Al-Qaida, ISIS, and Intelligence Analysis

Spring 2017
Copenhagen
3 credits

Related Disciplines: Criminal Justice, History, International Relations, Political Science
Faculty Members: Søren Hove and Nis Mathiesen
Program Director: Neringa Vendelbo
Program Assistant: Alex Berlin

Tuesdays 14:50-17:45 (and a few Fridays)
Vestergade 10-A12

Course Description

This course has two central components. The first being the analysis of al-Qaida’s and the Islamic State’s ideology and modus operandi; and the second, a hands-on approach designed to develop students understanding of how intelligence analysis works today.

On one hand, students will be reading primary sources from al-Qaeda and the Islamic State and analyze what kind of organizations they have evolved into today. What is the history of militant Sunni extremism? When and why did al-Qaeda’s leadership begin to target the West? How do al-Qaida and the Islamic state spread their ideology and how do they recruit foreign fighters in the West? What is the difference between al-Qaeda and the Islamic state? Moreover, why has Europe, and especially Denmark, come to the attention of both al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in recent years?

On the other hand, this course will also offer a broad introduction to the methodology of intelligence analysis. Through workshops, we will apply basic intelligence analysis to both fictitious and legitimate al-Qaida source material.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, all students will:

- Understand the ideology and modus operandi of al-Qaida and ISIL
- Understand different theories of how militant Sunni Extremists mobilize, communicate and recruit
- Know different approaches to analyzing sources and working with intelligence
Instructors:

Søren Hove, Ph.D.
hove.privat@gmail.com

Søren Hove (Ph.D in Middle East Studies, 2009) is working as a Chief Consultant at the Danish Defense and has been research fellow at the Centre for Contemporary Middle East Studies (University of Southern Denmark) and the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS, Copenhagen). Søren has expertise in the terrorism and Islamist militancy in the Middle East. With DIS since 2011.

Nis L. Mathiesen, MA
nis@nisleerskov.com

Cand.Mag. (MA) in Rhetoric (University of Copenhagen, 2006), MA in Intelligence and International Security (King's College London, 2005). Nis has been working as a Chief Analyst with the private intelligence company Risk Intelligence, specializing in maritime security. With DIS since 2007.

Required Readings

The majority of the texts for this course can be found in your course compendium or are located on DIS Canvas.

Expectations of the students

It is expected that all students actively participate in class: do the reading for each class; share thoughts and ask questions for the instructor and other students; actively and responsibly participate in their project groups.

Field Studies and Guest Lectures:

- **Field study dates / work shop:**
  - Workshop 1: Friday, 10 March 14.50-17.45 (Note: Friday)
  - Field study: Wednesday, 29 March 13.00-17.00

Assignments and Evaluation: Students will be evaluated as follows:

- Workshop 1, written in groups (1 page pr. person): 20 %
- Workshop 2, written in groups (1 page pr. Person): 35 %
- Participation (attendance and activity in class): 25 %
- Individual Test(s): 20 %

Disability and Resource Statement: Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Academic Support (acadsupp@dis.dk) to coordinate this. In order to receive accommodations, students should inform the instructor of approved DIS accommodations within the first two weeks of classes.
Policies

**Attendance** – You are expected to attend all DIS classes when scheduled. If you miss multiple classes the Director of Teaching and Learning, and the Director of Student Affairs will be notified and they will follow-up with you to make sure that all is well. Absences will jeopardize your grade and your standing at DIS. Allowances will be made in cases of illness, but in the case of multiple absences you will need to provide a doctor’s note.

**Academic Honesty**: Plagiarism and Violating the Rules of an Assignment
DIS expects that students abide by the highest standards of intellectual honesty in all academic work. DIS assumes that all students do their own work and credit all work or thought taken from others. Academic dishonesty will result in a final course grade of “F” and can result in dismissal. The students’ home universities will be notified. DIS reserves the right to request that written student assignments be turned in electronic form for submission to plagiarism detection software. See the *Academic Handbook* for more information, or ask your instructor if you have questions.

**Electronic Devices in the Classroom**: The use of electronic devices is restricted to note-taking during lectures and field studies.

**Late arrival to class**: All students are expected to come to class on time. Repeated late arrivals may result in a reduction of students’ final grade.
Class Schedule:

Schedule is subject to change if necessary with as much notice as possible.

1. 24 January: Introduction: What is intelligence? (Søren/Nis)

- Understand Intelligence as a field of study and tradecraft

Readings:

Malcolm Gladwell “Open Secrets”, The New Yorker, JANUARY 8, 2007 ISSUE, (on Canvas)

Jack Davis “The Kent-Kendall Debate of 1949”, Center for the Study of Intelligence, Vol. 35 No. 2 (in the compendium)

Optional reading:

Joseph S. Nye, Jr. “Peering into the Future” Foreign Affairs July/August 1994 Issue


Herman “Intelligence Power in Peace and War” (in the compendium)

2. 31 January: Basic Intelligence I (Nis)

- From data to Intelligence

Readings:

Katherine Hibbs Pherson and Randolph H. Pherson: Critical Thinking for Strategic Intelligence, CQ Press, 2013, 121-150 (on Canvas)

Class Representative Elections

No class - 7 February

3. 14 February: Basic Intelligence II (Nis)

- Target-centric analysis

Readings:

Clark 2004 (in the compendium)
4. **21 February:** Basic Intelligence III (Nis)

- Avoiding Intelligence failures – dealing with biases

**Readings:**

Katherine Hibbs Pherson and Randolph H. Pherson: Critical Thinking for Strategic Intelligence, CQ Press, 2013, 151-158 + 185-196 (on Canvas)

Case material (on Canvas)

**Optional reading:**


*No class* - 28 February

5. **7 March:** Basic Intelligence IV (Nis)

- Intelligence products – writing like an intelligence analyst

**Reading:**

James S. Major “Communicating with Intelligence”, Scarecrow Press 2008 (in the compendium)

6. **10 March:** Field study- Work Shop 1 (14:50-17:45) (Nis / Søren) (NOTICE FRIDAY)

7. **14 March:** Militant Sunni Extremism and the West I (Søren)

- Al-Qaeda and ISIL turns towards the West - History and evolution of militant Sunni extremism’s focus on the West

**Readings:** (on next page)

**Primary Sources:**

Abdallah Azzam 1984 “The Defense of Muslims territories”, Osama bin Ladin 1994 “Saudi Arabia supports the communists in Yemen”, Osama bin Ladin 1996 “Declaration of Jihad Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holiest Sites”, Osama bin Ladin 1998 “Jihad against jews and Crusaders” (all of these texts are in the compendium)
Textbook readings:

Daniel Byman 2015 “Comparing Al Qaeda and ISIS: Different goals, different targets”

Prepared testimony before the Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence of the House Committee on Homeland Security (on Canvas)

Fatwas E. Gerges 2005 “Prologue – The Far Enemy” (in the compendium)

Extra (not mandatory):

The case of The Islamic State: ISIL 2014: “Dabiq vol 1” (just skim it),


https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/the-islamic-state-e2809cdc481biq-magazine-422.pdf

Watch CNN’s interview with Osama bin Ladin 1997 (we will see some of it in class)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqQwnqjA-6w

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No class - 21 March

8. 28 March: Sunni Extremism and the West II (Søren)

- Militant Sunni extremists talks to the West and to Foreign fighters – propaganda and recruitment + small individual test

Readings:

Primary sources:


Textbook readings:

William McCants and Clint Watts 2016 “Why the United States can't make a magazine like ISIS”, Brookings Markaz Middle East and Policy Blog (on Canvas)

Peter Bergen (et al) 2015 “ISIS in the West” Policy Paper from New America Foundation (on Canvas)
Extra (not mandatory): See if you can locate ISIL’s twitter account.


Thomas Hegghammer 2013 “Should I stay or should I go. Explaining Variation in Western Jihadists’ Choice between Domestic and Foreign Fighting” American Political Science Review (on Canvas)

29 March Field Study - TBA

9. 31 March: Sunni Extremism and the West III (Søreng)

- AQ and ISIL attack Europe – the case of the cartoon crisis

Readings:

Primary sources:


Textbook readings:

Kim Hundevadt /Jyllandsposten 2008: “The cartoon crisis – how it unfolded” (in the compendium)


Extra (not mandatory): 

Read Al Qaeda 2008 video transcript “Word of the Sword” (on Canvas) “Translation AQ 2008 Danish Embassy Bombing” (we will see some of the video in class).

10. 4 April: Sunni Extremism and the West IV (Nis)

- Attacks in Europe from a tactical, operational and strategic point of view

Readings: Will be announced and published on Canvas

- Individual test
No class – 11 April

11. 18 April: Advanced intelligence I (Søren)
Workshop 2: Intelligence sources & Workshop 2: Timeline
Readings:
Separate source compendium for workshop 2 (can be pick up at DIS a few days before the workshop begins)

12. 21 April: Advanced intelligence II (Søren) (NOTICE FRIDAY)
Workshop 2: Competing hypotheses
Readings:
Richard Heuer 1999 “Analysis of Competing Hypotheses” (in the compendium)
Source compendium for workshop 2

13. 25 April: Advanced intelligence IV (Søren & Nis)
Workshop 2: Linkcharts
Reading:
Source compendium for workshop 2

14. 29 April Deadline for WORKSHOP 2 (17:00)

15. 2 May: Last Day of Class (Søren & Nis) (we meet at 16:00)
Workshop 2 feedback + course evaluation (Søren and Nis)