JLS 396: Terrorism and Counterterrorism, Fall 2012

Department of Justice, Law & Society
American University

1 Instructor Information

Dr. Joseph K. Young
Phone: 202.885.2618
Email: jyoung@american.edu
URL: http://nw18.american.edu/~jyoung/
Twitter: JosephKYoung
Office: 247 Ward Circle
Office Hours: 2-5 pm T, 2:30 - 5:30 pm W
Class Location: TBA
Course Time: 11:45 am - 2:25 pm
Skype: mjosephyoung

2 Course Description

This course introduces students to the study of terrorism as a political act. We discuss the difference between state and oppositional terror, but the bulk of the course focuses on terror by non-state actors. The main focus is on theories that can help explain terrorism and these are intended to provide students a foundation for future courses on this topic, including a spring module that explores terrorism and counterterrorism in practice. We will compare different theories that attempt to explain why, how and when the opposition uses terror tactics to pursue their goals. Different research strategies of studying terrorism will be considered throughout with emphasis placed on developing a project related to increasing scholarly understanding of terrorism. We conclude by examining the ways that states counter terror, and the choices and the tradeoffs states face when confronting terrorism. In addition to preparing students for the spring module on terrorism and counterterrorism in practice, this course also provides a basis for other courses focused on the study of violence.

3 Course Objectives

I have four main objectives for this course. First, my goal is to introduce you to important theories and concepts related to the study of terrorism. Second, since many students have limited exposure to important cases of terrorism, we investigate several prominent historical and contemporary cases of oppositional and state terrorism. Third, students will develop the basic skills necessary to produce original research on terrorism. Fourth, this course serves as a basis for further courses on understanding violence in JLS and beyond.

4 Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

-define terrorism and categorize violent events based on an objective definition

-identify theories of violence and apply to why individuals and groups use terrorism

-compare and contrast theories of violence and evaluate which best explain the behavior of groups that use violence
-explain the long history of terrorism
-compare and contrast oppositional terrorism, state terrorism, insurgency, and state sponsored terrorism
-connect theories of violence with ways to counter terrorism
-analyze and apply course material in an original research paper
-apply the course concepts and theories to current policy debates

5 Course Format

The course is structured to consider various theoretical approaches to the study of terrorism. As such, we consult a variety of sources from disciplines such as political science, sociology, psychology, criminology, anthropology, and economics.

I believe strongly that learning occurs in many ways and strive to engage you beyond simply lecturing. Instead, we will engage in a variety of activities including lectures, personal writing exercises, partner and group work, class discussions, video clips, demonstrations, problem-solving activities, simulations, debates, and other critical thinking exercises. I also firmly believe in democracy and will solicit your opinions regarding the course generally, and the success or failure of certain exercises specifically. This course will require a great deal of reading and participation on your part. If you are not prepared each day and do not engage in the discussions, debates, and other activities, you will not be successful.

6 Communication

Email
I will send emails on a regular basis to remind people about upcoming events, due dates, important news, etc. These messages will come to your official AU email unless you send me an alternative email. You are responsible for the contents of these messages.

Facebook
I set up a Facebook page for this course. I will email the exact URL this week. It is a closed group and will be used by myself and everyone in the class to post interesting articles, discuss current issues, set up study groups, or other class-related activities.

Skype
In the event that you are unable to make it to campus for my office hours, I will also be on Skype during this time. If I need to travel during the semester, I may hold my office hours for the week on Skype. I will let you know via email and Facebook if this occurs.
7 Requirements

Required Books


Recommended Books


The required books are available at the bookstore and online. *The 9/11 Commission report* is available for free as a PDF on the Internet. You can find all of the books on Amazon.com or Addall.com at a reduced price.

Many of the articles for the class will be on reserve at the library. You can also find most of the journal articles on JSTOR (www.jstor.org). I will also place readings on blackboard that are not available on JSTOR, and these are noted in the syllabus (*). I expect you to read a newspaper everyday. You can choose any paper you would like, but I would recommend the New York Times (www.nytimes.com) or Christian Science Monitor (www.csmonitor.com) as they generally have the best coverage of international events.

Assessment

1. **Attendance and Participation (25%)**—attendance and participation are required. I may call on you randomly so you need to be prepared each day. Each day you should bring a typed question for each reading (i.e. if we have four readings, you should bring four questions). These questions should bring up important inconsistencies in the readings, relate to previous readings, or extend the discussion in an important way. Each day I expect that you will ask and answer at least one question. Since we meet only once a week, I expect that you will not miss any classes. Missing class may lead to automatic failure in the course.
2. **Tests (50%)**—The tests are a mixture of multiple choice and essay. There is one midterm exam and a final. The final is cumulative.

3. **Research Paper (25%)**—The first goal of this paper is to produce an original argument explaining the use of terror by a particular group and how to combat it given the theoretical justification for the group’s goals. The second goal is to improve your written communication skills and thus to produce a paper of the highest quality. In the past, students have used this paper as a writing sample for graduate or professional schools. We will participate in a series of writing workshops that will guide you through the writing process. Each workshop requires that you bring a portion of your paper as we build towards producing a final product.

The paper must be between 10 and 12 pages (not including a title or works cited page). The format must be Times New Roman font, 12 pt, 1 inch margins. A rough draft is due on Wed., Nov. 7th. I will return the drafts with comments before Thanksgiving break. The rough drafts are worth 20% of the final grade, however; if you do not turn in a rough draft, I will not grade your final draft. I grade the papers using a strict rubric (available on blackboard). Consult these documents before writing the paper.

### Assessment Scale

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
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<td>93-96</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>60-62</td>
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<td>60 or below</td>
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### 8 Course Policies

#### Make-up Exams and Assignments

Unexcused absences from exams will result in a 0 for the assignment. I also DO NOT accept any late papers. The paper is due in hard copy on the date assigned by the time the class begins or the student earns a 0 for the assignment.

To qualify for a make-up test a student must notify me of the absence in advance (e-mail or call me) and provide documentation.

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class on the date indicated in the schedule. I will not accept e-mail copies or papers placed under my door. Please make hard copies of your papers as you work on them. Do not be afraid to print out multiple rough drafts. I do not accept excuses about dogs, computers, or traffic. Be responsible.

#### Academic Honor Code

Students are expected to uphold the highest academic integrity standards published in American University’s Academic Integrity Code (Section .02, Article A) ([http://www1.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.htm#1](http://www1.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.htm#1)). Plagiarism is the most serious academic offense. Violations of this code can lead to failure of the course and a hearing with the university’s judicial board to suspend you from the university.
Classroom Courtesy

Classroom courtesy is an essential component of creating an effective learning environment. All students have the right to learn without unnecessary distractions. These distractions include: cell phones, talking during lectures (unless recognized by the instructor), reading newspapers, falling asleep, etc. If you need a cell phone for emergency purposes, leave it on vibrate. **Laptop use is also restricted.** Unless you have a documented learning need, do not bring a laptop to class. Entering and leaving are also significant sources of distraction. It is your responsibility to be on time and to stay for the entire period. In circumstances where you need to leave early, tell the instructor beforehand. Repeated disruptions of class will lead to a reduction in your final grade.

Most importantly, class discussions of the issues in political science and criminology, especially as they relate to terrorism, can lead to strong feelings and heated debate. Because this is a college classroom, all discussion must be respectful and scholarly.

Scholarly Comments

- are respectful of diverse opinions and open to follow up questions and/or disagreement
- are related to class and/or the course material
- focus on advancing the discussion about issues related to the course and/or course material rather than personal beliefs, and
- are delivered in normal tones and a non-aggressive manner.

Unacceptable Comments

- are personal in nature. This includes attacks on a persons appearance, demeanor, or political beliefs.
- include interrupting the instructor or other students. Raise your hand and wait to be recognized.
- often use the discussion to argue for political positions and/or beliefs. If political discussions arise, they must be discussed in a scholarly way (see above).
- may include using raised tones, yelling, engaging in arguments with other students and being threatening in any manner.
- include ignoring the instructors authority to maintain the integrity of the classroom environment.

Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice. These changes may come via e-mail. Make sure to check your university supplied email regularly. You are accountable for all such communications.
9 Tentative Course Schedule

What is Terrorism?

Aug. 29—Introductions, Syllabus, Procedures

Defining Terrorism

- Hoffman, Bruce. Chapter 1.

Sept. 5—What Terrorism is Not and a Brief History of Terrorism

- Bruce Hoffman. Chapter 2—“Origins of Contemporary Terrorism.”

Different Approaches to Understanding Terrorism

Sept. 12—The Rationalist Approach to Understanding Terror

- Enders and Sandler. (skim pp. 1-8) pp. 9-14, 52-83

Sept. 19—Psychology and Understanding Terror


**Sept. 26–Sociological Approach to Understanding Terror**


- Writing Workshop #1 (Bring a Thesis Statement)

**Suicide Terrorism and Writing Workshops**

**Oct. 3–Suicide Terrorism**


- Bruce Hoffman. Chapter 5—“Suicide Terrorism” (skim).


- Writing Workshop #2

- Bring 3 copies of 1-2 pages of type-written work to class.

- Review for exam

**Oct. 10–EXAM #1**

**Oct. 17–FILM–“The Cult of the Suicide Bomber” AND Simulation**

**State Terror and State Sponsored Terror**

**Oct. 24–State Terrorism**

Bruce Falconer, “Murder by the State,” *Atlantic Monthly*.


State Sponsored Terrorism


Sick, Gary. “Iran: Confronting Terrorism,” [http://www.twq.com/03autumn/docs/03autumn_sick.pdf](http://www.twq.com/03autumn/docs/03autumn_sick.pdf)

Zakaria, Fareed. “Terrorists Don’t Need States.”

**Terrorism, Insurgency, and International Terrorism**

Oct. 31—Insurgency and Terrorism


Che Guevara, General Principles of Guerrilla Warfare. [http://www3.uakron.edu/worldciv/pascher/che.html](http://www3.uakron.edu/worldciv/pascher/che.html)

Mao Zedong, What is Guerrilla Warfare?

Nov. 7—Insurgent/Terror Groups Continued

Bruce Hoffman. Chapter 3—“Internationalization of Terror”

James Poland. *Understanding Terrorism*. Chapter 5. pp. 113-140.


Nov. 14—Al-Qaeda and Transnational Terror
-*Ross, Jeffrey Ian. “9/11, Al-Qaeda, and Osama Bin Laden” pp.165-178
-Council on Foreign Relations website, Who and What is Al Qaeda?
    [http://www.cfr.org/publication/9126/]
-*Rohan Gunaratna, Inside Al Qaeda, Chapters 2, p.54-94
-*Peter Bergen, Holy War Inc., Chapter 10, p.195-220

THANKSGIVING BREAK–Nov. 21, NO CLASS

Counterterrorism

Nov. 28–Counterterror and Violent Networks
-*Sageman, Marc. Understanding Terror Networks, Chapter 5.
-Peruse this website: [http://www.orgnet.com/hijackers.html]
    [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/counterterrorism_strategy.pdf]
-*Forst, Brian. Terrorism, Crime, and Public Policy, Chapter 11 “Preventing Terrorism: Short Term Approaches,” 339-373.

Dec. 5–Human Rights and Counterterror
-John Yoo–Commentary on the so-called “torture memos.”
    [http://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2005/01/05_johnyoo.shtml]
-*Economist–Is Torture Ever Justified?
-Final Exam Review

Dec. 7–Final Paper Due

Dec. 17–FINAL EXAM–Dec. 17, 11:45 am - 2:15 pm