**Political Theology: The Case of Islam** THEO 355/Fall 2015/TR 9:30-11:45/NN 107; plh2

**Course Description:** This course looks to theology for insight into Muslim concepts of political sovereignty. How is God’s rule to be represented in the polity, especially when governance has taken varied form over the centuries (dynastic, democratic, etc.)? Muslims, like all peoples, live in a world of concrete realities, but there are recurring even if varied patterns in Muslim thinking on the nature and purpose of rule as a norm of human society. We proceed by considering perennial themes but also case studies from both past and present. A key goal of this course (in line with its status as a Doyle Seminar) is to consider the diversity of forms that political assumptions in Islam take, providing insight into the choices that Muslims have in determining the kind of political order they desire in the current moment from a global perspective. Also, to that end, readings and discussions will include reference to political thought in relation to the West, highlighting common pluralities.

**Course Readings:** Available on Blackboard or On-Line (video clips/short articles)

**Course Goals:**
1) To garner insight into politics as a theological phenomenon
2) To learn more about political ideas in Islam
3) To think about political theology as a method
See below (next page) for paper production schedule.

**Course Etiquette:**
Tardiness is unacceptable. No laptops.

**Course Requirements:**
- Participation (attendance, engagement, summaries): 20%
- First Draft of Paper (mid-term): 20%
- Oral Presentations (on paper topic): 20%
- Final Paper: 40%

**Course Schedule** (subject to change)

**September**
3
Introduction: What is Political Theology? Can It Explain Anything?

8/10
Training in Concepts of Political Theology

15/17
Further Training in Concepts of Political Theology

22/24/29
Sacral Kingship or Caliphate?

**October**
1/6/8
Sufism: Spirituality and Society

13/15
Mahdism: Recreating the Sacred Past/Creating the Sacred Future

20/22/27/29
Allegiance and Loyalty (and Disloyalty)

**November**
3/5/10
Intermezzo: Tribes, Land Empire, and All That Stuff

12/17/19/24
Shari'a Government: God's Commands or God's Purposes?

**December**
1/3
Paper Presentations (Additional Classes)

8/10
PLH away
Paper Production Schedule:

October 8: Submit a paragraph or two describing paper topic/focus and approach
October 22: Submit outline (one-page) and bibliographical list (5-7 items)
November 10: Submit first good draft (10-12 pages, hard copy – not by email)
December (first week): Oral presentations
December 18: Submit final draft (15-20 pages)

In terms of evaluation criteria and writing expectations: A strong research paper shows mastery of the chosen topic, has a clear thesis, and is well-organized according to a comprehensible argument. (A comprehensible argument is not a summary of the topic). The style should flow smoothly. (You should not place a burden on the reader to understand what you're saying.) Grammar should be correct without typos. More on writing processes later.

Doyle Seminar

This course is a Doyle Seminar, part of the Doyle Engaging Difference Program, a campus-wide curricular initiative, and gives faculty the opportunity to enhance the student research component of upper-level seminars that address questions of national, social, cultural, religious, moral, and other forms of difference. The Doyle seminars are intended to deepen student learning about diversity and difference through enhanced research opportunities, interaction with thought leaders, and dialogue with the Georgetown community and beyond.