An International History of the Post-11 September Era

HI - Spring - 6 ECTS
Time: 16:15-18:00

Course Description

This course examines the international history of the post-9/11 September era. Almost two decades have elapsed since the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. In the aftermath of these events, the world has entered a period characterised by a number of distinct dynamics which have persisted and have significantly impacted the configuration of the global order. What is the nature of these changes, notably the militarisation of international relations, the securitisation of social affairs, the rise of cultural and religious tensions and the crisis of democracy? What explains their materialisation and resilience? The course aims at providing students with a comprehensive understanding of what already constitutes an international history of the most recent period in global affairs and to enhance their critical ability to assess and write in situ history.

Syllabus

This course is a study of the international history of the post-9/11 September era.

The active participation of students in class discussion is expected, and will be an element in the determination of their final grade.
The main assignment is an individual research paper which will count for 60% of the grade. The term paper should be approximately 5,000 words or 15 pages long (12 point font, double-spaced), with proper citations and a bibliography (additional to the text page length). The paper should put forth a cogent argument or examine analytically, comparatively and historically an issue, rather than summarize the literature. The paper may discuss any particular aspect of the course themes. The topic of the research paper should be thematic. If the student opts for a case-study, the paper must nonetheless cast the analysis against thematic questions, historically and comparatively in relation to other instances.

Students are invited to select a topic for their paper and submit an outline of their paper no later than Session Seven (30 March). Please make an appointment with me if you have questions or would like to discuss research topics. A draft of the paper can be submitted no later than Session Eleven (4 May), and will be returned to you the following week with comments without a grade. The completed term paper is due at the course’s last session (25 May).

The papers will be presented in class. Each student will distribute a one-page abstract to her/his classmates before their scheduled presentation. Presentations will be held during sessions eleven to thirteen. Students will be given time (determined in relation to the number of students in the class, approximately ten minutes) to present their work followed by a brief question and answer session with the class. Students are expected to engage each other in the focused discussion of their colleagues' papers.

The overall grade received in this class will be distributed as follows:

- Research paper: 60%
- Class participation: 20%
- Paper presentation: 20%

Plagiarism – the copying of another person’s text or ideas and passing the copied material as your own work – is prohibited. Please familiarise yourself with the Institute’s policy on plagiarism and its consequences for violators.

Readings

For each session, there will be three (3) required readings. Students are expected to familiarize themselves ahead of the class with all the readings and be prepared to discuss them critically in the context of the session’s scheduled issues and the course’s overall themes.

Please note that this syllabus is subject to change, and that specific sessions may be rescheduled to meet unavoidable commitments on my part. Should that be the case, students will be informed ahead of time and proper rescheduling arrangements made promptly.

If you have a special condition that requires accommodation in this course, let me know after class or in office hours during the first week of class. I will be happy to consider appropriate accommodations provided timely notice is received and the arrangement is consistent with the Graduate Institute’s policies.

**Session One (February 17): Introduction: The Post-9/11 Era and the Study of the Present**

**Issues:**
- How do we study the present in history?
- What is referred to as the ‘post-9/11 era’?
How do we delineate the contours and issues of this period?

Readings:

Session Two (February 24): The pre-9/11 Era: Global Fin de Siècle

Issues:
- What was the pre-9/11 context?
- What dominant dynamics were at play internationally?
- How does the post-Cold War relate to the post-9/11 era?

Readings:
- Mahmood Mamdani, “From Proxy War to Open Aggression”, in Mahmood Mamdani, Good Muslim, Bad Muslim – America, the Cold War and the Roots of Terror, New York: Doubleday, 2005, pp. 178-228.

Session Three (March 2): Al Qaeda’s 11 September 2001 Attacks on the United States

Issues:
- What is the background to Al Qaeda’s 9/11 attacks on the US?
- What took place on 11 September 2001?
- What immediate consequences did the attack have?

Readings:

Session Four (March 9): The Global War on Terror and its Discontents

Issues:
- How was the Global War on Terror defined and launched?
- What were its immediate consequences?
- What lasting changes has the policy had?

Readings:
Richard English, “Change and Continuity across the 9/11 Faultline: Rethinking Twenty-first Responses to Terrorism”, Critical Studies on Terrorism, 12, 1, 2019, pp. 78-88.

Session Five (March 16): The Iraq War of 2003

Issues:
- Where does the Iraq War of 2003 fit into the post-9/11 puzzle?
- How did the march to war and the conflict play out?
- What have been the consequences of the war?

Readings:
- Charles H. Ferguson, “The Civilian Occupation and the Coalition Provisional Authority”, in Charles H. Ferguson, No End in Sight – Iraq’s Descent into Chaos, pp. 266-311.

Session Six (March 23): The Spectacle of 9/11

Issues:
- How has been ‘9/11’ represented beyond policy?
- What have been the techniques and vignettes of the language (re)introduced?
- What impact did this imagery and experience have on the contemporary era?

Readings:

Session Seven (March 30): Othering and Orientalism Redux

PAPER TOPICS AND OUTLINE DUE

Issues:
- What place do ‘othering’ and ‘Orientalism’ occupy in the post-9/11 construct of international affairs?
- How, in that context, has culture been weaponised?
- What relationship to ‘security’ and ‘insecurity’ does this have?

Readings:
- Erin Steuter and Deborah Wills, “Making Enemies: Propaganda and the Making of the Orientalist Other”, in Erin Steuter and Deborah Wills, At War With A Metaphor – Media,
Session Eight (April 6): The Militarisation of World Affairs

Issues:
- To what extent have international relations been militarised since 2001?
- What forms does such trend take?
- What are the historical implications of this evolution?

Readings:

Spring Break – no classes on 13 April

Session Nine (April 20): Ubiquitous Technology, New Revolts and Neo-Authoritarianism

Issues:
- What place does technology occupy in contemporary international affairs and with what overall impact?
- What is the nature of the new social movements since 2001 and to what extent has there been a criminalisation of protest and dissent in recent years?
- How has authoritarianism returned round the world in the 2010s?

Readings:

Session Ten (27 April): Empire and the Boomerang Effect

Issues:
- What is the relationship between post-9/11 neo-imperial projection abroad and the domestic theatres?
- To what extent has there been a boomerang effect of imperial violence and control?
- What patterns can be discerned and what meaning does this have?

Readings:

**Session Eleven (4 May):**

**Papers Presentations I**

**DRAFT RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**

*Students present their papers and discuss them with the class.*

**Session Twelve (11 May):**

**Papers Presentations II**

*Students’ papers presentations (continued).*

**Session Thirteen (18 May):**

**Papers Presentations III**

*Students’ papers presentations (completed).*

**Session Fourteen (25 May):**

**Conclusions**

**FINAL RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**

 Issue(s): □ Review of course issues

**Further Reading and Research Resources**

The sources of print and electronic information below may be useful to the students in the preparation of their research papers, and for further reflection on the issues discussed in class.

**Books and articles**


Mamdani, Mahmood. Good Muslim, Bad Muslim – America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror. New York: Penguin Random House.


Films
The Siege, directed by Edward Zick, 1998
Naqoyqatsi, directed by Godfrey Reggio, 2002
Sicario, directed by Denis Villeneuve, 2015
Sicario: Day of the Soldado, directed by Stefano Sollima, 2018

Documentaries
Fahrenheit 9/11, directed by Michael Moore, 2004
Do Not Resist, directed by Craig Atkinson, 2016
Fahrenheit 11/9, directed by Michael Moore, 2018
Dark Money, directed by Kimberly Reed, 2018
The Great Hack, directed by Jehane Noujaim and Karim Amer, 2019