

“And the garment of Godwariness— that is best.” (The Qur’an, 7:26)

The Enlightenment, then, was a single army with a single banner, with a large central corps, right and left wing, daring scouts, and lame stragglers. And it enlisted soldiers who did not call themselves philosophes but who were their teachers, intimates, or disciples... Behind their tactical alliances and personal fellowship there stood a common experience from which they constructed a coherent philosophy. This experience... was the dialectical interplay of their appeal to antiquity, their tension with Christianity, and the *pursuit of modernity*... They, unlike the others, use the classical learning to free themselves from their Christian heritage, and then, having done with the ancients, turned their face toward *a modern worldview*. The Enlightenment was a volatile mixture of classicism, impiety, and science; the philosophes, in a phrase, were modern pagans.

—Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, 7-8 (italics added)

Surely the present moment is one of great crisis in the history of modern culture. The modern world stands in need of biological renewal. And religion, which in its higher manifestations is neither dogma, nor priesthood, nor ritual, can alone ethically prepare the modern man for the burden of the great responsibility which the advancement of modern science necessarily involves, and restore to him that attitude of faith which makes him capable of winning a personality here and retaining it hereafter. It is only by rising to a fresh vision of his origin and future, his whence and whither, that man will eventually triumph over a society motivated by an inhuman competition, and a civilization which has lost its spiritual unity by its inner conflict of religious and political values.

—Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 149

IN GOD'S COUNTRY

Vision(s) and Realities of An Islamic Society

REL 432 (Spring 2024)

T: 1:40 – 4:20 (EU Hall 101)

An Overview of Our Study

Our seminar will probe the relationship between authority of God and human beings in Islamic sociopolitical life. What does it mean to dwell in God's Islamic country? What does polity, law and economy look like in God's country? Who must rule, 1) God, 2) human beings individually or collectively, OR 3) both, and how? Who prescribes the Law by which a human society has to live: God, human beings or both, and how? And what about economy? Does God have an economic system in mind? What are the burdens of God's economy? We will seek answers to these questions in the mirror of Islamic political and economic thought, Shariah law, and past and present civilizational experience.

Honor and Conscience:

The College expects students to fully abide by the Honor Code. The instructor wonders about our conscience and the convergence/divergence between the two.

AN INTENTIONAL INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY

Prof. Syed Rizwan Zamir

Office: EU Hall 104 (Phone: 704- 894 2950)

Email: [rizamir@davidson.edu](mailto:rizamir@ davidson.edu) (On weekends, I fast from Microsoft *outlook* and try others)

The Intellectual Community inside and outside the class

For intellectual practices (see below) and other study-related things you must familiarize yourself and consult from time to time the *Dear Strangers* section of the following website: www.rizwanzamir.net.

Weekly Preparation & Class Meetings

If TWO of you can extend an invite, I am willing to, from time to time, read the assigned material for the next class meeting together. If purposeful and joyful, we can think of other similar activities that will bring more life to the intellectual community of the class.

The goal of each class meeting is a) *better understanding* of the assigned text-guide(s) which will be key to our b) *thinking* about the discussion theme for that meeting. A “good” reading of the assigned text(s) and willingness to *think* with the Class’s intellectual community are therefore foundational to our study. Throughout this term, we will also practice discerning the ethical difference between speaking from *within* the text and from *without*.

 Intentional Speaking in the Class: *Sham-e-Mahfil & Adab*

Meet with the Instructor

You can meet with SRZ:

1. Right after a class meeting – just walk up to me.
2. signup no later than noon for his office hours (**MW 4:15-5:30**)
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0A4AA8AD2DA31-46916327-hours>

Text-Guides for the Study

1. Gai Eaton, *King of the Castle* (1997)
2. Paul Heck, *Political Theology and Islam: From the Birth of the Empire to the Modern State* (2023)
3. Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam in India c.1200-1800*, 2004. (**ON RESERVE**)
4. Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (**ON RESERVE**)

Recommended Reading

If inspired to explore a topic further, you are invited to meet with the instructor and ask for a recommended reading. A sense of what in particular caught your eye will be useful.

Attendance Policy, Grades, Weekly Preparation & Other Queries

Carefully review the Notes & FAQs here: <https://rizwanzamir.net/faqs-notes/>

Intellectual Practices

<i>Journal-Portfolio</i> (see details below)	21%
Final Cumulative Review (Or Interview)	25%
"Think & Research" – A Venture of Your Own Choice	20%
Contributions to the Intellectual Community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🚩 Setting Agenda for ONE Seminar Meeting (the first half) – 7% 🚩 Reading-Maps – 10% 🚩 Contribution to the Seminar Discussion – 13% (will be self-evaluated) 🚩 Other Ways of Contributing – 5% 	34%

JOURNAL-PORTFOLIO (14 page of writing – pick three)

1. Dialog between two authors
2. Dialog between you and an author
3. Reflective and Interpretive Writing
4. Opinion Piece, Op-ed
5. A Sermon Or a letter to the class
6. A Poem or a Story
7. Argue a Case

LEARNING OUTCOMES

YOURS? *Feel free to communicate those to the instructor.*

Instructor's

It is expected that by the end of the class, the students will have:

1. Received an overview of the Muslim vision(s) of an ideal society, the traditions of Muslim thinking on this theme, and major concepts and approaches in formulating it.
2. Adequate familiarity with the evolution of Muslim thinking about politics and seminal figures that have shaped it.
3. Thought about Islamic political or/and economic thought through research on a theme of their own choice.
4. Cultivated skills of (and appreciation for) careful reading of texts, thinking analytically and imaginatively, interpreting, writing, and conversing with others on ideas.
5. Compared Islamic thought on the ideal Muslim society with the Western point(s) of view.

Academic Access and Disabilities Resources (AADR):

The college welcomes requests for accommodations related to disability and will grant those that are determined to be reasonable and maintain the integrity of a program or curriculum. To make such a request or to begin a conversation about a possible request, please contact the Office of Academic Access and Disability Resources by emailing AADR@davidson.edu. It is best to submit accommodation requests within the drop/add period; however, requests can be made at any time in the semester. Please keep in mind that accommodations are not retroactive.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

- Hallaq, *Introduction to Islamic Law*, Chapters 5 & 6 (M)
- *Law and the Rule of God*, Chapter 3 (E).
- Antony Black, *The West and Islam*, Chapter 1 (E)
- Sherman Jackson, "Islam, Muslims and the Wages of Racial Agnosia in America"
- *The Qur'an and the Just Society*, Part I (E)
- Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, Chapter 3, (O)
- **Primary Text(s):** *The Qur'an: Basic Teachings*, Chapters 20 and 21 (M)
- **Primary Text(s):** *Caliphate and Imamate*
- **Primary Text(s):** " Hamas" (Ch. 15) and "Umar Abd al-Rahman" (Ch. 14) in *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought* (O)