

GEOG 297H  
**Geography of Political Extremism:  
The Causes and Consequences of Contemporary Terrorism**

Spring 2003  
Class: Tuesday and Thursday: 9:45-11:00.  
Hosler 218

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Prof. Colin Flint  
Walker 312C  
Office Hours: TR 8:30-9:30 and 2:30-3:30.

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Course Objectives: The objective of this class is to develop a geographical framework to evaluate the causes and consequences of contemporary terrorism. We will explore a variety of processes at a number of geographic scales: global geopolitics, global and regional disparities of wealth and opportunity, political and social marginalization within countries, and the politics of creating individual and collective identities (especially fundamentalist interpretations of all the major religions). Thus, the class integrates geopolitics, political economy, and identity, while considering a number of countries, to understand the contexts that breed terrorism. The class requires students to integrate different perspectives and processes while gaining knowledge of particular places by independent research

Mode of Instruction: A small amount of the material will be presented in a lecture format. But most of the material will be in the form of readings that we will discuss as a class. Guiding questions will be offered to structure responses to the reading and take us in a common direction while allowing for individual interpretation. Individual interests and angles may then be pursued, as each student will create a portfolio. The portfolio will examine the relationships between these geographic scales to explain why terrorism is occurring within (or emanating from) a particular country (to be chosen by the student).

Students will also participate in a group project – designed to address broader questions regarding the form, meaning, reasons, and implications of contemporary terrorism. Simulating the work of a firm of defense consultants, each group will create an oral presentation and written document. The groups will address questions regarding the reasons why the United States of America is a target for contemporary terrorism, and formulating policy recommendations to foster a global climate in which the roots of terrorism, rather than existing terrorist organizations, are addressed.

### **Readings**

Four books are required and available in the bookstores:

**Bruce Hoffman**, *Inside Terrorism*. Columbia University Press, 1998.

**John L. Esposito**, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam*. Oxford University Press, 2002

**Mark Juergensmeyer**, *Terror in the Mind of God*. California University Press, 2000.

**Ken Booth and Tim Dunne** (Eds.), *Worlds in Collision: Terror and the Future of Global Order*. Palgrave, 2002.

In addition, the following readings have been placed on reserve in the EMS Library in the Deike Building. We will select these readings as and when we see fit and you should choose from them for your portfolio and group project. However, depending upon how the class evolves I may add other readings and deem some of those listed below as less relevant.

**Peter Taylor and Colin Flint**, *Political Geography: World-economy, nation-state, and locality* (4<sup>th</sup> Edition), Prentice Hall, especially chapters 1, 2, and 3.

**Eqbal Ahmad** "The Lexicon of Terrorism" in *Confronting Empire*, South End Press, 2000, pp. 94-100.

**David C. Rapoport** "The Fourth Wave: September 11 in the History of Terrorism" *Current History* Vol. 100, No. 650, pp. 419-424.

**Gearoid O Tuathail** "Postmodern geopolitics? The modern geopolitical imagination and beyond" in *Rethinking geopolitics*, G. O Tuathail and S. Dalby (eds). Routledge, 1998, pp. 16-38.

**James Kurth** "Confronting the Unipolar Movement: The American Empire and Islamic Terrorism" *Current History* Vol 101, No. 659, pp. 403-408.

**Peter Taylor** "Chapter 2. Prime Modernities" in *Modernities: A Geohistorical Interpretation*. University of Minnesota Press, 1999, pp. 28-43.

**Martha Crenshaw** "Why America? The Globalization of Civil War" *Current History* Vol. 100, No. 650, pp. 425-432.

**Michael Klare** "Waging Postindustrial Warfare on the Global Battlefield" *Current History* Vol. 100, No. 650, pp. 433-437.

**Ivo Daalder, James M. Lindsay, and James B. Steinberg** "Hard Choices: National Security and the War on Terrorism" *Current History* Vol. 101, No. 659, pp. 409-413.

**Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay** "Nasty, Brutish, and Long: America's War on Terrorism." *Current History* Vol 100, No. 650, pp. 403-409.

**John L. Esposito** “Chapter 2. Islam and the West: Roots of Conflict, Cooperation, and Confrontation” *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 23-44.

**Michael T. Klare** “The Deadly Nexus: Oil, Terrorism, and America’s National Security” *Current History* Vol. 101, No. 659, pp. 414-420.

**Joshua Kurlantzick** “Tilting at Dominos: American and Al Qaeda in Southeast Asia” *Current History* Vol. 101, No. 659, pp. 421-426.

**P.W. Singer** “America and the Islamic World” *Current History* Vol. 101, No. 658, pp. 355-364.

**Edward Said** “Introduction” in *Orientalism*. Vintage Books, 1979, pp. 1-28.

**Samuel P. Huntington** “The Clash of Civilizations” in *The Geopolitics Reader*, G. O Tuathail, S. Dalby, and P. Routledge (eds.) Routledge, 1998, pp. 159-169.

**G. O Tuathail** “Samuel Huntington and the ‘Civilizing’ of Global Space” in *The Geopolitics Reader*, G. O Tuathail, S. Dalby, and P. Routledge (eds.) Routledge, 1998, pp. 170-176.

**Peter J. Katzenstein** “Same War, Different Views: Germany, Japan, and the War on Terrorism” *Current History* Vol. 101, No. 659, pp. 427-435.

**Roxanne L. Euben** “Jihad and Political Violence” *Current History* Vol. 101, No. 658, pp. 365-376.

**Augustus Richard Norton** “Activism and Reform in Islam” *Current History* Vol. 101, No. 658, pp. 377-381.

**Sumit Ganguly** “Putting South Asia Back Together Again” *Current History* Vol. 100, No. 650, pp. 410-414.

**Shibley Telhami** “It’s Not about Faith: A Battle for the Soul of the Middle East” *Current History* Vol. 100, No. 650, pp. 415-418.

**Scott B. MacDonald and Jonathan Lemco** “Political Islam in Southeast Asia” *Current History* Vol. 101, No. 658, pp. 388-392.

## **Grades**

Fifty percent of the grade will be based upon your individual portfolio that integrates the academic class material with a case study of terrorism in a particular country. The portfolio may be presented either as a written (paper) document or in electronic media (a website).

Forty per cent of the grade will be based upon the student's participation in the group project (peer grading will be used to help determine this portion of the grade). The group project will be presented in class (twenty-minute presentation) and submitted as a written report.

The remaining ten per cent of the grade will be based upon class participation. In many ways the philosophy of Woody Allen is helpful, but for this class one aspect of his thought does **not** apply – “just turning up” will not get you “80%” – you need to participate too!

### **Academic Integrity**

By remaining in this class after being presented this syllabus, it is understood that you will follow and be bound by the EMS College policies on academic integrity. The College policies may be found at <http://www.ems.psu.edu/admin/integ.html>.

### **Key Dates**

Spring Break is the week beginning March 10.

I may well be going to a conference between April 6-8, but it is in Kuwait so, for reasons that are related to the subject matter of this class, the trip is not finalized!!!

### *Portfolio*

Tuesday January 28 – notify me in writing (e-mail is fine) of the country you will be examining in your portfolio.

Tuesday March 4 – in-class oral report on portfolio progress; a chance for us to identify questions, problems, directions, and opportunities.

Thursday March 27 – 3-page written report documenting the development of your portfolio due in class.

Tuesday April 15 – in-class oral report on portfolio progress – last chance for feedback.

### *Group Project*

Tuesday March 25 – identify groups.

Tuesday April 1 (no kidding!) – groups present their problem statement in class.

Thursday April 17 – groups present outline of their project in class to generate discussion and feedback.

*Portfolio and Group Projects due 5pm Monday May 5, my mailbox is in Walker 302.*

No late papers will be accepted, with the exception of documented medical and family emergencies. If you have interviews, weddings, etc. plan ahead!

## **Final Word**

This is your class as well as mine. If you want to provide feedback, suggestions or comments at any time during the semester don't hesitate to come and see me (or leave an anonymous note if you wish!).