Political Science 131: Muslim Integration and Exclusion

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Introduction

Muslim immigration and integration is an increasingly important topic of political debate across developed democracies. In the U.S., President Trump’s harsh rhetoric on Islam and “Muslim ban” have incited heated debate. In Europe, researchers have stressed that Muslim demands for official recognition and “group rights” — including, for example, Islamic education in public schools, teachers’ rights to wear headscarves, the construction of cemeteries conforming to Islamic burial practices, permission to ritually sacrifice live animals for Muslim feast days, and requests for gender-segregated physical education classes — lie at the heart of contemporary debates over the incorporation of immigrants (Koopmans et al. 2005; Kymlicka 1995).

This class will introduce students to debates about Muslim integration in developed democracies. I will begin by introducing the fundamental principles of Islam and providing an overview of Muslim immigration to North America and Europe. We will then discuss the opportunities and challenges involved in integrating Muslim populations. In particular, we will draw from European and Islamic political theory to discuss the compatibility of Islam and democracy — a particularly contentious topic in contemporary politics. We will emphasize key flash points in debates over Muslims’ integration, namely women’s rights and the compatibility of Islamic legal principles with Western law. Finally, we will discuss the causes and consequences of discrimination against Muslims.

Course readings will consist of a mix of works by European and North American scholars and Islamic scholars. Students will read works representing a variety of Muslim viewpoints, challenging the frequently-monolithic portrayal of Islam in America media. By the end of the course, students will learn to think critically and objectively about such debates.

Course Materials

All readings are posted online on the course website on TED in the ‘Contents’ folder.

I will occasionally make use of in-class polls and quizzes. Students are required to purchase an I-Clicker. They may be purchased (new or used) from the UCSD bookstore.

My Expectations

Come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Muslim integration is an extremely complex issue and we will engage with a variety of perspectives. I urge you to read each piece with an
open and reflective mind. Some pieces we read will seem challenging and very foreign at first, but your persistence will be rewarded.

Your papers should demonstrate not only that you read and understood the readings, but that you have thought about them critically and formed an opinion. I expect you to be able to articulate your opinion in a thoughtful, balanced way, acknowledging the pros and cons of your argument. You should also demonstrate that you can integrate concepts from the readings in an organized, succinct manner.

**Grading**

You will be graded based on two in-class exams and a 5-page written final assignment.

The exams will consist largely of essay questions. You will be given a list of possible prompts a week in advance to prepare. You will be given the (optional) opportunity to raise your midterm grade by up to 5 points by submitting a re-write to the professor by Week 7.

You will receive the final assignment prompt during Week 6. For this assignment, you will be required to respond to an opinion piece on Muslim integration akin to what you might read in the paper or internet. You will be required to fact check the piece, correct any figures that are incorrect, and write a 5 page response in which you agree or disagree with the key points made by the author.

This assignment should be double-spaced and written in 12 point, Times New Roman (or comparable) font.

On occasion, extra credit points may be offered for in-class quizzes using I-Clicker. I anticipate offering 5 points throughout the quarter.

Your grade will be calculated as follows:

30 % Midterm Exam
40% Final Exam
30% Final Assignment

**Late Policy**

Your grade will drop one half a letter grade (e.g. A to A-) for each day you are late in turning in your papers. After one week, I will not accept papers without a documented medical or family excuse.

**Grade Appeals**
You can expect to be graded solely on your academic performance. This includes clarity of thought, knowledge of the material, composition, spelling, and grammar. Students who believe to have received an incorrect grade or a grade based on non-academic criteria should e-mail me a formal appeal. The appeal will consist of a single typed page that identifies the problem and presents a reasoned argument that the grade fits the appeal criteria listed above.

**Disability**

If you are a student with a documented disability who will be requesting accommodations in my class, please make sure you are registered with the Office for Students with Disabilities (University Center 202; 858.534.4382) and provide me with documentation outlining your accommodations. I will be glad to meet with you privately during my office hours to discuss any concerns you have.

**Respect for Diversity**

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be valued as a resource and benefit. It is my intention to present materials and promote discussions that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other students or student groups.

**Course Schedule**

**Week 1: Introduction**

**Thursday, September 28, 2017**

**Week 2: What is Islam? How is it perceived in the West?**

*Key Question: What do Muslims believe? How diverse are Muslim beliefs? How is Islam perceived in the West?*

**Tuesday, October 3, 2017**

Film: FAQ on Islam


**Thursday, October 5, 2017**


**Week 3: Muslims in the U.S. ; Muslims in Europe**

*Key Questions: What are the characteristics of Muslims in the U.S.? What challenges do they face? What are the key challenges Muslims face in Europe? How have European governments reacted to Muslim immigration?*

**Tuesday, October 10, 2017**

In-Class Film


**Thursday, October 12, 2017**


**Week 4: Muslims in Europe (continued) ; What is integration? Are immigrants politically integrating?**

*Key Questions: What does it mean for an immigrant to “integrate”? How do debates over Muslim immigrants differ from those over Latinx immigrants, and how are they the same?*

**Tuesday, October 17, 2017**

Thursday, October 19, 2017


Week 5: Islam and Democracy

Key Questions: Is Islam compatible with democracy? How does Islamic political theory conceptualize the relationship between Islam and the state?

October 24, 2017


October 26, 2017


Highly Recommended:


Week 6: Clash of Civilizations / Midterm

Key Question: Is a clash of civilizations inevitable?
October 31, 2017:

MIDTERM

November 2, 2017


Week 7: Multiculturalism and Group Rights

What is multiculturalism? Does it work?

November 7, 2017


November 9, 2017


Week 8: Muslim Political and Legal Integration

Key Questions: Are Muslim immigrants integrating into democratic polities? Are Islamic conceptions of law and women’s rights compatible with European and North American norms?

November 14, 2017


November 16, 2017


**Week 9: Muslim Exclusion**

*Key Questions: What are the causes and consequences of Muslim exclusion?*

**November 21, 2017**


**Week 10: Sending Country Influence / Refugees**

*Key Questions: What responsibilities do states have towards refugees and asylum seekers?*

**November 28, 2017**


**November 30, 2017**


**Week 11: Radicalization**

*Key Question: Why do people radicalize?*

**December 5, 2017**

In-Class Film.


**December 7, 2017**

**FINAL EXAM REVIEW SESSION**

**Note**

If you read this far, please send me an e-mail with “Syllabus Extra Credit” in the subject line (by September 28th) and you’ll receive 2 extra credit points on your final exam grade.