

POS 4931 Islamic Radicalization

Class Meeting Time: Tuesday 1:55 to 2:45pm
Thursday 1:55 to 3:50pm

Class Venue: 101 Anderson Hall

Professor: Sebastian Elischer
Office: Anderson Hall 212
Office Hours: Tuesday: 10-11am
Thursday: 10am-12pm
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Class Description

It is hardly possible to overstate the long-term effects of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on American foreign policy, the relationship between the West and the Middle East, societal relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, the contemporary public discourse about Islam, and academic curricula. The class introduces students to what Islamic radicalization is (and what it is not), how Islamic radicalization and Islamic terrorism differ from other types of extremism, the complex and manifold nature of radicalization processes as well as the strategies designed to counter religious radicalization. The class focuses on the interconnectedness of the manifold drivers of radicalization and the extent to which states have fostered or undermined radicalization processes. To examine these issues and questions, we analyze the origins and activities of prominent Islamic extremist organizations including Al Qaeda, ISIS, Boko Haram and others. The empirical case studies cover all world regions. The class critically discusses how “strong states” such as for example, the United States, France or the United Kingdom counter radicalization attempts and engage with terrorist organizations. The class pays equal attention to the strategies of “weak states” such as for example Nigeria or Mali. Given the complexity of the topic and the poor public understanding of the drivers of radicalization, the class requires students to read a lot, think a lot and work independently (a lot). Students enrolling in this class must be genuinely interested in the topic, willing to work through an extant reading list and prepared to challenge their own biases.

Desired Outcomes

By the end of the semester students will have a thorough understanding of the key concepts guiding research on radicalization and violent extremism. Students will comprehend the nature and the effects of different deradicalization strategies. Finally, students will be able to identify the modus operandi of Islamic terrorist organizations from across the world. The class prepares students for positions in research, policymaking, advocacy and government.

Requirements, Assignments and Grading

The course is for advanced undergraduate students, who are willing to invest a significant amount of time into this topic. Students must read the assigned material by Tuesday morning of each week. I do not regurgitate the content to the required reading. Instead, the presentations and discussions in class build on the required reading. Therefore, students must read the material in advance of each class in order to comprehend the discussion in class. I expect students to attend all classes and to participate actively in class discussions. If you cannot make it to class, please let me know prior to the class which you cannot attend. Please consult with university policies which circumstances qualify as reasonable absences and what kind of paperwork these circumstances require. If your performance is affected by circumstances beyond your control, I need to know before the due date of the assignment(s). In case of a personal emergency make sure to contact me as soon as possible. I will try my best to accommodate your circumstances.

In order to get full credits, students have to pass several assignments:

1. Regular attendance and *active* participation in class. If students miss more than two classes without a reasonable excuse, your grade inevitably will suffer. Attendance and *active* participation account for 10% of your final grade.
2. One *group presentation* in class (as part of a group of students 3-5 depending on the size of the class; the presentation should last no less no longer and no less than 20-25 minutes). **All group presentations take place during Week 11 and 15.** I will divide the class into groups during the first two weeks of the semester. Each group will present about the origins and the trajectory of a terrorist organization in a particular world region. To prepare for the oral presentation, presenters must make adequate use of academic materials (books by academic publishing houses, peer-reviewed journal articles and other suitable sources), which are not included in the required reading. I strongly encourage you to discuss the content of your presentation with me during my office hours. Make sure your group comes to see me during the first part of the semester *and* at least two weeks prior to your presentation. I will provide help in identifying suitable literature and a suitable topic for your presentation. The *oral presentation* accounts for 20% of your final grade. I will provide further information about this assignment in class throughout the semester.
3. A *group research memo* (5 pages including bibliography; Time New Roman 12, single-spaced) summarizing your group presentation in an *accessible manner*. **The group memo is due one week after your oral group presentation in class.** The group memo accounts for 20% of your final grade. All group memos must follow a template. I will provide further information about the template and the content of the research memo throughout the semester. *Please note that it is difficult to write short and insightful memos! Do not underestimate this assignment.*
4. Two multiple-choice tests. The first test accounts for 30%, the second test for 20% of your final grade. Both tests cover the concepts and thematic issues we discuss in class. Both tests take place in class. **The first test (30%) takes place on October 1. The second test (20%) takes place on December 4.**

Grading scale

A	91 or above	B	82-84	C	73-75	D	67-69
A-	88-90	B-	79-81	C-	72-74	D-	64-66
B+	85-87	C+	76-78	D+	70-72		

Policies on Persons with Disabilities

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. It will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Anyone with a disability should feel free to see me during office hours to make the necessary arrangements.

Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism

All students should observe the University of Florida's standards of academic honesty. In the event that a student is found cheating or plagiarizing, he/she will automatically fail the course and will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs and to the Department Chair and Graduate Coordinator for possible dismissal from the program. Acts of plagiarism include:

- Turning in a paper or another assignment that was written by someone else (i.e., by another student, by a research service, or downloaded off the Internet);
- Copying, verbatim, a sentence or paragraph of text from the work of another author without properly acknowledging the source through a commonly accepted citation style and using quotation marks;
- Paraphrasing (i.e., restating in your own words) text written by someone else without citing that author;
- Using a unique idea or concept, which you discovered in a specific reading, without citing that work.

Policy on Late Assignments

I understand that sometimes there might be reasons why an assignment cannot be handed in on time. If you anticipate such a situation, please contact me asap. This MUST happen prior to the deadline of the assignment or prior to the class that you are missing.

Books

Students are required to purchase the following books:

Berger, J.M. (2018): *Extremism*. Cambridge: MIT Press

Byman, Daniel (2015): *Al Qaeda, The Islamic State and the Global Jihadi Movement. What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Neumann, Peter (2016): *Radicalized. New Jihadists and the Threat to the West*. New York: I.B. Tauris.

I will make every effort to post the required readings on the university's online elearning system. This might not always be possible. At the beginning of the semester, the political science librarian will give a lecture about how students can make best use of the library and other resources. Students should familiarize themselves with the Global Terrorism Dataset (DTA): <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED): <https://www.acleddata.com/> and the following two journals:

Terrorism and Political Violence: <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ftpv20/current>
Studies in Conflict & Terrorism: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/uter20>

There are many other sources you may consult to prepare for the various assignments.

Class Calendar

Any of the sessions may be subject to change

To follow the discussions in class you need to do the readings prior to the Tuesday meeting

Week 1, August 20 and 22: Getting Started

Organizational meetings, expectations and assignments, how to make best use of the library and other academic resources, discussion of syllabus, outline of key concepts, clarification of terminology, and overview of key themes in radicalization research.

Berger (2018): Chapter 2 and 3.

Week 2, August 27 and 29: What is (Islamic) Radicalization/ Extremism?

How does Islamic radicalization resemble and differ from other types of radicalization? How does radicalization differ from extremism and terrorism? What can we learn from communist radicalization and terrorism that shaped politics in Western Europe in the 1970s and right-wing or fascist extremism the United States today? What is the difference between religious radicalization, religious polarization and religious extremism?

Neumann (2016): p.1-54.

Berger (2018): Chapter 5

Hoffman, Bruce (2017): *Inside Terrorism*. New York: Columbia University Press, Chapter 4.

Week 3, September 3 and 5: The Ideological Origins of Islamic Radicalization

We discuss the trajectory of the Salafi creed and the evolution of quietist Salafism to political and jihadi Salafism. Although not all jihadi terrorists are Salafis and not all Salafis are jihadi terrorists, Salafism is the strand of Islam most associated with contemporary Islamic extremism. We take a closer look at ideological developments within Islam, which explains why Muslims are often the target of Islamic terrorist attacks.

Bymann (2015): Chapter 4

Maher (2016): *Salafi-Jihadism. The History of an Idea*. Oxford: Oxford University Press p. 3-20.

Wiktorowicz, Quintan (2005): "A Genealogy of Radical Islam." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 28 (1): 25–97.

Week 4, September 10 and 12: The Drivers of Islamic Radicalization

Scholars generally agree that radicalization processes are inherently complex and process-driven. We take a look at these processes, isolate some particularly salient variables and discuss common deradicalization strategies that states worldwide resort to.

Schuurman, Bart (2018). *Becoming a European Homegrown Jihadist*. Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press, Chapter 2.

Hafez, Mohammed, and Creighton Mullins (2015): "The Radicalization Process: A Theoretical Synthesis of Empirical Approaches to Homegrown Extremism." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38 (11): 958–75.

United Nations. 2015. "Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism." United Nations.
http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/674.

Week 5, September 17 and 19: Dislocation and Exclusion: Islamic Radicalization in France

Cultural alienation in combination with economic and political exclusion can foster radicalization processes. We discuss this in the political and historical context of France, the first Western country to experience Islamic radicalization. We examine France's colonial legacy and how it influences the relationship between France and its growing Muslim-minority.

Bowen, John (2010). *Can Islam Be French?* Princeton: Princeton University Press, Chapter Two.

Kepel, Gilles (2015). *Terror in France*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, Chapters 4 and 5.

Farhad Khosrokhavar (2016): The New European Jihadism and Its Avatars. *Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society* 2 (2): 1-29.

By the end of Week 5 all students need to inform me about the content of the group presentation!

Week 6, September 24 and 26: Dislocation and Exclusion: Islamic Radicalization in the UK and the Netherlands

Building on our insights from last week, we discuss the evolving relationship between the state, society and Islam in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

Cesari, Joyceline (2009). *The Securitisation of Islam in Europe*. Brussels: Changing Landscape of European Liberty and Security.

Hugh, Barnes (2006). *Born in the UK: Young Muslims in Britain*. London: The Foreign Policy Centre.

Schuurman, Bart (2018). *Becoming a European Homegrown Jihadist*. Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press, Chapter 3-4.

Week 7, October 1 and 3: EU Strategies Against Radicalization and Extremism

The first test takes place on October 1.

To what extent have counterterrorism and counter-radicalization strategies become Europeanized? What are the EU's political and institutional responses to radicalization?

Bossong, Raphael (2014): EU Cooperation on Terrorism Prevention and Violent Radicalization: Frustrated Ambitions or New Forms of EU Security Governance? *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 27 (1): 66-82.

Didier Bigo et al. (2015): *The EU Counter-Terrorism Policy Responses to the Attacks in Paris: Towards an EU Security and Liberty Agenda*. Brussels: CEPS Papers in Liberty and Security in Europe No.81.

Week 8, October 8 and 10: Al Qaeda, 9/11 and The War Against Terror

How, when and why did Al Qaeda form and what led to the attacks on 9/11? How does the West fight Al Qaeda? How do European counter-terrorism approaches differ from American

approaches? Can Western approaches be regarded as suitable and effective? Can extremists ever be defeated for good?

Byman (2015): Chapter 1, 2 and 3.

Week 9, October 15 and 17: The Rise and Fall of ISIS

How does ISIS differ from Al Qaeda? What does the rise of ISIS tell us about the relationship between weak statehood and Islamic radicalization? Which political factors and grievances facilitated the rise of ISIS?

Byman (2015): Chapter 8

Stern, Jessica and Berger, J.M (2016). *ISIS. The State of Terror*. USA: Harper Collins, Chapter 2 and Chapter 8.

Efraim Benmelech & Esteban F. Klor (2018): What Explains the Flow of Foreign Fighters to ISIS?, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Published Online First.

Week 10, October 22 and 24: Weak States: Fertile Ground for Jihadi Infiltration?

Building on insights from previous classes we discuss if weak states are particularly susceptible to the spread of jihadi groups.

Laurent de Castelli (2014). Mali: From Sanctuary to Islamic State. *The RUSI Journal* 159 (3): 62-68.

Newmann, Edward (2007). Weak States, State Failure and Terrorism. *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19 (4): 463-488.

Week 11, October 29 and 31. No class. Time to prepare your presentations and papers

By the end of this week all groups need to send me a short outline of their class presentation.

Week 12 to 16: Group Presentations with Case Studies from Across the Globe

Each class will feature one or two student presentations about an individual case study, i.e. a jihadi terrorist organization, the factors that gave rise to its formation, how a state or a group of states is engaging with that group and whether or not state strategies in fighting this group have been successful.

Week 12, November 5 and 7: Case Studies – Europe

Week 13, November 12 and 14: Case Studies – Africa and the Maghreb

Week 14, November 19 and 21: Case Studies – Asia

Week 15, November 26: Case Studies – Russia and the post-Soviet Sphere

Week 16, December 2: Case Studies – Russia and the post-Soviet Sphere II

The second test takes place on December 4 in class