

SISU 419-001: Voices of Terror
American University
Fall 2017
Mondays, 11:20 am - 2:10 pm
SVB 201

Instructor Information

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This course investigates the causes and consequences of terrorism by reading, discussing, hearing, and watching first person accounts of participation in terrorism. We will examine prominent contemporary and historical terror campaigns through the lens of the people involved. Most courses on terrorism only examine secondary sources or information that is filtered by another people/sources, this course is unique as it asks students to evaluate terrorist actions and goals through the participant's own words. The course will incorporate insights from psychology, political science, economics, history, and other disciplines to help us understand behavior.

We will begin by outlining various ways scholars explain the question of why activists target civilians when attempting to coerce a state. Rationalists (political scientists and economists primarily), psychologists, and sociologists (and criminologists) have the most prominent explanations for this question. We will compare and contrast these arguments, and then apply them to a host of groups and individuals who use terrorism. Using skills and knowledge learned in the course, students will perform original research explaining why groups use terrorism.

I believe strongly that learning occurs in many ways and strive to engage students 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 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.

Course Objectives

- To understand and apply theories of terrorism to the actors based upon their stated objectives;
- To distinguish between primary and secondary sources and to evaluate primary source materials;
- To develop an understanding of the individuals and movements that use terror as a tactic; and
- To create an original research project that analyses primary source material and identifies the reasons for a group/individual that uses terrorism.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to investigate, critique, and evaluate terrorism (Assessment: exam, research paper, weekly discussions)
- Students will be able to collaborate and identify multiple perspectives on theories of terrorism and those who engage in terrorist activities (Assessment: group work, exam, research paper)
- Students will present research in a professional setting (Assessment: presentation)

Evaluation

The grading scale for this class is as follows:

A	= 94+	C	= 74-76
A-	= 90-93	C-	= 70-73
B+	= 87-89	D+	= 67-69
B	= 84-86	D	= 64-66
B-	= 80-83	D-	= 60-63
C+	= 77-79	F	= 59 & below

Participation (20%): You should think about class as a time for exploration; for figuring out what the readings mean; for critically evaluating arguments made by various authors, by other students, and by me; for connecting the assigned materials to other things you think are relevant and important. A number of things follow from this:

Attendance is required. There is no way to recreate this process of discussion by yourself. It is not enough to understand the readings or to get notes from a fellow student. Since we meet once a week, I expect you will be at every class. Without proper documentation, an absence will count against the participation grade. Students who miss more than three classes for any reason may not be able to pass the course.

Careful reading is essential. Students must carefully read all assignments, noting questions or points that they want to raise in class. You will receive a discussion grade for every class. This grade will be based on your contributions to class discussion, any oral presentations, group projects, or short written assignments that contribute to class discussion. Quizzes, both pre-announced and not, could occur and would be factored into this discussion grade.

Midterm Exam (30%): On October 16th, you will have an in-class mid-term exam covering the theoretical foundations learned in the first half of the semester. This test will be open-note and

you may bring a laptop on exam days. All questions will be essay style that require analysis and synthesis of course material.

Research Paper (40%): Select a group or individual who uses terrorism and explain their actions by applying theories for why people use such methods. Please use Times New Roman 12 point font, 1-inch margins. You can use MLA, Chicago, or APA citation style; I only ask that you be consistent throughout the paper. I grade everything using a rubric. I will place a rubric on blackboard as well as distribute one in class that clearly discusses how the paper will be assessed. To ensure that you are making timely progress on your paper, we will have the following milestones:

- **Topic and Research Question Session:** In the 3rd week, we will devote time in class to collectively brainstorming your research project. We will focus on the group you choose and the research question you ask. To facilitate this process, please circulate a document with 1 or more research questions and topic. A few paragraphs are fine.
- **Progress Report:** By the 8th week of class, you will circulate a rough draft of the paper to up to this point and a one-page executive summary on your research paper. The summary will describe where you are headed and what you are struggling with. We will devote time in class to discussing your progress and any challenges you are facing. These two smaller pieces are worth 10% of your final paper grade.
- **Final Draft:** You will turn in the final paper on the final exam day, Monday Dec. 11th. I will not accept late papers for any reason.

Research Presentation (10%): During the last few weeks of class, each student will present their research, explain the use of terror, and discuss some of what the individual/group says and how this is communicated. The student will also field questions from the instructor and other class members.

Academic Integrity Code

Students should be aware of the contents of the AU Academic Integrity Code. I regard violations of this code seriously and will immediately refer the matter to the Dean, should such violations occur. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the code either in general or as they apply to particular requirements of this course.

Additional Support Services

If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please do not hesitate to contact me. In addition to the resources of the school, a wide variety of services are available to help you in your efforts to meet the requirements of the course.

- **Academic Support Center** (x3360, MGC 243): offers study skills workshops, individual instruction, tutor referrals, and services for students with learning disabilities.
- **Writing support** is available in the ASC Writing Lab or in the Writing Center, Battelle 228.

- **Counseling Center** (x3500, MGC 214): offers counseling and consultations regarding personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus mental health resources.

- **Disability Support Services** (x3315, MGC 206): offers technical and practical support and assistance with accommodations for students with physical, medical or psychological disabilities.

If you qualify for accommodations due to a disability, please notify me in a timely manner with a letter from the ASC or DSS so that we can make arrangements to address your needs.

Emergency Preparedness

In the event of an emergency that leads to university closure, we will use an alternative method to hold class. I will communicate class-specific information via AU e-mail and Blackboard. You are responsible for checking AU e-mail regularly. In the event of a declared emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site (www.prepared.american.edu) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information.

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 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 person's appearance, demeanor, or political beliefs.

- include interrupting the instructor or other students and not allowing people to speak.
- 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 instructor's 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.

Course Schedule

Section I: Introductory Lessons

August 28: Introductions, course overview, student expectations, etc.

September 4: Labor Day – No class, no office hours

September 11: Definitions of terrorism – What is it, how should we define it, what do definitions of terrorism reflect? What is terrorism not?

Readings:

- Hoffman, Bruce. Chapter 1 in *Inside Terrorism*.
- Ross, Jeffrey. "Introducing Oppositional Terrorism." Chapter 1 in *Political Terrorism: An Interdisciplinary Approach*. pp. 1-27.
- Weinberg, Leonard, Ami Pedahzur, & Sivan Hirsh-Hoefler. 2004. "The Challenges of Conceptualizing Terrorism." *Terrorism & Political Violence* 16(4): 777-94.
- Young, Joseph. [Menu Item or a Specialty?](https://mobilizingideas.wordpress.com/2012/04/02/menu-item-or-a-specialty/), *Mobilizing Ideas*, <https://mobilizingideas.wordpress.com/2012/04/02/menu-item-or-a-specialty/>
- Merari, Ariel. "Terrorism as a Strategy of Insurgency." *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol.5, No. 4 (Winter 1993), pp.213- 251

Section II: Reasons for Terrorism

September 18: A Rationalist Approach to Understanding Terrorism

Readings:

- Lake, David. 2002. "Rational Extremism: Understanding Terrorism in the Twenty First Century." *International Organization* 56 (1): 15-29.
- Crenshaw, Martha. 1998. "The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorist Behavior as a Product of Strategic Choice," in *Terrorism in Perspective*. Sue Mahan and Pamaka L. Grisit (eds). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp 24-34.

- Crenshaw, Martha. 1981. "The Causes of Terrorism." *Comparative Politics*. 13(4) 379-399.
- Kydd, Andrew and Barbara Walter. 2006. "The Strategies of Terrorism." *International Security* 31(1): 49-80.
- Pape, Robert. 2003. "The Strategic logic of suicide terrorism." *American Political Science Review* 97(3): 343-361

SIMULATION

September 25: Psychological Approaches to Understanding Terrorism

Readings:

- Victoroff, Jeff. 2005. "The Mind of a Terrorist: A Review and Critique of Psychological Approaches." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49(1): 3-42.
- Crenshaw, Martha. 2000. "The Psychology of Terrorism: An Agenda for the Twenty First Century." *Political Psychology* 20(2): 405-420.
- Goldman, Emma. "The Psychology of Violence" in *Voices of Terror*, pp. 181-85.
- Borum, Randy. 2011. "Radicalization into Violent Extremism: A Review of Social Science Theories" 4(4).
- Borum, Randy. 2004. "Understanding the Terrorist Mind-Set". p. 22-24.
- "The making of an American Terrorist: Dylan Roof." <https://www.gq.com/story/dylann-roof-making-of-an-american-terrorist>
- Dylan Roof's Manifesto <http://gawker.com/here-is-what-appears-to-be-dylann-roofs-racist-manifest-1712767241>

Film: Soldiers in the Army of God

October 2: Sociological Approaches to Understanding Terrorism

Readings:

- Juergensmeyer, Mark. 2000. *Terror in the Mind of God*. California Press. Chapters 1, 6, and 11.
- Boyns, David and James David Ballard. 2004. "Developing a Sociological Theory for the Empirical Understanding of Terrorism." *The American Sociologist* 35(2): 5-25.
- Elliott, Andrea. 2010. "The Jihadist Next Door." *The New York Times*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/31/magazine/31Jihadist-t.html?pagewanted=all&mcubz=1>
- Agnew, Robert. (2010). "A general strain theory of terrorism." *Theoretical Criminology*, 14(2), 131-153.
- Goodwin, Jeff. 2006. "A theory of categorical terrorism." *Social Forces* 84(4): 2027-2046.
- "Jahar's World". <http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/news/jahars-world-20130717>
- "Lackawanna Six". <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/12/nyregion/where-trail-led-between-evidence-suspicion-unclear-danger-inside-lackawanna.html?mcubz=1>

Topic and Research Questions Workshop

October 9: Justifications for Violence/Guerrilla Warfare

- Tse Tung, Mao. “The three stages of the protracted war” in *Voices of Terror*. p.350-356
- Piao, Lin. “Encircling the Cities of the World” in *Voices of Terror*. p.357-359
- Guevara, Che. “Guerrilla Warfare—A Method” in *Voices of Terror*. p.360-364
- Debray, Regis. “The Guerrilla as the Political Vanguard” in *Voices of Terror*. p.365-369
- Marighella, Carlos. “From the mini-manual” in *Voices of Terror*. p.370-376
- Holbrook, Donald. “Using the Qu’ran to Justify Terrorist Violence: Analysing Selective Application of the Qur’an in English-Language Militant Islamist Discourse.”
<http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/104/html>
Perspectives on Terrorism (2010) vol. 4 no. 3.

Suggested Films:

Motorcycle Diaries—Dramatic depiction of Che Guevara’s early life

Battle of Algiers—Classic film about terrorism/insurgency. Actors were actual militants. The best film on the topic. Period.

Four Days in September—Brazilian film about the kidnapping of the US Ambassador in the 1970s

Baader Meinhof Complex—Dramatic depiction of the famous German terrorist organization

Review for Exam

October 16: Mid-term

Section III: Voices of Terror (Ideology, Tactics, and Violence)

October 23: Jihadi violence

Readings:

- Qutb, Sayed, “Jihad in the Cause of God”, p.394-397.
- Bin Laden, Osama. “Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders”, p.410-412.
- Azzam, Sheikh Abdullah Yusuf Azzam. “A Short Biography”, p. 420-425.
- Zawahiri, Ayman Al. “Knights Under the Prophet’s Banner”, p.426-433.
- Hamas, “The Covenant” p.434-438.
- Abu Bakr Naji, *The Management of Barbarism*, trans. William McCants (Cambridge, MA: John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies, 2006), Sections 1-6.
<https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2010/08/abu-bakr-naji-the-management-of-savagery-the-most-critical-stage-through-which-the-umma-will-pass.pdf>
- Architect of Global Jihad, Intro and Chapter 1.

Suggested Films:

To Die in Jerusalem—intimate portrait of two teenagers and two families destroyed by a suicide bombing in Jerusalem

Meeting Resistance—a unique inside account of the Iraqi insurgency

The Siege—movie from the 1990s that predicted a 9/11 style attack in the US

Son of Al-Qaeda—Frontline interview with a former child of a high-ranking Al-Qaeda member

October 30: Suicide bombers

Readings:

- Pape, Robert (2003) “The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism,” *American Political Science Review* 97: 3 (August), 1-19. (*peruse* again)
- Rubin, Alissa J. (2009). “How Baida Wanted to Die” New York Times. Section MM, p. 38. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/16/magazine/16suicide-t.html?_r=0
- Israeli, Raphael. 2002. “A Manual of Islamic Fundamentalist Terrorism,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 14(4): 23-40.
- Hassan, N. (2001). An arsenal of believers: Talking to the “human bombs.” *The New Yorker*, Nov 19. http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2001/11/19/011119fa_FACT1
- Bloom, Mia (2007) “Female suicide bombers: a global trend *Daedalus* 136(1): 94-102.
- Ghosh, Aparisim. 2005. “Professor of Death” *Time* 166(17): 44-48.

Film: Cult of the Suicide Bomber

Suggested Films:

Cult of the Suicide Bomber II—More Robert Baer interviews with participants in the process

Paradise Now—Two childhood friends are recruited for a suicide mission in Tel Aviv

Inside the Mind of a Suicide Bomber—History channel documentary on suicide bombers

November 6: The Extreme Right

Readings:

- Beam, Louis. *Leaderless Resistance*. 1983. <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~satran/Ford%2006/Wk%202-1%20Terrorism%20Networks%20leaderless-resistance.pdf>
- Simi, Pete. *American Swastika*. Chapters 1- 4
- Lincoln Rockwell, George. *White Power* Chapter 1. p.1-31.
- Watch Rockwell <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rli3a3OMJEU>
- https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/retropolis/wp/2017/08/21/the-shadow-of-an-assassinated-american-nazi-commander-hangs-over-charlottesville/?utm_term=.2f96a2cd6fe9
- Cotter, John. 1999. “Sounds of Hate: White Power Rock and Roll and the Neo-Nazi Skinhead Culture.” *Terrorism & Political Violence* 11(2): 111-140.
- *Peruse* Storm Front <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/t538924/>
- Three Percenters and Oathkeepers. <http://www.politicalresearch.org/2016/01/05/profiles-on-the-right-three-percenters/#sthash.dV3z6okd.dpbs>
- <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/backgrounders/oath-keepers-and-three-ers-part-of-growing-anti-government?ncid=edlinkushpimg00000313>
- Pitcavage, Mark. 2001. “Camouflage and Conspiracy: The Militia Movement from Ruby Ridge to Y2K.” *The American Behavioral Scientist* 44(6): 957-981.

Suggested Films:

American History X--story of brothers in California that go in and out of the skin head life
KKK: A Secret History—History Channel Documentary on the longest running US terrorist organization.

Arlington Road—A story of a terrorism professor who becomes neighbors with a domestic extremist

November 13: The Far Left -

Readings:

- Dept. of Energy report on Left-Wing Extremism
<http://www.osti.gov/scitech/servlets/purl/780410>
- Leader, Stefan H., and Peter Probst. 2003. "The earth liberation front and environmental terrorism." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15(4): 37-58.
- Charan, Bhagwat. "The Philosophy of the Bomb" in *Voices of Terror*, 140-43.
- "Political Statement of the Weather Underground" in *Voices of Terror*, 163-68.
- Austin, Curtis J. *Up against the Wall: Violence in the making and unmaking of the Black Panther Party*. Introduction.
- Black Nationalists today <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2017/return-violent-black-nationalist>
- Antifa <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/aug/22/antifa-anti-fascist-handbook-trump-us-politics-far-right-charlottesville>

Suggested Films:

Behind the mask—a film about the Animal Liberation Front

Guerrilla: The Taking of Patty Hearst—Inside account of the SLA who famously kidnapped a young heiress who later joined them in their struggle against the US government

Your Mommy Kills Animals—Portrait of violent animal rights activists

Weather Underground—interviews with the most notorious militant leftists in the US in the 1970s

If a Tree Falls—Oscar winning documentary about the Earth Liberation Front

November 20: Lone Wolves?

Readings:

- The Unabomber Manifesto (Originally published in the NY Times)
<http://www.provokateur.com/webres/Unabomber%20Manifesto%20by%20Theodore%20Kaczynski.pdf>
- Stack, Andrew Joseph. "Well Mr. Big Brother IRS man...take my pound of Flesh..."
<http://www.thesmokinggun.com/archive/years/2010/0218102stack1.html>
- Eric Rudolph's Written Statement about why he bombed abortion clinics
<http://www.armyofgod.com/EricRudolphStatement.html>
- Phillips, Brian. 2017. "Deadlier in the U.S.? On Lone Wolves, Terrorist Groups, and Attack Lethality Terrorism and Political Violence 29(3): 533-549.
- Army of God <https://www.armyofgod.com>
 - Paul Hill site <https://www.armyofgod.com/Paulhillindex.html>
- Faizal Shazad-- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/sep/19/times-square-bomber>

- The Meaning of Timothy McVeigh.
<https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2001/09/mcveigh200109>

November 27: Foreign Fighters

Reading:

- Malet, David. 2010. "Why Foreign Fighters? Historical Perspectives and Solutions." *Orbis* 54(1): 97-114.
- Hegghammer, Thomas. 2013. "Should I stay or should I go? Explaining variation in Western jihadists' choice between domestic and foreign fighting." *American Political Science Review* 107(1): 1-15.
- Locks, Tim. 2016. *Fighting ISIS* Sidgewick and Jackson. Intro and Chapter 1.
- Fritz, Jason and Joseph Young. 2017. "Transnational Volunteers: American Foreign Fighters Combatting the Islamic State." *Terrorism and Political Violence* forthcoming.
- Berger, JM. 2011. Jihad Joe. *Potomac Books*.
- Berger, JM. 2013. "Omar and Me: My Strange, frustrating relationship with an American Terrorist." *Foreign Policy*. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/09/17/omar-and-me/>

December 4: In-Class Presentations

December 11th – Field Trip to Newseum, Research papers due