

# Religious Fundamentalism in a Global Perspective

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## Overview

Religious fundamentalism, that is the quest for a purist literalist reading and implementation of religion is a worldwide phenomenon, encompassing most major religions, particularly Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Moreover, religion has become a key prism, through which people grasp and articulate their socio-economic and cultural grievances, as well as translate these grievances into political action. While most religious people are not violent, most violent and terrorist organizations claim to be acting on behalf of their religious convictions. Radical fundamentalist movements have become in various parts of the globe, most notably West Asia and Africa, a major force exacerbating civil and political conflicts and a threat to the survival of states.

Religious fundamentalist movements are products of the universal crisis of modernity and of modern social and political processes. All of them seek to return to the spirit and purity of a past golden age. Yet, they are all modern in the way they articulate their ideology, build their organization and promote their political activities. Modern technology particularly the Internet, have become indispensable in their evolution and organization. While each fundamentalist movement in each religion is unique, they all share common features and characteristics. A proper study of religious fundamentalism and its interaction with broader historical processes is therefore essential for a better understanding of a major universal human problem and challenge.

## Objectives of the Course

The primary objectives of the course are as follows:

1. Exposing students to the major characteristics of modern fundamentalism in each of the three religions but most also through a comparative perspective.
2. Examining in-depth case studies of individual movements and phenomena by studying their origins, ideology and political conduct.

Offering the students a better understanding of the evolution of modern religions, particularly the interaction between broader socio-economic and political processes and the evolution of religious movement. A major aim here is to demonstrate to students that many religions are dynamic and ever evolving historical actors.

# Lecture-wise course plan: (February 8-13, 2016 /15 hours)

## 08 FEBRUARY 2016 (MONDAY)

**Lecture 1** : Introduction: What is modern Fundamentalism?  
(10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.)

**Reading Material Distribution**  
(11:00 a.m. – 11:10 a.m.)

Tea/Coffee Break (11:10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.)

**Lecture 2** : West Asian Islam and the Challenge of Modernity  
(11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)

**Open Forum (Discussion/Q&A)**  
(12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

## 09 FEBRUARY 2016 (TUESDAY)

**Lecture 3** : Modern Islamism in the Indian Subcontinent—From  
(10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.) Deoband to Mawdudi

Tea/Coffee Break (11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.)

**Lecture 4** : The Muslim Brothers  
(11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)

**Open Forum (Discussion/Q&A)**  
(12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

## 10 FEBRUARY 2016 (WEDNESDAY)

**Lecture 5** : The Rise of Salafi Challenge  
(10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.)

Tea/Coffee Break (11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.)

**Lecture 6** : Modern Shiism: From Quietism to Revolution  
(11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)

**Open Forum (Discussion/Q&A)**  
(12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

## 11 FEBRUARY 2016 (THURSDAY)

**Lecture 7** : Jewish Fundamentalism in the Modern Age  
(10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.)

Tea/Coffee Break (11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.)

**Lecture 8** : Christian Fundamentalism in the United States  
(11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)

**Open Forum (Discussion/Q&A)**  
(12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

## 12 FEBRUARY 2016 (FRIDAY)

**Lecture 9** : Religious Radicalism in South Asia: From the RSS to the Taliban  
(10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.)

Tea/Coffee Break (11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.)

**Lecture 10** : Jihadi Salafism in South Western Asia  
(11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)

**Open Forum (Discussion/Q&A)**  
(12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

## 13 FEBRUARY 2016 (SATURDAY)

**Examination and Evaluation of participants**  
(10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.)

Tea/Coffee Break (11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.)

**Takeaways and Distribution of Certificates**  
(12:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

<b>Modules</b>	<b>A: Duration :</b> February 08 – February 13, 2016 <b>B: Venue :</b> Conference Hall, First Floor, Imarat Ibn-Khaldun, Jamia Millia Islamia (A Central University), New Delhi 110025, INDIA <b><i>Number of participants for the course will be limited to FORTY.</i></b>
<b>You Should Attend If...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ You are a faculty or student from an academic/research institution and interested in knowing about religious fundamentalism and its impact on global affairs.</li><li>▪ You are a journalist or from an NGO and interested in understanding more about religious fundamentalism in the context of global non-state conflicts.</li></ul>
<b>Fees</b>	The participation fees for taking the course is as follows: <b>Academic Institutions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Faculty members : Rs. 1,000/-</li><li>• Students : Rs. 500/-</li></ul> <b>Industry/ Research Organizations :</b> Rs. 10,000/ <b>Individual participants from SAARC countries (other than India) :</b> USD 200 <b>Individual participants from abroad (non-SAARC countries) :</b> USD 300 The above course fee includes all reading materials, stationary kit, refreshments, certificates and library facility. The outside participants will be provided with accommodation on nominal payment basis, if available.

## The Faculty



**Meir Litvak** (PhD Harvard 1991) is Associate Professor at the Department of Middle Eastern History; Director of the Alliance Center for Iranian Studies, Principal Research Fellow at the Dayan Center for Middle Eastern Studies and Coordinator of the Parviz and Pouran Nazarian Chair for Modern Iranian Studies, at Tel Aviv University. His fields of expertise include Modern Shi'i and Iranian History and modern Islamic movements. Author of *Shi'i Scholars of Nineteenth Century Iraq: The 'Ulama' of Najaf and Karbala'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998);

Co-author, *From Empathy to Denial: Arab Responses to the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). Co-author, *Iran: from a Persian Empire to an Islamic Republic* (Tel Aviv: Open University of Israel Press, 2014, Hebrew); Editor, *Palestinian Collective Memory and National Identity* (New York: Palgrave-McMillan, 2009); Editor, *Middle Eastern Societies and the West: Accommodation or Clash of Civilizations?* (Tel Aviv: Dayan Center for Middle Eastern Studies, 2007); Co-editor, *Religious Fanaticism* (Jerusalem: ZalmanShazar Center, 2007, in Hebrew); Editor, *Palestinian Collective Memory and National Identity* (New York: Palgrave-McMillan); Co-editor, *The Sunna and Shi'a in History Division and Ecumenism in Islam*: (New York: Palgrave-McMillan, 2011). His most recent publication edited with Dr. Bruce Maddy-Weitzman is *Nationalism, Identity and Politics: Israel and the Middle East - Studies in Honor of Prof. Asher Susser* (Tel Aviv: Dayan Center for Middle Eastern Studies, 2014, English and Hebrew). In addition, he has articles on modern Shi'i and Iranian history as well as on modern Islamic movements.



**Javed Ahmad Khan** is Professor at the Centre of West Asian Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, a Central University at New Delhi and is teaching the Contemporary Arab Economics and Islamic Finance there. He holds PhD in West Asian Studies (Economics) from Aligarh Muslim University, India. Among his publications include, *Iraq Reconstruction: The Arab's Response to an Imperial Design* (2008), *India's Energy Security and the Arabian Gulf: Oil and Gas Market in*

*Decontrolled Regimes* (2005), *Islamic Banking in India : Scope & Challenges* (edited, 2003), *India's Search for Natural Gas in the Persian Gulf* (2004), *Social Sciences in Islamic Perspectives: A Bibliography of Contemporary Literature, 1975-2000* (compiled. 2001), *India and West Asia: Emerging Markets in the Liberalisation Era* (1999) and *Islamic Economics and Finance: A Bibliography* 1995). He also edited a bio-monthly *Islamic Economic Bulletin* (1991-2003). His field of specialisation includes Arab Economies, Indo-Arab Economic relations and Islamic Economics & Finance. He knows Urdu, English, Arabic, Persian and Hindi, languages.



**Sujata Ashwarya** is Assistant Professor at the Centre for West Asian Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. She obtained her higher education from the University of Delhi and Jawaharlal Nehru University. She was awarded fellowships for research at the Rothberg International School, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel; Maison des Sciences de l'Homme (MSH) and Centre d'Etudes et des Recherches Internationales (CERI), Paris, France; and the Schusterman Centre for Israel Studies, Brandeis University, USA. She was also affiliated as a

researcher at the Faculty of World Studies, University of Tehran, Iran. Her research interests include India's West Asia policy, politics and foreign policy of Iran, Iraq and Israel, politics of energy, and issues relating to democratization in the region. Her books, *Civil Society, Democracy and State in West Asia* (edited) and *Essays on Iran and Israel: An Indian Perspective* were published in 2010 and 2014 respectively.

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