

CONF 240

Social Dynamics of Terrorism

Fall 2007

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Meeting Times: Th 1:30 pm- 4:10
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Terrorism refers to a form of violent conflict whose causes, dynamics, consequences, and methods of resolution are still not very well understood despite a large volume of literature on the topic. This course is intended to throw new light on the topic with the ultimate aim of determining whether conflict resolution concepts and techniques have a role to play in dealing with terrorist/counter-terrorist violence. We begins with a consideration of definitions of terrorism and the problem of labeling, and go on to study a variety of relevant topics, including the causes and dynamics of terrorism, motivations of terrorists and counter-terrorists, the consequences of terrorism, and alternative methods of responding to this form of violence. One unit of the course focuses particularly on religious terrorism. Though course readings, films, and case study presentations students will become acquainted with a variety of theories for understanding terrorism and with many of the policies intended to address it.

Requirements:

Participation: Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings. This means that you should have completed all the assigned readings prior to each class. No grades are accorded for attendance and participation; students who miss more than a few classes will not receive a passing grade in the course. The topic of terrorism can be divisive. The goal in this class is to have respectful, open dialogue of the topic as part of learning about how terrorism impacts our social world.

Grades and Exercises: Grades will be computed as follows:

Case study paper: 25%
Short midterm exam: 25%
Final exam: 50%

Final grades of Incomplete will not be given except in cases of medical emergency attested to by a medical professional.

The case study paper is due in class on Oct. 8. Specifications will be provided by the instructor. The short midterm exam paper is due in class on Nov. 5, and the final exam is

due at the ICAR office on Dec. 10. All exams are take-home exams in which students choose one topic from a list provided by the instructor and write on that topic. They should be typed or word-processed in 12-point type, double spaced, and submitted in hard copy in class on the dates indicated below. All students are expected to be familiar with the GMU honor code and policy on plagiarism and to adhere strictly to these policies. Anyone with a question about possible plagiarism should discuss it with the instructor before taking the chance of violating the code.

WebCT: There is a WebCT page set up for the course that all students have been added to. If you have trouble accessing the site please let me know. Class notes and readings will be housed on WebCT.

Required Books:

Juergensmeyer, Mark. *Terror in the Mind of God*, 3d Ed. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003. Available in bookstore

Kegley, Charles, Ed. *The New Global Terrorism: Characteristics, Causes, Controls*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2003. Available in bookstore

Working Group on War, Violence and Terrorism, ICAR. *Terrorism: Concepts, Causes, and Conflict Resolution*. Ft. Belvoir: Defense Threat Reduction Agency, 2003. (Listed in the syllabus as WG). Available on the class WebCT site

Required reading on electronic reserve:

Brady, P. "The Impact of the September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks on Civil Liberties". In Nyatepe-Coo, A. and D. Zeisler-Vralsted, Eds. *Understanding Terrorism: Threats in an Uncertain World* (2004). Ch 11, 175-182

Crenshaw, M. "The Causes of Terrorism." *Comparative Politics*, 13:4 (1981), 379-399

Hoffman, B. "The Modern Terrorist Mindset: Tactics, Targets and Technologies." CIAO Working Paper, Center for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence, 1998, 10-97

"Does Our Counterterrorist Strategy Match the Threat?" RAND Corporation (2005)

Neumann, P.R. "Negotiating with Terrorists." *Foreign Affairs* 86:1 (2007)

Pandit, L. "Inside the Mind of a Suicide Bomber: Santosh Sivans *The Terrorist*". In Nyatepe-Coo, A. and D. Zeisler-Vralsted, Eds.(2004). Ch 6, 91-112

Rubenstein, R. "The Noncauses of Modern Terrorism" and "The Logic of Terrorist Action," in *Alchemists of Revolution: Terrorism in the Modern World* (1974). Ch 4, 49-64, and Ch 10, 158-169

"Violence and Theology in the 21st Century". The Alma Royalton Kisch Lecture, Clare College, Cambridge, 2006

Stohl, Michael. "Counterterrorism and Repression". In. Richardson, L., Ed. *The Roots of Terrorism* (2006). Ch 5, 57-70

VanVoorhis, C. "Psychological Responses to the Terrorist Attacks", In Nyatepe-Coo, A. and D. Zeisler-Vralsted, Eds. (2004). Ch 9, 135-146.

Wilkinson, P. "Law Enforcement, Criminal Justice, and the Liberal State" In *Terrorism versus Democracy: The Liberal State Response* (2006). Ch. 5, 61-88.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

Introduction and Framework for Analysis

Aug. 27

Organization of the course, assignments, expectations
Multi-Disciplinary Analysis as a tool for understanding terrorism
Definitions of terrorism and the problem of labeling
Major philosophical/political differences in interpreting terrorism
No assigned reading

Sep. 3 LABOR DAY HOLIDAY

Sep. 10

Types of terrorist activity
Survey of history of terrorism
Regional surveys of terrorism
Select topic for your case study paper
Reading:

- o WG, 3-37
- o David C. Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Rebel Terror," *Anthropoetics* 8:1 (2002). WebCT
- o Kegley, Ch. 4, 11

Who Joins a Terrorist Organization and Why? Terrorist Motivations

Sep. 17

Overview of profiles of terrorists

- Socioeconomic factors
- Political affiliations
- Psychological profiles

Reading:

- Kegley, Ch. 8, 9
- Bruce Hoffman, "The Modern Terrorist Mindset," WebCT

Sep. 24

Movie: *The Terrorist*

Dynamics of recruiting individuals to terrorism organizations

History of suicide bombing

Reading:

- Kegley, Ch 10
- Pandit, L. "Inside the Mind of a Suicide Bomber: Santosh Sivans *The Terrorist*". WebCT

The Causes of Terrorism

Oct. 1

Social causes: role of preexisting violence

Relationship between terrorist organizations and the communities or societies they arise from

Reading:

- WG pp. 85-116
- Kegley Ch. 5, 6
- Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism," WebCT

Oct. 8

Case study papers due in class

Discussion of case studies

Oct. 15

Role of discrimination or deprivation

Impact of political structure on the incidence of terrorism

The relationship of terrorist groups to political groups

Reading

- Kegley Ch. 14, 16
- Richard Rubenstein, "The Noncauses of Modern Terrorism" and "The Logic of Terrorist Action," WebCT.

The Dynamics of Religious Terrorism

Oct. 22

What is the relationship between religion and terrorism?

Survey of leading cases of religious terrorism pre-2001

Short midterm exam questions handed out in class

Reading:

First third of Juergensmeyer

Oct. 29

Essential characteristics of religious terrorism

Situations most productive of religious violence

Prospects for continuation of religious violence

Reading:

Second third of Juergensmeyer

Nov. 5

Are there creative responses to religious terrorism?

Midterm exam questions returned and discussed

Reading:

Last third of Juergensmeyer

Richard Rubenstein, "Theology and Violence in the 21st Century,"

WebCT

Responses to Terrorism

Nov. 12

Psychological and political effects of terrorism on target populations

Reading:

o Kegley, Ch 16

o VanVoorhis, C., "Psychological Responses to the Terrorist Attacks",

WebCt

Nov. 19

Alternative responses to terrorism by modern states

Final paper questions handed out in class

Reading:

o WG pp. 140-63

o Paul Wilkinson, "Law Enforcement, Criminal Justice, and the Liberal State," WebCT

- Brady, Patricia. “The Impact of the September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks on Civil Liberties,” WebCT
- Michael Stohl, “Counterterrorism and Repression,” WebCT

Nov. 26

New strategies for preventing and responding to terrorism
The role of conflict resolution concepts and techniques
(Panel discussion with guest participants)

Reading

- Kegley, Ch 20, 21
- WG, 127-138

Final Exams or Papers Due: Dec. 10