

CONF 240
Social Dynamics Of Terrorism, Justice And Security
FALL 2010
Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution
George Mason University

Class meeting time: Wednesdays 10:30 – 1:15 p.m.

Innovation Hall, Room 208

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:15 to 2:30 p.m. and by appointment

Robinson Hall B, Room 365

Course Description:

Welcome to the course! Terrorism has emerged as one of the most critical challenges to global security. This course explores the problem from the lens of conflict analysis and resolution. We shall study various forms, sources, strategies and tactics of terrorism. Terrorist motivations and behavior will be examined, in addition to considering a range of terrorist personality types to better our understanding. Applying fundamental concepts in conflict analysis and resolution to various case studies of terrorism in modern history, we shall attempt to explain the phenomenon, while also reflecting on counter-terrorism strategies. Various dimensions of human and state security as well as issues of social justice will be discussed, particularly as they relate to the threat of terrorism. Of special interest to the course are various types of trans-national and home-grown terrorist organizations and movements, and their impact on states and society in different regions of the world. Students are strongly encouraged to follow current affairs related to terrorism, covered in the local and if possible international print and electronic media. You will be asked to share your insights about various forms and manifestations of the problem and possible underlying sources, in class.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course students should have developed the following:

- familiarity with various theoretical perspectives on terrorist motivations and behavior;
- an understanding of the political, structural, social, and psychological sources of terrorism;
- knowledge of origins, evolution, and ideologies of various terrorist groups;
- skills to evaluate the social, psychological and political impact of terrorism and counter-terrorism strategies.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required text (available in the GMU bookstore):

1. Bruce Hoffman. *Inside Terrorism*, 2nd edition (Columbia University Press, 2006).
2. Walter Reich, ed. *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*. (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

Recommended Readings. The following texts are supplemental and helpful to your learning and research projects, but are *not* required unless specified in your weekly reading assignments:

1. J. V. Montville, The psychological roots of ethnic and sectarian terrorism. In Volkan, V., Julius, D.A. & Montville, J.V. (Eds.). *The psychodynamics of international relationships: volume I: concepts and theories*. (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books. 1990).
2. Lawrence Wright. *The Looming Tower: Al Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (Vintage, 2006).
3. M. Crenshaw. The logic of terrorism: terrorist behavior as a product of strategic choice. In W. Reich, ed. *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*. (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press. 1998).
4. Rex Hudson. *Who becomes a terrorist and why: the 1999 government report on profiling terrorists*. (Guilford: The Lyons Press. 2001). Available online at: http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/pdf-files/Soc_Psych_of_Terrorism.pdf
5. Richard Rubenstein. *The Alchemists of Revolution: Terrorism in the Modern World*. (Basic Books, 1987).
6. Stuart Gottlieb, ed. *Debating Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Conflicting Perspectives on Causes, Contexts, and Responses*. (CQ Press, 2010).
7. W.I. Zartman, I. W., ed. *Negotiating with Terrorists*. (Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publications, 2003)
8. "Foreign Terrorist Organizations." Provides a list and brief background of terrorist organizations. (U.S. Department of the Treasury, n.d.). Available online at: http://www.specialoperations.com/PDF/ForeignTerrorist_Organizations.pdf

Additional articles, recommended readings and relevant materials may be made available on Blackboard and e-reserves. Password for e-reserves will be given in class.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Please come to class on time and prepared. Bring your readings with you. Turn off cell phones and other electronic devices. Remain in class except in case of an emergency. The use of laptops in class is discouraged except for taking notes. Do not engage in side conversations and passing notes. Be mindful of the sensitivities of others in your comments in class; however, open discussion and dialogue are our goals. We will be discussing contentious political issues in this course. Students are encouraged to express diverse perspectives. You are likely to encounter strong opinions. You will be expected to keep a balance between arguing your own position on these issues, as well as encouraging, hearing, and respecting other opinions.

If an emergency prevents a student from attending class, the student should inform me ahead of time when possible. Please ask a classmate for class notes as soon as possible to catch up on what you have missed. Students are responsible for all announcements, assignments, and date changes made in class, and for all material covered in class, even if they are not there.

*You may contact me by phone or by e-mail at anytime. E-mailing is the best way to reach me. I shall respond to your query within 48 hours. **Please remember to always use your GMU email account when communicating with me.***

ASSIGNMENTS and EVALUATION

Participation: Classes shall follow an interactive seminar format. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss readings. **Regular attendance and active participation** based on thoughtful reflection of the literature and class discussions are required. This will be worth **20%** of your final grade.

Team Presentation: You will be a member of one of six research teams. There will be five members in each team. Your team shall prepare a class presentation (not a paper), of a case study selected by all members. The team must send an e-mail to me by **September 14th** informing me of team member names, **and a paragraph drafted jointly by team members**, about your case study. I shall give you my comments the following week. Each team will have 20 minutes to present their case study to the class on **October 13th and October 20th**. You may also indicate the date you would like to present on, and your preference shall be accommodated in the order that the requests are received. Each presentation shall be followed by a 10 minute Q & A. In your presentation you shall:

- provide an overview of the case study – sources, evolution and nature of terrorism;
- discuss the organization of the group – recruitment strategy, attitudes and behavior;
- discuss the impact of terrorism on stakeholders including state and society;
- evaluate the outcome in attempts to resolve or transform the conflict.

To supplement your presentation, each team is expected to submit a media portfolio and 1-3 pages outline of the presentation. The media portfolio and outline shall be worth **5%** of your final grade. In your media portfolio you will include at least **10 articles or reports** (from major newspapers around the world, think tanks, journals and websites) related to your topic. The team presentations and Q & A shall carry **20%** of your final grade. Groups will plan meetings outside of class time in preparation of their presentations. Everyone is expected to attend all presentations, and questions raised by you, at the end of other group presentations, will be considered part of your final participation grade.

For group assignments, the names of all participants should appear on the work. While it is fine for groups to divide project work among team members, the final product should represent a single, conceptually-linked piece of work. With rare exception, each student working in a group is given the same grade for an assignment. *If a group is having trouble with a member not fulfilling their work obligation, then the group needs to bring the concern to my attention immediately.*

Midterm Exam: This will be an open-book in-class exam carrying **20%** of the final grade. Students will be assigned the role of a counter-terrorism professional, and asked to make recommendations for a counter-terrorism strategy based on theoretical analysis of

the motivations and behavior of a terrorist organization of their choice. You will be graded for your creativity in proposing out-of-the-box, yet viable solutions guided by theories learned in the course (November 3).

Final Exam: A take-home final exam will be given on December 8 – to be turned in by e-mail to instructor on or before December 11 at 5:00 p.m. The exam will amount to 5-6 pages. It will account for 35% of the semester grade.

- **Class Participation (regular attendance is a pre-requisite): 20%.**
- **Team Presentation: 20%. (October 13 and October 20)**
- **Team Presentation Outline and Media Portfolio: 5%** Due on the day of your presentation
- **Mid-term Exam: 20 % (Nov 3)**
- **Final Research Paper: 35% (To be distributed in class on December 8, and due by email to the instructor on December 11 by 5:00 p.m.)**

Grading Scale

98 - 100	A+
93 - 97	A
90 - 92	A-
87 - 89	B +
83 - 86	B
79 - 82	B -
75 - 78	C+
72- 74	C
69- 71	C-
61 - 68	D
0 – 60	F

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Academic Honesty and Collaboration: GMU has an Honor Code with guidelines regarding academic integrity. It is designed, “to promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community” (www.gmu.edu/catalog/policies). Plagiarism is a serious offense, and all written work for this course should include proper citations in a standard citation format (MLA, APA, etc.). *If you are unsure about how to cite a direct quotation or concept from course or outside readings, then ask for help.* “I wasn’t sure how to cite a source, so I left out the reference,” is not an acceptable defense for plagiarism. Copies of common style manuals are available at the GMU library reference desk or online at <http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/workscited/>.

For individual class assignments, you may discuss your ideas with others or ask for feedback; however, you are responsible for making certain that there is no question that the work you hand in is your own. You may not submit papers or presentations from other courses to fulfill assignments for this class.

Late Work: Class assignments that are submitted late can be penalized by one point for

each day they are late. Late papers and proposals will be accepted only in cases of documented personal illness or family emergency. If this is the case, you must leave the paper in my mailbox in the Conflict Analysis and Resolution (CAR) office (Robinson B365) and email a copy at my GMU email address per the extension given to you. Papers should be submitted in an envelope marked with my name and the course number. If the office is closed, the envelope can be dropped through the mail slot in the door.

Paper Format: Papers for the course should be typed, double-spaced, have 1” margins, and use a common 12-point font. The pages should be numbered and stapled together. Headers should include only the course number, CONF 240. **Papers should have a title, include your name and the instructor’s name.** Sources should be cited using a single standard academic citation format.

STUDENT RESOURCES

GMU Writing Center

“The Writing Center seeks to foster a writing climate on campus and beyond by offering free writing support to George Mason students, faculty, staff and alumni. No matter what your writing abilities are, writing specialists can help you develop the skills you need to become a successful writer...Free services include: One-on-one 45 minute sessions with a writing specialist; online writing lab; one-on-one sessions with an ESL specialist; workshops on such topics as documenting sources, grammar and punctuation; writing handouts on a variety of subjects; a library of handbooks and writing manuals; [and an] online chat with a tutor about papers submitted to the Online Writing Lab” (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>).

Disability Support Services

Any student with documented learning disabilities or other conditions that may affect academic performance should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with the Office of Disability Support Services (993-2474) to determine the possible accommodations you might need; and 2) contact her or his instructor to discuss reasonable accommodations.

“George Mason University is committed to providing appropriate services and accommodations that allow self-identified students with disabilities to access programs and activities at the university as stated in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The staff of the Disability Resource Center Office coordinate services for students with disabilities, determine reasonable services and accommodations on the basis of disability, and act as a liaison between students and faculty/administration on concerns relating to services and accommodations” (<http://www.gmu.edu/departments/advising/dss.html>).

Library Services

The CAR library liaison is Melissa Johnson (703-993-2212). Don’t hesitate to contact her with specific questions about holdings and research regarding the CAR field.

Meeting 1: September 1

- Introductions, course protocol, overview and expectations.
- Outline case studies from various regions of the world to be discussed during the course.
- We shall watch and discuss our reactions to the following documentary film:
 1. Sri Lanka's Female Tamil Tigers

Readings: None.

Meeting 2: September 8

Terrorism definitions; problems in formulating a common understanding of the term; approaches and various types and manifestations of terrorism.

Readings: Hoffman: Chapters 1, 2.

Hudson: Approaches to Terrorism Analysis pp.15-18. Available online at:
http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/pdf-files/Soc_Psych_of_Terrorism.pdf

E-mail instructor names of team members for group presentation and a paragraph about your presentation topic by September 14.

Meeting 3: September 15

Origins of terrorism: political, structural and social factors

- We shall watch and discuss reactions to the following documentary film:
 1. The Taliban's Spreading Influence

Readings Reich: Chapters 1 and 2

Hudson: General Hypothesis of Terrorism, pp.19-20. Available online at:
http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/pdf-files/Soc_Psych_of_Terrorism.pdf

Meeting 4: September 22

Psychological factors, suicide terrorism.

Readings Reich: Chapters 9 and 10

Bobby Ghosh. "Inside the mind of an Iraqi Suicide Bomber". *Time*, (2005). Available online at: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1077288,00.html>

Meeting 5: September 29

Ideology and radicalization

Readings: Hoffman: Chapter 4.

Reich: Chapters 6 and 7

Meeting 6: October 6

Terrorist goals, motivations and targets.

Readings: Hoffman: Chapter 6.

Reich: Chapter 3

Meeting 7: October 13

Group Presentations

Meeting 8: October 20

Group Presentations

Meeting 9: October 27

Transnational terrorism

Readings: Hoffman: Chapter 3

Meeting 10: November 3

Mid-term exam

Meeting 11: November 10

Counter-terrorism: challenges and opportunities

Readings: Reich: Chapter 13 and 14

(Research topics in preparation for next class will be assigned in class).

Meeting 12: November 17

Counter-terrorism: international strategies and policy implications

A group activity will be conducted in class.

Readings: Students will have been assigned specific case studies to research in preparation for the group activity the *week before*.

No class on November 24 – Thanksgiving Break

Meeting 13: December 1

Counter-terrorism: terrorist profiling

Readings: Hudson: Hazards of Terrorist Profiling and Conclusion: pp. 43-64. Available online at: http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/pdf-files/Soc_Psych_of_Terrorism.pdf

Final exam will be discussed in class.

Meeting 14: December 8 – Last class

Course wrap-up and evaluations. **A take-home exam will be distributed in class. Must be turned in by e-mail to instructor by December 11 at 5:00 p.m.**