

HNRS 299: Political and Social Life in the Muslim World

Paper #2 – due Friday May 7 under my door (hard copy) and to vlangohr@holycross.edu BY 12 p.m.

This paper should be 8-10 pages, but not longer than 10 (with one-inch margins and 12 point font). PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THE PAPER EXCEPT ON A FINAL, TITLE PAGE STAPLED TO THE END OF YOUR PAPER. You need to submit one hard copy in class and email one to vlangohr@holycross.edu.

Anything more than a very small number of spelling or grammatical errors will result in points being deducted from your grade. If you are not able to turn the paper in on time, you will lose five points per late weekday unless your class dean contacts me to ask for an extension.

Readings

- *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics*, Jenny White, University of Washington Press, 2002, 3-20, 31-33, 37-45, 48-52, 58-67, 79-84, 156-164, 180-191, 233-238 (packet)
- “Religion, Politics, and Gender Equality in Turkey: Implications of A Democratic Paradox,” Yesim Arat, U.N. Research Institute for Social Development, September 2009, 7-19 (start at “Some Quantitative Snapshots”)
[http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/httpNetITFramePDF?ReadForm&parentunid=B49BF0AB76047D15C125765E0047B1EB&parentdoctype=paper&netitpath=80256B3C005BCCF9/\(httpAuxPages\)/B49BF0AB76047D15C125765E0047B1EB/\\$file/TurkeyFinRR.pdf](http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/httpNetITFramePDF?ReadForm&parentunid=B49BF0AB76047D15C125765E0047B1EB&parentdoctype=paper&netitpath=80256B3C005BCCF9/(httpAuxPages)/B49BF0AB76047D15C125765E0047B1EB/$file/TurkeyFinRR.pdf)
- *Rethinking Islam and Liberal Democracy: Islamist Women in Turkish Politics*, Yesim Arat, (State University of New York Press, 2005), 89-108 (packet)
- “Islam and Democracy in Turkey,” Binnaz Toprak, *Turkish Studies*, June 2005 (ER)

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS BELOW. Note: the party we are examining here is referred to by several different names in the reading: Refah, the Welfare Party, and the AKP. These all refer to the same party and should be used to answer the questions below.

- 1) As we have seen in many of the countries we have examined this semester, it is often the case that popular understandings of Islam are more conservative in countries with large rural populations, while the process of urbanization (leaving rural areas to live in cities) is often thought to make migrants more liberal in their outlook. You are a Turk who votes for the Welfare Party (the party is also known as Refah) living in Umraniye, a district of Istanbul, in the 1990s. You become the pen pal of a Muslim living in a poor suburb of Paris. In a letter written in the FIRST PERSON initiating your correspondence with the Parisian and introducing yourself to her, explain your life in no more than five pages, making sure to answer the following questions/cover the following topics:

- What do you do for a living? Do you have enough money?
- How do you dress?
- Has your family been in Umraniye for decades, or are you more recent immigrants? Do you perceive life in Umraniye as very difficult? Is it socially oppressive: are people free to make the lifestyle choices they please? Able to achieve the economic goals they set for themselves?
- Would you rather live in “European Istanbul” (EI) than in Umraniye? When you go to visit EI, or read Turkish newspapers talking about places like Umraniye, do you feel that people in EI/the newspaper commentators have an accurate view of you and Umraniye?
- Would you like to live in EI?
- Why did you vote for the Welfare Party?

Note: You do not have to limit yourself to the White reading for this question; you can take examples of Welfare Party/Refah party ideas from other readings and put them in the “mouth” of your resident of Umraniye, unless those party ideas are clearly identified in the other readings as coming from party supporters whose background is different from that of Umraniye.

2) In “Religion, Politics, and Gender Equality in Turkey: Implications of A Democratic Paradox,” Yesim Arat traces several decisions/practices by AKP which she argues violate women’s rights or decrease their opportunities. Using the interviews with Refah Party women in the *Rethinking Islam and Liberal Democracy* reading by Arat as well as the discussions with these women in the White reading, do you think the Refah party women would agree with all of the decisions/practices described by Arat in “Religion, Politics” and think that they are called for by Islam? If you think they would agree with **any** of them, then pick those that you think they would agree with (no more than two or three) and explain, from within their worldview as described by Arat in *Rethinking Islam* and White, why they would think these are religiously appropriate. In addition, do you think that these women would disagree with any of the practices/decisions described by Arat in “Religion, Politics”? If so, why would they disagree with them?