

MOSP40, Politics and Religion in the Middle East, 7.5 credits

*Mellanösternstudier: Politik och religion i Mellanöstern, 7,5
högskolepoäng*

Second Cycle / Avancerad nivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by The pro-dean for First-Cycle Studies at the Faculties of Humanities and Theology on 2011-06-22 to be valid from 2011-06-22, autumn semester 2011.

General Information

The course is offered as part of the Master of Arts programme in Middle Eastern Studies (MESLU) at the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies and as a free-standing course.

Language of instruction: English

Main field of studies

Middle Eastern Studies

Depth of study relative to the degree requirements

A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Learning outcomes

On completion of the course the student shall

Knowledge and understanding

- be able to identify and summarise the processes that have shaped the links between religion and politics in the Middle East and the functions of religion in political contexts
- be able to summarise the positions of different religious movements in the public debates in the Middle East and explain their historical background
- be able to use theories of the history of religions, the anthropology of religion and political science concerning the concepts of religion and politics and to apply them to situations in the present-day Middle East

- be able to provide concrete examples of how current practices and discussions of religion and politics in the Middle East as well as among Middle Eastern minorities in North America and Europe are related to general global political, social, economic and religious situations and to the specific debates and practices of foreign affairs and domestic policies in Europe and North America

Competence and skills

- be able to participate in, organise and lead discussions on the function of religions in the political debates in the Middle East and of the impact of political processes on present-day religious exegesis
- be able to apply theories of the history of religions, the anthropology of religion and political science to analyses of the effects of processes of religion and politics on the situation of religious minorities, gender relations, the rights of sexual minorities and political dissident movements in the present-day Middle East
- be able to complete a detailed written analysis and a concise and brief oral report of one specific debate of the functions of politics and religion in a country and arena of choice and be able to offer sophisticated views on the analyses of others

Judgement and approach

- be able to assess the relevance of religion and politics in an independent selection of present-day public debates or aesthetic expressions and be able to assess and problematise in detail the effect on them of historical factors and associated socioeconomic processes linked to colonialism, postcolonialism and globalisation
- be able to assess in depth the function of religious symbolism and historical narratives in present-day constructions of political legitimacy and religious privilege of interpretation
- be able to make a nuanced assessment of different positions in the present-day discussion, in the Middle East as well as in Middle Eastern minorities in Europe and North America, on the conservation of power and the subversive political effects of the practices and debates of politics and religion with regard to democracy and political influence, respect for human rights and gender relations.

Course content

Against a background of discussions on the function of religion in the Middle East from the early 20th century onwards, students examine how religion has been interpreted and reinterpreted for different purposes related to political situations. Issues of how religion has been interpreted by individuals, social movements and states in order to legitimate different aims and ideologies are a central theme of the course and students are encouraged to practise studying religion as an expression of control, repression, conservatism, secularism, and radicalism as well as of resistance, tolerance, respect for human rights and change.

The course is designed as a combination of lectures and seminars on religious texts, news broadcasts, films and other media expressions, in which students take turns, supervised by lecturers, to organise and conduct discussions of the dynamic of religion and politics in the present-day Middle East.

Course design

The teaching consists of lectures and compulsory seminars.

Assessment

The assessment is based on the students' individual and active participation in the teaching, a minor written assignment midway through the course and a final written assignment.

Each student will be assigned the role of discussion leader at one seminar at least. Absence from teaching can be compensated for by written assignments.

Subcourses that are part of this course can be found in an appendix at the end of this document.

Grades

Marking scale: Fail, Pass, Pass with distinction.

To be awarded a Pass on the course, students must have completed all assignments within the time span allotted to each.

Entry requirements

To be admitted to the course, students must have at least a Bachelor's degree.

Subcourses in MOSP40, Politics and Religion in the Middle East

Applies from V11

1101 Final Assignment: Politics and religion, 7,5 hp
Grading scale: Fail, Pass, Pass with distinction