

Syllabus

CONF 758- Social Dynamics of Terrorism

Spring 2015

Meeting place: Blackboard 9.1

Weekly schedule: Each week runs Monday-Sunday starting on January 19, 2015

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Office Hours: by appointment (via telephone, email, or Skype)

Course Description

Terrorism is a global problem that impacts hundreds of thousands of people round the world. Modern terrorism movements have include by state and non-state actors and targeted both civilian and government targets. Terrorism is a tactic used by groups on the left and the right of the social spectrum as a tool to address political goals. The course begins with a consideration of different definitions of terrorism and the consequences of the “terrorist” label. Subsequent topics include a broad survey of modern terrorism, the range of actors involved in terrorism, and cross-state comparisons of reactions to terrorism. Students will learn a method for analyzing conflict and use it to identify the sources and conditions that give rise to terrorism and the impacts that terrorist activities have on different societies. Great variation in both the forms terrorism takes and also in the impact of terrorism on social systems justifies focusing, on the one hand, on the social dynamics that give rise to terrorism and, on the other hand, on the effects on social dynamics in societies struggling with the threat and reality of terrorism. Students will develop case studies of terrorist organizations that will be used for cross-state comparisons of the dynamics of terrorism. Through 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.

Books

Cortright, D. & Lopez, G. Uniting Against Terrorism: Cooperative Nonmilitary Responses to the Global Threat. Cambridge, MIT Press, 2007. (e-book through library)

- Cronin, A. How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns, Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2009. (e-book through library)
- Hess, S. Kalb, M. Media and The War on Terrorism. Brookings, 2003. (e-book through library)
- Richardson, L. The Roots of Terrorism (Democracy and Terrorism) v. 1. Taylor and Francis, 2006 (e-book through library)
- Rubin, B. Rubin, J. Chronologies of Modern Terrorism. Sharpe 2008. (e-book through library)
- Terrorism: Concepts, Causes and Conflict Resolution. Defense Threat Reduction Agency (PDF found in course content folder)

Chapters (E-Reserve)

E-reserves can be found in the Blackboard class. There is a tab on the left hand navigation bar labeled E-Reserves.

- Birkenstein, J. Froula A. Randell, K. Reframing 9/11: Film, Popular Culture and the War on Terror. CH 1 & 3.
- 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. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2004. Ch 11, pp 175-182
- Crenshaw, M. "The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorist Behavior as a Product of Strategic Choice". In Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind. Reich, W. Ed. Washington: Wilson Center, 1998, CH 1
- Jenkins, P. "A Critical Consumer's Guide to Understanding Terrorism". In Images of Terror. New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 2003. Ch 10, pp. 189-194.
- Pandit, L. "Inside the Mind of a Suicide Bomber: Santosh Sivans *The Terrorist*". In Nyatepe-Coo, A. and D. Zeisler-Vralsted (eds). Understanding Terrorism: Threats in an Uncertain World. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2004. Ch 6, pp. 91-112.
- Post, J. "Terrorist Psycho-logic: Terrorist Behavior as a Product of Psychological Forces". In Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind. Reich, W. Ed. Washington: Wilson Center, 1998, CH 2
- Ramsbotham, O, Woodhouse, T., & Miall, H. Contemporary Conflict Resolution. Cambridge: Polity, 2012 CH 1
- Sanders W. and Sandler T. "The Economic Impact of Terrorism", The Political Economy of Terrorism (ch 10) Cambridge 2012
- Stampnitzky, Lisa. "The Invention of Terrorism and the Rise of the Terrorism Expert". Disciplining Terror Cambridge 2013, CH 2

Article (E-Reserve)

E-reserves can be found in the Blackboard class. There is a tab on the left hand navigation bar labeled E-Reserves.

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

Pape Robert A., 'The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism', American Political Science Review, Vol. 97, No. 3, August 2003, pp. 343-361

Course Overview

- There are readings and activities due each week.
- There are other significant assignments outlined below. You will find these assignments on Blackboard and you will submit the assignments through blackboard, unless otherwise noted.
- It is important to complete all work on schedule, but if there are extenuating circumstances; such as sickness, family issues, or religious observances that conflict with our schedule, please let me know as soon as possible.

Grading

Item	Value (points)
Assignments	
Categorizing Groups	5
Group Case Study Presentation	10
Fiction Assignment	10
Research Paper	20
Exams	
Midterm	15
Final	10
Participation	30
• Syllabus quiz, weekly activities: discussions, blogs, wikis	

Grading Scale (points)

A 100-93

A- 92-90

B+ 89-87

B 86-83

B- 82-80

C 79-70

F <70

Course Logistics

This course will use a distance learning format; the primary meeting space will be on Blackboard 9.1; and we will use other means of keeping in touch such as: email, telephone, and Skype. We will cover one module each week. In a typical module:

- you will read about 100- 150 pages and discuss the material with your classmates
- accomplish on-line activities and respond to weekly requirements
- work on an assignments to be submitted in the Blackboard assignment drop box according to the assignment schedule.

Though the delivery method is different, it should take you the same amount to time as a typical graduate course. Because this class is accelerated, you should expect to spend 8 to 10 hours on coursework each week.

It is critical to keep up with weekly requirements. I will provide a folder each week in our Blackboard course to specify required activities and assignments (available by clicking on 'Course Contents' on the course menu in Blackboard).

Grading Policies

Timeliness of Assignments:

Assignments are due by 11:59 pm on the listed due date. Any assignments submitted after that, without prior approval, will be downgraded one-half letter grade per day. If illness means you will be late with an assignment, please be prepared to show a doctor's note.

Participation

Active participation in the weekly activities is an integral part of reaching your learning outcomes for the course. I realize that many of you are balancing multiple obligations and that sometimes out of class requirements make it difficult for students to fulfill their participation responsibilities. I will drop the lowest participation grade to account for short term difficulties in participating.

Incomplete Grades

Students experiencing exceptional circumstances that require additional time to complete the course must contact the instructor prior to the end of the course about the possibility of an incomplete. Incompletes are given at the discretion of the instructor.

Blackboard (Available on January 12, 2015)

We will use Blackboard 9.1 for the course. Additional guidance on individual assignments and discussion questions will be posted there. Use Blackboard to submit your work for grading. Please visit our Blackboard site regularly.

Access Blackboard 9.1 by following these steps:

1. Go to [MyMason](http://mymason.gmu.edu) (<http://mymason.gmu.edu>).
2. Login using your NETID and password,
3. Click on the ‘Courses’ tab.
4. Click on “[201510 - Master - CONF-758-DL1 / CONF-758-ML1 \(Spring 2015\)](#)” under the “Blackboard 9.1 Course” heading.

Technical Support

If you have difficulty logging into Blackboard, contact the ITU Support Center at support@gmu.edu or 703-993-8870. If you have questions regarding Blackboard features or other course tools email courses@gmu.edu

Technology Requirements for this Course

Please see “Technology Requirements” on the Course Menu in Blackboard. Download the software indicated onto your computer for use in the course. Pay special attention to the Blackboard supported browsers and operating systems.

Instructor-Student Communication:

Please feel free to email me with questions or concerns. I will respond to your emails within 48 hours. If I will be away from email for more than two days, I will post an announcement in the Blackboard course folder.

Before sending an email, please check the following (available on your Blackboard course menu) **unless the email is of a personal nature:**

1. Syllabus
2. Help forum (Feel free to respond to other students in the Help forum if you know the answer.)
3. Blackboard videos on how to use Blackboard features
4. Blackboard Q&A, and
5. Technology Requirements.

Mason EMAIL

- Mason requires that Mason email be used for all courses. I will be sending messages to your Mason email and you are responsible for making sure you have access to these messages.
- You may forward your Mason email to other accounts but always use your Mason e-mail when communicating with me to allow verification of your identity.
- You are required to check your Mason email account regularly and to keep your mailbox maintained so that messages are not rejected for being over quota.
- When you email me, you can expect a response within 48 hours. If I am going to be away from email for more than two days, I will send an announcement to the class.
- When you email me, be sure to include **CONF 758** at the beginning of the subject heading to alert me that I have received a message from one of my online students

Expectations of Students

Academic Integrity

Students must be responsible for their own work, and students and faculty must take on the responsibility of dealing explicitly with violations. The tenet must be a foundation of our university culture. [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/distance/>].

Assignments for this course will be run through a SafeAssign module within Blackboard, which electronically checks for plagiarism. A safe assign module has been provided for you to check your own papers before turning them in.

Honor Code

Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>].

Patriot Pass

Once you sign up for your Patriot Pass, your passwords will be synchronized, and you will use your Patriot Pass username and password to log in to the following systems: Blackboard, University Libraries, MasonLive, myMason, Patriot Web, Virtual Computing Lab, and WEMS. [See <https://password.gmu.edu/index.jsp>].

University Policies

Students must follow the university policies. [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu>].

Responsible Use of Computing

Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing>].

University Calendar

Details regarding the current Academic Calendar. [See <http://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/index.html>].

Religious Holidays

Please refer to AP.1.6.1 Absence for Religious Observances or Participation in University Activities in the University Catalog, at catalog.gmu.edu for information.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu>].

Students are expected to follow courteous Internet etiquette

The topic of terrorism can be very 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. Be mindful of the sensitivities of others in your comments; however, open discussion and dialogue are our goals.

Work Ethic

CONF 758 is designed as a collaborative learning experience. It is important that students participate in every class and that they contribute actively to groups and class discussions. Please participate enthusiastically in group activities while respecting the opinions and valuing the work of other group members. You will be disappointed in this class if you focus on individual effort alone. However, any individual work should be strictly your own.

Student Services

University Libraries

University Libraries provides resources for distance students. [See <http://library.gmu.edu/distance> and http://infoguides.gmu.edu/distance_students].

Writing Center

The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to

construct and share knowledge through writing. [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>]. You can now sign up for an Online Writing Lab (OWL) session just like you sign up for a face-to-face session in the Writing Center, which means YOU set the date and time of the appointment! Learn more about the [Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#).

Counseling and Psychological Services

The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu>].

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), also known as the "Buckley Amendment," is a federal law that gives protection to student educational records and provides students with certain rights. [See <http://registrar.gmu.edu/privacy>].

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course you will be able to:

1. Analyze conflict involving terrorism, including the application of relevant theories of conflict, reflecting factors in both the local and global context using conflict mapping.
2. Apply Concepts and Theories to explain prevalence of terrorism in particular societies.
3. To assess the integration of a terrorist group within its society using the case study material.
4. To conduct a threat assessment for a particular conflict, using what they learn about the ideology of terrorism and how it impacts choices of tactics and targets they should be able to identify most likely actions for a particular terrorist group based on the group's ideology and goals.
5. Evaluate counter-terrorism measures in their case studies using the three metaphors (disease, crime, and warfare) and make recommendations for strategies to be used in the future.
6. Evaluate the author's perspective and the messages being intentionally and unintentionally conveyed to readers in both fiction and non-fiction sources

Weekly Schedule

This schedule is subject to change in the event of unforeseen circumstances (e.g., weather, etc.). Changes will be negotiated with the students.

Distance learning courses are dynamic—to ensure we achieve our learning outcomes, we may need to negotiate weekly schedule changes. We will focus on learning, fairness, and reason in any approved changes.

Weeks	Topics	Content (Readings/Video/Audio)	Activities	Assignments
Week 1 Tues., Jan. 20- Sun., Jan. 25 Learning Outcomes: 1,2	Definitions & Conflict Mapping	Readings: Cronin Ch 1 Richardson Ch 1 Stampkinsky Ch 2 Ramsbotham Ch 1 Welcome Video Conflict Mapping Handout Minilecture: Conflict Mapping	1.1 Student Introductions Blog Entries Due 1/22 1.2 Syllabus Quiz Due 1/22 1.3 Group Mapping Exercise (Wiki) Due 1/25	
Week 2 Mon., Jan 26- Sun., Feb. 1 Learning Outcomes: 1	Types of Terrorism	Readings: ICAR/Terrorism Ch 2 & 3 Hoffman Rubin Ch 1		2.1 Categorize Groups Assignment Due 2/1 2.2 Case Study Choices (group): Choose a terrorist group by 2/1
Week 3 Mon., Feb. 2 – Sun., Feb. 8 Learning Outcomes: 1, 3, 4	Goals of Terrorist Groups/Audi ences for Terrorism	Readings: ICAR/Terrorism Ch 4 & 5 Crenshaw	3.1 Create a Terrorism Strategy Activity Due 2/8	3.2 Case Study presentation Due 2/8 3.3 Self and Peer Evaluation, Due 2/8
Week 4 Mon, Feb. 9 – Sun., Feb. 15 Learning Outcomes: 2, 3	History of Terrorism	Readings: Rubin Ch 2-6 Video: In the Name of Liberation: Freedom by Any Means	4.1 Discussion: Terrorist or Freedom Fighter? Original Post Due 2/11, responses due 2/15 4.2 Discussion: View 3 case study presentations and comment. Due 2/15	4.3 Fiction Assignment Book Choices Due 2/15
Week 5 Mon., Feb.	Culture/Reli gion & Terrorism	Readings: Richardson Ch 10- 12	5.1 Discussion: Religious Terrorist Groups Original	

16-Sun., Feb. 22 Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 3		Rubin Ch 7-8 Video: In the Name of God: Holy Word, Holy War	Post Due 2/18, responses due 2/22	
Week 6 Mon., Feb. 23 – Sun., Mar. 1 Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 3	Politics & Terrorism	Readings: Richardson Ch 4-6 Pape Video: In the Name of the State: When Might Makes Right	6.1 Discussion: Democracy and Terrorism Original Post Due 2/25, responses due 3/1	Begin Research Paper, First Draft Due 3/29 , Final Due 4/19
Week 7 Mon., Mar., 2 – Sun., Mar., 8 Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 3	Economics & Terrorism	Readings: Richardson Ch 7-9 Video: In the Name of Revolution: Gun-Barrel Politics	7.1 Discussion: Crime & Terrorism Original Post Due 3/4, responses due 3/8	7.2 Mid-Term Exam Due 3/8
Week 8 Mon., Mar. 9 – Sun., Mar., 15	SPRING BREAK			
Week 9 Mon., Mar. 16 – Sun., Mar. 22 Learning Outcomes: 1, 4, 6	Individual & Psychological Roots	Readings: Richardson Ch 2-3 Post Pandit Movie: The Terrorist/ Paradise Now	9.1 Discussion: Recruitment Original Post Due 3/18, responses due 3/22	9.2 Fiction Assignment Due 3/22
Week 10 Mon., Mar 23 – Sun., Mar. 29	Terrorism as Communication	Readings: Hess & Kalb Ch 2,5,14,15,16 Birkenstein Ch 1 & 3 Jenkins	10.1 Discussion: Media Outcomes Original Post Due 3/25, responses due 3/29	10.2 Research Paper First Draft Due 3/29

Learning Outcomes: 4, 5		Video: Jihad TV terrorism and mass media Minilecture		
Week 11 Mon., Mar., 30 – Sun., Apr. 5 Learning Outcomes: 5	Decapitation /Crushing	Readings: Cartright & Lopez Ch 3, 5, 6 Cronin Ch 1, 5 Minilecture	11.1 Peer Editing of Research Paper Feedback due 4/5	
Week 12 Mon., Apr 6 – Sun., Apr. 12 Learning Outcomes: 5	Achieving Objective/Failure	Readings: Cartright & Lopez Ch 4 Cronin Ch 3 & 4 Minilecture	12.1 Continued Peer Editing Feedback due 4/12	
Week 13 Mon., Apr., 13 – Sun., Apr. 19 Learning Outcomes: 5	Negotiation/Reorientation	Readings: Cronin Ch 2 & 6 View Research Paper Summaries	13.1 Discussion: Research Papers Questions raised due 4/19	13.2 Research Paper Final Due 4/29
Week 14 Mon., April 20 – Sun., Apr., 26 Learning Outcomes: 5	Impact of CT Strategy on Civilian Populations Effects on Target Populations	Readings: Enders & Sanders Brady Video: Frontline “Are We Safer” View Fiction Summaries	14.1 Discussion: Civil Rights Original Post Due 4/22, responses due 4/26 14.2 Discussion: Fiction Assignments Response to 2 papers Due 4/26	
Week 15 Mon., April 27 – Sun., May 3 Learning	Comparison of CT Strategies	Readings Cartright & Lopez Ch 1, 2, 7, 8 Cronin Ch 7 Video: Targeting Terror Minilecture: Threat		15.1 Final Exam: Threat Assessment Timed, will be completed during the scheduled final exam period.

Outcomes: 5		Assessment		
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Assignments

Categorizing Groups (5%)

You will be asked to use your knowledge from readings, you will identify the category that terrorists groups fit into and explain what types of activities the group is likely to engage in. Specifically use the table on page 26 of the Terrorism, Concepts, Causes and Conflict Resolution as your source for types of groups. Due by February 1st.

Group Case Study Presentation (10%)

Each group will identify a terrorist group from the State Departments List of Foreign Terrorist Organizations and make a 5 slide presentation, that will be posted for the class to review and will be due next week. The Organization chosen by the group must be pre-approved. A group contract indicating the roles the members will take during this project must be submitted this week. Your grade will be based on the presentation and the peer assessments submitted by each group member on the other members of the group.

Fiction Assignment (10%)

Much of what we hear in our daily lives about conflict issues is from popular culture: books, movies, films, etc. This assignment asks you to choose a fiction book that has terrorism as its topic and analyze how the book presents the issue of terrorism. Details on what is expected of the assignment and a list of suggested books can be found here:

Research Paper (20%)

Using the same case as you research for the group case study presentation you will continue to research that particular terrorist group. You will prepare a research paper that maps the conflict the terrorist group you chose is a part of. The paper should be between 15 and 20 pages not including references and citations. It should reference course readings, videos and other course content and be an analytical work, not simply a description or history of the conflict. An initial draft of the paper is due March 29th. We will conduct two weeks of peer reviewing and editing of the paper. You will receive final comments by Sunday April 12th. Final version, incorporating comments is due by April 19th. It should be submitted through Blackboard.