How do scholars make sense of acts of violence—even terrorism—that are undertaken not just for strategic political gain but to make a symbolic statement on behalf of a religious world view? Two scholars who have interview scores of violent activists reflect on the methodological approaches involved in their research. Mona Sheikh, a research scholar at the Danish Institute of International Studies, has interviewed leaders of the Pakistani Taliban, and Mark Juergensmeyer, director of UCSB’s Orfalea Center for Global and International Studies has interviewed activists from a variety of religious backgrounds for his books on religious violence. Together they have coined the name for a cross-disciplinary analytic approach that they call “sociotheology,” taking seriously both the humanistic perspective of the subject's religious world views and the social scientific analyses of their social contexts and impact.

Tuesday November 13, 2012 - 12:00pm NOON
McCune Conference Room, 6020 HSSB