



LUND
UNIVERSITY

Faculties of Humanities and Theology

RHBM79, Islamic Studies - Islam and the Politics of Everyday Life in the Middle East, 7.5 credits

Islamic Studies - Islam and the Politics of Everyday Life in the Middle East, 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 2022-03-14 to be valid from 2022-03-14, autumn semester 2022.

General Information

The course is offered as a freestanding course. It can be included in a first or second cycle degree.

Language of instruction: English

Main field of studies

Religious Studies and Theology with specialization in History of Religions and Religious Behavioural 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, students shall be able to

Knowledge and understanding

- describe, explain and discuss key theoretical perspectives on power and representation and their relevance for the understanding of Islamic discourse and practice in the contemporary Middle East
- account for current academic discussions on 'political Islam' and its application in state policies and Islamic movements, in relation to different national and historical contexts in the Middle East
- explain the role of Islam in the political dimensions of everyday life in the Middle East and the potentially disciplinary, repressive, mobilising, and emancipatory

This is a translation of the course syllabus approved in Swedish

functions of Islamic discourse and practice

Competence and skills

- illustrate how Islamic concepts, rituals and consumption products are discussed, interpreted and applied by contemporary actors, organisations and individuals in the everyday social life of the contemporary Middle East
- describe the research situation in a delimited research field on the role of Islamic discourse and practice in different Middle Eastern societies
- carry out a theory-based and well-referenced minor case study on the role/s of religion in contemporary Middle Eastern societies, and provide nuanced, informed and well-founded feedback on the case study of a fellow student

Judgement and approach

- reflect on the extent that socio-economic and politically strategic relations in the Middle East influence current debate on the political, social and cultural functions of Islamic discourse and practice
- theoretically evaluate scholarly discussions on the role of Islam in relation to political processes - from transregional, regional, state and/or local perspectives
- based on a scholarly approach, assess the impact of religious discourse, structures and practices on legal systems and social control mechanisms in the Middle East at both the individual and group level with regard to ethnicity, gender and sexuality

Course content

This course focuses on reflections that go beyond the often simplified and dichotomous approaches to the complex set of phenomena known as 'Islam'. It explores the complexity in the social processes that define, design and traverse Islamic discourse and Muslim practice. Based on shared reading of literature, discussions and presentations of current academic research, the course explores, both theoretically and empirically, the effects of Islamic discourse and Muslim practice in contemporary Middle Eastern societies from social, political and cultural perspectives. Two main issues form the basis for the literature, discussions and assignments: How do Islamic concepts, methods, norms and ideals (and debates about these) relate to broader socio-economic and politically strategic tendencies in the Middle East? What are the power effects of Islamic/Muslim discourse and practice (or criticism of these) from individual, social, political, cultural, consumption-related and strategic perspectives?

The course is organised into four thematic segments as follows:

1. Theorising religion, power and representation in the Middle East

This segment addresses some basic theoretical perspectives on the study of religious discourse and practice in the Middle East. It focuses on anthropological and political science related perspectives on religious discourse, power and representation.

2. Imagining religious and social order

This segment focuses on empirical perspectives on the role of religious discourse and practice in Middle Eastern societies - with a continued theoretical approach. We explore the complex relationship between 'religion' and 'politics' in empirical detail, and examine how this takes shape in different national contexts today.

3. Religious consumption, affects, corporeality and visual (re)presentation

In the third segment, we look beyond dichotomies such as sacred/secular, public/private and politics/civil society to explore political realities beyond 'traditional' institutions, and examine the 'uncertainty' that characterises the line between

religion, power and politics.

4. Individual specialisation, presentation and critical review.

The final two weeks of the course is devoted to an individual paper. The students focus on a topic of their own choice regarding Islam in the contemporary Middle East and discuss it in relation to one or several theoretical perspectives covered in the course. The individual paper is presented at a final seminar where the student also gives oral feedback on another student's paper.

Course design

The teaching in this course is provided in a seminar format, which means that group discussions (in pairs, smaller groups or whole classes) take place at each teaching session. Unless there are valid reasons to the contrary, compulsory participation is required at all class meetings.

An alternative form or date for compulsory components is offered to students who are not able to complete a compulsory component owing to circumstances beyond their control, e.g. accident, sudden illness or similar. This also applies to students who have been absent because of duties as an elected student representative.

Assessment

The assessment of the course is based on three written assignments and one oral assignment:

Assignment 1: Written theoretical reflection

Assignment 2: Written research overview

Assignment 3: Individual written specialisation

Assignment 4: Final seminar discussion and summary of critical review in bullet-point format

All written assignments must contain text references and a list of cited works. The papers are to be submitted via the course learning platform within a predetermined time frame. The student must also have participated in all compulsory activities.

The examiner, in consultation with Disability Support Services, may deviate from the regular form of examination in order to provide a permanently disabled student with a form of examination equivalent to that of a student without a disability.

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

Grades

Marking scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A.

The grade for a non-passing result is Fail. The assessment of the student's performance is based on the learning outcomes for the course. For the grade of E, the student must demonstrate acceptable results. For the grade of D, the student must

demonstrate satisfactory results. For the grade of C, the student must demonstrate good results. For the grade of B, the student must demonstrate very good results. For the grade of A the student must demonstrate excellent results. For the grade of Fail, the student will have demonstrated unacceptable results. At the start of the course, students are informed about the learning outcomes stated in the syllabus and about the grading scale and how it is applied in the course.

The grade distribution is as follows:

Assignment 1 (Theory reflection paper): 20 per cent

Assignment 2 (Research review paper): 20 per cent

Assignment 3 (Final paper: individual specialisation): 40 per cent

Assignment 4 (Final seminar discussion and summary of critical review in bullet-point format): 20 per cent

All components are assigned points that add up to a final result on which the final grade is based. The grade for the whole course is based on the average grade for all assessed components. For the grade of Pass on the whole course, the student must have been awarded at least an E on all components.

Entry requirements

To be admitted to the course, students must have successfully completed 90 credits within the humanities, social sciences or law.

Further information

1. The course is offered at the Centre for Theology and Religious Studies, Lund University.
2. The credits allocated for course content that in whole or in part is commensurate with another course can only be credited once for a degree. For further details, see the current registration information and other relevant documentation.
3. The course replaces SIMS55 Middle Eastern Studies: Islam and the Politics of Everyday Life in the Middle East.

Subcourses in RHBM79, Islamic Studies - Islam and the Politics of
Everyday Life in the Middle East

Applies from H22

2201 Islam and the Politics of Everyday Life in the Middle East, 7,5 hp
Grading scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A