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HSTR 291.80: Seminar for Terrorism in the Modern World - Honors

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Spring 2023

HSTR 291:80 Honors College Seminar for Terrorism in the Modern World (HSTR 272E)

CRN 31654
Friday 2:00-2:50
McGill 210

Office Hours: MWF 1:00-2:00 and by appointment

Description of the Course

Students in the seminar will meet every Friday from 2:00 to 2:50 with Professor Drake. They will discuss the lectures, readings, and/or films for that week in HSTR 272E. Students will write one five-page review of a book or film about terrorism not on the required reading list for HSTR 272E. The review, which will be worth 50 percent of the semester grade, will be due by e-mail before class on Friday, 14 April. Please confirm your book or film selection with me. The other 50 percent of the semester grade will be based on seminar attendance and participation. The goal of the course is to provide a stimulating intellectual seminar environment for highly motivated students in which they can acquire an understanding of the historical forces responsible for the scourge of terrorism in the modern world. The discussion materials for our weekly meetings will follow the HSTR 272E syllabus. The same strictures and other guidelines listed on that syllabus apply to the Terrorism seminar.

Learning Outcomes

The course has two main pedagogical aims. One concerns the development of speaking skills in a seminar setting. Students are encouraged to offer their views about the weekly readings and themes for HSTR 272E based on an intelligent mastery of the material and in a spirit of mutual respect. The second aim has to do with proficiency in writing. Students are expected to acquire an understanding of sound professional standards for a book or film review. We devote much time in the seminar to the elements of style and substance in this important genre of scholarly writing. Please see below the addendum for the Book\Film Review assignment.

Meetings

20 January	Introduction
27 January	Discussion: Eric Hoffer, <i>The True Believer</i>
3 February	Discussion: <i>Danton</i>
10 February	Discussion: Joseph Conrad, <i>Under Western Eyes</i>

17 February	Discussion: Arthur Koestler, <i>Darkness at Noon</i>
24 February	Discussion: The Holocaust as an Act of State Terrorism
3 March	Discussion: Mark Danner, <i>Massacre at El Mozote</i>
10 March	Discussion: Terrorism in the Middle East
17 March	Discussion: Ayatollah Khomeini (Articles available on Moodle)
Spring Break Monday, 21 March—Friday, 25 March	
31 March	Discussion: Ahmed Rashid, <i>The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia</i>
7 April	Discussion: <i>The Battle of Algiers</i>
14 April	Discussion: The Years of Lead in Italy (Articles available on Moodle) Book or Film Reports due by e-mail before class
21 April	Discussion: Terrorism in Contemporary Europe
28 April	Discussion: <i>American History X</i> and <i>If a Tree Falls</i>
5 May	Discussion: Osama bin Laden, <i>Messages to the World</i>

Students will take the final examination for HSTR 272E: Tuesday, May 9, 10:10-12:10

Guidelines for HSTR 291 Book\Film Review

The five-page book\film review is due in class on Friday, 14 April. First, identify a topic on the HSTR 272E syllabus you would like to investigate beyond the limits of the required course readings. Do some research in the library or online. Acquire a general understanding of the literature covering that topic. For the review assignment, choose a book or a film that appears to be unusually interesting and important. Be sure to confirm your choice with me.

Questions that you should keep in mind as you write your review include the following:

What is the argument of the book or film?

Is the argument well-made?

Is the argument communicated effectively?

What is the evidence or research base for the argument?

How does the book or film contribute to our understanding of terrorism?

Does the book or film confirm any of our course themes either by echoing or supplementing them?

Does the book or film contradict any of our course themes, and, if so, how successfully?

Be sure to link your review to the course material in HSTR 272E.

If you are looking for a reliable source of general information about writing, *The Chicago Manual of Style* (16th edition) will serve you well. Other useful works of this kind are William Strunk, Jr., and E. B. White, *Elements of Style*, 4th edition, and Christopher Lasch, *Plain Speech: A Guide to Written English*.

Richard Drake