

**UNDERSTANDING TERRORISM:
ORIGINS, OPERATIONS, AND STRATEGIES**

**Spring Quarter 2009
Monday/Wednesday 11-12:30**

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Background: In the wake of the attacks of September 11, 2001, international terrorism has become the most important national security problem facing the United States. Neither evidence nor logic suggests that a strategy of deterrence, used during the Cold War, will succeed in coping with the present threat. Instead, the United States needs a new strategy to deal with the individuals and groups who have the means and motivation to attack the U.S. using non-conventional methods. Such a strategy must be founded on an adequate understanding of terrorism, its origins, its means of support, and strategic logic.

The goal of this course is to give students a unified, rigorous and empirically supported understanding of international terrorism, suitable for guiding policy efforts to cope with the main problems driving this form of violence. Three issues or themes in particular will be explored: the origins of terrorism, the way terrorist networks recruit and operate, and the strategies and counter-strategies of terrorist violence.

Requirements: Students are required to complete all assigned reading, actively participate in class discussions, and write five papers (one every other week). Papers are due on First Class by 6 pm the evening before class so that all students can read them in preparation for the day's discussion. Each paper will be worth 15% of the final grade. Class participation will be worth 25%.

Readings: Required readings are listed below. All readings can be downloaded using the url indicated below or will be distributed in class.

Class Discussion: Class meetings will be structured around an open discussion of the assigned readings and the papers students write for that class. A typical seminar will start with Professor Walter asking a student (student A) to open up a discussion on student B's paper, then asking student C to summarize and then evaluate student B's principal point. Student B will then be given the opportunity to respond before the topic is opened up to general discussion. Preparation for class will be critical.

Week One

- **Monday March 30: Course Introduction**
- **Wednesday April 1: What's our Working Definition of Terrorism Going to Be?**

Is terrorism a distinct form of violence or is it just political violence with a bad name?

Timothy Garton Ash, "Is There a Good Terrorist?" New York Review of Books, November 29, 2001. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/14860>

"What is Terrorism?" BBC News World Edition.
<http://bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1555265.stm>

Definition of Terrorism under U.S. Law:
http://terrorism.about.com/od/whatisterroris1/ss/DefineTerrorism_5.htm

"Terrorism: The Problems of Definition" Center for Defense Information.
http://www.cdi.org/program/document.cfm?DocumentID=1564&from_page=../index.cfm

Jonathan Mahler, "Ahead for Obama: How to Define Terror," The New York Times, November 30, 2008.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/30/weekinreview/30mahler.html>

Assignment: In no more than two pages, please offer what you believe is the most compelling definition of "terrorism" and explain why. Please post your memo on First Class by 6 pm Tuesday evening. We will use these definitions to come up with a class definition of terrorism.

Week Two

- **Monday April 6: What do Terrorist Groups Hope to Achieve?**

Fareed Zakaria. "The Politics of Rage: Why Do They Hate Us?" Newsweek.
http://www.fareedzakaria.com/ARTICLES/newsweek/101501_why.html

Mosin Hamid. "Why Do They Hate Us?" The Washington Post, July 22, 2007, p. B1.
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/20/AR2007072001806.html>

Read student papers. Make sure these are posted on First Class by 6 pm the evening BEFORE class (that's Sunday evening) so that all students can read them.

Paper topic: In no more than 4 pages, please state the main goals of the following terrorist organizations, why they are seeking these goals, and how they believe terrorist violence is likely to help them achieve these goals. (Each students should pick one of the

following groups: Hamas, Al Qaida, the Tamil Tigers, ETA, FARC, the Real IRA, the Shining Path, or Abu Sayyaf)

- **Wednesday April 8: Why Turn to Terrorism?**

What types of groups turn to terrorist violence and why? Does it work?

Robert Pape. Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism. (New York: Random House, 2005) pp. 3-76. On hard reserve in IRPS library.

Read student papers. Topic: If you were to design a study to determine whether terrorism works, what would you do and why? (Keep in mind that Bob Pape's method might be deeply flawed.)

Week Three

- **Monday April 13: Who Joins Terrorist Organizations and Why?**

What are the root causes of terrorism? (The Demand Side of Terrorism)

Andrea Elliott. "Where Boys Grow Up to Be Jihadis," The New York Times Magazine. November 25, 2007.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/25/magazine/25tetouan-t.html>

Alan Krueger and Jitka Maleckova, 2003. "Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?" Journal of Economic Perspectives 17 (4) 119-144.

<http://www.krueger.princeton.edu/terrorism2.pdf>

Read student papers. Topic: Explain the underlying conditions that appear to cause individuals to support extremist groups. What do you think are the most influential and why?

- **Wednesday April 15: How do Terrorist Organizations Recruit and Screen Participants?**

What do terrorist organizations do to increase recruitment? (The Supply Side of Terrorism)

Shankar Vedantam. "How Terrorist Organizations Work Like Clubs," The Washington Post. August 4, 2008, p. A2.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/03/AR2008080301529_pf.html

Laurence R. Iannaccone and Eli Berman, "Religious Extremism: The Good, the Bad, and the Deadly," Public Choice. 2006. <http://econ.ucsd.edu/~elib/rex.pdf>

Read student papers. Topic: What do terrorist organizations do to increase recruitment? What do you think is likely to be most effective and why?

Week Four

- **Monday April 20: Why Religion?**

Is ideology necessary for recruitment?

Peter Fritsch, "Lesson Plan: Religious Schools in Pakistan Fill Void – And Spawn Warriors," Wall Street Journal. October 2, 2001, p. A1.

<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=10&did=82524508&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=3&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1167870469&clientId=1561>

Colin J. Beck. "State Building as a Source of Islamic Political Organization," Unpublished paper. Stanford University. To be posted on First Class.

Read student papers. Topic: "Militant Islam is not about Islam." Explain.

- **Wednesday April 22: Who do Terrorists Target and Why?**

Martin C. Libicki, Peter Chalk, and Melanie Sisson. "Exploring Terrorist Targeting Preferences," RAND Report. 2007. Entire document.

http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2007/RAND_MG483.pdf

Read student papers. Topic: If you were the leader of Al Qaida and your goal was to convince the U.S. to change its policy in the Middle East, who would you target and why?

Week Five

- **Monday April 27: How Does Terrorism Work?**

Abu Bakr Naji "The Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage Through Which the Umma Will Pass." Translated by William McCants. Funded by the John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies. May 23, 2006.

<http://www.wcfia.harvard.edu/olin/images/Management%20of%20Savagery%20-%2005-23-2006.pdf>

Read student papers. Topic: The Management of Savagery is a strategic manual placed on the internet by Al Qaida in 2004. What is the main strategy that the manual describes and how does Al Qaida believe it is likely to work?

- **Wednesday April 29: What are the Strategies Terrorist Groups Pursue and Why?**

Andrew Kydd and Barbara Walter. "The Strategies of Terrorism," International Security. (Summer 2006).

http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/international_security/v031/31.1kydd.html

George Packer. "Knowing the Enemy: Can Social Scientists Redefine the "War on Terror"?" The New Yorker. December 18, 2006.

http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/12/18/061218fa_fact2

Read student papers. Topic. David Kilcullen argues that terrorism is a war about information. Explain what he means by this. Do you agree with him or not, and why?

Week Six

- **Monday May 4: The Battle of Algiers**

Martha Crenshaw, "The Effectiveness of Terrorism in the Algerian War," in Terrorism in Context.

Gary Crowds, "Terrorism and Torture in The Battle of Algiers: An Interview with Saadi Yacef," Cineaste. 29, 3 (Summer 2004), pp. 30-37. Copies to be distributed.

- **Wednesday May 6: Discussion about the Battle of Algiers**

Read student papers. Topic: Why did the FLN turn to terrorism against the French versus some other method? In what way did their tactics change over time and why? What does this film tell us about U.S. counter-insurgent strategies in Iraq since 2006?

Week Seven

- **Monday May 11. Counter-Terror Strategies**

U.S. Counter-Terrorism Manual. Pages to be assigned.

Read student papers. Topic: You are Barack Obama's main foreign policy adviser. The President has asked you to come up with a plan to deter additional attacks directed at the U.S. by Al Qaida. What advice would you give him and why?

- **Wednesday May 13: Iraq and Afghanistan. What Should the U.S. Do?**

David Kilcullen, "The Accidental Guerrilla." Pages to be assigned.

Read student papers. Topic: What were the main mistakes the U.S. made in Iraq and Afghanistan? Why were these mistakes made? What can the U.S. do to correct them?

Week Eight

- **Monday May 18: Addressing the Root Causes**

Eli Berman, Jacob N. Shapiro, and Joseph H. Felter, "Can Hearts and Minds Be Bought? The Economics of Counterinsurgency in Iraq," Unpublished Paper, December 16, 2008. <http://econ.ucsd.edu/~elib/ham.pdf>

Invited guest. Eli Berman to discuss his new project on terrorist recruitment.

Wednesday May 20: Topic TBD Please submit topics of particular interest.

Week Nine

- **Monday May 25: Memorial Day. No Class.**

- **Wednesday May 27 The Importance of Intelligence**

Paul Pillar, "Intelligence," in Audrey Kurth Cronin and James Ludes eds., Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy. (Georgetown 2003) pp. 115-139. Available on e-reserves.

Adam Meirowitz and Joshua A. Tucker, "Learning from Terrorism Markets," Perspectives on Politics. Vol. 2, no 2 (June 2004) 331-336.
http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2FPPS%2FPPS2_02%2FS1537592704040204a.pdf&code=50309212ccabe900a52396b9fb4b0cce

Read student papers. Topic: If you were the President of the United States and his advisory staff, how would you know whether we were winning the war against terror? What observable indicators would you use, why would you use these indicators, and what confidence would you have in your conclusions?

Week Ten

- **Monday June 1 The Challenges for Democracy**

Dana Priest and Barton Gellman, "U.S. Decries Abuse But Defends Interrogations," Washington Post, December 26, 2003. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A37943-2002Dec25?language=printer>

Russell Hardin, "Civil Liberties in the Era of Mass Terrorism," The Journal of Ethics, 8: 77-95, 2004.

<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/politics/faculty/hardin/research/CivLiberties.pdf>

Debate: Security versus civil liberties. What are the pros and cons of each? Which would you choose and why?

- **Wednesday June 3 Wrap-Up.**

**Seminar to be held at Professor Walter's house: 12982 Via Latina, Del Mar.
6:30-8:00 pm.**