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# Domestic Terrorism & Political Violence

Spring 2013

T 5:30-8:00, Ward 3

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## Instructor Information

Name : Dr. Joseph K. Young, Assistant Professor  
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## Course Description

This course investigates the causes and consequences of domestic terrorism and political violence. We will be reading, discussing, hearing, and watching first person accounts of participation in acts of violence within the United States or directed abroad by US citizens. We will examine prominent contemporary and historical terrorist acts and campaigns, hate crimes and other violent political movements through a scholarly perspective as well as the lens of the people directly involved. The course will incorporate insights from psychology, political science, economics, history, and other disciplines to attempt to understand these group's and individual's motivations, goals, and propensity towards violence. I teach another course related to general theories of violence and terrorism that is helpful in preparation for this course but is not required.

Learning occurs in many ways, and I strive to engage students beyond simply lecturing. We will engage in a variety of activities including direct instruction, 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 thought and participation.

We will begin by outlining various ways scholars explain the question of why activists use violence in pursuance of their political goals. We will compare and contrast these arguments, and then apply them to a host of groups and individuals across the ideological spectrum. Towards the end of the course, we will discuss law enforcement and national security responses to political violence. Finally, we have a range of speakers who will visit our class and provide important insight on specific groups, movements, and the government's response.

## Student Learning Outcomes

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

1. Understand and apply theories of violence to actors and their actions based upon their stated objectives
2. Explain the long history of political violence in the United States
3. Develop an understanding about the individuals and movements that use political violence and terrorism in the United States
4. Read and analyze diverse kinds of scholarly work
5. Create an original research project that analyzes primary source material and identifies the reasons for a domestic group using violence

## Assessment

1. Attendance and Participation (20%)—Attendance and participation in all class activities is required. Reading assigned course material is the critical element in being prepared. You must come to class on time and remain for the entire period.
2. Documentary/Films Projects (10%)—Choose two documentaries or films from the list at the end of the syllabus or a pre-approved film not on the list. Write a 3–5 page paper for *each* film that: 1. Summarizes the film (quickly) 2. Applies one of the theories to explain violence/terrorism to the actions of the individuals in the film 3. Cites direct evidence from the film to support your claims. I will provide a detailed rubric that explains how you will be assessed. The first paper is due two weeks before the midterm exam, and the second is due two weeks prior to the final.
3. Midterm Exam and Final Exam (40%)—The Midterm and Final exam will ask you to answer questions about course material, to write a series of essays related to readings and discussion from the course, and to evaluate primary source documents.
4. Final Paper (30%)—Select a group or individual who uses political violence or terrorism and explain their actions by applying theories for why people resort to violence. Cite

evidence from the group or individuals own writings (8-10 pages for undergrads/15-20 pages for grads). I will provide a detailed rubric that explains how you will be assessed. You will bring a first draft of your paper midway through the course to a writing workshop. At this workshop, you will receive feedback on your paper from the instructor and your peers. This feedback will help you revise the paper for final submission.

## **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 Dean Meg Weekes, 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 department, 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.

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## Schedule of Topics and Reading Materials

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### What is Terrorism and Political Violence?

January 15

- George, John & Laird Wilcox. 1996. *American Extremism* Chapter 2
  - Gurr, Ted Robert. 1970. *Why Men Rebel* Princeton University Press. Chapter 1. p. 3-21.
  - Hoffman, Bruce. 2006. *Inside Terrorism* Columbia University Press, Chapter 1. "Defining Terrorism."
  - Sanchez-Cuenca, Ignacio and Luis de la Calle. 2009. "Domestic Terrorism: The Hidden Side of Political Violence." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12: 31-49.
  - Weinberg, Leonard, Ami Pedahzur, & Sivan Hirsh-Hoefer. 2004. "The Challenges of Conceptualizing Terrorism." *Terrorism & Political Violence* 16(4): 777-794.
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### Approaches to Understanding Political Violence

January 22

*Rationalist*

- David Lake. 2002. "Rational Extremism: Understanding Terrorism in the Twenty First Century." *International Organization* 56 (1): 15-29.
- Crenshaw, Martha. 2002. "The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorist Behavior as a Product of Strategic Choice," in R.D. Howard & R.L. Sawyer (eds.) *Terrorism and Counterterrorism*, New York: McGraw Hill, pp. 54-66.
- Caplan, Bryan. 2006. "Terrorism: The Relevance of the Rational Choice Model," *Public Choice* 128: 91-107.

*Psychological*

- Jeff Victoroff. 2005. "The Mind of a Terrorist: A Review and Critique of Psychological Approaches." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49(1): 3-42.

- Martha Crenshaw. 2000. "The Psychology of Terrorism: An Agenda for the Twenty First Century." *Political Psychology* 20(2): 405-420.
- Borum, Randy. 2006. "Understanding the Terrorist Mind-Set." pp. 22-25.

#### *Sociological*

- Mark Juergensmeyer. 2001. *Terror in the Mind of God*. University of California Press. Chapters 1 and 11.
  - Jeff Goodwin. 2006. "A Theory of Categorical Terrorism," *Social Forces* 84(4): 2027-2046.
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### **Understanding and Doing Research on Political Violence**

January 29

#### *Fieldwork/Qualitative Research*

- Horgan, John. "Interviewing the Terrorists: Reflections on Fieldwork and Implications for Psychological Research." *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 4(3): 195-211.
- Post, Jerrold M. 2009. "Talking with Terrorists." *Democracy and Security* 5(2): 145-148.

#### *Formal Theory*

- Bueno de Mesquita, Ethan. 2005. "The Quality of Terror." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(3): 515-530.
- Sandler, Todd and Daniel Arce. 2003. "Terrorism and Game Theory." *Simulation & Gaming* 34(3): 319-337.

#### *Quantitative Research*

- Freilich, Joshua D. and William Alex Pridemore. 2007. "Politics, Culture, and Political Crime: Covariates of Abortion Clinic Attacks in the United States." *Journal of Criminal Justice* 35: 323-336.
- Young, Joseph and Michael G. Findley. 2011. "Problems and Pitfalls of Terrorism Research." *International Studies Review* 13(3): 411-431.

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## A History of Political Violence in America

February 5

- George, John & Laird Wilcox. 1996. *American Extremism* Chapter 1, p. 15-53.
- Hewitt, Christopher. 2000. "Patterns of American Terrorism 1955–1998: An Historical Perspective on Terrorism Related Fatalities." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 12(1): 1-14.
- McCann, J, *Terrorism on American Soil* Sentient Publications. Pgs., 18-32, 62-69, 145-150, 282-287.
- (skim) Nudelman, Franny. 2001. "The Blood of Millions: John Brown's Body, Public Violence, and Political Community." *American Literary History* 13(4): 639-670.
- Rapaport, David C. "Before the Bombs There Were Mobs: American Experiences With Terror."

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## The Extreme Right—Overview, The Klan, and Skinheads

February 12

- Berger, JM. "The Awakening." *Foreign Policy*  
[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/11/12/the\\_awakening](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/11/12/the_awakening)
- Cotter, John. 1999. "Sounds of Hate: White Power Rock and Roll and the Neo-Nazi Skinhead Culture." *Terrorism & Political Violence*
- Dobratz, Betty and Stephanie L. Shanks-Meile. 1997. *The White Separatist Movement in the United States* Johns Hopkins University Press. Chapter 2, p. 34-88.
- Gruenewald, Jeff. 2011. "A Comparative Examination of Homicides Perpetrated by Far-Right Extremists." *Homicide Studies* 15(2): 177–203.
- Map of Hate Groups <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/hate-map>
- National Socialist Movement <http://www.nsm88.org>
- Watch: Christopher Hitchens vs. Tom Metzger. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p7RX1CXiI8>
- Tom Metzger. <http://www.resist.com>
- Peruse Storm Front <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/t538924/>

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## **The Extreme Right—Sovereign Citizens, Patriots, the Militia Movement and Christian Identity**

February 19

- *Skim The Turner Diaries* <http://www.solargeneral.com/library/turner-diaries.pdf>
- Watch: *The McVeigh Tapes*, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VL\\_IorASuPo&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VL_IorASuPo&feature=related)
- Anti-Defamation League Report. 2010. *The Lawless Ones: The Resurgence of the Sovereign Citizen Movement*
- Pitcavage, Mark. 2001. "Camouflage and Conspiracy: The Militia Movement from Ruby Ridge to Y2K." *The American Behavioral Scientist* 44(6): 957-981.
- Sullivan, Francis. 1999. "The 'Usurping Octopus of Jurisdictional/Authority': The Legal Theories of the Sovereign Citizen Movement." *Wisconsin Law Review* 785-823.
- Telfair Sharpe, Tanya. 2000. "The Identity Christian Movement: Ideology of Domestic Terrorism." *Journal of Black Studies* 30(4): 604-623.
- Kingdom Identity Ministries <http://www.kingidentity.com> (Read the statement of doctrine)
- *Peruse Sovereign Citizen How-tos*: <http://www.sovereign-citizenship.net/home.html> and <http://www.discharge-debt.com/id73.htm>

## **WRITING WORKSHOP**

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## **The Extreme Right—Leaderless Resistance, Anti-Abortionists, and the Army of God**

February 26

- Army of God, <http://www.armyofgod.com/index.html> (Warning: disturbing images) Pay attention to: "Thoughts on Tiller, Justifiable Homicide, and Persisting Abortionists" Rev. Michael Bray (A defense of the Army of God's use of violence against abortion doctors).
- Beam, Louis. 1992. *Leaderless Resistance*. <http://www.louisbeam.com/leaderless.htm>
- Jefferis, Jennifer. 2011. *Armed for Life: The Army of God and Anti-Abortion Terror in the United States*, Intro, Chapters 2 and 3.

- Juergensmeyer, Mark. 2001. *Terror in the Mind of God*. University of California Press. Chapters 2.
  - Kaplan, Jeffrey. 1997. "Leaderless Resistance." *Terrorism & Political Violence* 9(3): 80-95.
  - A tribute to Joseph Tommasi, [http://www.angelfire.com/rebellion2/aiwsf/tommasi\\_tribute.html](http://www.angelfire.com/rebellion2/aiwsf/tommasi_tribute.html)
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## **MIDTERM EXAM**

March 5

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MARCH 10-MARCH 17 Spring Break No Classes

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## **The Far Left—Overview, Marxists**

March 19

- Berger, Dan. 2006. *Outlaws of America: The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity*. AK Press. p. 1-37.
  - Prairie Fire: The Politics of Revolutionary Anti-Imperialism, Political Statement of the Weather Underground
  - *Weather Underground*—interviews with the most notorious militant leftists in the US in the 1970s
  - George, John & Laird Wilcox. 1996. *American Extremism* Chapters 4-7, p. 97-146.
  - SLA Manifesto: <http://feastofhateandfear.com/archives/sla.html>
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## **The Far Left—Environmental and Animal Activists**

March 26

- Earth Liberation Front, <http://earth-liberation-front.org/>
- Environmental Life Force, <http://www.originalelf.com/>
- Watch: *If a Tree Falls*—an Oscar nominated documentary about violent environmental activists called the Earth Liberation Front



- Animal Liberation Front <http://www.animalliberationfrontline.com/>
  - Ackerman, Gary. 2003. "Beyond Arson? A Threat Assessment of the Earth Liberation Front." *Terrorism & Political Violence* 15(4) 143-170.
  - Monaghan, Rachel. 1997. "Animal Rights and Violent Protest." *Terrorism & Political Violence* 9(4): 106-116.
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## Domestic Islamic Extremists

April 2

- Berger, JM. 2011. *Jihad Joe: Americans Who Go to War in the Name of Islam* Dulles, VA: Potomac Books.
  - *Peruse* <http://intelwire.com>
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## Hate Crimes/Gangs and Domestic Islamic Extremists continued

April 9

- Gartenstein-Ross, Daveed. 2007. *My Year Inside Radical Islam* Penguin.
- Ball, Richard and David Curry. 1995. "The Logic of Definition in Criminology: Purposes and Methods for Defining Gangs." *Criminology* 33(2): 225-245.
- Blazak, Randy. 2001. "White Boys to Terrorist Men: Target Recruitment of Nazi Skin-heads." *American Behavioral Scientist* 44(6): 982-1000.
- Defining Gangs, NIJ. <http://www.nij.gov/topics/crime/gangs-organized/gangs/definitions.htm>
- Gertenfeld, Phyllis. 2011. *Hate Crimes: Causes, Controls, and Controversies* Sage. Chapters 4 + 5.
- Esbensen, Finn-Aage, Winfree, L. Thomas, and He, Ni. 2001. "Youth Gangs and Definitional Issues: When is a Gang a Gang, and Why Does it Matter?" *Crime & Delinquency* 47(1): 105-130.
- Sullivan, John P. 2006. "Maras Morphing: Revisiting Third Generation Gangs." *Global Crime* 7:3-4, 487-504.
- Vigil, James Diego. 2003. "Urban Violence and Street Gangs." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 32: 225-242.

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## Conspiracy Theories and Lone Wolves

April 16

- Barkun, Michael. 1990. "Racist Apocalypse: Millennialism on the Far Right." *American Studies* 31(2): 121-140.
- *Peruse* Domsday Preppers. <http://thesmartpreppers.com>
- Berge, JM. "Newtown and the Domsday Preppers." *Foreign Policy*  
[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/12/17/newtown\\_and\\_the\\_domsday\\_preppers](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/12/17/newtown_and_the_domsday_preppers)
- *Peruse* Protocols of the Elders of Zion <http://www.biblebelievers.org.au/przion1.htm>
- Deconstructing the Protocols <http://www.usmmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007058>
- Zimmer, Ben. "How to Talk Like a Domsday Prepper." *Boston Globe*  
<http://bostonglobe.com/ideas/2012/12/30/how-talk-like-domsday-prepper/n5P4CeiU4Hj7QBO9k3>
- Watch: Domsday Preppers  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CuUUX-AWu7g>
- Kaczynski, Theodore. *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
- Kaczynski's comments on Timothy McVeigh  
<http://www.3-3-3.org/docs/Kaczynski's%20comments%20on%20McVeigh.htm>
- *Peruse* Alex Jones and Info Wars <http://www.infowars.com>

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## Counterterrorism and Homeland Security

April 23

- Chermak, Steven M., Joshua D. Freilich and Zachary Shemtob. 2009. "Law Enforcement Training and the Domestic Far Right." *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 36(12): 1305-1322.
- Freilich, Joshua D., Steven M. Chermak, David Caspi. 2009. "Critical Events in the Life Trajectories of Domestic Extremist White Supremacist Groups: A Case Study Analysis of Four Violent Organizations." *Criminology & Public Policy* 8(3): 497-530.
- McGarrell, Edmund F., Joshua D. Freilich and Steven Chermak. 2007. "Intelligence-Led Policing As a Framework for Responding to Terrorism." *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 23(2): 142-158.

- Michael, George, and Michael Minkenberg. 2007. "A Continuum for Responding to the Extreme Right: A Comparison between the United States and Germany." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30: 1109-1123.
  - Ross, Jeffrey Ian and Ted Robert Gurr. 1989. "Why Terrorism Subsides: A Comparative Study of Canada and the United States." *Comparative Politics* 21(4): 405-426.
  - Smith, Brent, and Kathryn Morgan. 1994. "Terrorists Right and Left: Empirical Issues in Profiling Terrorists." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 17: 39-57.
  - Wolfendale, Jessica. 2007. "Terrorism, Security, and the Threat of Counterterrorism." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29(7): 75-92.
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## **FINAL EXAM**

Wed. May 1 5:30 pm–8:00 pm

## List of Documentaries and Films on Domestic Terrorism and Political Violence

*Note: This list is by no means comprehensive. If you select a movie not on this list, please send me the title for my final approval.*

- *Arlington Road*—Story about a terrorism professor who suspects his neighbors are extremists
- *American History X*—Film portraying the making of a Neo-Nazi
- *Army of God*—documentary about abortion-inspired terrorism in the US
- *Behind the Mask*—documentary exploring violent animal rights activists, the Animal Liberation Front
- *Guerrilla: The Taking of Patty Hearst*—inside account of the SLA who famously kidnapped a young heiress
- *If a Tree Falls*—an Oscar nominated documentary about violent environmental activists called the Earth Liberation Front
- *Weather Underground*—interviews with the most notorious militant leftists in the US in the 1970s
- *Your Mommy Kills Animals*—another portrait of violent animal rights activists