In this course we shall examine the ways in which the religion of Islam has manifested itself as a political ideology—i.e., how and in what circumstances has Islam been used as a basis for political action. We shall begin with an overview of Islam as a way of life and style of thinking; this should give the necessary background to those without previous study of Islamic societies and cultures, and provide a useful perspective to students who do have this experience. We shall then study a number of cases (medieval, modern, and contemporary) of political action in an Islamic framework. These will include the following: (1) the Community of Muhammad and the Early Caliphate (the models for all later political thought and action); (2) "establishment" political thought in the Middle Ages; (3) revolutionary opposition to the established order in early Islam; (4) radical elitism: the Assassins; (5) revivalism and traditional fundamentalism: the Wahhabis and the rise of Saudi Arabia; (6) reform and modernism in Islamic thought in the early 20th century; (7) the Islamic state in contemporary conservative thought: Maududi and the formation of Pakistan; (8) revolutionary neo-fundamentalism: the Muslim Brothers in Egypt and Syria; Khomeini's Iran.

Evaluation: 1) a research paper on some topic defined in consultation with the instructor—due at final session; 2) a critical book review (3-5 pp.), the title to be chosen from a bibliography to be supplied by the instructor—due 10th week of session; 3) a critique (3-5 pp.) of any one of several assigned articles and essays. No examinations. Grades: 50%/25%/25%.

To be purchased:

Richard C. Martin, Islam (Prentice-Hall)
Clifford Geertz, Islam Observed (Univ. of Chicago Pr.)
J. Esposito and J. Donohue, Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives (Oxford Univ. Pr.)

In addition, a substantial packet of articles, translated texts, etc., will be prepared and required for purchase from one of the local copy shops.