In the wake of 9/11, President Bush tried to assure the world that, "Our war is not against Islam... Our war is a war against evil. This is clearly a case of good versus evil and make no mistake about it -- good will prevail." What followed this statement, however, was an unfortunate bifurcation of so-called "good Muslims" and "bad Muslims." As internationally renowned scholar Mahmood Mamdani argues, America’s “war on terror” was framed in theological terms that framed terrorists as pre-modern barbarians. In this Great Works Seminar, we will examine both the modern roots of terrorist violence as well as the cultural consequences – for both America and the world – of (mis)understanding Muslims as either good or bad. Mamdani’s now-famous analysis certainly does not excuse terrorism, rather attempts to understand how political violence is (mis)construed within broader imperial histories and notions of just war.

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This Great Works Seminar will meet at The Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry @ Emory University from 7 p.m. - 8:15 p.m. on the following Thursday evenings during the 2022 fall semester: Oct. 6, 13, 20 & 27. Participants are expected to attend all four sessions. For further information and to reserve a spot on a “first-come basis,” email the Fox Center at foxcenter@emory.edu. Everyone from the Atlanta community is welcome and invited to join us for this free seminar.

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