

CRIM 475-DL1
Theory and Politics of Terrorism
Spring 2024
George Mason University, Fairfax Campus

100% Asynchronous, Online (Recordings and Assignments provided on Blackboard)

Instructor

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Office Hours: By appointment (email); meetings via phone/zoom

I check my email frequently and it's the quickest way to reach me. It is also strongly advised that you check your email and blackboard daily

Course Description and Objectives

This course examines the theory and politics of terrorism. We will attempt to define terrorism, explore different types of terrorism, understand how terrorists and terrorist organizations operate and how they recruit. We'll also explore what's being done to counter terrorist efforts around the world.

We will also discuss how gender matters in terrorism and the ability of terrorists to advance a political agenda, fundraise and their use of media to promote their vision and ideology.

By the end of the course, students should have the skills needed to establish a baseline for understanding the theory and politics of both domestic and international terrorism.

Complete list of course learning objectives provided at the end of the syllabus.

Required Textbook

G. Martin (2020). Understanding Terrorism: challenges, perspectives, and issues. SEVENTH Edition. SAGE Publications, Inc. ISBN 13: 9781544375861 (Hard Text or eBook is fine).

Course Format

Class will be lecture and independent learning. **This is a 100% asynchronous class.** Please ensure you are up to the discipline and individual effort it takes to complete a class online, with minimal supervision. There will also be an assigned web exercise for each class to be completed as part of the asynchronous portion of the course. Web exercises will be posted in Blackboard and are to be submitted via Blackboard.

Course Policies

Recordings of class lectures and slides will be provided for each chapter. Please reach out to the professor if you have any questions about the content. There will also be a discussion board in Blackboard for questions, and participation will be calculated as part of your final grade.

Honor Code

George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. All students are expected to be familiar with this Honor Code. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are prohibited. All violations of the will be reported to the Honor Committee. See <https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/> for more information.

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Add/Drop Period

Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in class. Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes available from the Registrar's Website at registrar.gmu.edu. All add/drop and selective withdrawal procedures are contained in your Schedule of Classes. If you need assistance, please contact the Registrar's Office.

Grading

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Attendance/ Participation:	5%
Oral Presentation	5%
Web Exercises (Asynchronous):	15%
Research Paper:	20%
Mid-term Exam:	25%
Final Exam:	30%
Total:	100%

Course scale:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Total Points</u>
A+	97 – 100
A	93 – 96
A -	90 – 92
B+	86 – 89
B	82 – 85
B-	80 – 81
C+	76 – 79
C	72 – 75
C-	70 – 71
D	65 – 69
F	64 and Below

Research Paper (20%)

Choose an extremist/terrorist organization. This group can be current or an historical group that is no longer in existence in its original form. Provide a comprehensive report based on the following rubric:

- Origins (10%)
- Founding members (10%)
- Belief(s) and goals (10%)
- Significant timeline events (attacks, media coverage, deaths of members, etc) (10%)
- Response by governments to counter (10%)
- Lasting effects/Analysis (30%)
- Writing Composition (20%)

You must email me your top three choices for terrorist organizations by the second Friday after class starts. Assigned groups will be given at the beginning of the third week. **Research Paper is due by the end of the day (11:59 PM ET) two Fridays before the Exam Period begins.** See the end of this syllabus for list of US-Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations.

6-8 pages (of written content!), 1.5 spaced, TNR 12 pt font. Visuals and appendixes are encouraged (not part of your page requirement). Citations (include works cited page, also not part of your page requirement) can be done in MLA, APA, Chicago. Your choice but please be consistent throughout.

Oral Presentation (5%)

You will be responsible for briefing a major terrorist-related incident and recording this via zoom to submit via Blackboard. Ensure you cover the “5 W’s & an H” and feel free to use slides or other visual aids. Your presentation should be between 5-15 minutes long and should cover the following, at a minimum (not necessarily in this order):

- Who: Who was involved in the incident? Who were the attackers, victims, who else played a role in the incident... the public? The media? (10%)
- What: What type of incident was it? (10%)
- When: When did the incident occur? Was it an isolated or ongoing event? (10%)
- Where: Where did the incident occur? Be as specific as possible and note if the location was significant to the message or purpose of the incident. (10%)
- Why: Why did the incident happen? What were the people involved trying to accomplish? (10%)
- How: Discuss the specific tactics used by the individual or group carrying out the incident. (10%)

Finally, discuss what the after-effects were of the incident. Was the incident “successful” in any way? From what perspective? Was the goal of the incident achieved, did it influence future CT efforts? **INCORPORATE THEORIES AND TOPICS YOU LEARNED IN CLASS!!! (40%)**

Email me your top three choices for incident and presentation date as soon as you can as preference will be given according to when I receive the request but no later than the second Friday after class starts. If you need help finding an event to present, let me know as soon as possible. **Due before the end of the Mid-Term period.**

For help selecting an incident for your Oral Presentation, go to the ODNI Counter Terrorism Guide's Historic Timeline: <https://www.dni.gov/nctc/timeline.html>

Mid-Term & Final Exams (30% each)

These exams will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions that are based on assigned readings and class lectures. The mid-term exam will cover book chapters from 1-7 and the final exam will cover chapters 8-15. Exams will follow GMU exam schedules. Failure to take an exam at its scheduled time will result in a grade of zero (0) being used in the computation of your final grade—exceptions will only be made in the case of unforeseeable and acceptable circumstances. **Both exams will be completed utilizing Blackboard.**

You will be getting the mid-term and final exam questions in advance. The expectation is that you will work on these questions throughout the course, adding examples of theories, principles and concepts taken from the book and class lectures and incorporate them into your answers. As these are open-note exams, you will be able to copy and paste your essay answer from your notes into Blackboard. As such, I will expect a multi-paragraph, well-written essay question that fully answers the question.

Short answers will also be familiar to you prior to the exams. My expectation for all exam short answer questions is that they will each be 3-4 sentences, paragraph form, well written and fully answering the question asked. Provide examples, include theories and concepts learned from class to support your answer.

Please remember, the only purpose of the essay and short answer questions is to show me that you have learned something from this course. You should be thinking about how you can include as much information as possible in each answer, not to write the bare minimum to move on to the next question. This will result in the bare minimum score. Please allow me the flexibility to subjectively give you as many points as possible per question!

Web Exercises (15%)

Each chapter will have a corresponding web exercise. Exercises can be found in the assignments section within Blackboard. Please ensure that you answer each question as you would a short answer question on an exam (3-4 complete sentences). For submission, download the docx., provide your answers in the text boxes provided, and then submit each exercise via Blackboard in the corresponding assignment. At the end of each WebEx assignment, you'll see several keywords that are included to help with your searches. These are provided just to help with your research in addition to the websites. No extra work is required for that last portion. It's for those that want to do a little extra above and beyond to research the topics discussed.

All WebEx assignments for chapters 1-7 must be turned in prior to the first day of the mid-term exam period and assignments for chapters 8-14 must be turned in prior to the first day of the final exam period.

Attendance/Participation (5%)

This is a 100% asynchronous class, so interaction between classmates and discussion is difficult. The only way we have to interact together is within the Discussion board in Blackboard.

I have posted a discussion board for each chapter that I'd like you to respond to as part of your attendance/participation grade. **Note: you will need to create a thread in each discussion to view others' threads. Discussion boards 1-7 will close one day prior to the first day of the mid-term exam period, and board 8-15 will close one day prior to the first day of the final exam period for me to do calculations.**

Additionally, if you would like to create your own Forums in the Discussion board to pose questions for thought or talk about subjects in class, I will be monitoring to see how you engage with each other. I will also be chiming in from time to time, but the discussion board is a place meant to simulate the classroom as best as possible and engage each other, so please take advantage of it and talk amongst yourselves!

Course Schedule

Topic

Introductions & Course Overview | C1.Terrorism: First Impressions
C2.The Nature of the Beast: Defining Terrorism
C3.The Causes of Terrorism
C4.Terror From Above: Terrorism by the State
C5.Terrorism From Below: Terrorism by Dissidents
C6.Violence in the Name of the Faith: Religious Terrorism
C7.Violence Ideologies: Terrorism From the Left and the Right
C8.Terrorism Spillovers: International Terrorism
C9.Emerging Terrorist Environments: Gender-Selective Political Violence and Criminal Dissident Terrorism
C10.Tools of the Trade: Tactics and Targets of Terrorists
C11.The Information Battleground: Terrorist Violence and the Role of the Media
C12.The American Case: Terrorism in the United States
C13.Counterterrorism: The Options
C14.A New Era: Homeland Security
C15. What's Next? The Future of Terrorism | Course Wrap-Up

****all due dates NLT 11:59 PM ET***

Research Paper Topic / Presentation Topic & Date Preferences Due (Email - kgraha5@gmu.edu): 26 Jan
WebEx 1-7 Due (Blackboard): 11 Mar
Midterm Open (Blackboard): 12-15 Mar
Presentation Due (Zoom Recording submitted via Blackboard): 15 Mar
WebEx 8-15 Due (Blackboard): 1 May
Research Paper Due (Blackboard): 19 April
Final Open (Blackboard): 2-9 May

A special note about this class: Definitions of terrorism vary, but there is consensus that it involves violence. We will avoid unnecessary discussions of violence and disturbing images but, given the theme of the class, some exposure to violence and death is guaranteed. If you are sensitive to discussions of violence, this course may at times raise issues that you find uncomfortable. **Please acknowledge that in taking this course you are accepting exposure to some disturbing content and discussion.**

Given the nature of our topic, I fully expect that there will be differences of opinion in this classroom. You are encouraged to ask questions and express your viewpoints. **Please remember that George Mason University has a very diverse population from all over the world, and there will be members of the class who have different experiences and backgrounds and therefore quite different perspectives.**

Treat everyone (myself and your fellow classmates) with respect. All of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere that respects the rights, safety, dignity and worth of every individual in the class. This includes, but is not limited to, being aware of the impact that your communications, practices, and behaviors have on others, acknowledging and respecting the diversity of ideas, opinions and backgrounds that exist between and among us, and rejecting bigotry and intimidation of any kind.

US-Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations

Segunda Marquetalia
Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (FARC-EP)
ISIS-DRC
ISIS-Mozambique
Harakat Sawa’d Misr (HASM)
Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH)
Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)
Jama’at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM)
al-Ashtar Brigades (AAB)
ISIS-Greater Sahara
ISIS-West Africa
ISIS-Philippines
ISIS-Bangladesh
Hizbul Mujahideen (HM)
Al-Qa’ida in the Indian Subcontinent
Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant’s Branch in Libya (ISIL-Libya)
Islamic State’s Khorasan Province (ISIS-K)
Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al Naqshabandi (JRTN)
al-Nusrah Front
ISIL Sinai Province (formerly Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis)
Ansar al-Shari’a in Benghazi
Ansar al-Shari’a in Darnah
Ansar al-Shari’a in Tunisia
al-Mulathamun Battalion (AMB)
Ansaru
Boko Haram
Ansar al-Dine (AAD)
Haqqani Network (HQN)
Abdallah Azzam Brigades (AAB)
Jemaah Anshorut Tauhid (JAT)
Indian Mujahedeen (IM)
Army of Islam (AOI)
Jaysh al-Adl (formerly Jundallah)
Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)
Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami (HUJI)

al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)
Kata’ib Hizballah (KH)
Revolutionary Struggle (RS)
al-Shabaab
Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami/Bangladesh (HUJI-B)
Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)
Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (formerly al-Qa’ida in Iraq)
Continuity Irish Republican Army (CIRA)
Ansar al-Islam (AAI)
Lashkar i Jhangvi (LJ)
Jemaah Islamiya (JI)
Communist Party of the Philippines/New People’s Army (CPP/NPA)
al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)
Asbat al-Ansar (AAA)
Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (AAMB)
Lashkar-e Tayyiba (LeT)
Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM)
Real Irish Republican Army (RIRA)
Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)
al-Qa’ida (AQ)
Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)
HAMAS
Harakat ul-Mujahidin (HUM)
Hizballah
Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK, aka Kongra-Gel)
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)
National Liberation Army (ELN)
Palestine Liberation Front (PLF)
Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ)
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)
PFLP-General Command (PFLP-GC)
Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C)
Shining Path (SL)

***You may also use State-Sponsors of Terrorist and Domestic Terrorist Organizations with professor’s prior approval.**

Complete Learning Objectives (*HINT: great for exam reviews!*)

- Demonstrate knowledge of the historical context of modern terrorist violence.
- Discuss the significance of symbolism.
- Explain the conceptual consideration of whether political violence is mala prohibita or mala in se.
- Apply the moral considerations of the just war doctrine.
- Discuss cases of terrorism and criminal skill.
- Explain the importance of identifying the common characteristics of extremism and understanding the world view of extremist adherents.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the common features of formal definitions of terrorism.
- Discuss whether violence should be classified as terrorism by recognizing the contextual perspectives of perpetrators and participants in terrorist environments.
- Apply the Political Violence Matrix as a conceptual tool to interpret the quality of violence.
- Demonstrate the ability to interpret revolutionary ideologies and cultural factors to assess whether the use of political violence is a strategic choice.
- Apply sociological theories of intergroup conflict and collective violence to posit explanations for political violence.
- Apply criminological theories of criminality to posit explanations for political violence.
- Apply psychological theories of group- and individual-level dynamics to posit explanations for political violence.
- Interpret justifications for political violence, as reported by extremists, within the context of moral reasoning.
- Understand and explain the state terrorism paradigm.
- Interpret some incidents of state-initiated international violence as state terrorism.
- Interpret some incidents of state-initiated domestic violence as state terrorism.
- Discuss scales of violence perpetrated by states.
- Understand and explain the dissident terrorism paradigm.
- Interpret some incidents of dissident-initiated political violence as antistate terrorism.
- Interpret some incidents of dissident-initiated political violence as communal terrorism.
- Discuss central operational attributes of the New Terrorism.
- Explain the concept of primary and secondary motives for religious terrorism.
- Understand the historical context of religious terrorism.
- Interpret some incidents of religious-motivated political violence as state-sponsored religious terrorism.
- Interpret some incidents of religious-motivated political violence as dissident-sponsored religious terrorism.
- Discuss the future of religious terrorism.
- Understand the classical ideological continuum.
- Classify some ideologies and activism as left-wing phenomena.
- Explain the attributes and behavior of left-wing terrorism.
- Classify some activism and extremism as right-wing phenomena.
- Explain the attributes and behavior of right-wing terrorism.
- Define international terrorism.

- Discuss the reasons for international terrorism.
- Explain terrorist networks and environments.
- Understand the international dimension of the New Terrorism.
- Describe the debate on identifying and defining gender-selective terrorism.
- Discuss the reasons for perpetrating gender-selective terrorist violence.
- Explain the elements that comprise and define criminal dissident terrorism.
- Describe the debate on identifying and defining criminal dissident terrorism.
- Understand and explain terrorist objectives.
- Explain the concept of asymmetric warfare and the means used to engage in this strategy.
- Interpret the selection and symbolism of targets.
- Discuss the attributes of terrorist "success."
- Explain the perspectives of the media and governments.
- Understand the role of the media.
- Describe the conflict for manipulating the "spin" of media reporting.
- Discuss issues arising from the debate concerning media regulation.
- Understand extremist ideologies and behavior in the United States.
- Analyze differences between left-wing and right-wing extremist movements in the United States.
- Analyze domestic terrorism occurring in the United States.
- Understand international terrorism occurring in the United States.
- Evaluate lone-wolf terrorist incidents in the United States.
- Classify the scope of counterterrorist options.
- Summarize counterterrorism and the use of force.
- Explain repressive options for operations other than war.
- Explain conciliatory options for operations other than war.
- Discuss counterterrorism and legalistic options.
- Explain the conceptual and international contexts of homeland security.
- Describe the international context of homeland security.
- Debate the American approach to homeland security.
- Identify civil liberties challenges that occur when implementing homeland security policies.
- Discuss balancing the need for security and civil liberties protections.
- Discuss theoretical projections for the future of terrorism.
- Analyze possible terrorist environments in the 21st century.
- Identify types of possible new threats posed by violent extremists.
- Explain theoretical and plausible scenarios for ending terrorist campaigns.
- Describe plausible scenarios for future terrorism in the United States.