

POS 339/439: Political Violence and Terrorism
Fall 2010
Professor Erickson

Professor: Christian Erickson (cerickso@roosevelt.edu - <http://faculty.roosevelt.edu/erickson/>)

Meeting Times: Mondays and Wednesdays 2:00-3:15pm.

Class Location: AUD 426.

Office Hours and Location(s):

- o Downtown - AUD 757: Wednesday and Thursday 4:00-5:45.

Phone Number: (312) 341 3707 (office/voice mail for either campus).

Course objectives: This course examines terrorism and political violence from both a comparative and international relations perspective, with a primary focus on the history and current status of terrorism and political violence in the United States. The approach of the course is interdisciplinary as well, drawing on political science, sociology, criminology, and history. An important goal of this course is to develop the tools to evaluate how policy makers and scholars approach the problem of terrorism and the trade offs between civil liberties/human rights and security. This course will cover: the problems of defining terrorism; theoretical writings on political violence and terrorism; the distinction between terrorism and revolutionary warfare; the organizational dynamics and motivations of terrorist groups; and the evolving nature of the threat posed by political violence and terrorism including the potential use of weapons of mass destruction and cyberterrorism.

While the events of 9/11, the ongoing "war(s) on Terror," occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, provide the contemporary backdrop of the course, we will not be exclusively focusing on current events, but rather develop the intellectual tools to understand terrorism in a wider comparative, historical, and global context.

Prerequisites: No formal prerequisites, but course assumes students have taken several international relations, political science, or sociology courses and have an interest in the subject matter.

Course texts and other materials:

All books are available at the Roosevelt University bookstore.

Required Texts:

- 1) Martin, Gus. 2010. *Understanding Terrorism: Challenges, Perspectives, and Issues*. 3rd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- 2) Hewitt, Christopher. 2003. *Understanding Terrorism in America*. New York: Routledge.
- 3) Gerges, Fawaz. 2009. *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global*. 2nd Edition. New York: Cambridge University Press.

I will be using the course website to provide links to recommended articles.

Course website: <http://faculty.roosevelt.edu/Erickson/courses/pos339-439/>

The syllabus is posted on this site. The course website will be used for announcements, research links and links to supplemental reading materials, archiving of lecture materials, and other purposes as we decide over the course of the semester. Currently, I have no plans to use Blackboard for this class; therefore, all material will be posted on my faculty server space.

Course Assignments:

This course places equal emphasis on readings and lecture/discussion.

Total class grade will be derived from your participation in several ways:

Class participation: 30% of the total class grade
(Attendance, in-class participation/exercises, occasional research assignments
15% - in-class presentation 15%).
Midterm examination: 20%
Research/Term paper: 30%
Cumulative final exam: 20%

There will be no make-up examinations without medical excuse or prior arrangement with the professor.

Course Participation Expectations: Both students are expected to in class on time, having done the assigned readings, and are prepared to discuss the assigned readings, and do other types of in-class assignments related to the Discussion Box sections of the Martin, or discussion questions for the week that are distributed. For September 8th, the discussion question is on the syllabus.

During class I expect that all cell phones, PDAs, Blackberry's, etc. will be on either "silent," or if need be, "vibrate" mode. If you are awaiting an important call, please leave the room for the conversation. I would expect that this would only be a rare event. Excessive absences, late arrival, early departure, repeated use of cell phone in class (including audible ringing), and other disruptive behavior will adversely impact class participation.

In-Class Presentations: Students are required to do a presentation and lead a discussion during class on a subject raised by the readings for no longer than 5-7 minutes during one class session.

On September 8th a more detailed handout describing the presentation assignment and possible topics will be distributed in class. Students should select a week/topic by September 15th, and presentations can begin on September 15th. There are no presentations on October 4th and 6th (movie) and October 18th (midterm).

Past presentations have included: profiles of terrorist organizations, leaders, or attacks; profiles of counterterrorist organizations or programs; discussion of cinematic or televisual representations of terrorism/counterterrorism; discussion of "critical incidents" which seem to trigger escalatory processes leading to the outbreak of widespread political violence and terrorism.

Research paper: Students will write a term paper of 2500 to 2750 words (excluding bibliography and notes, ten to twelve typed, double-spaced pages 12 point font) on a topic of your choice that pertains to the themes of the course. The term paper should not be just a report on a subject, but rather should 1) address a theoretical *question* that is introduced by one of the readings for class, which is 2) backed up by empirical evidence. You must then 3) state your own opinion, and 4) substantiate your opinion with facts. A more detailed summary of the term paper assignment will be distributed on the second week of class (September 8th).

The paper assignment is broken up into 4 assignments:

- 1) September 29th: A paragraph long paper description with 3 sources. Assignment is worth 5% overall paper grade.
- 2) November 3rd: One page long paper description with 6 sources. Assignment is worth 5% overall paper grade.
- 3) December 1st: one and a half page description, annotated bibliography with 9 sources; outline. Assignment is worth 10% overall paper grade.
- 4) December 8th: Final research paper. 80% of overall paper grade.

The kinds of questions students might ask could include: what are the origins and causes of a particular terrorist organization; when is a military response to terrorist attacks required; is assassination of terrorists a legitimate policy decision; the adequacy – or inadequacy of current “homeland security” organizations; ethnic and/or religious profiling and discrimination following terrorist attacks; how to balance civil liberty, privacy and security when developing counter-terrorist policy; is the “war on terror” a diversion from other important political priorities; is terrorism really an important threat or is the threat being deliberately exaggerated?

The above possible paper subjects are only suggestions; feel free to come up with your own and clear it with me.

Writing Center: The Roosevelt University Writing Center provides one-on-one peer tutoring to all writers in the university community. It would be wise to schedule appointments early on in the semester if you have any writing/research problems, or areas you want to improve upon. Appointments are available by phone, e-mail, or stop by the Writing Center at AUD 650, Monday – Thursday 1:00pm – 7:00pm. X7141. On-line tutoring is also available.

For more information: <http://www.roosevelt.edu/writingcenter/>

Late Policy/Plagiarism: Without a valid medical or other excuse or prior permission of instructor late papers will be penalized 3 points (on a 100 point scale) for each 24 hour period the paper is late, and 5 points for each 24 hour period after 48 hours. Students are required to review Roosevelt University policies on plagiarism and will be held to standards of scholarship outlined in these policies. If plagiarism is detected the student will be reported as specified in the Roosevelt University plagiarism policy, and will receive an F in the class. All students are required to submit both a hard copy and an electronic copy of their papers for scanning by plagiarism detection software.

Academic Dishonesty: Acts of academic dishonesty violate the very spirit of the University. Academic dishonesty is taken very seriously at Roosevelt University, with consequences ranging from failing the assignment or the course, to being expelled by the university.

Roosevelt University students are responsible for following the “Code of Student Conduct,” which is available at this url: <http://www.roosevelt.edu/current/judicial/code.htm>.

All students should review code of conduct.

Accommodation of Persons with Disabilities. Students with disabilities or other conditions that require special accommodations are encouraged to identify themselves to the instructor and/or to the Academic Success Center/Office of Disability Services at 312 341-3810.

Class Topics and Readings

Classes One and Two (August 30th and September 1st): Introduction to the Course and the issues.

Overview of the course. Discussion of definitions of Terrorism and Counterterrorism.

Readings: September 1st

- Martin: Chronology, About the Author, Acknowledgements, Introduction and Rationale, and Chapter 1 (i-34).

Syllabus distributed.

September 6th No Class Labor Day Holliday

Class Three (September 8th): Definitions of Terrorism and Counterterrorism.

Questions: What are the different definitions of terrorism proposed or used by each author? How does Hewitt measure terrorist phenomena? Are these definitions objective or clouded by ideology or methodology?

Readings:

- Hewitt: Preface, Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. i.-22).
- Gerges, Abstract, Contents, Acknowledgements, Prologue (i-15).

Presentation and Research Paper Topic Proposal assignments distributed.

Classes Four and Five (September 13th and 15th): The Causes, Emergence, and Motivations of Terrorism.

Readings:

- Martin: Chapter 2 and 3 (35-95).
- Hewitt: Chapter 3 (23-52).
- Gerges, Introduction (16-42).

Due September 15th: Presentation topic/week selection – presentations can begin.

Classes Six and Seven (September 20th and 22nd): Mobilizing for Terror: State Terror.

Readings:

- Martin: Chapter 4 (98-139).
- Hewitt: Chapter 4 (53-68).
- Gerges, Chapter 1 (43-79).

Classes Eight and Nine (September 27th and 29th): Mobilizing for Terror: Dissident Terror.

Readings:

- Martin: Chapter 5 (140-169).
- Hewitt: Chapter 5 (69-81).
- Gerges, Chapter 2 (80-118).

Due in class September 29th: Paper description assignment.

Midterm Review guide distributed and discussed.

Classes Ten and Eleven (October 4th and 6th): Cinematic Representations of Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism.

Film: "The Battle of Algiers" (1966).

- Yacef, Saadi (Producer), & Pontecorvo, Gillo (Director). 2004 [1966]. *The Battle of Algiers* [DVD]. Criterion (1966 Casbah Films).

Readings:

- Martin: Chapter 11 (380-408).
- Kaufman, Michael. 2003. "What Does the Pentagon See in 'Battle of Algiers'?" New York Times. September 7, 2003. Accessed via Lexis/Nexis.

Midterm Review Guide discussed.

Classes Twelve and Thirteen (October 11th and 13th): Tools of the Trade: Tactics and Targets of Terrorism.

Readings:

- Martin: Chapter 10 (336-379).

Class Fourteen (October 18th): In class Midterm Exam.

Class Fifteen, Sixteen, and Seventeen (October 20th, 25th, and 27th). Ideological Terrorism.

Readings:

- Martin: Chapter 7 (208-266).
- Review Hewitt: Chapter 5 (69-81).
- Gerges, Chapter 3 (119-150).

Midterm exam returned. Expanded description and bibliography assignment distributed.

Classes Eighteen and Nineteen (November 1st and 3rd): Religious Terrorism.

Readings:

- Martin: Chapter 6 (170-207).
- Gerges, Chapter 4 (151-184).

Due November 3rd: Expanded paper description assignment.

Classes and Twenty and Twenty One (November 8th and 10th): Terrorism in the United States.

Readings:

- Martin Chapter 12 (410-460).
- Gerges, Chapter 5 (185-218).

Revised expanded paper description, outline, and annotated bibliography assignment distributed.

Classes Twenty Two and Twenty Three (November 15th and 17th): Terrorism in Historical and Global Context, International and Transnational Terrorism.

Readings:

- Martin Chapter 8 (267-302).
- Gerges, Chapter 5 (218-250).

November 22nd and 24th: No classes Thanksgiving.

Classes Twenty Three and Twenty Four (November 29th and December 1st): Terrorism in Historical and Global Context, September 11th and US Military Response Afghanistan.

Readings:

- Martin Chapter 13 (461-510).
- Hewitt Chapter 6-7 (82-118).
- Gerges, Chapter 6 (251-276).

Due December 1st: Revised expanded paper description, outline and annotated bibliography assignment.

Classes Twenty Four and Twenty Five (December 6th and 8th) Occupation of Iraq, the “Global War on Terror”, and Emerging Threats.

Readings:

- Martin, Chapter 9 (303-334).
- Gerges, Chapter 7 (277-313).
- Brief reading to be added reflecting current (as of late Fall 2009) status of occupation of/insurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Due December 8th: Research Paper.

Final Exam Guide discussed.

Final Exam – Monday December 13th (Monday) 2:00-4:30pm

Final Paper returned before Final Exam via e-mail.

Grades submitted on-line and available via RU Access December 22nd, 2007 (early evening).