SOAN 263: Terrorism
T/Th 3:10-4:55
Leighton 426
Dr. Ahmed Ibrahim

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Office hours: T/Th 12-1 pm

Course description: In recent years, Muslim communities in Western countries have come to be seen as national security threats. In tandem, efforts to stem the flow of Muslim migrants into the U.S. and Europe, under the logic of combating terrorism, has shaped world events, from Trump’s election to Brexit. Through a reading of works from various disciplines including history, sociology, and anthropology, this course will historicize and unpack the presuppositions about religion and violence that inform the discourses which render Muslims a threat. We will look at the academic debate about religion and its relationship to the secular; examine the assumptions of an affinity between religion, particularly Islam, and violence; how such assumptions inform Counter Violent Extremist (CVE) programs that target Muslim communities, and the culture of surveillance and the marginalization of Muslim communities these programs spawn.

Course objectives:

1. Gain the ability to think historically, intelligently, and critically about terrorism.
2. Understand the scholarly debate about religion as a category and its relationship to secularism.
3. Understand the assumed relationship between religion and violence that informs and undergirds the discourse on terrorism and the War on Terror.

Requirements and Grading:

20% Response Essays. Each student is expected to write four responses to any reading of the student’s choice. The one-page response can be based on one reading or multiple readings dealing with similar topics. The response writers for that day’s class are expected to lead group discussions. Responses will be graded for the clarity of argument, proper citation, and engagement with the reading(s). To prevent procrastination students are asked at the beginning of the term to sign up for the dates they will write their responses. Please try to spread out your four responses evenly throughout the term.

25% Midterm Paper. For this assignment you will be asked to write a theater script in which you stage a debate between Jean Bethke Elstain and Talal Asad on the War on Terror and
related issues such as violence, law, and religion through your characters. The midterm paper should be 5-6 pages long. **Due on Tuesday, May 1.**

**30% Final Paper.** At the end of week 6 you will be assigned a final paper.

**10% Class Participation.** Class participation is a significant portion of your grade. You will be graded on the basis of your serious scholarly engagement with the assigned materials and your expression of this engagement in class. Please take good notes on the readings, so that you are prepared to participate effectively in class. Students who have written responses for the readings in discussion are expected to lead the group discussions.

**15% presentation.** On the first day of class you will be asked to sign up for a date and a topic of your choice to present on. Based on your choice of date and topic your will be partnered up with someone(s) to present a 15 minute presentation.

**Penalties:** Attendance of all class sessions is required. In some instances absences may be excused, but you should contact me by email to request permission before class if you plan to miss a session. Generally speaking, two sick or personal-day absences will be excused without further documentation being necessary. All unexcused absences will be penalized 2 points off your final grade. Late arrivals, early departures, and/or coming and going during class will begin to incur 1 point final grade deductions if they are repeated, and 2 point deductions if they are endemic. Late papers will lose credit. It is expected that all papers, exams, and other assignments will be completed and turned in on the designated due date. If you, for some reason, can’t make the deadline, talk to me about it before it is due. If I give you an extension I may still deduct points. Exceptions may be made for emergencies or unusual circumstances.

Students are responsible for any course material they may miss due to absences. Use of cell phones is prohibited during class. Laptops and tablets may be used for note-taking and class readings.

**Required Texts:**

2. Talal Asad. 2007. *On Suicide Bombing.*
4. Moustafa Bayoumi. 2015. *This Muslim American Life: Dispatches from the War on Terror.*

**ACADEMIC SUPPORT:**

Many resources are available on campus to assist you with all aspects of academic life. Make use of them! These services are not merely for students who are having problems (though they will gladly help there as well), but also for students who simply want to improve. All
professional writers use editors. Why shouldn’t you too? Visit the Academic Support Center Website (https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/asc/):

**Time Management, Study Skills, and Test-Prep Strategies**
All Residential Life Area Directors are trained to work with you to improve your time management and academic skills. Their goals are to heighten your awareness of your personal strengths and skills and to offer different ways you can approach your academic work so you’re more efficient and effective. Meetings are by appointment; you simply need to email one of them to arrange a visit. For details and resources: [Academic Skills Coaching Website](https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/asc/).

**The Writing Center**
The Writing Center, located in 420 4th Libe, has peer writing consultants who can work with you during any stage of the writing process (brainstorming to final proofreading). Hours and more information can be found on the [writing center website](https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/asc/). You can reserve specific times for conference in 420 4th Libe by using their [online appointment system](https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/asc/). Walk-ins are welcome, though writers with appointments have priority.

**Writing Assistance for Students Whose First Language Is Not English**
If you are a second language writer and believe you might benefit from working individually with a writing consultant on a regular basis this term, email Renata Fitzpatrick, [Multilingual Writing Coordinator](mailto:multilingualwriting@carleton.edu), call her at x5998, or stop by her office in 420D 4th Libe. She can arrange once- or twice-a-week meetings between you and a specific writing consultant throughout the term.

**Public Speaking and Class Presentation**
Speech coaching is a student-staffed resource designed to assist you with class presentations, comps talks, and other speech-related events. Your coach can assist you with speech & communication skills including clarity, organization, articulation, projection, body language, eye contact, and effective use of aids (e.g., notes, PowerPoint, Keynote, etc.). Depending on your goals, your coach can also work with you on the content of the presentation: organization, voice, clarity, and, ultimately, persuasive impact. Individuals and groups are welcome to request a speech coach by completing a [brief, online form](https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/sppeakeasy). The speech coach will meet you at a mutually convenient time and place. For more information, visit [go.carleton.edu/speakeasy](https://go.carleton.edu/speakeasy).

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**
Carleton College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodations should contact the Coordinator of Disability Services, Andy Christenson, at 507-222-4464 or [anchrist@carleton.edu](mailto:anchrist@carleton.edu), to begin the process.
CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

Tuesday, March 27
Introduction to the course and to each other
- Introductions
- Syllabus

Thursday, March 29
Framing the War on Terror
- Jean Bethke Elshtain. *Just War against Terror*. Chapters 1-4

WEEK 2

Tuesday, April 3
Framing of the War on Terror (continued)
- Jean Bethke Elshtain. *Just War against Terror*. Chapters 9-12 & the Epilogue

Thursday, April 5
Violence in state formation (U.S.)
- Dee Brown. *Bury my Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*. Chapters 1 and 3.
- Film: The Dakota War

WEEK 3

Tuesday, April 10
The history of religion(s)

Thursday, April 12
Debating Religion
WEEK 4

Tuesday, April 17
Religion, violence and modern society

Thursday, April 19
Religious and secular violence
- Talal Asad. *On Suicide Bombing*, Introduction and chapter 1

WEEK 5

Tuesday, April 24
Religious and secular violence
- Talal Asad. *On Suicide Bombing*. Chapters 2, 3 and Epilogue

Thursday, April 26
Empire, religion and war
- Mahmood Mamdani. *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*. Introduction and chapters 1
- Alain Gabon. “Me or Chaos: why the West needs terrorism.”
http://www.middleeasteye.net/essays/how-terrorism-useful-our-governments-112174807

Midterm Break: Saturday-Monday (April 28-30)

WEEK 6

Tuesday, May 1
Film: The Battle of Algiers
Midterm paper due

Thursday, May 3
Empire, religion and war
- Mahmood Mamdani. *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*. Chapters 2 and 3

WEEK 7

Tuesday, May 8
Empire, religion and war
- Mahmood Mamdani. *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*. Conclusion
- Lecture by Natasha I. Shivji

**Thursday, May 10**

**Islamic militants and the international order**

**WEEK 8**

**Tuesday, May 15**

**Empire and the governance of religion**
- Class visit, Noah Salomon

**Thursday, May 17**

**American Islam**
- Moustafa Bayoumi. *This Muslim American Life: Dispatches from the War on Terror*. *Introduction*, Chapters 1-3

**WEEK 9**

**Tuesday, May 22**

**Muslim Americans and the War on Terror**
- Moustafa Bayoumi. *This Muslim American Life: Dispatches from the War on Terror*. Chapters 7-11 and 14.

**Thursday, May 24**

**Muslim Americans and the War on Terror (CVE)**
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WEEK 10

Tuesday, May 29
Immigration and the War on Terror

Wednesday, May 30 is the last day of classes
Final paper due