

**University of Florida
Department of Religion**

Religious Extremism

RLG 5365 – Section 23BE

REL 4936 – Section 2943

Meeting & Location:

Mon/Wed/Fri, per. 6 – MAT 13

Instructor: Dr. Terje Ostebo

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Office Hours: Thursday 8:30-10:30

Course Description:

Religious extremism, or similar words like radicalism, fanaticism, fundamentalism, is frequently used in the media and the policy world. But what is religious extremism? How do we define extremism? Who are the extremists? And, is religious extremism meaningful and useful as a concept? This course digs into these questions and provides students with critical knowledge about what is called extremism within the major religious traditions, such as Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. The course focus on current affairs – in different contexts across the globe. It critically explores what we mean with religious extremism, juxtaposing it with the assumed moderate.

Course Objectives

A student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

- Analyze the current discourses and dynamics in the study of Global Islam
- Identify and analyze both the commonalities and the diversity within Global Islam
- Apply relevant theoretical perspectives and analyze the intersection of Islam with social, political, and cultural issues in different parts of the world
- Critically analyze Islam and trans-nationalism, migration, and global inter-connectivity
- Analyze the various perspectives on gender and feminism found within Global Islam
- Map out and identify the interrelations between Islam and other religions in a global context
- Understand and analyze the main currents with regard to Islam and politics in a global context

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

The final grade for undergrads will be determined by the total scored for:

- Attendance and participation in classroom discussions (5%). We will circulate an attendance sheet, which you should sign. Signing for others is considered Academic dishonesty.
- In-class presentations (15 %)
- 4 Mini research papers (20 % each: 4 x 20% = 80%)

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Tot %	94-100	88-93	82-87	76-81	71-75	66-70	61-65	56-60	51-55	46-50	40-45	<40

Additional information about UF's grading policy can be found here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Attendance and Classroom Participation: Students are expected to attend **ALL** classes and participate actively in class discussions. Active and informed participation demands that students **read the material carefully before coming to class**. The instructor will seek to engage all students in discussions by asking direct questions to the students, and by for comments to the readings. The instructor will keep a log for each week, noting the degree of engagement and level of insights demonstrated.

In-class presentations: Each student will give an in-class presentations on a topic related to the assigned readings. The presentation will be 10-15minutes, and the student presenting will lead the subsequent classroom discussion. The presentation will be evaluated based on the student's comprehension of the material, degree of independent and critical thinking, and ability to communicate the material clearly.

4 Response Papers (4-5 pp): Each student will write research papers wherein you choose an actual incident or a case related to the theme of Religious Extremism. You will investigate the case (using media and other sources) and analyze in relation to the readings, lectures and class discussions. The objective of think critically about what is addressed in the readings and class discussions and apply to real-life cases. The format for the papers is double space / font size 12.

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria – Graduate Section

The graduate students will follow the lectures for the course, do the readings for each lecture, do in-class presentations, and submit the assigned papers. In order to get the course registered as a graduate course, there is, however, some additional work as listed below.

2 Review Papers (6-7 pp): In addition to the 4 mini research papers and the presentation, you will have 2 assignments which is to write a review¹ of different books. The format for the papers is double space / font size 12. You will also meet with me 2 times (1/2 hour) during the semester to discuss the readings and assignments. These meetings will be during my office hours, and you should email me in advance with your questions and/or the texts which you would like me to comment on.

1st paper:

Maher, Shiraz, *Salafi-Jihadism: The History of an Idea*, Oxford University Press, 2016.

Deol, Jevaam and Zaheer Kazmi (eds.) (2011). *Contextualizing Jihadi Thought*, New York: Columbia University Press.

2nd paper:

Pahl, J. *Empire of Sacrifice: The Religious Origins of American Violence*. New York: New York University Press, 2010.

Gardell, M. *Gods of the Blood: The Pagan Revival and White Separatism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

The final grade for grads will be determined by the total scored for:

¹ A review is more than a synopsis; it entails giving your (argued) opinions on the text

- Attendance and participation in classroom discussions (5%). We will circulate an attendance sheet, which you should sign. Signing for others is considered Academic dishonesty.
- In-class presentations (15%)
- 4 Mini research papers (10% each: $4 \times 10\% = 40\%$)
- 2 grad papers (15% each: $2 \times 15\% = 30\%$)

Make-ups and Attendance:

Make-ups will only be allowed in unavoidable circumstances or for compelling reasons that can be convincingly documented. Similarly, absence(s) means that 1 point per absence will be detracted – except unavoidable ones proven with satisfactory explanation/documentation. This is in consistence with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Class Demeanor:

Students are allowed to use laptops in class, but only for purposes related to class (i.e. taking notes). The use of cell phones is prohibited during class. Tardiness will not be accepted, and arrival 10 minutes late will count as an absence.

Student Honor Code:

As a UF student, you have agreed to follow the university's Honor Code, meaning you will not give or receive unauthorized assistance in completing assignments. Violations can result in failing an exam, paper or the course. For more information, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentrights.php>. On all work submitted for credit by University of Florida students, the following pledge is implied, "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." Please note that acts of plagiarism include:

- Turning in a paper or assignment that was written by someone else.
- Copying verbatim a sentence or paragraph of text from the work of another author without proper citation and quotation marks.
- Paraphrasing or restating in your own words, text or ideas written by someone else without proper citation.

For more info, see <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html>

Disabilities:

"If you are a student with a disability and would like to request disability-related accommodations, you are encouraged to contact me and the Disability Resource Center as early in the semester as possible. The Disability Resource Center is located in 001 Building 0020 (Reid Hall). Their phone number is 392-8565."

Contact info for the Counselling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>

Phone: 352-392-1575; and the University Police Department: 352-392-1111 or 911 for emergencies.

Course Evaluations:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these evaluations are available at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>

Required Reading:

See Class Calendar for details about required and supplementary readings.

Most of the readings will be available as pdf-files on Canvas, while required readings marked with an '*' should be purchased – but will also be available through Course-reserve (for in-library loans)

Class Calendar and Reading Schedule:

Note: This document is subject to change, students are responsible for all changes announced in class.

Week 1 (August 20-23): Introduction and Course Preview

Week 2 (August 26-30): The Concept of Religious Extremism

Readings:

- King, M.L Jr. "Letter from the Birmingham Jail". M.L King (ed.), *Why Can't We Wait*. New York: Signet, 2007, p. 64-84.
- Liebman, C. "Extremism as a Religious Norm." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 22,1, 1983, p. 75-86.
- *Pratt, D. *Religion and Extremism: Rejecting Diversity*. London: Bloomsbury, 2018, chapter 1-3.

Week 3 (September 2-6; Monday holiday): The Concept of Religious Extremism

Readings:

- Hopkins, N. and Kahani-Hopkins, V. "Reconceptualizing 'Extremism' and 'Moderation': From Categories of Analysis to Categories of Practice in the Construction of Collective Identity." *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 48, 2009, p. 99-113.
- Harding, S. "Fundamentalism: The Problem of the Repugnant Cultural Other." *Social Research*, 58,2, 1999, p. 373-393.

Week 4 (September 9-13): The Origin of Religious Extremism

- *Lawrence, B. *Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt against the Modern Age*. Durham: University of South Carolina Press, chapters 1-4.
- Pratt, D. *Religion and Extremism: Rejecting Diversity*. London: Bloomsbury, 2018, chapter 4.

1st Graduate paper due: September 13 @ 5pm

Week 5 (September 16-20): Religious Extremism and Violence/Non-violence

Readings:

- Schmid, A. *Violent and Non-violent Extremism: Two Sides of the Same Coin?* Hague: ICCT, 2014, p. 1-29.
- *Jurgensmeyer, J. *Terror in the mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, chapter 1, 7, 8.

Week 6 (September 23-27): Radicalization

Readings:

- Sedwick, M. "The concept of Radicalization as a Source of Confusion." *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 22,4, 2010, p. 479-494.
- Kundnani, A. "Radicalisation: The Journey of a Concept." *Race and Class*, 54,2, 2012, p. 3-25

- FBI. *The Radicalization Process: From Conversion to Jihad*. Unpublished doc.
- Barlett, J. and Miller, C. "The Edge of Violence: Towards Telling the Difference Between Violent and Non-Violent Radicalization." *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 24,1, 2012, p. 1-21.

Week 7 (September 1 – October 4; Friday holiday): Radicalization

Readings:

- Hegghammer, T. 2012. The recruiter's dilemma: Signaling and rebel recruitment tactics. *Journal of Peace Research* 50,1, 2012, p. 3-16.
- Kirby, A. The London Bombers as "Self-Starters": A Case Study in Indigenous Radicalization and the Emergence of Autonomous Cliques". *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, 2007, p. 415-428.

1st mini research paper due: October 4 @ 5pm

Week 8 (October 7-11): Religious Extremism and Nationalism

Readings:

- Minkenberg, M. "Religion and the Radical Right." in *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*, ed. Jens Rydgren, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 366-393
- Jurgensmeyer, J. *Terror in the mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, chapter 3.
- Pratt, D. *Religion and Extremism: Rejecting Diversity*. London: Bloomsbury, 2018, chapter 5.

Week 9 (October 14-18): Religious Extremism and Nationalism

Readings:

- Silva, K.T. "Gossip, Rumor, and Propaganda in Anti-Muslim Campaigns of the Bodu Bala Sena." *Buddhist Extremism and Muslim Minorities: Religious Conflict in Contemporary Sri Lanka*, ed. Holt, J.C., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, chapter 5.
- Schonthal, Benjamin, "Making the Muslim Other in Myanmar and Sri Lanka," in *Islam and the State in Myanmar: Muslim-Buddhist Relations and the Politics of Belonging*, ed. Crouch, M. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 1-23 (DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199461202.003.0010).
- Oberoi, H. "Mapping Indic Fundamentalisms through Nationalism and Modernity," in *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*, eds. Marty, M. & Appleby, S. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Week 10 (October 21-25): Religious Extremism and Race(ism)

Readings:

- Camus, J. "The European Extreme Right and Religious Extremism." *Central European Studies Review*, 9,4, 2007, p. 263-279
- Gardell, M. "Crusader Dreams: Oslo 22/7, Islamophobia, and the Quest for a Monocultural Europe." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26,1, 2014, p. 129-155.

2nd mini research paper due: October 25 @ 5pm

Week 11 (October 28 – November 1): Religious Extremism and Race(ism)

Readings:

- Gardell, M. "White Racist Religions in the United States: From Christian Identity to Wolf Age Pagans," in *Controversial New Religions*, ed. Lewis, J and Aasgard Petersen, J. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, p 387-458.
- Taras, R. "Islamophobia never stands still: Race, Religion, and Culture." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 36,3, 2013, p. 417-433.

Week 12 (November 4-8): Religious Extremism, Gender, Sexuality

Readings:

- Sjoberg, L & Gentry, C. "It's Complicated: Looking Closely at Women in Violent Extremism." *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 17,2, 2016. p, 23-30
- Mahmood, S. "Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival." *Cultural Anthropology*, 16,2, 2001, p. 202-236.

2nd Graduate paper due: November 8 @ 5pm

Week 13 (November 11-15; Monday holiday): Religious Extremism, Gender, Sexuality

Readings:

- Loken, M. & Zelenz, A. "Explaining Extremism: Western Women in Daesh." *European Journal of International Security*, 3,1, 2017, p. 45-68.
- Bedi T. "Feminist Theory and the Right-Wing: Shiv Sena Women Mobilize Mumbai." *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 7,4, 2006, p. 51-68.

3rd mini research paper due: November 15 @ 5pm

Week 14 (November 18-22): Countering Religious Extremism

Readings:

- Mandeville, P & Nozell, M. *Engaging Religion and Religious Actors in Countering Violent Extremism*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, p. 1-14.
- Cohen, J. "The Next Generation of Government CVE Strategies at Home: Expanding Opportunities for Intervention." *The ANNALS*, 668,1, 2016, p. 118-128.

Week 15 (November 25; Thanksgiving): Countering Religious Extremism

Readings:

- Schanzer, D., Kurzman, C. and Moosa, E. *Anti-Terror Lessons for Muslim Americans*. Washington, DC: National Insititute of Justice, 2010, p. 1-21.
- Ostebo, T. "Islam and State Relations in Ethiopia: From Containment to the Production of a 'Governmental Islam.'" in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 81,4, 2013, p. 1029-1060.

Week 16 (December 2-6; Friday reading day): Conclusions

4th mini research paper due: December 6 @ 5pm