

Origins of Radicalism and Political Instability in the Middle East

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Course theme: Youth and the allure of terrorism: identity, recruitment, political economy
Course rationale: The Middle East (MENA) is a large and complex region. First, by posing a specific question, our seminar will be better able to grasp important political dynamics which are ongoing in the MENA region through a focused study such as the one proposed for this semester. Second, extremism is on the rise worldwide. It poses a threat to democratic regimes, cultural and religious tolerance and diversity, human rights, gender equality and the rule of law. Finally, my current research and book project on the topic of the seminar will offer a developed conceptual framework and extensive data base to enrich the seminar.

Central questions raised:

- 1) What attracts certain youth demographics to extremism and to engage in terrorist violence?
- 2) How are youth recruited to terrorist organizations? What are the mechanisms which are used to entice youth to join extremist groups?
- 3) What are the financial means by which terrorist organizations are able to persist over time and fund their violent and illicit activities?
- 4) Why do the most powerful terrorist movements in the world today embrace radical Islamism (Salafi jihadi ideology)
- 5) How can we become more empathetic to better understand the motivations which lead youth to become attracted to extremism and join terrorist organizations?

Course learning goals:

- 1) Seminar members will learn to better comprehend the causal factors which lead youth to become attracted to extremism.
- 2) They will understand the internal dynamics and ideologies of terrorist organizations.
- 3) Seminar members will develop skills in understanding the rise and development of terrorist organizations by conducting *comparative historical analysis*.
- 4) With this conceptual, empirical and methodological understanding, students will explore strategies and policies which can be used to dissuade youth from joining extremist organizations and how to de-radicalize those who have joined such groups.
- 5) In addition to improving skills in textual analysis, seminar members will increase their acuity in visual learning

SAS core learning goals met by this course:

- 1) Explain and be able to assess the relationship among assumptions, method, evidence, arguments, and theory in social and historical analysis.
- 2) Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science.
3. Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.
4. Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

The course meets each Tuesday from 6 pm - 8:40 pm (with a 10 minute break). The course will be offered synchronously through Webex. Individual consultations will be held periodically by the instructor with the seminar members via Skype, Zoom or Webex or telephone to discuss the student's progress in the course. Office hours are offered by an "on appointment" basis.

Students need to attend class on a regular basis. Because this seminar is offered synchronously online, the Webex platform will be opened by the instructor at 5:30 pm prior to the official beginning of the class at 6 pm. The access to the Webex platform is listed on the Home page of the seminar Sakai website. This added half hour will facilitate all seminar members being sure that they can access the online instruction. It also can provide an opportunity for individual questions to be posed prior to the beginning of the class. In the event of a problem accessing Webex, students should call the instructor at (732)322-0099.

Official announcements about this class will be posted on our Sakai site. In the unlikely event that a class must be cancelled, you will receive an email announcement that you should confirm on the Sakai site. If you plan to use a different email address from the email you have given me, be sure to inform me of that email address.

COURSE REQUIRMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS

Expectations of seminar students:

The seminar should be conceptualized as a team effort. If the instructor is viewed as the coach and the students are viewed as the players, then obviously there must be continued interaction between both parties. Especially in an online class, extra effort must be made to foster communication among the seminar members and between the instructor and the seminar participants. Students are *encouraged* to ask questions during instructor presentations and the instructor will create a number of breaks during each seminar session so that seminar members can raise questions and offer comments and analysis. Thus, *active learning* is expected of all seminar members, with the understanding that the material we will be covering is complex. There is no such thing as a "foolish question." Seminar members should ask as many questions as they feel necessary to make sure that the material being covered is understood.

Students should come to class having completed the readings for the session and the assignments for each seminar session. Students should upload required material using the Assignment Tool by 5 pm Monday evening before our Tuesday meeting.

Course evaluation:

- 1) Term Research Paper (40%)
- 2) Critical Reading Notes (30%)
- 3) Performance as a Discussant and class assignments (10%)
- 4) Class Attendance and Active Class Participation (20%)

Term Research Paper (TRP):

The Term Research Paper (TRP) counts for 40% of the final evaluation in the seminar. It will be judged according to: 1) the quality of the main question posed (10%); 2) the logic and reasoning behind the choice of research topic, namely the degree to which the topic is significant and compelling (20%); 3) the conceptual framework which is used to frame the research; and 4) the quality of the relationships or hypotheses which are examined (20%). The analysis and arguments presented in the TRP, and the sources used to document the research, will constitute the central part of the evaluation (50%).

The TRP should comprise at least 20 pages of 12 font double-spaced text, exclusive of Notes and Bibliography. The due date of the TRP will be decided after the seminar begins. Once we have decided on a fixed date, that date must be adhered to by all seminar members.

Critical Reading Notes (CRN):

To systematize our study of the origins of radicalism and political instability in the MENA region and Africa, you will be asked to provide Critical Reading Notes (CRNs) of designated course readings (30% of the final evaluation). Please note that only those readings designated with the notation, [CRN], require submission of a CRN.

The analysis of the reading should take the form of short notes (1-2 pages) that should be *uploaded regularly* to your Sakai Assignment portal. Each CRN should follow the structure below and answer the following questions for each seminar reading which requires a CRN:

- First, what is the main question posed by the author(s)?
- Second, why is the central question(s) important for an understanding of the central theme of the seminar, namely youth and the allure of terrorism?
- Third, what type of conceptual framework does the author(s) use in her/his/their analysis?
- Fourth, what is one main hypothesis the author(s) test(s) in her/his/their study?
- Finally, what conclusions does the author(s) reach and do you find them convincing? What is your overall assessment of the reading? Are there parts you found to be unclear?

Discussant Assignments:

Seminar members will serve regularly as Discussants (in teams of 2). This task, together

with assignments submitted during the semester, constitutes 10% of the course evaluation. Discussant Notes are designed to stimulate analysis of issues which the Discussants feel are important and to draw attention to issues in a reading which may be unclear. By having Discussants make brief presentations (3-5 minutes maximum), they can draw attention to issues which may still require more explanation beyond the material covered by the instructor.

Attendance and class participation:

Regular attendance and active participation in the seminar constitute 20% of the course evaluation. Students are allowed *one* unexcused absence during the semester. Students who encounter difficulty in attending a seminar session should contact the instructor well before the class session to explain why s/he will not be able to attend it.

Active class participation requires completing readings and assignments *before* the class session begins. Participating in class involves raising questions about issues in the readings or our discussions which are confusing or unclear. Challenging the arguments offered in a reading or by the instructor is also a key component of active class participation. Another contribution can involve offering comments on how a particular reading enhanced a student's understanding of the seminar analytic focus and themes.

Individual Meetings:

Seminar members should meet with the instructor periodically at least twice during the semester, to review the student's progress, address any concerns s/he has regarding the seminar, and review the progress the student is making on the Term Research Paper.

Course readings:

All readings required for the seminar are to be found on the course's Sakai website (under *Resources*). Supplementary articles and notes, including PPT presentations, will be also available on the course website. The Sakai website provides a comprehensive set of materials related to the course and you should plan on checking it often.

Chat Room and Discussion Forums:

Students are encouraged to use the *Discussion Forum* and *Chat Room* to pose questions about the course readings that may arise outside of our class meetings. I will check the *Discussion Forum* and *Chat Room* regularly. In the past, such discussions have helped students master some of the conceptual and empirical issues raised in course readings. We will also organize Discussion Forums topics around syllabus modules to improve the learning process.

Course Rubric:

The following rubric will be used in assessing your performance. It sets the most basic criteria of assessment, but it should give you the basic idea of what is expected of you. Should you decide to challenge any part of your evaluation, please refer to this rubric in arguing your appeal.

		A	B	C	D/F
Essays and other written work	Argument and analysis	Makes clear and compelling argument. Solid reasoning. Offers insightful analysis	Makes clear argument, based on plausible readings. Some effort to sustain argument throughout the analysis.	Attempts to offer a cogent argument and analysis, but argument and analysis are based on faulty reasoning.	Fails to make a cogent argument or to offer sound analysis.
	Writing and grammar	Writes well, making appropriate word choices and avoiding grammar and spelling mistakes.	Writes well, but may include a handful of grammar, spelling, or word choice mistakes.	Makes multiple errors, but still writes in a clearly intelligible manner.	Makes multiple errors that interfere substantially with comprehension.
	Organization and structure	Presents clear, navigable structure with introduction, body, and conclusion. Provides reader with a "road map" of essay.	Offers clear organization with some road map for reader.	Makes some effort to structure the paper, but organization is problematic or difficult to follow.	Structures the paper in a way that is disorganized and difficult or impossible to follow.
	Mastery and use of readings	Uses multiple readings and demonstrates mastery of facts and arguments made in readings.	References multiple readings and demonstrates a good degree of understanding.	Makes minimal use of readings and/or fails to demonstrate adequate mastery of readings.	Fails to use readings
Conceptual analysis	Knows the analytical concepts, provides their definition(s), and applies them precisely and systemically in the analysis of specific problems.	Knows most of the concepts. Makes minor definitional errors.	Makes some headway toward knowing and applying the relevant concepts.	Fails to know and apply basic concepts.	
Empirical analysis	Marshals appropriate evidence to describe, understand, and explain political problems.	Marshals appropriate evidence to describe, understand, and explain political problems, with small errors.	Attempts to provide and explain evidence but with substantial omissions or errors in interpretation.	Fails to provide relevant evidence.	
Theoretical analysis	Explains the relevance and applicability of a wide range of theoretical analyses to specific political problems.	Is able to apply successfully some of the course's theoretical analyses to selected political problems.	Has difficulty connecting theoretical analyses to the political problems.	Fails to connect the course's theoretical analyses to analyzed political problems.	
"Political literacy"	Exhibits a nuanced understanding of the relationship between the analytical tools learned in class and "real life" global/comparative political problems.	Demonstrates a general understanding of the relevance of political scientific theories for the analysis of the global political world.	Has difficulty connecting the theories to actual issues of global/comparative politics.	Fails to connect the theories to actual issues of global/comparative politics.	

SUPPORT AND POLICIES

Reporting absences

If a student is sick, has an emergency or other serious circumstances preventing her/him from participating in live session, the suggested policy is as follows: "Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence." An email is automatically sent to the instructor. Please note,

Late policy

The evaluation of assignments which are submitted late will be deducted 10% per day to a maximum of ten days. Assignments will not be accepted after ten days. It is your responsibility to ensure that all assignments reach me. Extensions are only available as a result dire of circumstances, such as a documented illness or debilitating injury spanning much of the time when you could have worked on the assignment. Even in these exceptional cases, you are responsible for informing me ahead of time, when circumstances permit, that an assignment will be late. Unnecessary delays in notification will disqualify you for an extension.

Academic honesty and plagiarism

Our purpose in the classroom is to seek the truth. The seminar's work requires trust and honesty between teacher and student. If we are not honest about what we know and do not know, our learning will always be impaired. Because our teaching and learning depends on this honest communication, we expect all students to understand what plagiarism is and why it is unacceptable.

Academic integrity means, among other things that you as a student must:

- Develop and write all of your own assignments.
- Show in detail where the materials you use in your papers come from. Create citations whether you are paraphrasing authors or quoting them directly. Be sure always to show source and page number within the assignment and include a bibliography in the back.
- Do not fabricate information or citations in your work.
- Do not facilitate academic dishonesty for another student by allowing your own work to be submitted by others.

All Rutgers students are expected to honor the following pledge, which is included in every assignment they are submitting in this course:

“On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment).”

The consequences of scholastic dishonesty are very serious. If you are in doubt about any issue related to plagiarism or scholastic dishonesty, please discuss it with the instructor. Students are also advised to consult the following links that provide more information and plagiarism tutorials:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

<http://library.camden.rutgers.edu/EducationalModules/Plagiarism/>

http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/avoid_plagiarism

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/resources-for-students/>

Student Code of Conduct:

Students are required to adhere to the University Student Code of Conduct delineated in the Rutgers Student Affairs website Student Conduct page.

Academic Services

- For academic support visit Rutgers Academics Student Support
- Any student can obtain tutoring and other help at the Learning Centers on each campus
- For coaching help with writing skills and assignments visit the Writing Coaching webpage
- Many library resources are available online. Assistance is available through phone, email, and chat. For information, check the Rutgers Libraries.

Accommodations and disability services

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form.

If you do not have documented disability but nevertheless struggling with studies and course requirements due to some health, family or other issues, speak to me sooner rather than later. I cannot help you if I am not aware of your problems.

Rutgers Student Health Services:

Rutgers Student Health Services is dedicated to health for the whole student body, mind and spirit. It accomplishes this through a staff of qualified clinicians and support staff. Services are available at several locations throughout the New Brunswick-Piscataway area. For more information visit: <http://health.rutgers.edu/>

Student Wellness Services:

Just In Case Web App <http://codu.co/cee05e> Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

(848) 932-7884; 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901;
<http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/> CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)

(848) 932-1181; 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901; www.vpva.rutgers.edu/
The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

Scarlet Listeners

(732) 247-5555 / <http://www.scarletlisteners.com/> Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space.

Veteran Service

Rutgers is proud to support veterans. If you are a veteran of the armed forces, please visit the Office of Veteran and Military Programs and Services website for more information.

COURSE OUTLINE

Module 1: Introduction and Seminar Overview (Sept. 1)

Concepts

- a) Introduction of seminar members and instructor;
- b) Course topic and rationale;
- c) Course requirements and instructor-student interaction;
- d) Cross-cultural understanding of the MENA region;
- e) Seminar members' questions and comments

Discussion questions:

- 1) Why does the seminar focus on the theme of youth and the allure of terrorism? Why are identity, recruitment and political economy core components of the question and larger topic?
- 2) What are *Critical Reading Notes* and why are they important to the seminar?
- 3) How should seminar members approach the Term Research Paper?
- 4) What role do preconceived notions of the MENA region and Islam have on our ability to comprehend the seminar topic?
- 5) Is meeting once a week (virtually) for a *consultation* the best way for seminar members to address concerns that they may have and to assure that they are making good progress in the course?

PPT Presentation:

“Youth and the Allure of Terrorism: Identity, Recruitment, Political Economy

Module 2: How do we conceptualize the Middle East? (Sept. 15)

Concepts

- a) stereotype

- b) the role of religion
- c) sectarianism
- d) Orientalism and Eurocentrism
- e) “Negative Othering” (intolerance)
- f) “presentism”
- g) “politics from above” vs. “politics from below”: the role of political elites
- h) “Communal mind”

Discussions questions:

- 1) How do we define the notion of *stereotype* and what impact does it have on the learning process?
- 2) How is Orientalism and Eurocentrism linked to the notion of stereotypes?
- 3) How do we define the concept of religion and what is its relationship to politics?
- 4) What do we mean by sectarianism and what role does it play in the dynamics of extremist ideologies and movements?
- 5) How should we understand the concept of “Othering” and what role does it play in political movements?
- 6) What are the shortcomings of “presentism” and the notion of the “communal mind” when we analyze politics?
- 7) What are the benefits and shortcomings of focusing on “politics from above” and “politics from below”?

Readings:

- Said, Edward – *Orientalism*, 1-28 [CRN]
 al-‘Azm, Sadek Jalal, “Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse,” *Khamsin*, 5-25 [CRN]
 Davis, Eric, “10 Conceptual Sins in Analyzing Middle East Politics,” *The New Middle East*, <http://new-middle-east.blogspot.com/2009/01/10-conceptual-sins-in-analyzing-middle.html>
 Davis, Eric, “A Sectarian Middle East?,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, <http://fas-polisci.rutgers.edu/davis/ARTICLES/DavisSectarianMiddleEastIJMES.1108.pdf> [CRN]
 Said, Edward, “The Phony Islamic Threat,” *The New York Times*, November 23, 1993; <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/11/21/magazine/the-phony-islamic-threat.html?searchResultPosition=1>

Module 3: What is terrorism? (Sept. 22)

Concepts

- a) Orientalism and Orientalism in reverse
- b) al-Qa’ida
- c) the Islamic State
- d) al-Shabab
- e) Boko Haram

Discussion questions:

- 1) When and why was al-Qacida formed?
- 2) What is the relationship of the Islamic State to al-Qacida and why did the two organizations separate?
- 3) How did al-Shabab develop in Somalia and how did it reflect collapse of the state?
- 4) What does the title Boko Haram tell us about the dynamics behind the formation of this terrorist organization?

Readings:

Clarke, Colin P., *Terrorism: The Essential Reference Guide*, “Al-Qaeda,” “al-Qaeda in Iraq,” “al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula,” and “al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghrib,” 9-19

Clarke, *Terrorism*, “al-Shabaab,” 19-21

Clarke, *Terrorism*, “Boko Haram,” 46-48

Nacos, Brigitte, *What is Terrorism?* 19-44 [CRN]

Module 4: Islam, Political Islam (Islamism) and Radical Islamism (Salafi-Jihadi Islam) (Sept. 29)

Concepts:

- a) Islamism
- b) The rise of the Society of the Muslim Brothers (Muslim Brotherhood)
- c) Religion vs. politicized religion
- d) Salafi-Jihadism

PPT presentation:

“Introduction to Islam”

Discussion questions:

- 1) What is the relationship between the world’s major religions and politics? Does a believer need to make a specific political commitment to join a religion?
- 2) When was the Muslim Brotherhood established and why?
- 3) How did the Muslim Brotherhood extend beyond Egypt and who is its typical members?
- 4) What is Islamism and how did politicized religion develop in the MENA region?
- 5) What is Salafism? Does it necessarily constitute a radical interpretation of Islam?
- 6) How do we define jihad? What are the different understandings of the term in Islam?

Readings:

Davis, Eric, “Religion and Politics in Post-Ba’thist Iraq,” *Newsletter of the American Academic Research Institute in Iraq* (TAARII), 2008 [CRN]

Haykel, Bernard, “On the Nature and Action of Salafi Thought,” in Roel Meijcher, *Global Salafism*, 1-24 [CRN]

Cook, David, *Understanding Jihad*, 32-48

Kirdis, Esen, Uncertainty and the Religious Market: The Unexpected Rise of Salafism in

Egypt and Tunisia after the Arab Spring, *Journal of Church and Religion*, (Mar. 2020): 1-24 (Recommended)

Davis, Eric, "The Muslim Brotherhood and the Myth of Islamic Fundamentalism," *The New Middle East*, <http://new-middle-east.blogspot.com/2013/06/the-muslim-brotherhood-and-myth-of.html>

Assignment for Oct. 6:

Please find a Biography of a youth who joined a terrorist organization and write a 500 word summary of the person's life experiences which led he/she to become an extremist.

Module 5: Ideological Change, Ideological Vacuums and "Tipping Points"
(Oct. 6)

Concepts:

- a) Secularism and secular ideologies
- b) Colonial liberalism (ideologies imposed on post-colonial nations)
- c) Corporatist nationalism (Pan-Arabism; Pan-Africanism)
- d) Neo-liberalism and the decline of civic engagement in the late 20th century

Discussion questions:

- 1) Why has the term secularism been such a prominent idea in the West?
- 2) What do we mean secular nationalism?
- 3) What was colonial liberalism and why did it fail in the mid-20th century?
- 4) What is a corporatist ideology and how are Pan Arabism and Pan Africanism corporatist?
- 5) What is neo-liberalism and why did it gain traction during the 1980s but especially after the collapse of communism in 1991?
- 6) How does neo-liberalism related to globalization?
- 7) How does neo-liberalism undermine civic engagement and political community?
- 8) How did a series of "tipping points" affect the rise of radical Islamism: Seizure the Grand Mosque of Mecca (1979); Iranian Revolution (1978-79); Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Gulf War (1991); US invasion of Iraq (2003)

Readings:

Harvey, David, "Freedom is Just Another Word...", *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, New York and London: Oxford University Press, 2007, 5-38 [CRN]

Dorraj, Manochehr, "Populism and Corporatism in the Middle East and North Africa: a Comparative Analysis," *Chinese Political Science Review* (2017) 2: 288-313 [CRN]

Cook, David, *Understanding Jihad*, 129-161

Copson, Andrew, "What is Secularism," "The Case for Secularism," and "The Case Against Secularism," *Secularism: Politics, Religion and Freedom*, 12-17, 64-76, 77- 99

Harvey, David, "Neoliberalism as a Creative Destruction," *Annals of the American*

Academy of Political and Social Science, 610 (Mar. 2007): 22-44
(Recommended)
Davis, Eric, "Egyptian Armed Forces, Inc.: The Middle East's New Janissary Corps,"
The New Middle East, <http://new-middle-east.blogspot.com/2013/08/egyptian-armed-forces-inc-middle-east.html> (Recommended)

PPT presentation:
"Tipping Points" and The Rise of Radical Islamism,"

Assignment for October 13:
Submit a 2 page *prospectus* of the Term Research Paper (TRP) you would like to complete. Be sure to specify the core question which you will pose in you TRP and why you consider your topic significant in relation to the core themes of the seminar.

Module 6: The Terrorist Imaginary (Oct. 13)

Concepts:

- a) al-Tawhid
- b) Takfir
- c) Jihad
- d) al-Hakimiya
- e) al-Jahiliya
- f) al-kufr
- g) shirk

Discussion questions:

- 1) What do we mean by a *terrorist imaginary*?
- 2) How do terrorists envision the world?
- 3) What are some of the core concepts of terrorist narratives?
- 4) Why does extremist ideology place such emphasis on "Othering" and hatred?
- 5) Why are external symbols, such as dress and ritual behavior, so important to its imaginary and the behavior of terrorists?
- 6) Who controls the construction and implementation of the terrorist imaginary?

Readings:

Bergsen, Albert, *The Sayyid Qutb Reader*, 3-13 [CRN] _____
Ignatius, David, "The Manual that Chillingly Foreshadows the Islamic State," Sept. 25, 2014
https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/david-ignatius-the-mein-kampf-of-jihad/2014/09/25/4adbfc1a-44e8-11e4-9a15-137aa0153527_story.html
Gerges, Fawaz, *ISIS: A History*, 23-49 [CRN]
Wright, Lawrence, "ISIS's Savage Strategy in Iraq," *The New Yorker*, June 16, 2014;
<https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/isiss-savage-strategy-in-iraq>

Module 7: Globalization, migration, social media and a "sense of place"

(Oct. 20)

Concepts:

- a) Migration and globalization
- b) Migration and social media
- c) Migration and a loss of a “sense of place”
- d) “Reverse” migration
- e) The Caliphate as fantasy
- f) Expectations vs. reality

Discussion questions:

- 1) What factors have increased global migration?
- 2) How has social media contributed to global migration?
- 3) How do people relate to the space they occupy? Under what circumstances do they feel connected socially and culturally and when do they feel marginalized

Readings:

Cresswell, Tim, *Place: A Short Introduction*, 1-14

Euben, J. Peter, “The Polis, Globalization and the Politics of Place, *Democracy and Vision*, eds. A. Botwinick and William Connolly, 257-289 (please read pp. 257-263, 276-289) [CRN]

Matusitz, Jonathan et al, “Al-Qaeda, ISIS and Al-Shabaab,” *Online Jihadist Magazines to Promote the Caliphate: Communicative Perspectives*, 91-115 [CRN]

Assignment for October 27:

Please submit a 4 page (1000 word) *prospectus* for your Term Research Paper. It should specify the central question your raising, its significance for the seminar theme, the concepts which you will use to frame your research, a set of hypotheses which you will be analyzing and thoughts on the sources which you will use.

Module 8: Gender and Jihad: The Fantasy World of the Caliphate (Oct. 27)

Concepts:

- a) motivations
- b) adventure
- c) romance
- d) patriarchy
- e) financial gain
- f) family strife
- g) escapism

Discussion questions:

- 1) What are the core motivations that lead youth to join the Islamic State?
- 2) In what sense is joining the Islamic State a source of adventure for some youth?
- 3) To what extent are romantic considerations a factor in causing women to join the IS?

- 4) How are women treated by the IS? What are its “sexual politics”?
- 5) What percentage of youth join the Islamic State for financial reasons?
- 6) What role does family strife cause youth to leave home and join the Islamic State?
- 7) What forms of escapism - “fantasy” – have motivated youth to join the IS?
- 8) Why were so many women who joined the Islamic State ultimately disillusioned?
- 9) How did the mixture of ethnicities and nationalities of IS members affect the organization socially and militarily?

Reading:

Moaveni, Azadeh, Guest House for Young Widows: Among the Women of ISIS, entire [CRN]

Module 9: The Rise and Fall of the Islamic State (Nov. 3)

Concepts:

- a) sectarianism
- b) Sunnis vs. Shi‘a
- c) corruption
- d) state capacity

Discussion questions:

- 1) What role did the Syrian regime play in the rise of terrorist organizations in Syria, including the Islamic state?
- 2) What role did the sectarian policies of the Iraqi regime under Nuri al-Maliki play in allowing the Islamic State to seize a third of Iraq?
- 3) How did the political economy of the IS function to allow it to become an established “quasi-state”? What financial resources did it exploit?
- 4) What were the inherent contradictions of the IS when it was first established?
- 5) What role did ideology play in both strengthening the IS but also weakening it?

Readings:

Davis, E., “A Tale of Two States: Iraq and the IS,” *The New Middle East*, November 30, 2014; <http://new-middle-east.blogspot.com/2014/11/a-tale-of-two-states-iraq-and-is.html>

Davis, E., “The Political Obstacles to the Defeat of the (so-called) Islamic State,” *The New Middle East*, December 29, 2015; <http://new-middle-east.blogspot.com/2015/12/the-political-obstacles-to-military.html> [CRN]

Davis, Eric, “Iraq’s Ja‘fari (Shiite) Personal Status Law: a Threat to Women and National Unity,” *The New Middle East*, 2014 <http://new-middle-east.blogspot.com/2014/05/iraqs-jafari-shiite-personal-status-law.html> (Recommended)

Gerges, Fawaz, *ISIS: A History*, 261-283 [CRN]

Halimi, Mahfuh Bin Haji and Muhammad Saiful Alam Shah Bin Sudiman, “Debunking Jihadist Ideological Misinterpretations and Distortions,” *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, 12/1 (January 2020): 87-91

Module 10: al-Shabab and the Collapse of the Somali State (Nov. 10)

Concepts:

- a) clans and warlords
- b) Siyad (Siad) Barre
- c) failed state
- d) fishing rights and piracy
- e) Islamic Courts Movement
- f) expatriate fighters

Discussions questions:

- 1) How does Somalia’s clan structure impact national politics?
- 2) How did General Siyad Barre’s regime set the stage for a failed state in Somalia?
- 3) How did the loss of fishing economy impact Somali society?
- 4) What led to the development of the Islamic Courts Union?
- 5) What role did the Islamic Courts Union play in the rise of al-Shabab?
- 6) Which type of expatriate fighters did al-Shabab attract to its ranks and why?

Readings:

Agbibo, Daniel, “Terrorism without Borders: Somalia’s Al-Shabaab and the global jihad network,” *Journal of Terrorism Research* (2014), 27-33

Aisha Ahmad, “The Price of Protection: The Rise of the Islamic Courts Movement,” *Jihad & Co.: Black Markets and Islamist Power*, 119-141 [CRN]

Kessels, Eelco et al, *Somalia: Violent Extremism and Instability in the Greater Horn of Africa*, Global Center for Collective Security (2016), 26-40

Module 11: Boko Haram: Ideological reactions to colonial rule, sectarianism and corruption (Nov. 17)

Concepts:

- a) “boko”
- b) colonial legacies
- c) Sufi orders
- d) emir
- e) Sokoto Caliphate
- f) identity markers
- g) al-Hajj and Wahhabism
- h) Izala movement
- i) “resource (oil) curse”

Discussion questions:

- 1) Why has the terrorist group organized by Muhammad Yusuf been called “Boko

Haram”?

- 2) What is the relationship between Boko Harm’s name and British colonial rule?
- 3) Why have Sufi orders been an important part of the historical power structure of the emirs of northern Nigeria?
- 4) Why have religion, ethnicity and region become key “identity markers” in Nigeria?
- 5) What impact did Saudi Arabia’s Wahhabi ideology have on Islam in Nigeria?
- 6) What explains the rise of the Izala movement and why was it hostile to the emirs?
- 7) Why do many analysts refer to large oil reserves in a country as a “resource curse”?

Readings:

Cook, David, “Introduction,” *The Boko Haram Reader*, 1-5

Hunwick, John, “An African Case of Political Islam: Nigeria,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (1992), 141-170

Yusuf, Muhammad, “This is our Creed and Method of Proselytization” (*Hadhihi ‘aqidatuna wa minhaj da‘awatuna*), *The Boko Haram Reader*, 27-35

Shehu, Abubaker, “This is our Creed (*Hadhihi ‘aqidatuna*),” *The Boko Haram Reader*, 139-146 [CRN]

Hudson, Valerie M., and Hilary Matfess, “In Plain Sight: The Neglected Linkage between Brideprice and Violent Conflict,” *International Security*, 42/1 (Summer 2017): 7- 40 [CRN]

Assignment for November 24:

For Module 12, students will be asked to submit *five suggestions for combating extremism* in the Middle East, based in part on your reaction to course readings and discussions and your research on suggestions which others have made which you find attractive. We will discuss your suggestions in class.

Module 12: Combating the attraction of youth to extremist ideologies and terrorist organization (Nov. 24)

Concepts:

- a) de-radicalization
- b) transitional justice
- c) peer group mediation
- d) social media
- e) new educational strategies

Readings:

al-Rawi, Ahmad, “Anti-ISIS Humor: Cultural Resistance to Radical Ideology,” *Politics, Religion & Ideology* (2016): 52-68 [CRN]

Koehler, Daniel and Verena Fiebig, “Knowing What to Do: Academic and Practitioner Understanding of How to Counter Violent Radicalization,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* , June 2019, 13/3 (June 2019): 44-62

Matusitz, Jonathan et al, “Strategies to Combat Online Jihadist Magazines,” *Online Jihadist Perspectives to Promote the Caliphate*, 269-296

Assignment for December 1:

Please submit a 2 page (500 word) *abstract* of your Term Research Paper so it can be uploaded to Module 13 on the *Resources* section of the seminar Sakai web page

Module 13: Presentation of research paper proposals (Dec. 1)

Module 14: Summary of seminar results and evaluation (Dec. 8)

Thoughts on the Study of the MENA Region and Africa

How do we study a region as socially diverse and politically complex as the Middle East (MENA region) and Africa? To accomplish this end, we must first pose a set of *organizing questions* and to delineate a *conceptual framework* – an “intellectual architecture” - which will allow us to comprehend this complexity. This task requires that we isolate the key concepts and categories that will ultimately enable us to comprehend Middle East politics. That process, in turn, will allow us to engage in empirical research.

While the overall study of the Middle East has been extremely rich in terms of empirical findings, Middle East area studies has made few conceptual, theoretical and methodological contributions to the larger political science discipline. This has led many political and social scientists to argue for a “Middle East exceptionalism,” and regard social and political processes in the Middle East as unique or *sui generis*. Why has there been an excessive focus on cultural variables, especially religion, when analyzing the region to the exclusion of those that emphasize other variables, e.g., political economy? How do these trends affect the contribution of the Middle East to theory construction in political science?

This seminar uses the current civil strife in the MENA region, and the displacement of large numbers of the region’s citizens, which has led to the formation of extremist ideologies and terrorist organizations as its main organizing theme. We also examine the impact of MENA region extremist ideologies on two terrorist organizations in Africa. In this effort, we focus on youth and why certain youth demographics are attracted to radical Islamist ideologies and then decide to join terrorist organizations.

One of the most persistent stereotypes of both the MENA region and Africa has been the notion of regional “democracy deficits.” Others include the idea that Islam in Muslim majority countries imposes a major impediment to democratization by refusing to allow the separation of the religious and the secular - mosque and state. By extension, the public sphere throughout the MENA region and in Islamic Africa is said to be dominated by “religion” which produces sectarian politics. Notions of the civic, the secular and citizenship are suppressed in the process.

At the microanalytic level, the idea of an “authoritarian personality” permeates much of the literature on the region. Violence, irrationality, anti-modernism, a desire for strong

leadership and a negative colonial legacy, it is argued, have all worked (in an “over determined” manner) to produce subjects rather than citizens in the MENA and other Muslim majority countries.

To address the problems posed by the study of radicalism and political instability in the MENA region and Africa, we rely largely on a case study approach. However, comparative historical analysis which focuses on case studies still requires contextualizing the case with a continued reference to the Middle East and Africa as regions and their relationship to the global political economy. To better comprehend youth and the allure of terrorism also requires the use of quantitative data, e.g., survey research, in addition to the qualitative data which normally characterizes case study approaches. A third level of analysis is the *global system* which is clearly evident as a set of exogenous variables which have benefitted extremism and terrorism which I reference as “tipping points.” Thus, a conceptual and methodological tension informs the seminar – the tension between case, region, and global system – which operate in a continuous dialogue and interaction.