

Religion, Heritage, and Generation

Conceptualizing Religion after 9/11

(Istanbul Sessions, Tentative Program in development)

23 September 2019 (Travel Day)

We will Arrive in Istanbul 11.20.

18.00 Common Dinner

Venue: TBA

24 September 2019

09.00 – 11.30 Lecture: Dr Olof Heilo, "Kingdoms of God: The Dream of the Caliphate and its Origins"

Venue: The Swedish Research Institute.

In the days immediately following the terror attacks on September 11, 2001, a particular Arabic word made the rounds in news media all over the world: the Caliphate. Used as a rallying point by Islamist groups throughout the 20th century despite its formal abolition in 1924, the 21st century has seen the concept of the Caliphate brought to new prominence through the rise of terrorist groups like the al-Qaida and the IS. In this lecture, we will take a broad look at the history of the concept of the Caliphate and show how it relates to both pre-Islamic and non-Islamic notions of political universalism and empires of faith.

12.00 – 13.00 Lunch

13.00 – 18.00 Guided excursion

The historical palace areas of Sultanahmet on the historical peninsula of Istanbul.

19.00 Common Dinner

Venue: TBA

25 September 2019

09.00 – 11.30 Dr Olof Heilo, "Witnesses to the End of Times: Jihad and Apocalypticism"

Venue: The Swedish Research Institute.

Whereas many Islamic empires throughout history used the concept of religious warfare to their own ends in one way or another, it actually constituted as much of a problem and a challenge to most of them. In this lecture we will scrutinize how Jihad, rather than a political concept aiming at the establishment of terrestrial empires originates in a rejection of terrestrial life and society and is nurtured by apocalyptic and eschatological convictions in the end of the world. At the same time, we will see how the "holy warrior" has paradoxically become an object of reverence for many societies, Islamic and non-Islamic.

12.00 – 13.00 Lunch

13.00 – 18.00 Guided excursion

To the city walls of Istanbul and the tombs of some notable "holy warriors" associated with them.

18.00 Common Dinner

Venue: TBA

26 September 2019

09.00 – 11.30 Lecture: Dr Bayram Balci, Islam and politics in Turkey and the Turkic world, Turkey, Central Asia and the Caucasus after 9/11

Venue: The Swedish Research Institute.

Because Lenin and Atatürk had to a large extent a similar vision of modernity, a very comparable version of secularism was imposed to the Muslims of Turkey, Central Asia and the Caucasus. However, in Turkey the transition to a more liberal political system after the second world war was a turning point in the management of Islam and in the relations between religion and politics. In Central Asia and the Caucasus, a similar turning point took place with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 where the new states, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan have adopted a more conciliatory approach in the management of Islam. Moreover, since 1991, there are more relations and reciprocal (mutual) influences between post-soviet Islam and the Islam of other countries, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, etc. Is the 9/11 another major turning point for Islam in Turkey, Central Asia, and the Caucasus? This is the most important question we would like to develop in our lecture. For a more nuanced response to this question we must make the distinction between the very secular states response to the 9/11 and, in a comparative perspective, how this tragedy has impacted, or not the practice of Islam in Turkey and post-soviet societies.

12.00 – 13.00 Lunch

Afternoon Program T.B.A (Possible visit to Jewish Museum, yet to be confirmed)

18.00 Common Dinner

Venue: TBA

27 September 2019. (Travel Day, Half Day)

09.00 – 11.30 Lecture: Dr. Ömer Turan Relocating the Religion in the Public Sphere in post-2002 Turkey

This lecture overviews how the Justice and Development Party (JDP) transformed the position of religion in the public sphere in Turkey, since 2002. The seminar will start by discussing how Islamist politics have been readjusted before and after 9/11. Then, the emphasis will be on the foundational moment of JDP in 2001 and its first electoral victory in 2002. The seminar will include the following subtitles: the headscarf debate; post-secular foreign policy of JDP; the Alevi opening and its inevitable failure, the new Directorate of the Religious Affairs (Diyanet) with a specific emphasis on gender politics. The seminar will conclude by touching upon the conflict between the JDP government and the Gülen community (faith-based network of Fetullah Gülen's followers) and the putsch attempt in 2016. Throughout the seminar, some questions of methodology (post-Orientalist perspectives on contemporary Turkish society) will be incorporated into the general discussion.

12.00 – 13.00 Lunch

Free time

Departure to Copenhagen 18.40