COURSE DESCRIPTION Presently, the most radical and violent movement that attaches itself to Sunni Islam is the Islamic State (IS). With its excessive use of violence, the movement even alienates other movements, like al-Qaida, that promote global Jihadism. Because of its justification for an excessive use of violence, the movement is not just a severe threat to mainstream islams and people living in (and fleeing from) their main region of activity, but also to Western security. The course aims at exploring the theological and ideological roots of Islamic State Ideology. As almost all radical movements in twentieth and twenty-first century Sunni Islam, IS considers the Hanbali theologian Ibn Taymiyya (in a radicalized reading) as one of its main intellectual sources. Other influences are mid-18th-century Wahhabiyya, the related Salafiyya movement, the Muslim Brotherhood, and (usually overlooked) Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi. In addition, the course leaves some room for exploring how Western politics has contributed to the birth and development of Muslim radicalization.

FORMAT The course is designed as a seminar. There will be no formal lectures, but rather the primary classroom work will be discussion of the assigned reading for the week. The professor will facilitate and direct discussion, and occasionally offer relevant background or conceptual information. Each student will be expected to contribute on a weekly basis to the debate and interchange within the class.

REQUIREMENTS Students are expected to be current with the reading assignments. They will be expected to make at least one presentation during the course of the semester (10%). These presentations will be a critical engagement (NOT a summary) with one of the core readings. Each student is expected to hand in two shorter essays (approximately 7-10 pages) reflecting on the previous readings (30%) and to be actively engaged in class discussion (20%). Students who are enrolled in the seminar at the 5000-level will also write a 20-25 pages research paper on some aspects of the seminar's themes (40%). Students who are enrolled in the seminar at the 4000-level will also write a 15-20 pages research paper on some aspects of the seminar's themes (40%). Possible topics will be discussed with the instructor on an individual basis.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY The Undergraduate Honor Code pledge that each member of the university community agrees to abide by states:

“As a Hokie, I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do.”

Students enrolled in this course are responsible for abiding by the Honor Code. A student who has doubts about how the Honor Code applies to any assignment is responsible for obtaining specific guidance from the course instructor before submitting the assignment for evaluation. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the University community from the requirements and expectations of the Honor Code. For additional information about the Honor Code, please visit:
https://www.honorsystem.vt.edu/
**HONOR CODE PLEDGE FOR ASSIGNMENTS:** The Virginia Tech honor pledge for assignments is as follows: "I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this assignment." The pledge is to be written out on all graded assignments and signed by the student. The honor pledge represents both an expression of the student's support of the honor code and an unambiguous acknowledgment that the student has, on the assignment in question, abided by the obligation that the Honor Code entails. In the absence of a written honor pledge, the Honor Code still applies to an assignment.

1. All assignments submitted shall be considered "graded work" and all aspects of your coursework are covered by the Honor Code. All projects and homework assignments are to be completed individually unless otherwise specified.

2. Commission of any of the following acts shall constitute academic misconduct. This listing is not, however, exclusive of other acts that may reasonably be said to constitute academic misconduct. Clarification is provided for each definition with some examples of prohibited behaviors in the Undergraduate Honor Code Manual located at [https://www.honorsystem.vt.edu/]

**CHEATING:** may lead to an unfair academic advantage by the student violating the rule(s). Cheating includes the intentional use of unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids or other devices or materials in any academic exercise, or attempts thereof.

**PLAGIARISM:** Plagiarism includes the copying of the language, structure, programming, computer code, ideas, and/or thoughts of another and passing off the same as one's own original work, or attempts thereof.

**FALSIFICATION:** Falsification includes the statement of any untruth, either verbally or in writing, with respect to any element of one's academic work, or attempts thereof.

**FABRICATION:** Fabrication includes making up data and results, and recording or reporting them, or submitting fabricated documents, or attempts thereof.

**MULTIPLE SUBMISSION:** Multiple submission involves the submission for credit—without authorization of the instructor receiving the work—of substantial portions of any work (including oral reports) previously submitted for credit at any academic institution, or attempts thereof.

**COMPLICITY:** Complicity includes intentionally helping another to engage in an act of academic misconduct, or attempts thereof.

**VIOLATION OF UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE, DEPARTMENTAL, PROGRAM, COURSE, OR FACULTY RULES:** The violation of any University, College, Departmental, Program, Course, or Faculty Rules relating to academic matters that may lead to an unfair academic advantage by the student violating the rule(s).

**ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT SANCTIONS:** If you have questions or are unclear about what constitutes academic misconduct on an assignment, please speak with me. I take the Honor Code very seriously in this course. The normal sanction I will recommend for a violation of the Honor Code is an F* sanction as your final course grade. The F represents failure in the course. The “*” is intended to identify a student who has failed to uphold the values of academic integrity at Virginia Tech. A student who receives a sanction of F* as their final course grade shall have it documented on their transcript with the notation "FAILURE DUE TO ACADEMIC HONOR CODE VIOLATION." You would be required to complete an education program administered by the Honor System in order to have the “*” and notation "FAILURE DUE TO ACADEMIC HONOR CODE VIOLATION" removed from your transcript. The “F” however would be permanently on your transcript.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities must be guaranteed a
learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you need adaptation or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in the case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible.

**COURSE SCEDULE**

Week 1: Introduction to the course

I. The Ideology of the Islamic State

Week 2: Emergence of IS

Week 3: IS Ideology

II. Theological and Intellectual Roots: Ibn Taymiyya, Wahhabiyya, Salafiyya

Week 4: Ibn Taymiyya—the Original

Week 5: Ibn Taymiyya—Applied

Week 6: Wahabiyya
Week 7: Salafiyya Doctrines  

Week 8: Salafiyya and Politics  

Week 9: Salafiyya and (Global) Jihad  

III. Western Politics and Muslim Radicalization

Week 10: Pan-Islamism and the West  

Week 11: War on Terror’s Impact  

IV. Contemporary Intellectual Influences: Muslim Brotherhood and al-Maqdisi

Week 12: Al-Banna and the Foundation of the Muslim Brotherhood  

Week 13: Al-Maqdisi  

Week 14: Al-Maqdisi and al-Qaida  
V. Al-Qaida versus the Islamic State

Week 14: The Question of Statehood

Week 15: Reassessing IS Ideology

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


