



Visiting Professor Program Academic Year 2024/2025

TEACHING COMMITMENT: 26 hours

COURSE TITLE

Religion and Politics in the Middle East and North Africa

TEACHING PERIOD

2nd term

SCIENTIFIC AREA

Sociology of cultural and communication processes

LANGUAGE USED TO TEACH

English

COURSE SUMMARY

The course aims to analyse the current transformations of the relationships between politics and religion in the MENA Region (Middle East and North Africa). During the last 20 years, this region has been invested by a revival of the religion in the public sphere and in the political arena. Islam has been particularly concerned by this phenomenon: Islamist groups, more or less militant, more or less radical, have trodden the boards of the Middle East, highlighting the relevance of political Islam and its impact on societies, on politics and on regional balance of power. The politicization of Islam, especially after the Arab uprisings, has emerged as a crucial component to understand regional evolution. At the same time religion, and particularly Islam, has been often adopted as an interpretative key in order to oversimplify the understanding of political dynamics in the region and of their societies, too often explained through the narrative of the wars of religions or, the sectarianism (for example using the prism of the internal battle between Sunni and Shiites). Two aspects of the relationships between politics and religion will be particularly addressed. On the one

hand, the focus will be on the political use of religion nowadays, in order to develop a broader reflection on this phenomenon and its impacts on societies and politics. On the other hand, the plurality of political Islam, its faceted expressions, and its historical transformations, will be particularly tackled.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

From a broader perspective the course will provide students with theoretical, methodological and analytical skills required to better comprehend the crucial relationships among politics and religion. At another level the course, through the focus on political Islam in the MENA region, will provide students the needed knowledge to better understand socio-political phenomena of the region. Moreover the course will reinforce the interdisciplinary background required both by the Erasmus Partner Countries students from Lebanon and Morocco as well as and by the students of the MENA Politics profile in the frame of the Master Degree programme in International Relations.

None

OTHER ACTIVITIES BESIDES THE COURSE

Considering the great interest on the issues that will be developed during the course, public lectures and seminars will be organized both in the frame of the PhD programme in 'Social and Political Change' promoted by the Department of Culture, Politics and Society of the University of Torino (in partnership with the University of Florence), and in the context of other relevant training and dissemination activities organized by the Department in partnership with external Institutions (T.waiTurin World Affair Institute, CSA-Centro Studi Africani). For example the cycle 'Spring seminars' (<http://www.medit.eu/?q=content/primavera-mediterranea-secondo-ciclo-di-incontri>) and the TOMideast Summer School (<https://www.tomideast.com/>).

VISITING PROFESSOR PROFILE

The ideal candidate (he/she) is an Anglophone scholar, conducting an original and internationally acknowledged research activity on religious phenomena in the MENA region from sociological, political science or historical perspective. The ideal candidate (he/she) has a solid network of scientific cooperation in the MENA region, a documented teaching experience, and the necessary social skills for being fully involved into the scientific activities of the Department. A background of political sociology is preferential, but applications from scholars with a Middle Eastern Studies background are also welcome.

CONTACT REFERENT

Irene Bono

irene.bono@unito.it