

## Discourse on Radicalization and Extremism

In the aftermath of 9/11 and the ensuing Global War on Terrorism a plethora of exploratory research has been conducted on individuals and groups that are labeled as 'terrorist' and 'extremist'. An emergent theme within such research is the analysis of the process of radicalization. Radicalization is generally defined as a "process through which individuals and groups internalize extremist values or goals of a radical organization and cognitively accept the use of violence in pursuance of such values or goals as justified". Scholars in the fields of criminal justice, sociology, political science and economics etc. have presented various theories that explain the process through which new and existing members of radical organizations internalize the organizational ideology and immerse themselves into the organizational culture to an extent that the goals of the organizations are cognitively perceived as personal goals and the enemies of the organizations are perceived as personal enemies. In this course the extant empirical literature on the process of radicalization will be analyzed and critiqued.

### Course Objectives:

- Introduce students to the topic of radicalization and its importance in contemporary social science research.
- Analyze exploratory research on various radical groups throughout the world and the theories of radicalization generated from such research.
- Look for cross contextual commonalities between different theories and build towards a general theory of radicalization.
- Present the concepts of 'ethnocentrism' and 'deviant mysticism', whereby prior to data collection the researcher biases his or her analysis by labeling the research subjects as deviant. Discuss the incidence of 'ethnocentrism' and 'deviant mysticism' in the extant radicalization literature and its impact on the overall validity of various radicalization theories.
- Discuss ways through which researchers interested in studying groups that are labeled as 'radical' or 'extremist' can avoid the pitfalls of 'ethnocentrism' and 'deviant mysticism' and produce empirically sound theories that can inform culture specific local and global policy initiatives.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

**Reflection Papers:** Students are required to write a reflection paper of no more than 500 words on each of the assigned readings. In this paper, students will critically reflect on the day's readings. Reflection papers must be **submitted during the class time**. Cumulative percentage of all reflection papers will be 20% of the final grade.

**Research Paper:**Students are required to write a 15-20 page research paper. Topic of the paper should fall within the framework of the concepts covered in the class. At the minimum, paper should include at least six articles from academic journals (or two books and two academic articles). This is a minimum requirement and by no means should be taken as a limit. Those students who wish to get a better grade would consider more in-depth study of their topics. Students may also cite materials covered in the class or sources like newspaper articles and other non-academic journals to boost their arguments in the paper. This paper will count for 15% of the student's final grade. Students are encouraged to start working on the paper at their earliest, and consult teacher of the course along the way to make sure that they are on the right track. Research papers should be submitted three weeks before the final term exams.

**Presentation (Research Paper):** Students are required to present their research papers during allotted times. Presentation time is 15 minutes, followed by a question-answer session. Students will be graded based on content, organization, and manner of presentation, as well as their participation in question-answer sessions, both as presenters and audience. This assignment will be worth 5% of the final grade.

**Book Report:** Students are required to write a critical book report on a classical text and discuss it in the classroom (Books for report must be approved by the instructor). Specific instructions for this assignment will be distributed during the fifth week of the classes. On average, length of this report should be anywhere between 9-12 pages. Total worth of this book report is 10 %. Book report should be submitted one week before the midterm exams

**Exams:** There will be two exams in this class, a midterm and a final. These exams will be closed book and conducted in the class room. Exams will be based on assigned readings, class discussions, lectures and any other learning activities done in the class room by the exam date. Midterm exam will be worth 20% and final exam will be worth 25% of the final grade.

**Attendance & Class Participation:** Students are required to come to class regularly. Attendance will be taken in each class. University policy on attendance will be followed. Class participation is also a vital part of this class. Students are required to read the assigned material prior to the class meetings and come prepared to take part in the discussion and learning activities related to that material. Participation includes, but not limited, reading the assigned material for the class, asking questions about the day's readings, answering questions raised by the instructor, spontaneously responding to the on-going discussion in the class, and taking part in the in-class activities. Overall, combined grade for attendance and participation is 5% of the student's final grade.

### Grade Evaluation Criteria

Following is the criteria for the distribution of marks to evaluate final grade in a semester.

<b>Marks Evaluation</b>	<b>Marks in percentage</b>
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Reflection Papers	20%
Research Paper	15%
Presentation (Research Paper)	5%
Book Report	10%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Term	25%
Attendance & Class Participation	5%
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Total	100%

### **COURSE POLICIES**

**A Note on Academic Honesty:** It must be emphasized that university policies on academic dishonesty will be strictly followed. These policies prohibit acts of cheating, lying and deceit in their diverse forms. Since this class includes research component, students must also be fully aware of plagiarism. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else's ideas or written work as your own, without giving proper citation and credit to the original source. If you still have any question or confusion about academic dishonesty, please do not hesitate to discuss with the teacher.

**Make-up Exams and Late Assignments:** There will be no make-up exams, unless there is a valid (documented) reason for not taking the scheduled exams, or prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. As of late assignments, ten per cent of the grade will be deducted for each day an assignment is late. Students will also lose percentage of assignment grades if incomplete assignments are turned in.

### **Course Structure**

- The first week will be spent in introducing the students to the following theories of social movement organization: The psychological perspective, the resource mobilization theory, the political process model, the micro mobilization perspective and the rational choice perspective of social movement organization.

## RECOMMENDED READINGS

McAdam, D. (1988). Micromobilization Contexts and Recruitment to Activism. International Social Movement Research, vol. 1: 125 – 154.

Della Porta, D. (1988). Recruitment Process in Clandestine Political Organizations: Italian Left-Wing Terrorism. International Social Movement Research, 1: 155 – 169.

McAdam, D. (1999). Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

- Beginning from the second week up till second last week, exploratory research on various radical groups in the world will be analyzed. This shall include analysis of the theories generated in the studies, presenting a critique of the theories, and identifying commonalities between theories that may lead towards the development of a general theory of radicalization. Presented below is a topic based classification of the recommended readings.

## RECOMMENDED READINGS

- *Theoretical essays on the general process of Radicalization and ways through which researchers can understand it*

Post, J. M., and Ruby, K. G. (2002). The Radical Group in Context: 1. An Integrated Analysis for Group Risk in Terrorism. Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, 25(2): 73 – 100.

Post, J. M., Ruby, K. G., and Shae, E.D. (2002). The Radical Group in Context: 2. Elements in the Analysis of Risk for Terrorism by Radical Group Type. Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, 25(2): 101 – 126.

- *Research on White Supremist groups in the US*

Aho, J. (1994). This Thing of Darkness: A Sociology of the Enemy. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.

Ezekiel, R. (2002). An Ethnographer's look at the Neo-Nazi and Klan Groups. The racist mind revisited. American Behavioral Scientist, 46(1): 51 – 71.

- *Research on Muslim Extremist groups in Europe*

Wiktorowicz, Q. (2005). Radical Islam Rising. Muslim Extremism in the West. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Kirby, A. (2007). London Bombers as "Self Starters": A case study in Indigenous Radicalization and the emergence of Autonomous Cliques. Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, 30: 415 – 428.

- *Research on Radical Groups in Pakistan, the Middle East and other parts of Asia*

Zaman, M. Q. (1998). Sectarianism in Pakistan: The Radicalization of Shi`i and Sunni Identities. Modern Asian Studies 32 (3): 689 - 716.

Hafez, M. (2005). Manufacturing Human Bombs. The making of Palestinian Suicide Bombers. Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 2006.

Noor, A. F. (2003). Blood, sweat and Jihad: The radicalization of the political discourse of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) from 1982 Onwards. Contemporary Southeast Asia, 25 (2): 200-232.

Zaman, M. Q. (1998). Sectarianism in Pakistan: The Radicalization of Shi`i and Sunni Identities. Modern Asian Studies 32 (3): 689 - 716.

- In the final week a formal critique of the literature will be made by introducing the students to the concepts of 'ethnocentricism' and 'deviant mysticism'. I will then relate these concepts to my dissertation research and present the argument that researchers interested in studying groups that are labeled as 'extremist' or 'radical' can only produce valid theories by remaining neutral in their analyses.

#### RECOMMENDED LITERATURE

Prus, R. (2005). Terrorism, tyranny, and religious extremism as collective activity: Beyond the deviant, psychological, and power mystiques. The American Sociologist, 36 (1): 47 – 74.

Boyns, D. and Ballard, J. D. (2004). Developing a Sociological Theory for the empirical understanding of Terrorism. The American Sociologist, 32(2): 5 – 25.

