

# Violent Islamic Extremism

POS 4931  
Fall 2024

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**Class Meeting Time:**  
5:10-6:00pm T  
5.10-7:05pm R  
Anderson Hall 34

## Content

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## Goals

Comprehend the complex realities of religious and secular radicalization processes

Understand the key drivers of radicalization processes in culturally diverse societies

Introduce, understand, and apply key social science concepts

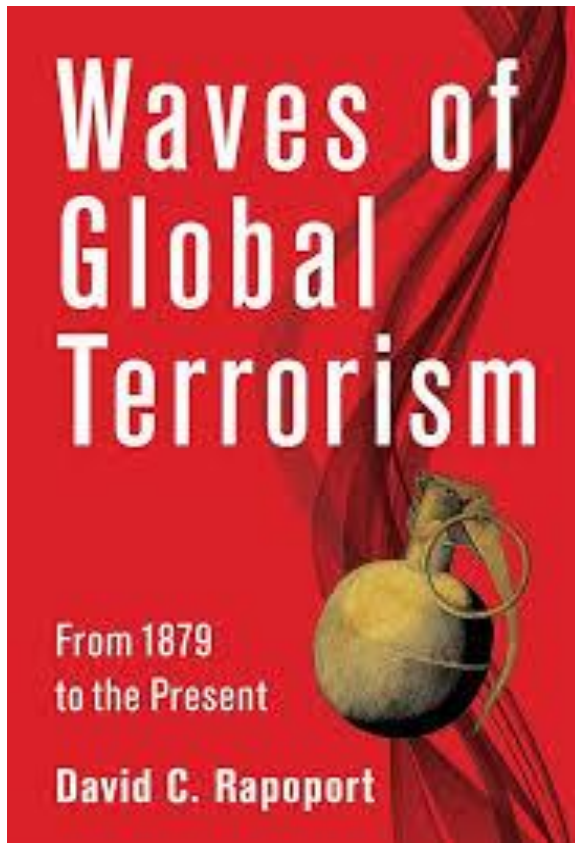
Contextualize and analyze key events in the literature on religious radicalization

Engage with empirical data in a constructive and problem-oriented manner

Prepare for advanced academic studies, and careers in government, international organizations, or advocacy groups

## Course Overview

It is hardly possible to overstate the effects of 9/11 on American foreign policy, the relationship between the West and the Muslim world, societal relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, the contemporary public discourse about Islam, and academic curricula. The class introduces students to how political science scholarship views Islamic radicalization, why the term “violent Islamic radicalization” might be seen as controversial, how radicalization processes ultimately may lead to terrorism, and how Islamic radicalization as well as Islamic terrorism (do not) differ from secular or non-Muslim types of radicalization. Further, the class elucidates the complex and manifold nature of radicalization processes and how states as well as societies have tried to counteract these processes. We will also discuss to what extent different military and non-military counterstrategies have been successful. To examine these issues and questions, we analyze the origins and activities of prominent Islamic extremist organizations including Al Qaeda, ISIS, JNIM, Boko Haram, and others. Given the complexity of the topic, the class requires students to read, think, and work independently as well as participate in class. Students enrolling in this class should genuinely interested in the topic and be prepared to challenge their own biases.



**GO to class.** Lectures explain important concepts, theories, and events that go way beyond the required reading. Discussion sections provide opportunities to debate important related topics. **I will share my PowerPoints slides on Canvas and I encourage students to use them as a study guide for the assignments. However, slides do not replace notetaking and critical thinking.**

In addition to the required textbook, we will read academic articles and blogs. I will upload the readings on Canvas. **Students need to purchase the required reading by Rapoport.**

**Visit me** during office hours if necessary.

Students must complete all assignments on time. **There is no extra credit in this class.**

## Weekly Pattern

This course includes lectures on Tuesdays and Thursdays that will introduce material, and discussion sections that provide opportunities for students to engage synchronously in scholarly debates and the ability to synthesize information.

The Tuesday meetings will consist of the introduction of new material. The longer Thursday meetings will feature student discussion sections, various forms of interactive learning, and student presentations. **To be prepared for class students need to do the required reading by the time we meet on Tuesday.**

I encourage thoughtful participation in lectures. We will use the iClicker technology, available free to UF students, to enable snap polling, stimulate discussion, and track lecture participation and attendance. I also make time for additional free-form discussion.

Students should be prepared to read, evaluate, and discuss different points of views in discussion sections and in their research papers.



## Assignments and Dates

The grade composition and the details of each assignment may be subject to change.

**Attendance and Participation:** Attendance is mandatory and is taken on Canvas every time we meet in class. I expect students to actively participate in class. You are allowed to miss two classes without a reasonable excuse. **UF policies apply.**

**Quiz:** The quiz will test your ability to engage with key concepts and your understanding of the global history of terrorism. **The quiz takes place on September 17 in class.**

**Oral Presentation:** The presentation (in a group of up to three people) covers the topic that we are discussing that week. Please note that group presenters are expected to do considerable research and go beyond the required reading. **All students are strongly encouraged to discuss their group presentation with me during regular office hours.**

**Midterm Research Paper:** A 3 000-3 500-word memo comparing the historical evolution of two violent Islamic extremist organizations of your choice. **The paper outline (500-word summary) is due on September 13 at 5pm ET. All students will discuss their midterm research paper with me during the first week of October during additional office hours. The midterm research paper is due on October 20 at 5pm ET.**

**Final Exam:** The final exam covers the content of the course including the content of student presentations. **The final exam takes place on December 12 at 5.30pm ET.**

### Grade Composition

Attendance: 10%

Participation: 10%

Quiz: 10%

Midterm Paper: 25% (5% outline; 20% memo)

Oral presentation: 20%

Final Exam: 25%

### GRADING SCALE

A	93.0 -100%
A-	90.0-92.9%
B+	87.0-89.9%
B	83.0-86.9%
B-	80.0-82.9%
C+	77.0-79.9%
C	73.0-76.9%
C-	70.0-72.9%
D+	67.0-69.9%
D	63.0-66.9%
D-	60.0-62.9%
F	below 60.0%

# Course Schedule

To follow the lectures and the discussions in class, you need to do the required reading prior to our meeting on Tuesday. I will post my power point slides after our class on Thursday. I will post the required readings on Canvas.

***The schedule and the required reading may be subject to change.***

Week/Date	Topic	Required Reading
<b>Week 1: August 22</b>	Getting Started	Sit back, relax, and pay attention.
<b>Week 2: August 27 and 29</b>	Key Concepts I  <i>What is radicalization?</i>  <i>What is terrorism?</i>	Berger (2018): Extremism, Ch.2-5.  E-book available: <a href="https://ufl-flvc.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01FALSC_UFL/6ad6fc/alma99383191069106597">https://ufl-flvc.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01FALSC_UFL/6ad6fc/alma99383191069106597</a>  Hoffman, Bruce (2017): Inside Terrorism. New York: Columbia University Press, Ch.4.
<b>Week 3: September 3 and 5</b>	Key Concepts II  <i>What is violent Islamic extremism?</i>  <i>How does religious terrorism differ from other (secular) types of terrorism?</i>	Rapaport (2022): Ch. 5  Bak, Mathias, Kristoffer Nilaus Tarp, and Christina Schori Liang. "Defining the concept of 'violent extremism.'" Geneva paper 24 (2019): 19. Available: <a href="https://ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/resources/docs/GCSP_document(59).pdf">https://ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/resources/docs/GCSP_document(59).pdf</a>
<b>Week 4: September 10 and 12</b>	No class meetings, students will conduct several independent assignments:  Independent reading assignment. The reading assignment will feature in the quiz next week.  Submission of short outline discussing your midterm research paper. The outline is due on September 13 at 5:00pm ET. Please submit to <a href="mailto:selischer@ufl.edu">selischer@ufl.edu</a>  <i>Further details provided in class</i>	Independent reading assignment:  Rapaport (2022): Introduction, Ch.1 and Ch.3

<b>Week 5: September 17 and 19</b>	Quiz (September 17 in class) Ideological Foundations	Byman, Daniel (2015): <i>Al Qaeda, The Islamic State and the Global Jihadi Movement. What Everyone Needs to Know</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press. Ch.4.  Wiktorowicz, Quintan (2005): "A Genealogy of Radical Islam." <i>Studies in Conflict &amp; Terrorism</i> 28 (1): 25-97.
<b>Week 6: September 24 and 26</b>	The Drivers of Islamic Radicalization	Schuurman, Bart (2018). <i>Becoming a European Homegrown Jihadist</i> . Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press, Ch. 2.  Hafez, Mohammed, and Creighton Mullins (2015): "The Radicalization Process: A Theoretical Synthesis of Empirical Approaches to Homegrown Extremism." <i>Studies in Conflict &amp; Terrorism</i> 38 (11): 958-75.  United Nations. 2015. "Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism." United Nations. Available: <a href="https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n15/456/22/pdf/n1545622.pdf?token=zLkFja5pwwUMPH5Fj&amp;fe=true">https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n15/456/22/pdf/n1545622.pdf?token=zLkFja5pwwUMPH5Fj&amp;fe=true</a>
<b>Week 7: October 1 and 3</b>	Additional office hours to discuss your midterm research papers with me in person.  <i>Further details provided in class.</i>	None
<b>Student presentations start on October 10</b>		
<b>Week 8: October 8 and 10</b>	Dislocation and Exclusion	Cesari, Joyceline (2009). <i>The Securitisation of Islam in Europe</i> . Brussels: Changing Landscape of European Liberty and Security.  Bowen, John (2010). <i>Can Islam Be French?</i> Princeton: Princeton University Press, Ch. 2.  Kepel, Gilles (2015). <i>Terror in France</i> . Princeton: Princeton University Press, Ch. 4 and 5.
<b>Week 9: October 15 and 19</b>	Economic Marginalization and Imprisonment	Kanol, Eylem. "The role of socioeconomic marginalization in the radicalization of jihadi foreign fighters from Europe." <i>Studies in Conflict &amp; Terrorism</i> (2022): 1-24.

		<p>Awan, Imran. "Muslim prisoners, radicalization and rehabilitation in British prisons." <i>Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs</i> 33, no. 3 (2013): 371-384.</p> <p>Hamm, Mark S. "Prison Islam in the age of sacred terror." <i>The British Journal of Criminology</i> 49, no. 5 (2009): 667-685.</p>
<b>The midterm research paper is due on October 20 at 5pm ET.</b>		
<b>Week 10: October 22 and 24</b>	Deradicalization Efforts	<p>El-Said, Hamed. "Deradicalization: Experiences in Europe and the Arab world." European Institute of the Mediterranean (2017). Available: <a href="https://www.iemed.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/DeradicalizationExperiences-in-Europe-and-the-Arab-World.pdf">https://www.iemed.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/DeradicalizationExperiences-in-Europe-and-the-Arab-World.pdf</a></p> <p>Ogunnubi, O., &amp; Aja, U. A. (2022). The de-radicalization, rehabilitation and reintegration project in Nigeria's counter-terrorism strategy: Operation Safe Corridor in context. <i>African Identities</i>, 1-17. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2022.2125365">https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2022.2125365</a></p>
<b>Week 11: October 29 and 31</b>	Al Qaeda, 9/11 and The War Against Terror	<p>Byman, Daniel, and Asfandyar Mir. 2022. "Assessing Al-Qaeda: A Debate." <i>Studies in Conflict &amp; Terrorism</i>, May, 1-40.</p> <p>Bergen, Peter, and Paul Cruickshank. "Revisiting the early al Qaeda: An updated account of its formative years." <i>Studies in Conflict &amp; Terrorism</i> 35, no. 1 (2012): 1-36.</p> <p>Hassan, Yaqoob-Ul. "Taliban and Al-Qaeda: The Unbreakable Relationship." <i>Strategic Analysis</i> 46, no. 2 (2022): 211-219.</p>
<b>Week 12: November 5 and 7</b>	The Rise and Fall of ISIS	<p>Gerges, Fawaz A. "ISIS and the Third Wave of Jihadism." <i>Current History</i> 113, no. 767 (2014): 339-43.</p> <p>Speckhard, Anne, and Molly D. Ellenberg. "ISIS in their own words." <i>Journal of Strategic Security</i> 13, no. 1 (2020): 82-127.</p>

<b>Week 13: November 12 and 14</b>	Violent Extremism in Africa	<p>Aldrich, Daniel P. "First steps towards hearts and minds? USAID's countering violent extremism policies in Africa." <i>Terrorism and Political Violence</i> 26, no. 3 (2014): 523-546.</p> <p>Romain Malejacq &amp; Adam Sandor (2020) Sahelistan? Military Intervention and Patronage Politics in Afghanistan and Mali, <i>Civil Wars</i>, 22:4, 543-566.</p> <p>Newmann, Edward (2007). Weak States, State Failure and Terrorism. <i>Terrorism and Political Violence</i> 19 (4): 463-488.</p>
<b>Week 14: November 29 and 21</b>	Looking Ahead: New Forms of Extremism	<p>Rapaport (2022): Conclusion</p> <p>Bjørge, Tore, and Kurt Braddock. "Anti-Government Extremism: A New Threat?" <i>Perspectives on Terrorism</i> 16, no. 6 (2022): 2-8.</p> <p>Speckhard, Anne, and Molly D. Ellenberg. "ISIS in their own words." <i>Journal of Strategic Security</i> 13, no. 1 (2020): 82-127.</p>
<b>Week 15: November 26 and 28</b>	Thanksgiving Break	None
<b>Week 16: December 3</b>	Review of everything we covered	Notes and Slides
<b>The final exam takes place on 12/12/2024 @ 5:30 PM</b>		

## Contacting Prof. Elischer

Please contact me if you need to discuss matters related to class. To protect your federal privacy rights, we cannot discuss your grade(s) over the phone, in front of the class or via non-official email. *Always email from Canvas or your UFL email.*

### Prof. Sebastian Elischer

212 Anderson Hall  
selischer@ufl.edu  
Regular Office Hours:  
T 3:00-4:00pm  
R 12:00-1:00pm

## The Fine Print: Course, Department, and University Policy in Brief

**Attendance:** Attendance is required. Students failing to attend class during the first week may be dropped from the course; excessive absences could result in a failing grade. Requirements for class attendance, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>). Please contact me if you will miss lecture. Documentation for excused absences must be received within one week of absence.

**COVID-19 (and other illnesses):** If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit [one.ufl.edu](https://one.ufl.edu/vaccination) for vaccination opportunities.

**Late Work/Make up Exams:** If you have an emergency on exam day, please email me immediately. Makeup assignments are allowed with documentation, within seven calendar days. **No one will be permitted to take any exam early.**

**Course Evaluations:** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback is available at [gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/](https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals or via Canvas. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at [gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/](https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/).

**Disability Services:** Students who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. Please share your accommodation letter (and discuss your needs) with Dr. Robbins as early as possible.

**Plagiarism/Cheating:** Cheating/plagiarism will result in zero for the assignment and will be reported to the SCCR. Students are bound by the UF Honor Pledge: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>. AI (e.g., ChatGPT) is not permitted in this course.

**Current UF Grading Policies/Grade Points:** Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points is here: [catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/](https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/).

**Recording lectures/discussion:** Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

**Extra-Credit:** I do not offer extra credit.