The Politics of Terrorism in the Middle East

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The Politics of Terrorism in the Middle East (DPL 4280) Spring 2011
Instructor: Ambassador Maureen Quinn
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Course Web site: dipl4280politicsofterrorism.shutterfly.com
Office Hours: Monday and Tuesday in McQuaid Rm. 128 approx. from 5:00 – 6:00 pm

Course Description and Objectives

This course will investigate the use of terrorism for political purposes. Areas covered include the debate about who/what constitutes a terrorist movement or organization, the connection between fundamentalism, religion and terrorism, the financing of terrorism, the exploitation of/by the media, state-sponsored terrorism and the abilities of governments, security services and intelligence agencies to effectively monitor and combat terrorism.

The course will begin with a discussion and debate of the definition of terrorism. The course will provide basic knowledge on the politics of terrorism in the Middle East: its modern origins, its significance, and its costs and consequences. Students will develop an understanding of Islam and political Islam in the Middle East. Case studies of specific country situations and/or terrorist incidents in the Middle East will be analyzed for their origins, politics, and impact on the region and international relations. Policy makers’ rhetoric, responses and the tools to combat terrorism will be covered as well.

Students are expected to participate actively throughout the course. Thus, students need to complete assigned readings and written assignments before class, attend and participate in class discussions.

Course Materials

Inside Terrorism by Bruce Hoffman
Islam the Straight Path (Fourth Edition) by John L. Esposito
Political Islam by Mohammed Ayoob

The above books are required reading for the course. Additional reading assignments are listed below or will be made during the course of the semester.

Student Responsibilities

Class Participation (25% of grade): Attendance and participation in class discussions are essential. Students will bring to the classes listed below a very brief (two to three paragraph/less than one page) double spaced, type written summary of the assigned reading that outlines what was read, what the student learned from the reading or what question(s) it raised or answered. Class participation also means actively contributing during class and respecting the participation of others. Students will be required to make some panel presentations. Any student missing four classes will be referred to the Administration of the Whitehead School.
Research Proposal, Presentation and Paper (25% of grade): Students will pick a topic of their choice related to the course and prepare a 12 page (not including cover page and bibliography) original research paper. The final bibliography will be attached to the research paper and the research paper will be footnoted, as needed. The paper will provide an in-depth analysis of the topic selected. Proposals (one paragraph abstract and an annotated bibliography of at least 6 sources, not counting any of the three required books for the class) are due March 1. An annotated bibliography means that each source is explained in two to three sentences. Students will receive a grade on the research proposal. Papers are due April 26. Paper copies of the Research Paper are required. Each student will present her/his research orally in a panel format in class.

Book Report and Analysis: 4-5 Page Type written summary of book (25% of grade): Reading and analyzing a book related to the course work is required. Possible book selections are listed below. While students may choose a book not on the list yet related to the course work, all books must be selected and approved before spring break. All written book reports will include a discussion of why the book is relevant to the course material. Written Book Reports are due March 29. Time permitting, the book reports will be presented/discussed in class. It is recommended, but not required that the book chosen for the book report be related to the student’s research.

Final Exam (25% of the grade): There will be a final exam of essay questions.

Grades will be lowered on any materials that are submitted late. Grades will be lowered one half a letter grade per day.

Possible Books for Book Analysis/Report

The Reluctant Fundamentalist – Mohsin Hamid
Ghost Wars – Steve Coll
Islam – Karen Armstrong
Reading Lolita in Teheran by Nazir Afisi
The Media Relations Department of Hizbollah Wishes You a Happy Birthday - Neil MacFarquhar
Forces of Fortune – Vali Nasr
In the Land of Israel by Amos Oz
The Taliban – by Ahmed Rashid
The Search for Al Qaeda – Bruce Reidel
The Ghosts of Martyr’s Square – Michael Young
Dreams and Shadows/the Future of the Middle East – Robin Wright
The Crisis of Islam - Bernard Lewis
A Peace to End All Peace/The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East – by David Fromkin
The International Relations of the Persian Gulf by Gregory Gause,
A Mighty Heart by Marianne Pearl
Course Topics and Readings

January 18 - Course Introduction – Politics of Terrorism in the Middle East

January 25 (written summary required)
Inside Terrorism Chapter 1 & 2 pg 1-62
Many Faces of Political Islam pg. 1-22

Feb. 1 (written summary required)
Islam, Islamic Law, Islamic Politics
Islam the Straight Path, all of Chapt. 1&3, Part of Chapt. 2 pages 1-52, 85-139

Feb. 8 (written summary required)
The Many Faces of Political Islam Pages 23-64
Islam the Straight Path Chapt. 4 Pages 141-184

Feb. 15 (written summary required)
The Many Faces of Political Islam Pages 65-89
Islam the Straight Path – Page 187 – top of 233

Feb. 22 -- Book Selection Required (written summary required)
Inside Terrorism - Pages 63-130 Chapter 3 and 4

March 1 – Research Proposal Due (no written summary required)
Many Faces of Political Islam 112-130
Inside Terrorism pgs. 131-171 (suicide terrorism)
Online Reading - Congressional Report on Hezbollah

March 8 – no class/spring break

March 15 (written summary required)
Islam the Straight Path, Chapter 4 pages 233 to 249
Many Faces of Political Islam Pages 131-151

March 22 (written summary required)
Inside Terrorism Chapter 6 & 7, pages 174-228

March 29 (Book Report Due) (no written summary)
Inside Terrorism – Chapter 8 Pages 229 - 256
Online Reading on Al Qaeda (see class web site)

April 5 (written summary required)
State Sponsored Terrorism (Iran, Syria, Iraq (pre-2003), Libya)
Online - State Dept. Report on Terror Chapters 2 & 3 & online articles on Libya & Iran
April 12 -- (written summary required)
Counter Terrorism – govts, threats, incidents and responses
Inside Terrorism Pgs 257 – 295 and online reading

April 19 – Research Presentations by Panels

April 26 – Research Presentations by Panels, Written Research Papers are due

May 3 – How does terrorism end/Review and Questions and Answers
Islam the Straight Path Chapter 6 - Pages. 250-294
The Many Faces of Political Islam – Pages 152-169

May 10 – Final Exam