

A History of Terrorism

Course Syllabus

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University of Maryland: University College

Course: HIST 319A

Location: Bethesda Naval Medical Center
Building One, Classroom B #3464

Class Time: 18:00 – 21:00 Wednesdays

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Website: <http://oforsber.kvasaheim.com/courses/hist319a/>

Course Description

In the field of Political Science, there are no fewer than six subfields: American Political System, Legalism, Normative Theory, Methodology, International Relations, and Comparative Politics. This course examines one specific aspect of Comparative Politics and of International Relations—that dealing with the causes and effects of terrorist activity.

According to the official course description, this course is

A survey of terrorism in the modern world, investigating the ideology of political violence since 1789. Topics include the organization, aims, arms, financing, and composition of terrorist groups, from the 1880s in Russia to the present day worldwide. Various interpretations of the terrorist phenomenon are discussed. Assignments include advanced reading and research.

With that stated, the underlying purpose for this term's course is to train you to be better terrorism researchers and thinkers. If you joined this class under the impression that it would be a place to sit around and condemn terrorist actions, you are in the wrong place. We are here to understand why they have done it and how to keep them from doing it in the future. I am assuming that we do want to keep it from happening. There is a very compelling moral argument that concludes terrorist activities are not immoral and do serve the common good. I may raise that argument as an intriguing counterpoint later in the term.

The field of terrorism research has grown substantially since the early 1980s, when Martha Crenshaw was forced to publish in a general-purpose journal. Today, two scholarly journals focus almost exclusively on the subject—*Terrorism and Political Violence* and *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*. Both are published by Taylor and Francis. The annual cost is \$643.00 for the former; \$1171.00 for the latter. Needless to say, UMUC does not subscribe to either journal. As such, we will have to make due with available resources.

Course Texts

The required books for this course are

- Howard, Russell D., and Sawyer, Reid L. 2006. *Terrorism and Counterterrorism*. McGraw Hill. ISBN: 0073527718
- White, Jonathan. 2005. *Terrorism and Homeland Security: An Introduction*, 5th edn. Wadsworth, Inc. ISBN: 0534643817

In addition to the texts, I will assign readings from articles and movies available on the Internet. These additional items will be available by link on the course's private website:

<http://oforsber.kvasaheim.com/courses/hist319a/>

Requirements

In addition to attending every class period, students are expected to deport themselves as professionals. This means that all readings and videos, extensive though they may be, are read, watched, and digested; questions about the materials are formulated; and extensions to the topics to be covered are considered. There are weekly assignments, online requirements, class discussion requirements, and a variety of in-class exercises designed to force you to grapple with some of the complexities of terrorism research. There is also a single examination.

In addition...

In addition to the above, you are expected to write as a professional. The grade you earn in the course will be based, in part, on the following the unwritten rules, which are assumed by *all* courses at this level. First, all writing must follow the rules of Standard American English. Do ignore the rules of the language. Additionally, all writing must follow academic style. This means there you can use neither contractions nor colloquialisms. Should your paper have too many simple errors, expect me to hand it back ungraded.

As words mean something, and as words have both a denotation and a connotation, you must use definitions relevant to the course, thus general-purpose references (such as dictionaries and encyclopedias) are not appropriate.

Cite definitions.

Cite information.

There *is* a class of information known as ‘common knowledge.’ Common knowledge does not need to be cited to avoid plagiarism charges. However, be careful; common knowledge is often *wrong*, as it is often based on incomplete analyses of events, and is often ‘common’ from a non-academic standpoint. The rule of thumb is that if the item is important to your argument, you should cite it using at least two *independent* sources. This reduces bias in your information. What is ‘common knowledge’? If the person serving you your Big Mac knows the fact, consider it ‘common knowledge’.

Closely follow the directions provided. If there is an ambiguity caused by the language, ask for clarification. If there is a vagueness in the requirements, that vagueness may be intentional; it allows you the latitude to explore the topic in your own direction. It also allows me to test what you think is important.

Format your paper as described in the course’s style sheet. There is a reason for the style sheet: it trains you to write in a specified format. It also emphasizes that different (sub-) disciplines have different prevailing styles.

If you make an assertion, you need to support it with unassailable logic and unassailable sources. Such sources do not include random people on the street, nor do they include politicians giving their own analysis of the event. Moreover, such sources do not include your parents or your dog (even if it is a Golden Retriever). Such sources, however, *do* include academics who are scholars of the class material and who have published in appropriate academic journals. Such sources are *peer-reviewed*. Newspapers are inherently biased in their analyses of events. Non–peer-reviewed sources have had no one—except the author—edit (and approve) the piece. Sources from non-academic publishers do not have to pass the scrutiny of academic publishers.

As you continue in the discipline, you will discover that certain sources will be better than others. This is a function of the journal editors and the peer-review process. Certain journals, such as *Journal of Politics*, *American Political Science Review*, and *International Organizations*, are of higher quality because the editors require a higher level of scholarship than do such journals as *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, *Politics and Policy*, and *American Journal of International Law*. With respect to university publishers, higher quality research is published by higher quality universities. Thus, a piece from Oxford University Press carries more weight than a piece from Podunk University Press.

When writing, avoid unnecessary words—especially adverbs and adjectives. Do not use metaphors. Do not use colloquialisms. Do not use contractions. Every word in the English language has a reason for existing and has a definite meaning, which includes not only its denotation but its connotation. Think about what you write and the words you choose. Words have power in that they represent meaning to people.

I can only grade what I read.

Realize that there is a difference between *ade*, *aid*, and *aide*; *your*, *yore*, and *you're*; *to*, *too*, and *two*; *its* and *it's*; *apart* and *a part*; *number* and *amount*; *less* and *fewer*; *Soviet* and *Russian*; and *British* and *English*. Get a dictionary of the English language and be best friends with it. Become best buds with Strunk and White.

Class Policies and Expectations

Taking Notes

Note taking is an essential part of any college course. Not only does the physical act of taking notes reinforce the material in question (it is not merely read and heard, but physically reproduced), it creates a record essential to preparation for quizzes and exams. If you are forced by circumstance to miss class, you are responsible for the information covered that class. Make friends in the class; they will be there for you if you miss a day.

Attendance

Attendance will be checked at the beginning of class. Tardiness counts as absence. If I do not mark you present, you are counted absent. Since participation is a component of your grade, it is very important that you show up for class on time and participate fully. Participation indicates that you have read the assignment (or watched the assignment), applied it, have grappled with some of the more obvious themes, *and are an active part of the class*. I strongly urge you to come to class with questions on the readings. If, by the end of the second class meeting, I cannot connect your face and name, you have a problem.

This is *your* class, not mine. I already know the material. Your job is to learn, not to get any specific grade. In all reality, your grade does not necessarily reflect knowledge gained; it reflects how well you meet the course expectations. When you leave this course, the only thing that really matters is how much you have learned.

Late Assignments

If an assignment is done late, it loses intrinsic value to you. If an assignment is handed in late, it loses all grade value. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. You may email your assignments to me, but it will cost you two things: in-depth feedback from me, and 10% of the total value of the assignment. When you hand in a multi-page hard copy, make sure it is stapled.

Preparation and Participation

This is college course. You are expected to have not only done the homework and all of the readings and viewings, but you are to have thought about them and their implications. Many classes will revolve around a lecture, many around discussions brought up by you from the readings or from current events, and many around current events that raise interesting questions with respect to the course topic, writ large.

If we do not cover the readings during a class, you are still responsible for them.

Conduct

At all times, all students are expected to be attentive, to take part in class discussions, and above all else to be courteous and sensitive towards their fellow students. We may deal with emotionally charged subject material with in this course (ethical, religious, political, etc.); such material requires maturity and openness to views which may conflict with one's own. This does not mean that you have to agree with anyone else. It does mean that you must understand their position, their arguments, and their assumptions about life.

This does not mean that any and every view is equally correct. Sometimes, you *will* be wrong.

Writing

Your grade depends upon how well you write. All assignments need to follow the style sheet for this class (if you have not done so yet, please download this document and read it). All writings reflect you and your ability (thus, plagiarism will be strongly punished). Make sure *you* are satisfied with your finished product. If you hand in hard copies, I will mark them up. This is good, for it gives you feedback with respect to your writing style.

As a side note, there is a fundamental difference between speaking extemporaneously and writing. Writing allows you to edit your words until they truly reflect your intentions. Speaking extemporaneously does not offer such luxuries. Sometimes, you will say things in

class that make no sense. (If you do that enough, you might get your own TV show.) The worst thing that I will do in that case is tell you that you are wrong. The world will not end. Flood waters will not rise. Locusts will not cover the Earth. Speaking in class trains you to think on your feet. However, your grades will come more from what you write; it gives a much richer indication of your ability and your knowledge.

Disabilities

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability, contact the Director of the Office of Disability Accommodations. Also, as soon as is reasonable, inform me of their response.

Cheating, Plagiarism, and Academic Dishonesty

Any instance of cheating, plagiarism, and/or academic dishonesty will at least result in an automatic failure of the course and will be dealt with according to those rules outlined in the Student Handbook.

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is both theft and cheating. It is using the intellectual property (words and/or ideas) or the product of someone else without giving proper credit. This includes (but is not limited to) not citing a quotation, not citing the underlying source of a paraphrase, and not placing quotation marks around a quotation. Such undocumented use of other's words or ideas in any medium of communication (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge) is an extremely serious offense, subject to disciplinary action that will include failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University.

Failure to cite sources of information is serious. Do not do it. In my five years teaching college-level students, I have failed 12 for minor instances of plagiarism and have removed four from the university—all four were seniors. One of the four lost a position at a lobbying firm in DC because of the plagiarism.

Please note that there is no discrepancy between this section and the section above regarding class requirements (the 'unwritten rules'). Many things are 'common knowledge.' Failing to cite such items is not plagiarism. It may be, however, poor style.

Assignments

Weekly Video Reflections:

VR2:	April 1	30	_____
VR3:	April 8	30	_____
VR4:	April 15	30	_____
VR5:	April 22	30	_____
VR6:	April 29	30	_____
VR7:	May 6	30	_____

Weekly Deep Answers:

DA2:	April 1	30	_____
DA3:	April 8	30	_____
DA4:	April 15	30	_____
DA5:	April 22	30	_____
DA6:	April 29	30	_____
DA7:	May 6	30	_____

Weekly Quick Assignments:

QA2:	April 1	10	_____
QA3:	April 8	10	_____
QA4:	April 15	10	_____
QA5:	April 22	10	_____
QA6:	April 29	10	_____
QA7:	May 6	10	_____

Weekly Quizzes:

WQ1:	March 25	10	_____
WQ2:	April 1	10	_____
WQ3:	April 8	10	_____
WQ4:	April 15	10	_____
WQ5:	April 22	10	_____
WQ6:	April 29	10	_____

Examination:

FE:	May 6	100	_____
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Participation:

Activity in class:		50	_____
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Grades

All grades are based on how I think you fulfilled the requirements of the assignment. This includes presentation requirements and content requirements. Both are important.

Grades will be posted to the WebTycho website at intervals throughout the semester. Your final letter grade will be based on the standard percentage scale: 90/80/70/60. I do not round. I do not change the grades at the end of the semester—either to your benefit or to your detriment.

You are responsible for tracking your grades and ensuring that what I have posted is correct. If you disagree with a posted value, you have 7 days from the date I hand back the assignment to contest the grade. Beyond that point, no adjustments will be made.

The exception for this rule is the final examination. The grade for the final examination will be made available at least 48 hours prior to when I post your final grades. You have those 48 hours to contest your final examination grade.

Weekly Assignments

Each week, for the fact-to-face class, there are three written assignments to be turned in to me. At the end of the semester, I will drop your worst score from each of the four classes of weekly assignments.

Weekly Video Reflections

[30 points each]

Each week, save the first, you have a video to watch on your own. You can find the link for each Internet video on the course website. These videos have run times between one and two hours. Your task is two-fold: watch the video; write a reflection paper on the video.

The reflection paper must be between **one** and three pages in length. It must have the following two sections: Summary of the Video (approximately ½ page in length), and Application to the Course (readings and/or discussions). On your assignment, explicitly label the two sections as provided above as first-level headings. See Course Style Sheet for what that means.

I will grade this assignment based on how well you follow the class writing guidelines, convince me that you have thoroughly watched the video. Tie the video to terrorism, our class discussions, and current events.

You need to use at least 3 sources other than the readings, and you need to cite and reference correctly. See the Style Sheet and the ‘Chicago References’ document for more information.

Weekly Deep Answers

[30 points each]

Each week, save the first, you will answer the *Weekly Question* posted on the website. This question is designed to allow you to demonstrate your knowledge and your success in tying the disparate parts of the discussions together with the readings and videos.

This paper must be between **1** and 3 pages in length. I will grade this assignment based on how well you follow the class writing guidelines, convince me that you have thoroughly watched the video and read the readings, and tied all together into a coherent narrative with the class discussions.

You need to use at least 3 sources other than the readings, and you need to cite and reference correctly. See the Style Sheet and the ‘Chicago References’ document for more information.

Weekly Quick Assignments

[10 points each]

Each week, save the first, there will be a sheet of small questions posted on the course website for you to print and answer.

I will grade this assignment based on how many of the questions you get correct.

Weekly Quizzes

[10 points each]

Each week, save the last, the first five minutes will be spent on a weekly quiz that covers the readings, the video, and current (terrorism) events for the week. It will be true/false, multiple choice, and fill-in-the-blank. This will not be an open note or open book quiz. Anything from the video, the readings, and current events is fair game for the quiz.

The Final Examination

The final examination will be held during normal class hours on 6 May 2009. It will cover all information covered and assigned during the entire term. A practice examination will be posted to the course private website to give you some practice in the types of questions I can ask. There will be no review sheet provided beyond the syllabus. It should not take you the entire period to finish the examination, but I will provide the time so that you do not feel time pressures. The final examination is worth 100 points.

Participation and Attendance

Your participation grade is completely subjective. I will assign a grade that I believe best approximates your weekly class participation. In assigning the grade, I will be noticing how many of your comments are constructive vis-a-vis classroom discussion, how intelligent your

comments are vis-a-vis class readings, and how often you offer comments. If you think it is odd that I grade subjectively here, how do you think others do it?

Participation is worth 50 points.

Attendance

There are not points assigned to attendance in this course; however, attendance is very important for this class. So much of the unmeasurable learning takes place during the classroom discussions. As such, I have devised the following grade schedule regarding attendance. If you miss three classes, the highest letter grade you can earn is a C, regardless of what you earn otherwise. If you miss only two classes, then the highest grade you can receive will be a B.

Number of Classes Missed	Highest Grade Possible
1	A
2	B
3	C
4	F

For example, suppose that at the end of the semester you earned 400 out of 450, but you missed three classes. While the points suggest you earned a B, you will receive a C because of your attendance. On the other hand, suppose you only missed one class; you will receive that B.

In other words, show up to all classes.

Course Outline

The articles and videos can be found on the course website.

<http://oforsber.kvasaheim.com/courses/hist319a/>

Week 1: March 25: Definitions of terrorism
Readings: Howard: 1C; Syllabus; Style Sheet
Video: None
Weekly Question: None

Week 2: April 1: Origins of terrorism
Readings: White: Chapter 1, Chapter 6; Howard 1C

Video: Terror's Advocate

Weekly Question: Does following the rule of law with respect to terrorists result in more or fewer terrorists?

Week 3: April 8: Cold War terrorism

Readings: Enders and Sandler (1999); Crenshaw (1981)

Video: The Man who Knew

Weekly Question: How were we able to defeat the Left-Wing terrorism of the 1960s and 1970s?

Week 4: April 15: Nationalist-Separatist terrorism

Readings: White: Chapter 7; De Silva (2007)

Video: On Our Watch

Weekly Question: How is Nationalist-Separatist terrorism different from, and similar to, al Qaeda terrorism?

Week 5: April 22: The New Terror

Readings: Howard: 3A, 4A, 4C; White: Chapter 11

Video: Beyond Terror and Martyrdom

Weekly Question: How is the new terrorism different from, and similar to, the socialist terrorism of the Cold War?

Week 6: April 29: Correlates of Terrorism

Readings: Howard: 2A, 6B; Krueger and Malečková (2002)

Video: Democracy Now!

Weekly Question: If you could ask only three questions to determine the probability of a group using terrorism in the next year, what would they be?

Week 7: **May 6:** **Final Examination**

Readings: None

Video: Shake Hands with the Devil

Weekly Question: Did al Qaeda attack us because they ‘hate our freedom’?

End Matter

Changes and Supremacy

I reserve the right to alter anything on this document. Should it become necessary to change the syllabus, an announcement in class will be made that the new syllabus is posted on the class web site. In the event of a discrepancy between this printed syllabus and the website’s syllabus, the website will take precedence.

Class Website

All classroom documents can be found at the classroom website. This website will also contain supplemental documents. Anything posted to the website will be assumed read by every member of the class.

Its address is

<http://oforsber.kvasaheim.com/courses/hist319a/>