Overview: This course provides a broad introduction to the many conflicts that compose what has been known since 9/11 as “The War on Terror”.

Course Requirements: Students are encouraged to attend the class’s synchronous sessions, but recordings of them will be available for those who cannot. Students are expected to have read the assigned readings before the start of each class session, and be prepared to discuss them.

Two midterm exams and one final exam: 30% of grade each. All exams are take-home, and must be submitted via Blackboard.

Class participation: 10% of grade.


Other readings listed can be accessed as indicated on the syllabus.

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

8/24 M Introduction
8/26 W Al Qaeda and the Lead-up to 9/11
Katz, Leaving without Losing, pp. 1-18
8/31 M  Afghanistan
"Afghanistan Profile: Timeline," BBC News, ongoing;
Borhan Osman, “Bourgeois Jihad: Why Young, Middle-Class Afghans Join the Islamic State,”
U.S. Institute of Peace, June 1, 2020

9/2 W  Iraq
"Iraq Profile: Timeline," BBC News, ongoing;
Michael Knights and Alex Almeida, “Remaining and Expanding: The Recovery of Islamic State

9/7 M  Labor Day: No Class

9/9 W  Iran
"Iran Profile: Timeline," BBC News, ongoing;
Nelly Lahoud, “Al-Qaeda’s Contested Relationship with Iran,” New America Foundation,
September 7, 2018;
Nakissa Jahanbani, “Reviewing Iran’s Proxies by Region: A Look Toward the Middle East,
South Asia, and Africa, CTC Sentinel, May 2020

9/14 M  Syria
"Syria Profile: Timeline,” BBC News, ongoing;
Sultan Al Kanj, “HTS Tries to ‘Syrianize’” Chatham House, August 2019;
Mona Yacoubian, “After Nine Years, Syria’s Conflict Has Only Become More Complicated,”
U.S. Institute of Peace, March 12, 2020

9/16 W  Turkey and the Kurds
"Turkey Profile: Timeline,” BBC News, ongoing;
"Turkey's Syria Offensive Explained in Four Maps,” BBC News, October 14, 2019
Semeh Idiz, “Does Turkey have the Will to Take on Jihadis in Idlib?” Al-Monitor, March 24,
2020

9/21 M  Israel/Palestine
FIRST MIDTERM POSTED ON BLACKBOARD (due Sunday, 9/27 by 11:59 pm)
"Palestinian Territories: Timeline,” BBC News, ongoing;
Grace Wermenbol, “Disrupting a Delicate Status Quo: The Hamas Crackdown on Salafi-Jihadists,” Middle East Institute, October 22, 2019;
“Ex-Israel Army Chief Admits Arming Syria Opposition,” Middle East Monitor, February 3, 2020;
Jonathan A. Hoffman, “Israel and the Counterrevolutionaries: Gauging Tel Aviv's Evolving Regional Alliances After the Arab Uprisings,” Durham Middle East Papers, no. 102, July 2020

9/23 W Yemen
“Yemen Profile: Timeline,” BBC News, ongoing;
Vincent Durac, “Yemen’s Houthis – And Why They’re Not Simply a Proxy of Iran,” The Conversation, September 19, 2019

9/28 M Saudi Arabia and the Arab Gulf Monarchies
“Saudi Arabia Profile: Timeline,” BBC News, ongoing;
Michael Knights and Matthew Levitt, “The Evolution of Shi`a Insurgency in Bahrain,” CTC Sentinel, January 2018;

9/30 W North Africa
“Egypt Profile: Timeline,” BBC News, ongoing;
“Libya Profile: Timeline,” BBC News, ongoing;

10/5 M Sub-Saharan Africa
“Mali Profile: Timeline,” BBC News, ongoing;
“Somalia Profile: Timeline,” BBC News, ongoing;
Jacob Zenn, “The Terrorist Calculus in Kidnapping Girls in Nigeria: Cases from Chibok and Dapchi,” *CTC Sentinel*, March 2018;
Jami Forbes, “Revisiting the Mali al-Qaeda Playbook: How the Group is Advancing on its Goals in the Sahel,” *CTC Sentinel*, October 2018;

10/7 W The Caucasus and Central Asia
“Chechnya Profile: Timeline,” BBC News, ongoing;
“Countering Violent Extremism,” *Russian Analytical Digest*, no. 255, 14 July 2020;

10/13 T Pakistan and South Asia
“Kashmir Profile: Timeline,” BBC News, ongoing;
Amira Jadoon and Sara Mahmood, “Fixing the Cracks in the Pakistani Taliban’s Foundation: TTP’s Leadership Returns to the Mehsud Tribe,” *CTC Sentinel*, December 2018;
Laurel Miller, “Calming India and Pakistan’s Tit-for-Tat Escalation,” International Crisis Group, 1 March 2019

10/14 W East and Southeast Asia
Amira Jadoon et al., “Rising in the East: A Regional Overview of the Islamic State’s Operations in Southeast Asia,” Countering Terrorism Center at West Point, 20 July 2020

10/19 M Europe and the Americas
SECOND MIDTERM POSTED ON BLACKBOARD (due Sunday, 10/25 by 12:59 pm)

10/21 W The Russian Approach to the War on Terror
Seth Jones, “Russia’s Battlefield Success in Syria: Will It Be a Pyrrhic Victory?” *CTC Sentinel*, October 2019
10/26 M Relations between the US and its allies
Mark N. Katz, “America’s Dilemma: Dealing with Multiple Adversaries Simultaneously,” Finnish Institute of International Affairs, June 15, 2017

10/28 W Relations among the Radicals (The Al Qaeda-ISIS Split)
Aymenn Al-Tamimi, “ISIS and al Qaeda: Partnership is Not in the Cards,” Center for Global Policy, June 2, 2020

Katz, Leaving without Losing, pp. 21-45;
Jonny Hall, “As Trump Pushes to Halt ‘Endless Wars’, the War on Terror Continues Unabated,” LSE US Centre, October 31, 2019

11/4 W Impact of 2020 US elections

11/9 M The Costs of the War on Terror
“War on Terror Facts, Costs, and Timeline, The Balance, January 22, 2020

11/11 W Conflict Resolution
“Are the Taliban Serious about Peace Negotiations?” International Crisis Group, March 30, 2020;
“Rethinking Peace in Yemen,” International Crisis Group, July 2, 2020

11/16 M The War on Terror in Historical Perspective
Katz, Leaving without Losing, pp. 49-114

11/18 W The War on Terror in Geopolitical Perspective
Katz, Leaving without Losing, pp. 115-133

11/23 M TBA
11/25 W  Thanksgiving Break: No Class

11/30 M  Discussion: Scenarios

FINAL EXAM POSTED ON BLACKBOARD (due Sunday, 12/06 by 11:59 pm)

12/2 W  The Future

**Students with Disabilities:** If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible and contact the Office of Disability Services at (703) 993-2474 or ods@gmu.edu. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

**Honor Code:** George Mason University has an Honor Code which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee. See honorcode.gmu.edu for more detailed information.

**Enrollment:** Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class. Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes.

**Last Day to Add:** August 31, 2020

**Drop Deadlines:** September 8, 2020 with 100% tuition refund;
September 15, 2020 with 50% tuition refund;
September 28, 2020 with no refund

**Selective Withdrawal Period for Undergraduates:** September 29-October 28, 2020