

From Fundamentalism to Extremism

The evolution of the Salafi movement in Islam

The purpose of this seminar is to understand and evaluate the theology that motivates and justifies Islamic warfare against Muslim leaders, as well as the countries that support them.

Moderator:	Gene Fisher
Date and Time:	Thursday 10:00 AM - Noon 10 weeks, starting February 22, 2018
Format:	Seminar
Location:	Applewood, The Tavern, Amherst

Description: The Salafi movement is an ultra-conservative reform movement within Sunni Islam that advocates a return to the traditions of Islam's "forefathers." Since the Gulf War, it has become the principal force in the warfare and terrorism promoted by ISIS, Al Qaeda, and other Muslim groups.

In this seminar, members will present and discuss subjects such as the following: (1) factions within the Salafi movement (purists, politicians, jihadis); (2) the five theological concepts of Salafism (jihad, takfir, al wala wal al-bara, tawhid, hakimiyya); and (3) selected Salafi groups (Wahabbi, Muslim Brotherhood, Al Shabab, AlQaeda, and the Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIS).

Role of participants: For each session (except the first), two participants will partner on one selected topic. In the first hour, one participant will present a review and critique of readings associated with one of the topics listed above. During the second hour, the second participant will lead a discussion of the topic presented. Participants are encouraged to choose the topic that interests them most.

Resources: All participants will read the following three books or portions of books:

- (1) *Radical Islam in America: Salafism's Journey from Arabia to the West*, Chris Heffelfinger;
- (2) *Anatomy of the Salafi Movement, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Quintan Wiktorowicz, Chapter 29, pp. 207–239; and
- (3) *Salafi Jihadism: The History of an Idea*, Shiraz Maher.

In addition, the Moderator will provide a list of additional resources, most of which are available on the Internet.

About the Moderator: Professor Emeritus of sociology, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. I have taught research methods and sociology of religion. I have participated in two 5CLIR seminars -- Reading Piketty (Spring 2016) and The Playwright and the Preacher (Fall 2017).

Maximum number of participants: 15

Emeriti accepted: yes

Course # 18SFE