Kamoludin Abdullaev
National and Muslim Movements in 20th Century Central Asia
Syllabus for the course offered in 2001-02
Yale University

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National and Muslim Movements in 20th Century Central Asia

Graduate Seminar

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Outline:

After September the 11, 2001 Central Asia, formerly neglected region, has suddenly found itself in the center of world politics. Do we really know what is going on in this region today? What does the fact - that after the crush of the USSR in 1991 all states of the region almost with no debates have declared and constitutionally confirmed national, secular, democratic projects – really mean? The experience of the concluding decade of the 20th century shows that initial efforts to reconcile Islam with secular national projects, not to say democracy, in most of Central Asian states were not visibly successful. Are Islam and democracy-oriented projects on a collision course in the region? What can be learned from the 20th century Central Asian political experience to predict possible prospects of the opposition development in Central Asia, and define clearly effective systems of governance that would “civilize” political developments in the region?

Responding these challenges, the proposed cross-disciplinary course seeks to introduce students to the nature and development of National and Muslim movements in the 20th century Central Asia, and to the academic study of the subject. This deals with different forms of political activism and with contemporary processes of democratization in Central Asian independent states. The course continues with a broader discussion of the diversity of the political principles underlying the practice of democracy and how these principles relate to the challenges facing Central Asians at the start of the new millennium.

Students should be aware that the course proposed is inventive. Many of the issues raised in it are difficult to pose correctly let alone to answer. The course will be academically challenging.

Objectives:

The course aims to teach students critical and analytic modes of thinking about contemporary political movements via a detailed exploration of National and Muslim movements in 20th century Central Asia. The course has three principal objectives:

1. To provide an understanding of the main forms of National and Muslim movements in the 20th century Central Asia;
2. Using the case of Central Asia to relate practice to theory, in terms of how democracy is to be understood;
3. To deepen students critical and analytic modes of thinking about important political issues.
Requirements:

Students must complete all required readings and attend and participate in class discussions. Each student will be assigned one class session and will be responsible for the following:

1. Lead discussion of the analytical issues raised by the readings;
2. Distribute one page of questions and suggestions to orient class participants in the issues he or she plans to raise one week prior to the session;
3. Submit a 15-20 page analytical essay based on the readings and discussion for the topic selected. These essays will be reproduced and distributed to class participants for the final in-class discussion.

Depending on the class size, there may be session for which two students are assigned.

Grades will be based on:

1. class participation based on the readings (40% of the grade)
2. discussion leading and essay (60% of the grade)

Readings for the course are available on reserve; in addition, the Reference Book and The Reader have been prepared and put on the Web page of the course INRL 541b.

The following readings are available at Yale Bookstore:

SCHEDULE FOR SEMINAR

The Seminar will consist of 12 two-hour sessions. Sessions 2-11 will entail a lecture of about 1 hour followed by A & Q and discussion lead by one or two students. It is required that students have read the reading material. Session 12 will be devoted to concluding general discussion.

Week 1. Introduction
Organization and description of course. General readings and Internet recourses providing core information for the seminar will be introduced. Definition of Central Asia; the region’s place in world history.

Assignments:
1. The Reader, Week I, “Introduction”.

Week 2. The Great Game and Colonization of Central Asia
Colonization of Central Asia and its consequences. Central Asia’s place in the Europe-dominated international system. Discussion why do Central Asians appreciate colonial past today?

Assignments:
1. The Reader. Week 2 “The Great Game and Inception of Future Tragedies”

Week 3. Entering 20th Century. Hopes and Frustrations
Political awakening. Two bids for Islamic government: fundamentalism and reformism. Jadidism and Pan-Turkism. Discussing Muslim confrontation with the West as the principal organizing theme for interpreting modern Central Asian politics.

Assignments:
1 The Reader, Week 3 “Entering 20th century. Hopes and frustrations”.
4 “Muslim Reformers: Awakening Muslim Mind” http://www.islam21.net/pages/keyissues/key1-6.htm

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Week 4. Islamic Militancy: Liberators or Terrorists? Case of Central Asia in the 1920s

Muslim guerrillas’ (Basmachis) jihad against forcible establishment of the Soviet rule (1918-1932); its political nature and relation to Pan-Islamism and nationalism. Discussing the policy of elimination of Basmachis by the Soviets in its implications. Discussing jihad (defensive, aggressive, local). Comparing Enver Pasha with Osama bin Laden (harbouring Enver by Basmachis versus harbouring Osama by the Taliban). Central Asia and “Islamic International”.

Assignments:
1. The Reader, Week 4 “The Basmachis and rise of Islamic militancy”
2. Rashid, Ahmed, Taliban, 82-94

Week 5. Making of Soviet Central Asia


Assignments:

Week 6. Opposition Developments Under the Soviet rule
Official and parallel Islam under the Soviet rule. Effect of the Afghan war on rise of opposition in Central Asia. Cold war and rise of Islamic factor. Utilizing of Islam by Cold war participants and its long-term effect. Discussing responsibility of experts or how to avoid a misleading of an over-politicized scholarship.

Assignments:
2. Polonskaya Ludmila and Malashenko, Islam in Central Asia, 99-107

Week 7. National State Building and Islamic “Renaissance” in Independent Central Asia
“Imagining Central Asian nations”. Political profile of today’s Muslim Central Asia. Islamic political parties’ formation, participation in legal politics and problems of opposition institutionalization. Discussing Hizbut Tahrir agenda.

Assignments:
9. The President of Uzbekistan admits to being intellectually bankrupt

**Week 8. Repressing Central Asian Islamic Activism: a Problem or Solution?**

Current political systems of Central Asia in the light of their attitude to oppositional movements. Assessment of different approaches to Islamic activism: inclusion, exclusion, cooperation. Discussion: is Central Asia’s democratic and secular profile a false façade to please international (Western dominated) centers of power or the region’s conscious choice? Can the exclusion of Islamists from legal politics lead to radicalization of Islam and rise of militancy? Islamism versus Islamization.

**Assignments:**

1. *The Reader*, week 8 “Repressing Central Asia Islamic activism: a problem or solution”
3. Hizb-ut Tahrir’s official site http://www.khilafah.com/

**Week 9. Democratic Opposition Emergence and Revival of Nationalisms**

Introduction to regional democratic movements. Non-Islamic Central Asia: myth or reality? Central Asian democratic opposition: an imagined product of Orientalism or durable political force? Discussing secularism, weakness of local democratic tendencies. Is Nationalism an opponent or ally of Islamism?

**Assignments:**


7 Mirsky, George “Russia in the Midst of Change” [http://www.ndu.edu/inss/strforum/z206.html](http://www.ndu.edu/inss/strforum/z206.html)


**Week 10. Modern Central Asia in Regional Context.**

National and Muslim movements in the light of interrelations of the new Central Asian states among themselves and with regional neighbors. Trans-ethnic and trans-national identities. The Taliban, Hizb-ut Tahrir and their allies in Central Asia. Islamism and modern terrorism. Is Central Asia a part of Muslim world, Europe, or former USSR?

**Assignments:**


6 Deoband madrasas in Pakistan [http://www.the-week.com/21jul01/life8.htm](http://www.the-week.com/21jul01/life8.htm)


**Week 11. Globalization aspect**


**Assignments:**


3 Ali Mazri “Globalization and the Future of Islamic Civilization”

4 Al-Musavi S. H. “Islamism and Globalization”
http://www.islam21.net/pages/keyissues/key1-12.htm

5 Khalid Al-Haroob “The naivety of an "Islamic-Huntington" view”
http://www.islam21.net/pages/keyissues/key1-10.htm


**Week 12. Final in-class discussion**

General discussion based on the analytical essays written by the participants and the knowledge acquired during the seminar. Students may be invited to introduce their ideas for this discussion. Summing up of the course.

**Assignments:**

Students’ analytical essays.

**Useful links**

Central Asia Regional information, Indiana University
http://www.indiana.edu/~jaunrc/caweb.html

Moral Economy of Islam: Institute of International Studies; University of California, Berkeley
http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/Islam/bibs.html

Eurasianet (Open Society Institute)
http://eurasianet.org/

Harvard Forum for Central Asian Studies
http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~centasia/index.html

INCORE guide to Internet sources on conflict and ethnicity in Tajikistan
http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/cds/countries/tajik.html

Interactive Central Asia Research Project
http://www.icarp.org/tajik.html

http://www.c-r.org/accord10/index.htm
Central Asia News.Net
http://www.centralasianews.net/
Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty
http://rferl.org/
International Crisis Group
http://www.crisisweb.org/
International Eurasian Institute for Economic and Political Research
http://iicas.org/
The Tajikistan Update
http://www.angelfire.com/sd/tajikistanupdate/artj.html#cw