



Spring 2023 Course Details

Instructor

Prof. Josh DiPaolo

Office Hours

Th 11:30-1:30

By Appointment

H311-C

Email

jdipaolo@fullerton.edu

Class

Tu/Th 10-11:15am

Hum 125

Course Page

Canvas

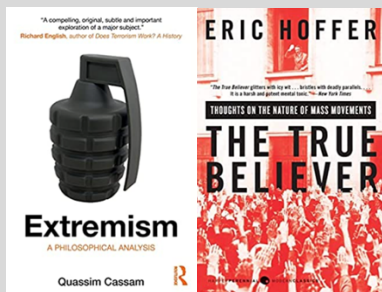
Tech Support

Student Help Desk

(657) 278-8888

studenthelpdesk@fullerton.edu

Texts



Course Description

Many of you were born in the aftermath of 9/11, and you were adults on January 6th. Extremism has pervaded the political environment encompassing your existence. But what is extremism? How does it relate to fanaticism, radicalism, and conspiracy theorizing? Is it true, as is sometimes said, that “Extremism in defense of liberty is no vice” and “Moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue”? What draws people into extremism, what keeps them in it, and what gets them out? The answers to these questions are far from obvious, and their unclarity has been abused by powerful people—often at the expense of religious and ethnic minorities. In this course, we will use philosophical tools to refine these questions, to improve our own answers to them, and to raise further questions. We will do cutting-edge philosophy. In its infancy, the contemporary philosophical study of extremism is growing. Rather than leading you through settled, well-trodden philosophical territory, as senior seminars often do, I invite you to be my fellow trailblazer of this underexplored and uncharted terrain.

Additional Topics

ideology, the politics of desire, existential anguish, meaning in life, freedom, misogyny, religious faith, conspiracy theories, gamification, radicalization, and deradicalization

Content: It probably goes without saying that discussing extremism requires discussing troubling events, behaviors, and ideologies. We must do so with the utmost respect and regard for our classmates. But there’s no escaping the fact that extremists, their ideas, and their actions are often upsetting. Talking about extremism requires talking about difficult things. Please consider this as you decide whether this is the class for you.

Readings

Two books are required for this course: Quassim Cassam's *Extremism: A Philosophical Analysis* and Eric Hoffer's *The True Believer*. They are available for purchase online and in the Titan Shops bookstore. All other texts will be freely available on Canvas.

Note: Since this is a senior seminar, most weeks will require a lot of reading, including approx. 130 pages in Week 2. You are expected to do all the assigned reading. Plan accordingly. But also notice that because of the Symposium and the Class Presentations in the last two weeks, several weeks of the semester require *no* reading. So, yes it's a lot in each week, but across the semester, it's about average.

Learning Goals

By the end of the semester, you should have a better understanding of:

1. Varieties of extremism and theories of how they relate to things like fanaticism
2. Key concepts and distinctions related to extremism
3. Central arguments related to these notions
4. Challenges and strategies associated with deradicalization and preventing radicalization

Along the way, you will:

- Improve your analytical skills
- Improve your reading skills
- Develop your own stances on questions related to extremism

Symposium

This class runs parallel to the philosophy department's 51st Annual Symposium. Many students in this class will have the opportunity to act as commentators on the Symposium presentations. Doing so is *not* a course requirement, but the commentators will (mostly) be selected from this class. We will need 9 commentators. If we have more than 9 volunteers, priority will be given to seniors and to students who have not already commented at a previous Symposium. We will begin assigning commentators immediately. Once assigned a paper, you will carefully read it and devise critical remarks on the paper. Then working with me or another faculty member, you will revise these comments until they are presentation-ready. I will share the talk abstracts and papers on Canvas.

Symposium Speakers and Titles

1. Quassim Cassam (Warwick, Keynote) "Extremism: A Philosophical Analysis"
2. Paul Katsafanas (Boston) "The Puzzle of Commitment"
3. Meena Krishnamurthy (Queens) "Martin Luther King Jr. On Fear and Fearlessness"
4. Tracy Llanera (UConn) "Extremist Women and Fanaticism"
5. M. Giulia Napolitano (UNC Chapel Hill) "Conspiracy Theories, Resistance to Evidence, and Propaganda"
6. Robert Simpson (UCL) "The Chilling Effect and the Heating Effect"
7. Heather Muraviav (Alum, UConn) "The Role of Epistemic Vice and Virtues for Extremist Mindsets"
8. Chavva Olander (Alum, CSU Long Beach) "Language-Games: Cult and Culture"

Grading Policy

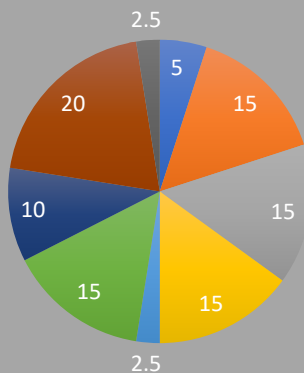
Winter Assignment	30
Reading Responses (3)	90
ICEQs (10)	90
Exit Tickets (9)	90
Mini-Presentation	15
Oral Exam	90
Research Presentation	60
Final Paper Take 1	20
Final Paper Take 2	100
<u>Participation</u>	<u>15</u>
Total	600 Pts

A+	98-100%	588-600 Points
A	92-97%	552-587 Points
A-	90-91%	540-551 Points
B+	88-89%	528-539 Points
B	82-87%	492-527 Points
B-	80-81%	480-491 Points
C+	78-79%	468-479 Points
C	72-77%	432-467 Points
C-	70-71%	420-431 Points
D+	68-69%	408-419 Points
D	62-67%	372-407 Points
D-	60-61%	360-371 Points
F	0-59%	0-359 Points

Please read coursework descriptions carefully. Ask questions if you're not sure you understand anything.

Grade Summary

Percentages



- Winter Assignment: 5%
- Reading Responses: 15%
- ICEQs: 15%
- Exit Tickets: 15%
- Mini-Presentation: 2.5%
- Oral Exam: 15%
- Research Presentation: 10%
- Final Paper: 20%
- Participation: 2.5%

Scheduling Script

Want to schedule a meeting outside of office hours, but not sure what to say? Feel free to use this script:

“Hi Josh/Professor DiPaolo,

I’m in your [CLASS NAME & TIME]. I’d like to schedule an appointment with you outside of your scheduled office hours. Do any of these times work for you [LIST THREE DIFFERENT TIMES YOU CAN MEET]?

*Thanks,
[NAME]”*

Coursework Descriptions



*You will be assigned to Group A, B, or C. What assignments you’re required to complete each week depends on which group you’re in. **Know your group!** (Every student will be required to complete the same number of assignments.)*

Winter Assignment: Over the Winter break, I asked you to read one of three books (*Educated*, *Rising out of Hatred*, *Unfollow*) and complete a reading report that addresses these questions: Which book did you read? Describe the extremism involved in the book in detail. What exactly led the book’s protagonist to exit their extremist group? Answer in detail. What struggles did the book’s protagonist experience as they were leaving? What was most interesting or most surprising to you in the book?

Reading Responses: *4 responses/30 points each/lowest score dropped.* To help you reflect on the readings, you will write reading responses throughout the semester. Write a single-spaced one-paged paper critically engaging with a component of the assigned reading. Either raise an objection to an author’s argument or conclusion, criticize their analysis of a concept, identify important omissions in their discussion, or provide a better argument in favor of their conclusions. **Submit on Canvas before the beginning of class on the first day we are scheduled to discuss that reading.** If there is more than one reading assigned for the week, you can choose which to write on. My advice? Glance at both, then pick the one that interests you most.

ICEQs: *12 ICEQs/9 points each/lowest 2 scores dropped.* ICEQ stands for: Insight, Connection, Error, and discussion Question. These assignments help you engage with a reading and prepare for class discussion. For each of these assignments, you must do three of four things (you can choose which to skip for each assignment, feel free to do them all):

1. Identify an insight in the assigned reading and explain why you find it insightful
2. Make a connection between the reading and something else (from our class, from another class, from life, etc.)
3. Identify a philosophical error in the reading, in other words, something you think is false or mistaken, and briefly explain why you think it’s an error
4. Raise a question for class discussion, including enough background that will help the class understand how the question relates to the reading and where the question is coming from

AI Ruins the World

You are probably aware of new AI technology that is easily accessible and that can be used to generate decently written texts. I hate this. One day I may decide to think creatively about how to use it in my classes. Today is not that day. All of your work in this course must be your own, from start to finish. If I discover that any part of your work was generated by AI technology, that work will fail and I will treat it as a case of plagiarism, with all its attendant consequences.

Academic Integrity & Plagiarism

Please only submit work that is your own. Doing otherwise is one of the worst mistakes you can make in your academic career. If plagiarism is found in your work, you will be subject to prosecution to the fullest extent of university code, which will result in a failure of the assignment and will probably result in your failure of the course. Confirmation of plagiarism precludes you from being eligible to repeat the course under the university's course repeat and grade forgiveness policy.

Accommodations

I will do my very best to help students with disabilities, special needs, or learning challenges succeed in this course. Students with disabilities who need accommodations, access to technology, or information about emergency building/campus evacuation processes should contact Disability Support Services. Services are available to students with a wide range of disabilities and conditions.

Disability Support Services

Phone: (657) 278-3112

Website: www.fullerton.edu/dss

These are not carefully crafted essays; they are more like bullet points. I will use these to guide our class discussion. Please be prepared to discuss any part of your ICEQ in class. **Submit them to Canvas at least 45 minutes before the class in which we will discuss the reading.** There is no specific due date for this assignment. You need to complete 12 throughout the semester. My advice? Do them on readings you're not already doing a Reading Response on to spread out your workload. There are 12 weeks of readings; plan accordingly.

Exit Tickets: *??# Tickets/10 points each/Only your top 9 exit tickets will count towards your grade.* You will not always understand everything in class. If there is a particular thing you don't understand, then make a note of it and who said it or discussed it. At the end of class, I will often ask you to submit an exit ticket that asks for this information: What was something from today's class you don't understand or would like more clarification on? Describe the idea or your confusion about it as best you can and state who mentioned it. We will then do our best to clarify major confusions in the next class or one-on-one.

Mini-Presentation: *1 mini-presentation/15 points.* I want you to be looking for connections between this class and your life, and I want other students to learn from the connections you've identified. Also, there is so much to extremism that I couldn't possibly bring every connection into the class myself. So I want your help. Once in the semester, you will give a brief 5 minute presentation sharing with the class some real-world connection to our class. For instance: you could bring in a social media post, a very brief news clip, share a news story, mention an extremist group we haven't yet discussed, etc. The possibilities are nearly endless. You will share and/or describe the thing, and briefly discuss what connection you are making between it and the class. I will let you choose whether we *schedule* these or whether the timing of them is more casual. Either way, they must be completed by Week 14.

Oral Exam: *1 exam/90 points.* To ensure that you understand key ideas, concepts, and arguments before writing your final paper, I will give you an *oral* exam in Week 9. Here's how it will work. Approximately a week before the exam, I will share essay-style questions with you. During the oral exam, I will randomly choose two of these questions to ask you. You and a classmate will come to my office at a scheduled time, and then you will answer the questions. The exam will be 20 minutes in length. Although it wouldn't be a bad idea to have written out answers to the questions, you cannot simply *read* your answers aloud. The exam will be more conversational. You will be scored on accuracy, completeness, and preparation.

Research Presentation & Final Paper Take 1: *60 points for Presentation, 20 points for Take 1.* During the last two weeks of class, we will have paper workshops in which you present the ideas of your final paper. By the day you're scheduled to present, you will submit a draft of your paper on Canvas. Then you will present your paper to the class. We will give you feedback on your ideas/arguments. Then you will revise your paper in light of that feedback, and submit your final paper.

Note: The paper you submit before your presentation should not be a rough draft. It should be your very best attempt to write your paper up to that point.

Final Paper Take 2: *100 points.* You will write an argumentative research paper on a course topic, articulating and defending your own stance on issues raised in the course. Approx. 3000-4500 words.

Participation: *15 points.* Participating in class benefits you and others. We learn while we express our thoughts. Since you have a unique perspective, everyone else in the class learns when you share that perspective. Also, this is a seminar. It should run almost completely on student participation. Here are some ways to participate:

1. Ask questions about the readings or lectures.
2. Answer questions when asked.
3. Contribute your perspective to a discussion.
4. Raise objections to arguments.
5. Mention a relevant life experience at an appropriate time.
6. Participate during small group activities.
7. Complete in-class assignments.
8. Talk with me about the class during office hours.
9. Engaging in discussion when classmates are leading.

Communication



Office Hours: I will have Office Hours at the times listed above, and by appointment. You can just drop in to my scheduled office hours. If those times don't work, you should ABSOLUTELY feel free to set an appointment with me. You can use the Scheduling Script to schedule a time to meet. **I want to help you succeed!**

Contact: Emailing me is best! Check the syllabus first if asking about the course.

You: I expect you to regularly check your email and Canvas for announcements.

- Regularly check your junk email folder too! "I didn't check my email" will not be an acceptable excuse for anything in this class.

Ask a Question Boards: On Canvas, there will be two "Ask a Question" discussion boards: (1) "Ask Josh a Question" and (2) "Ask Peers a Question." I will regularly check (1) and rarely check (2). You should check both often.

- Questions on these boards should be general. Think: "Could someone else benefit from knowing the answer to this question?"
 - If Yes, post. If No, email me.

Make a Good Impression

Education is a professional environment. One day you may want a letter of recommendation from me. You may want your peers to recommend you for some professional position. Assume you will want these things, and behave accordingly.

Assignment Checklist		
<input type="checkbox"/> Winter Assignment		1/27
<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Response 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Response 3	RR1 Wk3
<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Response 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Response 4	Other dates vary
<input type="checkbox"/> ICEQ 1	<input type="checkbox"/> ICEQ 7	Dates vary
<input type="checkbox"/> ICEQ 2	<input type="checkbox"/> ICEQ 8	
<input type="checkbox"/> ICEQ 3	<input type="checkbox"/> ICEQ 9	
<input type="checkbox"/> ICEQ 4	<input type="checkbox"/> ICEQ 10	
<input type="checkbox"/> ICEQ 5	<input type="checkbox"/> ICEQ 11	
<input type="checkbox"/> ICEQ 6	<input type="checkbox"/> ICEQ 12	
<input type="checkbox"/> Exit Tickets		Dates vary
<input type="checkbox"/> Mini-Presentation		Date varies
<input type="checkbox"/> Oral Exam		Wk 9
<input type="checkbox"/> Research Presentation		Wks 15-16
<input type="checkbox"/> Final Paper Take 1		Night before presentation
<input type="checkbox"/> Final Paper Take 2		Finals Week

Extremism Seminar Schedule

Reading and listening should be completed before class. Note some readings/listenings are optional, some are not.

Week 1: Getting to Know Extremism

Jan 24 Berger What is Extremism?

Jan 26 Cassam Introduction & How to Think about Extremism
Listen: Cassam Extremism *The Philosopher's Zone*

Assignments: Winter Assignment Due 1/27 Noon

Week 2: A Classic: Escaping Freedom and the Self

Jan 31 Hoffer *True Believer* Pts 1-2

Feb 2 Hoffer *True Believer* Pt 3

Week 3: Extremism & Ideology

Feb 7 Cassam Ideological Extremism
In-Class Video: Killer Incels

Feb 9 Srinivasan The Right to Sex
Listen: Srinivasan The Politics of Desire *The Ezra Klein Show*

Assignments: Reading Response (All Groups)

Week 4: Misogyny & the Alt-Right

- Feb 14 Manne The Logic of Misogyny
Listen: Kate Manne on Himpathy *UnMute Podcast*
- Feb 16 Llanera The Misogyny Paradox and the Alt-Right
Optional: Lombroso Why the Alt-Right's Most Famous Woman Disappeared
Optional Listen: Llanera Women, the Alt-Right, & the Liberal Centre *Philosopher's Zone*
- Assignments: Reading Response (Group A)

Week 5: The Extremist Mind

- Feb 21 Adler Faith and Fanaticism
In-Class Listen: She Was a Popular Yoga Guru, Then She Embraced QAnon
- Feb 23 Cassam Psychology of Extremism
- Assignments: Reading Response (Group B)

Week 6: Extremism: All Fun and Games?

- Feb 28 Munro Cults, Conspiracies, and Fantasies of Knowledge
Berkowitz A Game Designer's Analysis of QAnon
Optional Listen: Blattberg Conspiracy Theories, Anti-Semitism, and Fun *The Philosopher's Zone*
- Mar 2 Nguyen Gamification and Value Capture
Listen: Nguyen A Phil. of Games That is Really a Phil. of Life *The Ezra Klein Show*
- Assignments: Reading Response (Group C)

Week 7: Extremism & Fanaticism

- Mar 7 Katsafanas Fanaticism and Sacred Values
Nietzsche *The Gay Science* §374; *The Antichrist* §54
Optional: Reginster What is a Free Spirit? Nietzsche on Fanaticism
- Mar 9 Cassam Extremism, Fanaticism, Fundamentalism
- Assignments: Reading Response (Group A)

Week 8: Is Extremism Ever Virtuous?

- Mar 14 Cassam Why Not Extremism?
Optional Listen: King Letter from Birmingham Jail
- Mar 16 Battaly Can Fanaticism Be a Liberatory Virtue?
- Assignments: Reading Response (Group B)

Week 9: Radicalization & Oral Exam

- Mar 21 Cassam Pathways to Extremism
Mar 23 Oral Exam
- Assignments: Reading Response (Group C); Oral Exam

Week 10: SPRING BREAK

No Class This Week: Read Symposium Papers

Week 11: Symposium Week

April 4 Symposium Prep
April 5-6 NO CLASS: Symposium

Week 12: Countering Extremism

April 11 Symposium Debrief: No Reading

April 13 Cassam Countering Extremism
Dickson Former QAnon Followers Explain What Drew Them in And Got Them Out

Assignments: Reading Response (Group A)

Week 13: Difficulties with Deradicalization

April 18 Verwoerd et al. Peace as Betrayal: On the Human Cost of Relational Peacebuilding
Listen: Megan Phelps-Roper Leaving the Church *Making Sense Podcast*

April 20 Llanera Disavowing Hate
Optional: Chang Conversion via Twitter
Optional: Saslow White Flight of Derek Black

Assignments: Reading Response (Group B)

Week 14: January 6th

April 25 Rothschild The Role of QAnon in the Events of January 6th and Beyond
Listen: Belew Are We Witnessing the Mainstreaming of White Power in America? *The Ezra Klein Show*

April 27 Catch-Up/Discussion

Assignments: Reading Response (Group C)

Week 15: Presentations

May 2 Presentations
May 4 Presentations

Assignments: Final Paper Take 1 Due 10pm Night Before Presentation

Week 16: Presentations

May 9 Presentations
May 11 Presentations

Assignments: Final Paper Take 1 Due 10pm Night Before Presentation

Week 17 FINALS WEEK

Assignments: Final Paper Take 2 Due TBD