

# Terrorism

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## Course Description

In this course, we will examine the form of political violence called terrorism. There are three main objectives for this course:

1. Familiarize students with the history of terrorism, including important recent events such as the September 11 attacks and the rise of ISIS.
2. Introduce students to main themes and controversies in the academic terrorism literature.
3. Supply students with the concepts and theories necessary to understand and analyze terrorism.

This course is structured in three parts. First, we will examine terrorism from a conceptual and historical perspective (weeks 1 through 3). This section will lay the foundation for the subsequent weeks: it is necessary to understand what we mean by terrorism, and to appreciate the ways terrorism has changed (and has remained the same) during its history. Second, we will cover the motivations for terrorism (weeks 4 through 7). Why do individuals and groups use terrorism rather than legitimate means to pursue their objectives? We will explore various factors, including ideological and psychological ones, to make sense of this decision. Third, the second half of the course is organized around terrorist groups (weeks 8 through 16). Terrorism is largely a group phenomenon. Thus, this course will spend significant time addressing terrorism from a group-level perspective, covering topics such as the strategies terrorist groups use, their success in achieving political objectives, and the most prominent terrorist groups currently active.

## Course Requirements

### 1. Participation (10% of grade)

Students are expected to attend all classes, read the weekly material before class, and actively participate in discussion. Lectures are meant to be interactive, and significant time will be allotted for discussion in each session.

### 2. Book Quizzes (25% of grade)

Rather than a midterm and final exam, students are assigned several book quizzes distributed throughout the semester. Since the book quizzes are scheduled in advance, students are expected to carefully read each book before the quiz date. While these reading requirements are somewhat demanding, these books are all written in accessible and uncomplicated language. All are available for purchase at reasonable prices online at venues such as [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com).

The required books to purchase are:

1. Joseph Conrad. 1967. *The Secret Agent*. New York: Penguin.
2. Lawrence Wright. 2006. *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*. New York: Knopf.
3. Daniel Byman. 2015. *Al-Qaeda, The Islamic State, and the Global Jihadist Movement: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
4. *The 9/11 Commission Report*

### 3. Become a Case Expert (25% of grade)

In week 3, students will select a terrorist group on which they develop expertise throughout the semester. Students are expected to write five short papers during the semester that discuss their terrorist group in terms of the weekly topic. For instance, if the weekly topic is ideology and religion, then students submitting papers this week will research and outline the ideological and/or religious orientation of their terrorist group. There is no length requirement for these papers, although one page double-spaced is a reasonable target. Students are also encouraged to use knowledge about their case in class discussions.

Please see the end of this syllabus for recommendations on groups to select. While this list is not exhaustive, these are some groups for which there is sufficient information to complete all the assignments. If you are uncertain about a group, then please check with me first. As a note, students are not allowed to choose either Al-Qaeda or ISIS; learning about these groups is already built into the class schedule.

### 4. Write a Research Paper (40% of grade)

Students will write a research paper on an analytical question about terrorism that suits their interests. A good research paper does not merely summarize previous research or restate the course material. Rather, students are expected to demonstrate their ability to think critically, conduct additional research, and carry out their own analysis. I will provide additional resources on writing a good research paper throughout the semester, and students are advised to think about topics that might interest them as early as possible.

## Course Schedule and Readings

### Week 1: Concepts and Definitions

- Charles Tilly. 2004. "Terror, Terrorism, Terrorists." *Sociological Theory* 22(1): 5-13.
- Michael Findley and Joseph Young. 2012. "Terrorism and Civil War: A Spatial and Temporal Approach to a Conceptual Problem." *Perspectives on Politics* 10(2): 285-305.
- Leonard Weinberg, Ami Pedahzur, and Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler. 2004. "The Challenges of Conceptualizing Terrorism." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16(4): 777-794.
- Ignacio Sanchez-Cuenca and Luis De La Calle. 2009. "Domestic Terrorism: The Hidden Side of Political Violence." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12: 31-49.

### Week 2: History, I

- Gerard Chaliand and Arnaud Blin. 2007. *The History of Terrorism: From Antiquity to Al Qaeda*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapters 5, 6, and 7.
- David Rapoport. 2002. "The Four Waves of Rebel Terror and September 11." *Anthropoetics* 8(1).
- Christopher Fettweis. 2009. "Freedom Fighters and Zealots: Al Qaeda in Historical Perspective." *Political Science Quarterly* 124(2): 269-296.

### Week 3: History, II

- Gerard Chaliand and Arnaud Blin. 2007. *The History of Terrorism: From Antiquity to Al Qaeda*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapter 11.
- Walter Laqueur. 2002. *A History of Terrorism*. New Brunswick: Transaction. Chapters 2 and 5.
- Martha Crenshaw. 1981. "The Causes of Terrorism." *Comparative Politics* 13(4): 379-399.
- Brian Crim. 2007. "Terror from the Right: Revolutionary Terrorism and the Failure of the Weimar Republic." *Journal of Conflict Studies* 27(2): 51-63.

### Week 4: Motivations for Terrorism, I

- Max Abrahms. 2008. "What Terrorists Really Want: Terrorist Motives and Counterterrorism Strategy." *International Security* 32(4): 78-105.
- Jeff Victoroff. 2005. "The Mind of a Terrorist: A Review and Critique of the Psychological Approach." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49(1): 3-42.
- Alexander Lee. 2011. "Who Becomes a Terrorist? Poverty, Education, and the Origins of Political Violence." *World Politics* 63(2): 203-245.
- Simon Cottee and Keith Hayward. 2011. "Terrorist (E)motives: The Existential Attractions of Terrorism." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 34(12): 963-986.

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- Adam Lankford. 2017. "A Psychological Re-examination of the Mental Health Problems among the 9/11 Terrorists." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (Online): 1-24.

### **Week 5: Motivations for Terrorism, II**

- Joseph Conrad. 1967. *The Secret Agent*. New York: Penguin.

### **Week 6: Ideology and Religion, I**

- David Rapoport. 1988. "Messianic Sanctions for Terror." *Comparative Politics* 20(2): 195-213.
- James Piazza. 2009. "Is Islamic Terrorism More Dangerous? An Empirical Study of Group Ideology, Organization, and Goal Structure." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21(1): 62-88.
- Ehud Sprinzak. 1995. "Right-Wing Terrorism in a Comparative Perspective: The Case of Split Delegitimation." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7(1): 17-43.
- Jeroen Grunning and Richard Jackson. 2011. "What's So 'Religious' about 'Religious Terrorism?'" *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 4(3): 369-388.

### **Week 7: Ideology and Religion, II**

- Walter Reich. 1998. *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. Chapters 2, 5, and 6.
- Stathis Kalyvas. 2015. "Is ISIS a Revolutionary Group and if Yes, What are the Implications?" *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9(4): 42-47.
- Charles Krauthammer. 2001. "The Enemy is Not Islam. It is Nihilism." *The Weekly Standard*. October, 22.

### **Week 8: Strategies of Terrorism**

- Andrew Kydd and Barbara Walter. 2006. "The Strategies of Terrorism." *International Security* 31(1): 49-80.
- Robert Pape. 2003. "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism." *American Political Science Review* 97(3): 343-361.
- Thomas Schelling. 1982. "Thinking About Nuclear Terrorism." *International Security* 6(4): 61-77.
- Nicholas Grossman. 2018. *Drones and Terrorism: Asymmetric Warfare and the Threat to Global Security*. New York: IB Tauris. Selected Chapters.

### Week 9: The Effectiveness of Terrorism

- Max Abrahms. 2006. "Why Terrorism Does Not Work." *International Security* 31(2): 42-78.
- Audrey Cronin. 2006. "How al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups." *International Security* 31(1): 7-48.
- Claude Berrebi and Esteban Klor. 2008. "Are Voters Sensitive to Terrorism? Direct Evidence from the Israeli Electorate." *American Political Science Review* 102(3): 279-301.

### Week 10: Counterterrorism

- Lawrence Wright. 2006. *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*. New York: Knopf.

### Week 11: Terrorism and Democracy

- Ladan Boroumand and Roya Boroumand. 2002. "Terror, Islam, and Democracy." *Journal of Democracy* 13(2): 5-20
- Amichai Magen. 2018. "Fighting Terrorism: The Democracy Advantage." *Journal of Democracy* 29(1): 111-125.
- Erica Chenoweth. 2010. "Terrorism and Democracy." *Annual Review of Political Science* 16: 355-378.

### Week 12: Sociocultural Explanations

- Robert Braun and Michael Genkin. 2014. "Cultural Resonance and the Diffusion of Suicide Bombings: The Role of Collectivism." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58(7): 1258-1254.
- Scott Atran. 2006. "The Moral Logic and Growth of Suicide Terrorism." *The Washington Quarterly* 29(2): 127-147.
- Jean Baudrillard. 2002. *The Spirit of Terrorism*. New York: Verso. Chapters 1 and 3.

### Week 13: 9/11

- *The 9/11 Commission Report*

### Week 14: International Terrorism

- Thomas Hegghammer. 2013. "Should I Stay or Should I Go? Explaining Variation in Western Jihadists' Choice between Domestic and Foreign Fighting." *American Political Science Review* 107(1): 1-15.
- Barak Mendelsohn. 2012. "God vs. Westphalia: Radical Islamist Movements and the Battle for Organizing the World." *Review of International Studies* 38: 589-613.
- Assaf Moghadam. 2009. "Motives for Martyrdom: Al-Qaida, Salafi Jihad, and the Spread of Suicide Attacks." *International Security* 33(3): 46-78.
- Martha Crenshaw. 2017. "Transnational Jihadism in Civil Wars." *Daedalus* 146(4): 59-70.

## Week 15: Contemporary Terrorism

- Daniel Byman. 2015. *Al-Qaeda, The Islamic State, and the Global Jihadist Movement: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## Week 16: Future of Terrorism

- No readings; prepare to hand in final papers.

## Terrorist Groups

Here is a suggested list of terrorist groups to select to study throughout the semester. Remember that this list is not exhaustive, but that you cannot select either Al-Qaeda or ISIS:

- Shining Path
- FARC
- Aum Shinrikyo
- People's Will
- PKK
- The Black Hand
- Hezbollah
- Egyptian Islamic Jihad
- Taliban (post 2001)
- Sikh Separatists
- Caucasus Emirate
- Haqqani Network
- Animal Liberation Front
- Hofstad Group
- ETA
- Weather Underground
- Hamas
- Armed Islamic Group
- Red Army Faction
- LTTE
- Abu Sayyaf
- IRA
- Ku Klux Klan (1860s or 1950s)
- Cuban Nationalist Movement
- Al-Shabaab
- The Order
- Japanese Red Army
- Jemaah Islamiya