam and Human Rights.
- Recognize the main issues and themes in Islamic theorizing.
- Identify the leading thinkers in Islamic theorizing on human rights.
- Discuss the recent debates concerning human rights issues within the diverse trends of Islamic thought.
- Explain the recent transformation of political Islam, and the Islamists stand towards promoting human rights in the Arab-Islamic world.

**Skills:**

By the end of the course students should gain and improve the following skills:

- To lead a scientific discussion on problematic political and theoretical issues and events.
- Write a critical and scientifically sound papers and essays.
- Analyze and explain the relations, and correlations between different variables relating to Islam and human rights.
- To think causally in understanding and explaining human rights issues and its relation to Islamic theorizing.

**Attitudes:**

The course will encourage students to develop the following attitudes:

- Openness to learn and respect different ideas and explanations.
- Demonstrate objectivity in conducting social science research.
- Understanding of different motives and drivers of human behavior.

**Required Reading:**Texts books:

- Abdulaziz Sachedina, Islam and The Challenge of Human Rights, Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Abdullahi An-Na'im, Islam and the Secular State, Harvard University Press, 2010.
- Amina Wadud, Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam, Oneworld, 2006.
- Ann Elizabeth Mayer, Islam and Human Rights: Tradition and Politics, Westview Press, 2006.
- Asma Barlas, Believing Women in Islam, University of Texas Press, 2002.
- John L. Esposito, Voices of resurgent Islam,

- Khaled Abu El-Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women*, 2002.
- Leila Ahmad, *Women and Gender in Islam, Historical Roots of Modern Debate*, Yale University Press, 1992.
- Mohammad Abed al-Jabri, *Democracy, Human Rights and Law in Islamic Thought*, I. B. Tauris, 2008.
- Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid, *Rethinking the Quran: towards a humanistic hermeneutics*, University of Humanistic, 2004.
- Muhammad Shahrour, *The Quran, Morality and Critical Reason*, Brill: 2009.
- Abdolkarim Soroush, *Reason Freedom and Democracy in Islam*, Oxford University Press, 2000.

Suggested Readings:

- Ali Abd al-Raziq, *Al-Islam Wa Usul al-Hukum*, (Arabic Edition), 1925.
- Charles Kurzman, *Liberal Islam*, Oxford University Press, USA, 1998.
- Farid Esack, "In Search of Progressive Islam Beyond 9/11", in *Progressive Muslim*, 2004.
- Hodgson, Marshall, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, Vol. 3. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974.
- Farid Esack, *Qur'an, Liberation, and Pluralism*, One world Publications 1997.
- Nasr Hamed Abu Zaid, *Reformation of Islamic Thought: A Critical Historical Analysis*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006.
- Khaled Abou El Fadl, *The Place of Tolerance in Islam*, 2002.
- Martin Kramer, *The Mismeasure of Political Islam*, *The Islamism Debate*, ed. Martin Kramer (Tel Aviv: The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1997), pp. 161-73.
- Muhammad Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam: Common Questions, Uncommon answers*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1994.
- Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change*, Princeton University Press 2007.

- Said, AbdulAziz, Mohammed Abu-Nimer and Meena Sharify-Funk, eds. 2006, Contemporary Islam: Dynamic, not Static. NY: Routledge.
- Soroush, A. (2002). Islamic Revival and Reform,” in Reason, Freedom and Democracy in Islam. By Sadri, M & A. Sadri, eds.
- Souad, Ali, A religion Not a State, Ali Abd al-Raziq’s Islamic justification of Political Secularism, The University of Utah Press, 2009.
- Wael Hallaq, A History of Islamic Legal Theories (1997).

**Assessment Overview:**

Description	Weight	Due Date
Attendance, participation, presentation	30 %	
Term paper	30%	
Final exam	40%	

**Assessment Tasks:**

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all regularly scheduled classes. In this course you are permitted two unexcused absences (absences not caused by illness). If you have more than two unexcused absences your grade for the course will be lowered by one “mark” for each additional unexcused absence. For example, after three unexcused absences an A becomes an A- and so on.

Participation: Presentations and Discussions:

Questions, attendance, presentations and discussions are what will make this class work; your physical and mental presences in class, as well as consistent participation, are mandatory. Please make sure that you do the reading each and every time and that you come to class ready to express yourself, give effective presentations and discuss the readings.

### Final Exams:

The final exam for this course will be a take home exam in which the student will prepare three short essays (Typed) in response to three of five questions posed by the instructor. Each response should be limited to 1000-1500 words in a standard essay that conforms to the MLA format using 12 point Times New Roman font with 2.5 cm margins.

### Term Paper:

Approval of the paper topic (0% of grade).

Submission of an outline and bibliography (10%of the paper grade).

Submission of a first draft (10%of the paper grade).

Submission of a final paper (80% of the final paper grade).

Students are expected to complete a research paper on a topic to be chosen in consultation with the instructor. Papers must be not less than 5000 words. All term papers should include a bibliography of not less than eight scholarly sources which the student can draw on for future research. Papers must conform to the MLA format using 12-point font. You are asked to develop a complete research paper which integrates one of the topics you have studied throughout the class

### Guidelines for writing the term Paper

The paper is to address a topic related to the subject that was discussed during classes or to themes included in this syllabus or to a subject related to the course. All paper topics should be approved by the Instructor.

The paper should include a title page: all subsequent pages should be consecutively numbered.

All proposed topics are expected to be specific and narrowly focused.

Papers should be 10-15 pages, double-spaced (excluding title page, endnote page and bibliography) that conform to MLA format using 12-point font, you should summarize all related literature, focusing on the main arguments presented, and set out a framework for discussion.

The structure of a typical paper might look something like this:

Introduction of the subject matter

Statement of purpose

Research problem(s)

Research question(s)

Literature review

Discussion and conclusion.

A theoretical framework should be developed in the paper within or after the literature review.

At least eight different scholarly sources must be consulted and cited within the paper and in the endnotes. These may include books, articles, and newspapers if appropriate. Class lectures and text books may be used but WILL NOT count as one of the eight sources.

Books and Journal Articles will count individually. All newspapers will count as one (1) source. All magazine articles (Times, Newsweek, Economist, etc) will count as one (1) source. All internet recourses will count as one (1) source.

Late papers will be down-graded accordingly.

Week	Topic(s)	Assigned Readings
1 18 Feb.	Introduction and Overview	
2 25 Feb.	Conceptual Constructs: <i>What is Islam?</i> <i>What are Human Rights?</i>	1- Mayer, Ann Elizabeth, <i>Islam and Human Rights: Tradition and Politics</i> , Ch 3. 2- Abdulaziz Sachedina, <i>Islam and The Challenge of Human Rights</i> , pgs: 3-40. 3- Abdullahi An-Naim with D. Gort, H. Jansen, & H. M. Vroom, <i>Human Rights and Religious Values: An Uneasy Relationship?</i>
		Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs): Introduce and analyze the concept of Islam and the modern human rights discourse. Discuss and analyze various views on the relation between Islam and human rights.
3 4 March	Islam and Human Rights: <i>What to Study and How to Study it?</i>	1- Muhammad Arkoun, <i>Rethinking Islam Today</i> , Sage Publication, 2003. 2- Arvind Sharma, "The Religious Perspective: Dignity as a Foundation for Human Rights Discourse"; Part III, "A Declaration of Human Rights by the World's Religions," pp. 131-205 3- Antony Black, (2010), <i>Religion and Politics in Western and Islamic Political Thought: A Clash of Epistemologies</i> , The Political Quarterly, vol 81, no,1.
		ILOs: Introduce and assess the methodological approaches to the study of Islam and human rights.
4 11 March	<u>Islam and Ethics:</u> <i>The Original Position</i>	1- Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid, <i>Rethinking the Quran: towards a humanistic hermeneutics</i> , pgs: 7-34. 2- Mahmood Muhamad Taha, <i>The Second Message of Islam</i> . In Liberal Islam book, Charles Kurzman, 3- Muhammad Shahrour, <i>The Quran, Morality and Critical Reason</i> , pgs: 1-20 4- Abdolkarim Soroush, Reason Freedom and Democracy in Islam, pgs: 105-121.
		ILOs: Introduce contemporary theories of ethics in Islam, with an emphasis on Quranic ethics. Introduce John Rawls' "original position" in situating and analyzing these ethical theories.

<p>5 18 March</p>	<p><u>Islam and Ethics:</u> <i>Elements of A Theory</i></p>	<p>1- Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid, (2001), <i>The Quranic Concept of Justice</i>, Polylog, forum for Intercultural Philosophizing', No. 3 2- Khaled Abou El Fadl, <i>The Place of Tolerance in Islam</i>, 2001. 3- George Hourani, <i>Reason and Tradition in Islamic Ethics</i>, pgs: 1- 22, and 270- 276.</p> <p>ILOs: Build upon the theories of ethics in Islam. Analyze scholarly works on Islamic ethics in relation to conceptions of Islamic justice, tolerance, reason, and tradition.</p>
<p>6 25 March</p>	<p><u>Islam:</u> <i>History, Politics and Fiqh</i></p>	<p>1-Nasr Abu Zaid, <i>Reformation of Islamic Thought: A Critical Historical Analysis</i>, pgs: 21-36. 2-Wael Hallaq, <i>A History of Islamic Legal Theories: An Introduction to Sunni Usul Al-Fiqh</i>, pgs: Introduction. 3-Sayyid Qutb, "Ch. 3: <i>The Foundations of Social Justice in Islam</i>," <i>Social Justice in Islam</i> (Oneonta, N.Y.: Islamic Publications International, 2000), pp. 51-92.</p> <p>ILOs: Introduce and analyze the historical approach of Islam within politics and jurisprudence (fiqh). Juxtapose and critique the historical approach to the contemporary "original position" approach of Islam.</p>
<p>7 1 April</p>	<p><u>Islam:</u> <i>History, Politics and Fiqh</i></p>	<p>1- Mohammad Abed al-Jabri, <i>Democracy, Human Rights and Law in Islamic Thought</i>, pgs: 3-28. 2- Khaled Abou El-Fadl, <i>Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women</i>, pgs (1-8), (96-140). 3-Abdulaziz Sachedina, <i>Islam and The Challenge of Human Rights</i>, pgs: 41-80.</p> <p>ILOs: Assess and critique the historical approach of Islamic politics and fiqh and their relationship to the modern human rights discourse.</p>
<p>8 8 April</p>	<p><u>The State in Islam</u> <u>Ethical Islam</u></p>	<p>1- Abdullahi An-Na'im, <i>Islam and the Secular State</i>, pgs: 1-45. 2- Abdolkarim Soroush, <i>Reason Freedom and Democracy in Islam</i>, pgs: (122-155). 3- Fahmi Jadaan, <i>Notions of the State in Contemporary Arab-Islamic Writings</i>, In: Giacomo Luciani (Ed), <i>The Arab State</i>, (pp. 247-283)</p>



		<p>ILOs: Explore and analyze contemporary conceptions of the relationship between Islam and the state.</p>
9 15 April	<p>The State in Islam <u>History, Politics and Fiqh</u></p>	<p>1- Abdelwahab El-Affendi, <i>On the State, Democracy and Pluralism</i>, (172-193) 2-John L. Esposito, <i>Voices of resurgent Islam</i>, pgs: (63-133). 3- Basheer Nafi, <i>The Rise of Islamic Reformists Thought and its Challenge to Traditional Islam</i>, in <i>Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century</i> book, pgs: 28-60.</p> <p>ILOs: Assess and critique the historical approach to political Islam. Compare and analyze this approach in relation to the modern ethical conception of Islam.</p>
10 22 April	<p>Minorities and Citizenship <u>Ethical Islam</u></p>	<p>1-Abdulaziz Sachedina, <i>Islam and The Challenge of Human Rights</i>, ch: 5. 2- March, Andrew. <i>Islam and Liberal Citizenship: The Search for an Overlapping Consensus</i>, Oxford University Press, 2009. 3- Ann Elizabeth Mayer, <i>Islam and Human Rights: Tradition and Politics</i>, chapter 7.</p> <p>ILOs: Introduce and analyze the issue of minorities and citizenship in order to explore a specific manifestation of the modern conception of Islam and ethics.</p>
11 29 April	<p>Minorities and Citizenship <u>History, Politics, and Fiqh</u></p>	<p>1-A. Mawdudi, <i>Islam and Human Rights</i> (Islamic Foundation, 1981), pp. 5-39 2- Kaled Abou ElFadel, <i>Islamic Law and Muslim Minorities: The Juristic Discourse on Muslim Minorities from the Second/Eighth to the Eleventh/Seventeenth Centuries</i>", <i>Islamic Law and Society</i> 1, no. 2 (1994): pp. 141-187 3-Abdullahi An-Nai'm, <i>Religious Minorities under Islamic Law and the Limits of Cultural Relativism</i>, pp. 1-18.</p> <p>ILOs: Analyze and critique the treatment and conceptualization of minorities and citizenship employing the historical Islamic framework. Compare and contrast this framework with the modern conceptualization of Islam and ethics.</p>
12	<p>Woman's Rights</p>	<p>1-Amina Wadud, <i>Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam</i>, pgs: Introduction. 2-Asma Barlas, <i>Believing Women in Islam</i>,</p>

6 May	<u>Ethical Islam</u>	<p>pgs: 1-28. 3-Leila Ahmad, <i>Women and Gender in Islam, Historical Roots of Modern Debate</i>, Pgs: (125-248).</p>
		<p>ILOs: Assess and analyze the issue of women's rights within the modern framework of Islam and ethics. Review contemporary feminist Islamic scholars and reinterpretations of women's rights in Islam.</p>
13 13 May	<p>Woman's Rights <u>History, Politics, and Fiqh</u></p>	<p>1- Ann Elizabeth Mayer, <i>Islam and Human Rights: Tradition and Politics</i>, chapter: 6. 2-Khaled Abu El-Fadl, <i>Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women</i>, pgs: 209-263. 3- Leila Ahmad, <i>Women and Gender in Islam, Historical Roots of Modern Debate</i>, pgs: Part II: (41-124)</p>
		<p>ILOs: Introduce and critique the historical conception of women's rights within Islam, analyzing existing fiqh related to women's rights. Compare and critique this approach in juxtaposition with the modern conceptualization of Islam and ethics.</p>
14 20 May	<p>Freedom in Islam <u>Ethical Islam</u></p>	<p>1- Abdolkarim Soroush, <i>Reason Freedom and Democracy in Islam</i>, pgs: (88-105) 2-Nasr Abu Zaid, <i>Reformation of Islamic Thought: A Critical Historical Analysis</i>, pgs: 83-101.</p>
		<p>ILOs: Introduce the modern Islamic conception of freedom in relation to the "original position" and ethics in Islam. Explore this concept in relation to interpretations of democracy and reason in Islam.</p>
15 27 May	<p>Freedom in Islam <u>History, Politics, and Fiqh</u></p>	<p>1-Ann Elizabeth Mayer, <i>Islam and Human Rights: Tradition and Politics</i>, chapter 9. 2- Esposito, John. <i>The Future of Islam</i>. (2010). ch.: 2: God in Politics, 3: Where are the Muslim Reformers?</p>
		<p>ILOs: Explore and analyze the historical conception of Islam and freedom. Analyze Islamic jurisprudence on political Islam, democracy, and reason. Critique this approach in comparison to the modern ethical framework of Islam.</p>