



Criminology 495: Capstone in Criminology, Law and Society

The Past, Present, and Future of Terrorism

Fall 2021

Dr. Wesley S. McCann

Office Hours: Virtual by appointment

Email: wmccann@gmu.edu

Class Time: Monday/Wednesday (DL1-9:00-10:15 a.m.)

Monday/Wednesday (DL3 -10:30-11:45 a.m.)

Graduate Teaching Assistant: (DL1- Andrew Madrigal, amadrig2@gmu.edu)
(DL3- Suraiya Shammi, sshammi@gmu.edu)

Course Design

This course will follow the synchronous remote-only model. As such, classes will be conducted via Zoom during regular scheduled class time (see time listed above). Classes on Mondays will be lectures led by Professor McCann. Classes on Wednesdays will be recitations led by the Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA). This means that it is expected students have read the required materials by class time on Monday. Additional activities, assignments, quizzes, and exams will be assessed via Blackboard outside of class time. This fully remote course will take place entirely remotely with no in-person meetings.

Lectures on Monday will cover the topics pertaining to the course (e.g. terrorism) whereas Wednesday will focus on honing your scholarly reading, writing, and research skills via recitation. This means we will cover the content from the textbook on Monday and will then shift gears to covering the group project- the seminal assessment for the course- on Wednesday.

This basically means we discuss some topic pertaining to terrorism and counterterrorism policy on Monday and then take what we have learned and apply it to the group project. In the same vein, we will also discuss academic and scholarly inquiry on Wednesday by doing various data, literature review, synthesis, and analysis exercises that can also be applied to the group project. This approach ensures students learn about terrorism and counterterrorism policy while also spending significant time developing their research and writing skills while working as a group towards a final product (see below).

Course Description

This class is designed for you to examine and understand the historical and multicultural nuance behind the concept of ‘terrorism’ and its many motivations. This course will delve into the historical evolution of the concepts of ‘terrorism’ and ‘hate crime’ in order to fully appreciate its meaning today, as well unpack the contemporary notion of ‘extremism’. We will also critically analyze how culture, politics, religion, and ideology shape the different typologies of terrorism. Furthermore, we will examine the issue of defining these concepts and how that impacts ‘our’ ability to detect and respond to contemporary threats. Lastly, we will examine what research has shown regarding: the causes of terrorism, effective counterterrorism strategies, and the ethical concerns posed by various responses to extremism.

Overall, this course is designed to get you to think critically about effective ways to counter emerging extremist movements.

Student Learning Objectives:

- Critically examine and orally communicate the historical evolution of the concept of ‘terrorism’ across diverse and multicultural societies.
- Critically examine and discuss how extremism takes shape in the United States and abroad.
- Critically examine and discuss the role culture, politics, religion, and ideology have on extremism.
- Understand and articulate the different typologies of terrorism and their constituent elements.
- Critically examine and discuss the theoretical explanations and causes of extremism.
- Understand how extremism as a concept is constructed and defined and how this has varied over time.
- Understand and critique the different methods used to counter extremism in a global environment.
- Critically examine and discuss the ethical issues that occur in responding to extremism.
- Create meaningful policy ideas for combating extremism in the modern era using the knowledge that is generated by robust research.
- Create a research question; engage in an inquiry process; and situate the concepts, practices, or results within a broader context.

Additional Requirements Met by This Course



This is the department's capstone course that is required for all CLS majors, and meets the university requirements for Writing-Intensive and Scholarly Inquiry courses. This is also a Mason Impact Course.

Capstone Course

A capstone course is the “crowning achievement” or culminating course that pulls a department’s curriculum together from the foundation through the structure. As such, this course examines a key foundational issue in the field of criminology and justice, which underlies the study of different aspects of this field: how can we combat extremism?

Writing-Intensive

The university also requires students to complete a writing-intensive course in their major. Writing-intensive courses must “devote significant time to instruction on writing and how to complete assignments successfully. . . Students are required to revise at least one substantive assignment in the course based on instructor feedback. . . [and that assignment should be] divided into sequenced sections that receive feedback and can be revised.” (wac.gmu.edu/wi-course-criteria).

A “substantive assignment” means a paper of about 3500 words, or around 14 pages. This course fulfills the Writing Intensive requirement in the CLS major. It does so through the research paper that is developed through a process of drafting, feedback, and revision. This course provides instruction on writing skills in general, and instruction, review, and revision of the specific written products required in this course (the report section drafts and the final report). In addition, numerous short writing assignments will be completed to provide additional opportunities to develop critical thinking and writing skills.

Scholarly Inquiry

This course has been designated a Scholarly Inquiry course by Mason’s Office of Student Scholarship, Creative Activities, and Research (OSCAR), as part of the Students as Scholars initiative. Students as Scholars is Mason's initiative to give students the opportunity to conduct

undergraduate research. Check out OSCAR.gmu.edu or stop by the Office of Student Scholarship, Creative Activities, and Research in the Johnson Center to learn about the many other programs they offer students.

The general student learning outcomes for Scholarly Inquiry courses are that "Students will articulate a scholarly question; engage in the key elements of the scholarly process; and situate the concepts, practices, or results of scholarship within a broader context." In this course, students will engage in the scholarly process by:

1. Articulating and refining a scholarly question.
2. Following ethical principles.
3. Gathering evidence appropriate to the question.
4. Applying appropriate scholarly conventions when reporting.
5. Assessing the reliability of key assumptions and evidence.
6. Situating the scholarly inquiry within a broader context.

Course Materials

1. Gus Martin (2019). Essentials of Terrorism: Concepts and Controversies (5th edition). Sage (978-1544342931)

Technology Needs:

Students will need access to a microphone and webcam for this course. Almost every laptop has these items built in. If you do not have a laptop, cameras with built-in microphones can be purchased for a small fee online. These will be essential for weekly activities, lectures, and recitations..

Course Requirements:

This class requires both individual and group work (50-50). Students will be randomly assigned to a small group (4-5 people) during the first week. This will be your group for the entirety of the semester (see below).

Individual Work

Activities (20%)- This class will operate as both a lecture/seminar as it adheres to the Socratic method. Students will be expected to show up prepared in order to participate as well as to bring the respective materials to class each day. This requires students to actively engage and critically think about the course materials *before* coming to class. At the beginning of most weeks, an activity will be posted within the respective weekly module in Blackboard. This activity may take the form of a discussion, a debate, a case analysis, a problem that needs a solution, or something else. Many times these activities will require asynchronous interaction with your peers via video chat. Each of these activities builds on what we discussed in class. Regardless of format, instructions will be provided, and each response requires a minimum of 300 words. There are 10 total activities that are worth 20 points each (200 total points).

Quizzes (30%)- Each quiz will consist of 1 essay question (each response is worth 50 points); 3 short answer (e.g. one paragraph) questions worth 10 points each (30 total points) and 20 multiple-choice, true-false questions (worth 1 point each; 20 total points). Each quiz is out of 100 points. Quizzes will open on Blackboard at 12:01 a.m. on the Friday of the Week of the quiz, and will close on Sunday at 11:59 p.m. EST. Students can respond to the question whenever they would like during this period. Nonetheless, students will have 90 minutes to complete the quiz from the time the quiz is opened (timed response). If you accidentally close the quiz or exit the window, the clock continues to run and you may re-enter the quiz without a penalty.

Students can use any and all course materials on the quiz. However, students MAY NOT consult additional sources or online sources. A plagiarism tracker is used during this exam, so if you utilize sources for the written portion beyond what is provided to you in class, it will be easy to see where you got your inspiration from. Notes, lectures, readings materials, etc., are all fair game for the quizzes. There is a catch though. If you spend too much time digging through these items to find the answer, you will run out of time and will almost certainly be unable to complete the quiz in its entirety. Thus, preparing for these quizzes requires you to: 1) actually complete the required readings before class; 2) engage in course lectures and activities; and 3) rely on course materials and concepts in your weekly activities. The course is designed so that you DON'T have to cram before a quiz. Instead, put in the work each week and you will be golden; and you might actually learn quite a bit.

More details regarding the layout of the quiz will be discussed in the preceding week. Quizzes will cover topics covered leading up to that quiz. The essay response (50-point question) is capped at 1 page, single-spaced, and is expected to have been edited thoroughly. This also means you have to cite your sources properly. References do not count towards the page limit. There will be 3 quizzes during the semester (total of 300 points).

Group Work

Research Project (50%):

The Research Project is a competition to see what group can put together the best final product. What does this entail you might ask? Well, groups are tasked with picking a salient issue or problem that needs to be addressed in the realm of countering violent extremism (CVE) and are assessed on how well they analyze that problem or issue and their proposed solutions. The more creative and robust, the better the project. This project will result in a final presentation to the class and a Final Product to be submitted during Finals Week. Project components are described below. However, please consult the Research Project Guide listed in Blackboard. Consider this your rubric or roadmap for the entire semester.

Individual Contributions

This team project requires weekly participation and occasional submissions (see calendar below). This group project is designed for groups to succeed in analyzing a complex problem and providing potential solutions to it using social science research methodologies. This means that freeloaders will be tracked and weeded out over the semester, however.

Every time the group submits an item, each member is required to submit peer review. These items will be located in the same weekly module. For example, once the item is submitted (e.g. Literature Review), each team member will evaluate your level of participation, organization, and quality of work, as well as each other's. Individuals will also evaluate themselves. More importantly, surveys connect to grades because the latter are weighted based on level of contribution. Surveys will be open for each major submission and will close within 24 hours of that submission's due date (see chart below). For a more in-depth explanation of this item, please refer to the Individual Contributions page in the Group Project Guide.

Weekly Submissions (25%; 250 points)

The project consists of many parts. More on this project will be provided each week in terms of a rubric/expectations (see "Group Project Guide"). Here are the major parts of the project, however, that are due at various points during the semester (see Project Breakdown' OR 'Schedule' below):

- Topic Idea Decision (Week 2) (10 points)
- Data Sources and Design (Week 4)(50 points)
- Literature Review (Week 8)(100 points)
- Analysis and Proposed Solutions (Week 12)(75 points)

Feedback will be provided on a weekly basis for each group's weekly submissions, activities, and inquiries. Thus, you are expected to take into consideration the feedback you receive on a weekly basis. The feedback is meant to help guide your team on your final project. Teams that

focus on weekly self-evaluation and take feedback under consideration will have stronger final products.

Presentation (5%; 50 points)

Prior to submitting your final project, you are required to complete a team presentation in Week 14 or 15 on your project. This comes in the form of a 15-20 minute presentation and discussion, which should be slide or video based and covers the following items:

1. What did you choose to examine and why? (ex: Taliban in Afghanistan; PKK in Kurdish territories; Lone Wolf terrorism in Spain)
2. What is the historical context for the group or phenomenon you are covering?
3. What efforts have been made to combat this group or phenomenon?
4. How prevalent is this group or phenomenon today and what does the data say about this group or phenomenon?
5. What needs to be done to address this group or phenomenon?

You will have significant creative latitude to carry out this presentation in any way you see fit. A rubric for this will be provided early in the semester (“Group Project Rubric”). Once presentations are done, each group will receive written feedback from their peers.

Final Product (15%; 150 points)

This will be the culmination of everything to-date. Put simply, this is all of the constituent parts plus my feedback throughout the semester as well as the feedback provided by your peers following the presentation. This final product will be turned in *after* your presentation so you can make adjustments based on class feedback. This will be due during Week 16 (i.e. finals week).

Keep in mind that this is not a mere merging of prior submissions together. This requires a substantial amount of revision, editing, formatting, and additional research. Groups that continually improve upon their body of work are typically the groups that win the final prize.

This assignment needs to be **no less than 14 pages** OR 3,500 words, using 12-Point Times New Roman or Garamond font. This assignment will require a small amount of research. The Group Project Guide lays everything out for groups to be successful. In sum, students will choose one phenomenon to use as the baseline for their analysis (ex: focusing on the rise of environmental terrorism after the 1960s). You will need to utilize course readings, scholarly articles, and notes and discussions from class in answering the prompt(s). ***Students that regularly come to class will have a much easier time with this assignment as compared to those who fail to attend regularly. (Hint, Hint).*** All assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. EST in the Blackboard course content folder. This assignment is worth 150 points.

Project Breakdown

Groupwork Breakdown (500 points)

Week	Submissions	Points
2	Topic Idea Decision	10
4	Data Sources and Design	50
4	Submission Review	0
8	Literature Review	100
8	Submission Review	0
12	Analysis & Proposed Solutions	75
12	Submission Review	0
14-15	Presentations	50
14-15	Presentation Review	0
14-15	Peer Review of Projects	15
TBD	Final Product	150
TBD	Final Product Review	0
Total		500

The final grade will be comprised of the following components:

<i>Quizzes</i> (3 x 100 points each) (300 total points)	30%
<i>Activities</i> (200 total points)	20%
<i>Research Project</i> (500 total points)	50%
<i>Total (1000 points)</i>	100%

Grading scale:

A: 93%–100%

A-: 90%–92%

B+: 87%–89%

B: 83%–86%

B-: 80%–82%

C+: 77%–79%

C: 73%–76%

C-: 70%–72%

D+: 67%–69%

D: 60%–66%

F: 59% & Below

Course Policies

Changes to Syllabus Clause

The course requirements [see “course requirements” above] of this syllabus may be changed at any time by mutual agreement of the parties. Here the “parties” refers to the course instructor and student body within that course. Such modification shall be effective upon the express agreement by both parties of an alteration to this syllabus encompassing those changes. Where the alteration changes the course requirements, the agreement shall also describe the change in scope, character or complexity in terms of the course requirements that is the basis for the change. No change can be instituted without both the course instructor and a three-quarters majority of the voting student body coming to an agreement. Changes proposed by the course instructor will not go into effect until the course instructor describes the change in scope, character or complexity in terms of the course requirements that is the basis for the change, and the student body votes on and affirms those changes. Such a vote need not occur during regularly scheduled course time, but the scheduling of such a vote is at the discretion of the course instructor. If a vote to change the course requirements is proposed by the instructor outside of regularly scheduled course time, students will be given a maximum of 24 hours to respond. Once a vote has been executed and the voting period elapsed, the instructor will record and disseminate the results to the student body. Once the results are relayed, any agreed upon change is immediately effectuated. No student may propose a change to the course requirements.

Diversity Statement

At George Mason, students and faculty should create a learning environment that fosters respect for people across identities. We welcome and value individuals and their differences, including gender expression and identity, race, economic status, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age and ability, as well as heterodox ideas or opinions. We encourage all members of this course to engage with the material personally, but to also be open to exploring and learning from experiences different than their own.

Expectations for virtual office hours

Office hours will be held in Zoom:

- It is recommended that you schedule a time and place to come to office hours where you can have your camera on for better clarity in questions and answers.
- Have your course materials (books, notes, etc.) available when you attend office hours.
- Here is a quick tutorial for screen sharing to aid in showing documents during the call:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YA6SGQIVmcA>

Procedure for attending office hours:

- Schedule a Zoom meeting by emailing the instructor.
- Once the meeting is scheduled, ensure that you do the following:
 - Arrive on time for your appointment.
 - Please wait in the “waiting room” until the professor “admits” you into the office.

Course Accessibility

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with me. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email:ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474

Students who experience barriers in this course are encouraged to contact the instructor as early in the semester as possible. The Disability Services department is available to facilitate the removal of barriers and to ensure reasonable accommodations. For more information about the services they provide, please visit: [Classroom and Academic Accommodations – Disability Services \(gmu.edu\)](#) Student accommodations as determined by DS (e.g., additional time, time flexibility) should be discussed as early as possible with the instructor, and must be followed regardless of course delivery mode.

Covid-19 Note: Students who have a Covid-related disability should contact the Disability Services office; DS will contact faculty using standard protocols about any students who require accommodations.

Academic Integrity Policy

Students are expected to complete all course work with integrity by abiding by academic integrity policies. Acts of plagiarism and academic dishonest will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Academic integrity violations include, but are not limited to: plagiarism, cheating, resubmitting the same assignment for grade submitting work that is not the student's own, or facilitation (helping someone commit a dishonest act).

It is expected that students adhere to the George Mason University Honor Code as it relates to integrity regarding coursework and grades. The Honor Code reads as follows: "To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal and/or lie in matters related to academic work." More information about the Honor Code, including definitions of cheating, lying, and plagiarism, can be found at the Office of Academic Integrity website at <http://oai.gmu.edu>

As in many classes, a number of projects in this class are designed to be completed within your study group. With collaborative work, names of all the participants should appear on the work. Collaborative projects may be divided up so that individual group members complete portions of the whole, provided that group members take sufficient steps to ensure that the pieces conceptually fit together in the end product. Other projects are designed to be undertaken independently. In the latter case, you may discuss your ideas with others and conference with peers on drafts of the work; however, it is not appropriate to give your paper to someone else to revise. You are responsible for making certain that there is no question that the work you hand in

is your own. If only your name appears on an assignment, your professor has the right to expect that you have done the work yourself, fully and independently.

Any incident of serious academic dishonesty may result in the student failing the course. The Professor will also report the incident to the School's Academic Integrity Officer. Possible sanctions from the Board include suspension or expulsion.

Technology and Web-Conferencing

Activities and assignments in this course will regularly use the Blackboard learning system, available at <https://mymason.gmu.edu>. Students are required to have regular, reliable access to a computer with an updated operating system (recommended: Windows 10 or Mac OSX 10.13 or higher) and a stable broadband Internet connection (cable modem, DSL, satellite broadband, etc., with a consistent 1.5 Mbps [megabits per second] download speed or higher. You can check your speed settings using the speed test on this website.)

Activities and assignments in this course will regularly use web-conferencing software (Blackboard Collaborate / Zoom). In addition to the requirements above, students are required to have a device with a functional camera and microphone. In an emergency, students can connect through a telephone call, but video connection is the expected norm.

Course Materials and Student Privacy

All course materials posted to Blackboard or other course site are private to this class; by federal law, any materials that identify specific students (via their name, voice, or image) must not be shared with anyone not enrolled in this class.

Videorecordings -- whether made by instructors or students -- of class meetings that include audio, visual, or textual information from other students are private and must not be shared outside the class

Live video conference meetings (e.g. Collaborate or Zoom) that include audio, textual, or visual information from other students must be viewed privately and not shared with others in your household or recorded and shared outside the class

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual or interpersonal misconduct

As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Non-Confidential Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, complicity, and retaliation to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-993-3686 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

Extra-Credit Policy

The instructor reserves the rights to give students extra credit opportunities through the semester. Any and all opportunities will be made available to all students and will be discussed during class. Thus, students who miss class may miss opportunities to achieve extra credit.

Make-up/Late submission Policy

No late work will be accepted unless you have a pre-planned absence or pre-arranged accommodation. These excusals can be for any *legitimate* reason but need to be cleared in advance. If you are planning on missing classwork, please let me know within a reasonable amount of time.. Please speak with me if you are a student-athlete so that we can discuss proper arrangements. Assignments that are submitted late will not be given credit. You are all adults, and as such, will be treated like adults. I understand 'life happens' and things come up. Nonetheless, it is your responsibility to communicate- proactively- with me, as I am extremely flexible and amenable to the chaos that can be college (i.e. help me help you!).

Technology Issues

If you have technology issues or needs during the semester, please contact ITS Helpdesk at support@gmu.edu.

Additional Student Resources

- Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC)
- Counseling and Psychological Services
- The Learning Services Office or field-specific tutoring
- The Center for Culture, Equity, and Empowerment
- LBGTQ+ Resources
- University Career Services
- University Writing Center

Information and links regarding these and other student support offices are available on our [Student Support Resources on Campus](#) page.

Schedule

***weeks run from Monday-Sunday**

****all items are due at 11:59 p.m. EST**

Unit #1- The Basics

Week 1 (8/23-8/29): What is Terrorism and why it matters?

No readings!

Week 2 (8/30-9/5): Defining Terrorism

Read: Chapter 1

Read: McCann and Pimley (2019)

Due: Activity #1 (opens Monday at 12:01 a.m. and closes Friday at 11:59 p.m.)

Due: Topic Idea (due Sunday)

Week 3 (9/6-9/12): (No Class Monday, Labor Day)

*Recitation only this week. Use time to work on next week's group submission.

Week 4 (9/13-9/19): The Media and Terrorism: A Love Story

Read: Chapter 4

Due: Activity #2

Due: Data Sources and Design (due Sunday)

Due: Submission review (due Monday)

Week 5 (9/20-9/26): Causes of Terrorist Violence

Read: Chapter 3

Read: LaFree and Ackerman (2009)

Due: Activity #3 (opens Monday at 12:01 a.m. and closes Friday at 11:59 p.m.)

Quiz #1 (opens Friday @ 12:01 a.m. and closes Sunday @ 11:59 p.m.)

Unit #2- Types of Terrorism

Week 6 (9/27-10/3): Domestic Extremism in the United States

Read: Chapter 9

Due: Activity #4 (opens Monday at 12:01 a.m. and closes Friday at 11:59 p.m.)

Week 7 (10/4-10/10): The Internationalization of Terrorism

Read: Chapter 8

Read: LaFree et al. (2010)

Due: Activity #5 (opens Monday at 12:01 a.m. and closes Friday at 11:59 p.m.)

Week 8 (10/11-10/17): Dissident Terrorism (Tues Schedule, Fall Break)

Read: Chapter 6

Due: Activity #6 (opens Monday at 12:01 a.m. and closes Friday at 11:59 p.m.)

Due: Review of Literature (due Sunday)

Due: Submission Review (due Monday)

Week 9 (10/18-10/24): Religious Terrorism

Read: Chapter 7

Read: Osama bin Laden's Fatwas (1996 and 1998)

Due: Activity #7 (opens Monday at 12:01 a.m. and closes Friday at 11:59 p.m.)

Quiz #2 (opens Friday @ 12:01 a.m. and closes Sunday @ 11:59 p.m.)

Unit #3- What to Do About Terrorism? Policy, Practice, and Problems

Week 10 (10/25-10/31): Case Study: 9/11

Read: 9/11 Commission Report (Brief Version)

Due: Activity #8 (opens Monday at 12:01 a.m. and closes Friday at 11:59 p.m.)

Weeks 11 (11/1-11/7): The New Homeland Security

Read: Chapter 11

Week 12 (11/8-11/14): What works?

Read: Chapter 10

Due: Activity #9 (opens Monday at 12:01 a.m. and closes Friday at 11:59 p.m.)

Due: Analysis & Proposed Solutions (due Sunday)

Due: Submission Review (due Monday)

Week 13 (11/15-11/21): Future Projections....

Read: Chapter 12

Due: Activity #10 (opens Monday at 12:01 a.m. and closes Friday at 11:59 p.m.)

Week 14 (11/22-11/28): Presentations (No classes on 11/24-11/26, Thanksgiving Break)

Week 15 (11/29-12/5): Presentations

Due: Presentation Review (due Friday 12/3)

Quiz #3 (opens Friday @ 12:01 a.m. and closes Sunday @ 11:59 p.m.)

Final Product TBD

Final Product Review TBD