

**Take-home final essay examination**

Please answer the following question *in the first person* (i.e., as if you are speaking) as clearly and succinctly as possible, drawing particularly on information that you have garnered from class lectures, readings and discussions. Your answer is to be typed, double-spaced, 6-8 pages in length, and include a bibliography of sources used (but no need to cite lectures). The exam is due in 307 PLC no later than 12:30 pm on Wednesday December 11<sup>th</sup>, the time scheduled for our final exam.

**Question:**

After graduating from the University of Oregon, you receive a job offer from a great company that you had hoped would employ you. They have even given you a grace period of a month before you are to start working, and a signing bonus of \$2,000. You decide that you are going to spend the money on a trip back to your hometown, where you had gone to elementary school. You email a few people there with whom you have remained in contact, to ensure you'll be able to see them during your upcoming visit.

One of your old friends has become a member of the city council in your hometown. In corresponding with this friend about the courses you have been taking at the U of O, your friend is surprised to hear – in your friend's own words – that you “bothered to learn about those fanatic Muslims who hate everything that Americans love.” The friend goes on, ranting about a recent Fox News report that showed women in black veils joining in protests for their government to adhere more closely to Islam. Your friend ridiculed this Muslim country's attempts “to revert to the past.” You offer that when you meet, you would like to help your friend gain more of an understanding of the background to this event. Your friend replies that the city council would like to arrange for you to give a talk in the town so everyone can hear what you would like to say.

This is an opportunity to break through unwarranted stereotypes about Muslims and Islam, but also to educate people about the realities that exist among militant Islamist groups. Begin with a clarification of what is jihad, and discuss how Muslims have long used *islah* and *tajdid* to revitalize their society. Identify three very different groups (i.e., not in the same locale, and not branches of each other) operating in the world today. How can your audience make sense of these groups? Perhaps discuss the history behind the formation of each group, how do they use Islamic history, symbols and beliefs, and whatever else you'd like to break through the stereotype that “they hate everything that Americans love.”