Seminar

Religion and Politics: is There an Islamic Exceptionalism?
Olivier Roy
Mondays, 17:00 - 19:00
(Room 4)
Autumn 2012
(first session on 1 October, 2012)

Is there an Islamic exceptionnalism? In comparing the process of democratization which has started in the Arab world with other historical periods (Latin America in the 1970’s and 1980’s, Eastern Europe after 1989), we see a specific pattern: opposition parties which have an opportunity to win elections are mainly Islamist parties with a religious ideology. This triggers two questions: are these parties compatible with democracy? Is a process of secularisation a pre-requisite for a transition to democracy? In a word: what is the relation between Islam and democracy. The course will study what could be called an Islamic Political Thought, by referring to classical authors and History. The issue of sharia will also be studied (is sharia just a legal system or a global ideology?). Are politics framed by a fixed theological paradigm in the Arab world? We will also study the impact of political changes on the Islamic political thought.

1) What do we call a “political theology”?
2) Is there a coherent and accepted Islamic political thought?
3) What does the History of the Muslim world teach about Islam and politics?
4) Politics and legal norms: what is sharia?
5) Political and legal norms: is sharia the basis for a political system?
6) Islam as a political ideology: the Islamist movements.
7) How to think secularism in Muslim societies (2 courses).
8) The impact of politics on ideology: how current political turmoil does shape political thought? (2 courses).

Biblio

Books:
Antony BLACK The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present, Edinburgh University press 2011

Olivier ROY Secularism confronts Islam, Columbia University Press, 2008
Saba MAHMOOD, Politics of piety Princeton university Press (2011, paperback)

Youssef Courbage and Emmanuel Todd: A Convergence of Civilizations: The Transformation of Muslim Societies Around the World


Articles:

Read together and compare both articles:
Saba Mahmood “Religious Reason and Secular Affect: An Incommensurable Divide?” *critical inquiry*, 2009

See also:


Olivier ROY, *The Transformation of the Arab World*, Journal of Democracy, July 2012, Volume 23, Number 3