

Political Science 353 - Terrorism - Fall 2021

Instructor: Vincent Auger

Email: va-auger@wiu.edu

Office Hours: Tue, Thurs 12:30-1:30 pm; Wed 11 am-1pm

I. Course Description and Goals: This course examines the sources of modern terrorism, and the evolving implications of terrorist activities for international and domestic politics. We will look at the different ways in which “terrorism” is defined and used in political discourse; examine the social, cultural, political, economic, religious, and psychological factors that create contexts that encourage or facilitate terrorism; analyze why some individuals or groups turn to terroristic methods to achieve their goals, and evaluate how successful terrorists are in achieving those goals.

II. Course Readings: There is one required book for the course:

Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, third edition (Columbia University Press, 2017)

There will also be additional materials (readings, reading guides, power point slides) posted on Western Online. These are also required materials for the course and should be reviewed as you proceed through each section (or “module”) of the course.

III. Course Policies and Requirements:

1) **Class Attendance:** The following procedures are required by the University:

- a) all persons **must wear face coverings** in the classroom (see the University Policy at: http://www.wiu.edu/policies/covid_facecovering.php)
- b) faculty conducting on-campus classes must **maintain a seating chart** and **take attendance** in all class sessions.

Given the many uncertainties associated with COVID-19, **classroom attendance is not required in the course.** While attendance will be taken as required by the University, students will not be penalized for not attending class. While I believe that there are many advantages to in-person learning, if you are feeling ill in any way, have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, or are uncomfortable with being in the classroom, please do not come to class. The course is designed so that the readings, reading guides and power point slides are all accessible through Western Online; all exams will also be posted to that site. This also means that if in-person classes are suspended by the University for any reason, you will still have access to the materials necessary to complete the course.

2) **Written Assignments:** There will be **three take-home exams** on the readings, lectures and power point slides. Exams will have a mix of shorter and longer essay-type questions. Exams will be worth 100 points each.

There will also be a **final essay on an assigned topic**, also worth 100 points.

Dates for submitting the exams and the paper are indicated in the course schedule, below.

3) **Academic Honesty:** Plagiarism, cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and may result in a failing grade for the course. Please refer to the WIU Student Academic Integrity Policy at <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>. It is your responsibility to follow this policy; please ask me if you have questions.

4) **Student rights and responsibilities:** <http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php>

5) **ADA Statement:** In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 309-298-2512, disability@wiu.edu or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.

6) **Title IX:** University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, have been the victim of any of these offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online at: http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php. If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The complete Title IX policy is available at: <http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php>.

7) **COURSE GRADE:** Final course grades will be based on the following point totals:

380-400: A
360-379: A-
348-359: B+
332-347: B
320-331: B-
308-319: C+
292-307: C
280-291: C-
268-279: D+
252-267: D
240-251: D-
Below 240: F

IV. CLASS SCHEDULE: The course is divided into 4 modules. Each module (or sub-module) may have a variety of material: a reading guide, assigned reading from the Hoffman book, a list of additional readings posted on Western Online, and a set of power point slides. There is an exam or paper at the end of each module

Each module (and sub-module) as dates that correspond to when I plan to discuss those topics in class. Given the time limits of a class period, I will not review or discuss every reading assigned for a particular sub-module, nor will I necessarily show every slide from the power point presentations. I hope that you will review at least some of the material before class, so that we can have discussion or so that you can ask questions.

MODULE 1: Definitions and History (Aug. 24-Sept. 21)

a) Terrorism as a particular type of political violence: definitions and distinctions (Aug. 26-Sept. 2)

- Reading guide
- Power point slides

August 26 - Making distinctions:

- Hoffman, chapter 1
- J. Ling, “Incels Are Radicalized and Dangerous. But Are They Terrorists?”
- S. Englund, “Mexican Drug Cartels Are Violent – But They’re Not Terrorists”
- CRS, “Are Antifa Members Domestic Terrorists?”
- J. Mueller and M. Stewart, “Conflating Terrorism and Insurgency”

August 31 – US policy and designations:

- CRS, “Sifting Domestic Terrorism from Hate Crime and Homegrown Violent Extremism”
- S. Roberts, “The Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement barely existed, but Washington wanted Beijing on board for the war on terror.”
- M. Reinert and S. Hickey, “Trump changed how the U.S. assigns the label ‘terrorist.’ Can the Biden administration change it back?”
- S. Sinnar, “Questioning the ‘Domestic’ and ‘International’ in Biden’s Counterterrorism Strategy.”

Sept. 2 – State Sponsors of Terrorism:

- Hoffman, pp. 269-280
- A. Mir and C. Clarke, “Making Sense of Iran and al-Qaeda’s Relationship”
- A. Abu Amer, “Report outlines how Iran smuggles arms to Hamas.”

b) Terrorism: historical development and current status (Sept. 7-16)

- Reading guide
- Power point slides

- Hoffman, chapters 2 and 3
- D. Rapoport, “The Four Waves of Rebel Terror and September 11”
- START, “Global Terrorism Overview: Terrorism in 2019”

******* EXAM # 1 DUE by Monday, Sept. 20 at 11:59 pm *******

MODULE 2: Terrorist Ideologies, Goals and Strategies (Sept. 21-Oct. 26)

a) Terrorism: The Role of Ideology (Sept.21-28)

- Reading guide
- Power point slides

- S. Rubin and S. Hendrix, “Netanyahu turns to extremist party that calls for expelling Arabs from Israel” [Sept. 21]
- H. Gregg, “Defining and Distinguishing Secular and Religious Terrorism” [Sept. 23]
- Hoffman, chapter 8 and 4 [Sept. 23, 28]

b) Terrorist Goals and Strategies (Sept. 30-Oct. 5)

- Reading guide
- Power point slides
- J. Pressman, “Rethinking Transnational Counterterrorism” [Sept. 30]
- A. Kydd and B. Walter, “Strategies of Terrorism” [Oct. 5]
- M. Abrahms and K. Lula, “Why Terrorists Overestimate the Odds of Victory” [Oct. 5]

c) Case: Salafi Jihadist Terrorism (Oct. 7-14)

- Reading guide
- Power point slides
- Hoffman, pp. 314-331 [Oct 7]
- N. Lahoud, “Bin Laden’s Catastrophic Success” [Oct.12]
- B. Mendelsohn and C. Clarke, “Al-Qaeda Is Being Hollowed to Its Core” [Oct 12]
- C. Goldbaum and E. Schmitt, “In Bid to Boost Its Profile, ISIS Turns to Africa’s Militants” [Oct 12]
- M. Hafez, “The Crisis Within Jihadism: The Islamic State’s Puritanism vs. al-Qaeda’s Populism” [Oct 14]
- B. Mendelsohn, “Bound to Fail: Transnational Jihadism and the Aggregation Problem” [Oct 14]
- C. Blair, et.al. “The Death and Life of Terrorist Networks” [Oct 14]

d) Case: Far-right/White Supremacist Terrorism (Oct 19-21)

- Reading guide
- Power point slides
- [Hoffman, reread/review pp. 107-127 and pp. 249-252]
- K. Belew, “The Right Way to Understand White Nationalist Terrorism” [Oct. 19]
- C. Sarteschi, “Sovereign Citizens: More Than Paper Terrorists” [Oct. 19]
- M. Kutner, “The Surprising Convergence Between Neo-Nazis and Jihadists” [Oct. 19]
- V. Auger, “Right-Wing Terror: A Fifth Global Wave?” [Oct. 21]
- J. Blazakis and N. Fink, “The International Far-Right Terrorist Threat Requires a Multilateral Response” [Oct. 21]
- D. Byman and M. Pitcavage, “Identifying and Exploiting the Weaknesses of the White Supremacist Movement” [Oct. 21]

******* EXAM # 2 DUE no later than Monday, October 26 at 11:59pm *******

MODULE 3: Terrorist Operations and Methods (Oct. 26-Nov. 18)

a) Management, Recruiting and Financing (Oct. 26-28)

- Reading guide
- Power point slides

- Hoffman, pp. 299-314
- J. Shapiro, “The Business Habits of Highly Effective Terrorists”
- START, “L.E.A.D.I.R”
- M. Fisher, “From memes to race war: How extremists use popular culture to lure recruits”
- N. Popper, “Terrorists Turn to Bitcoin for Funding, and They’re Learning Fast”
- A. Latif Dahir, “Feared Shabab Exploit Somali Banking and Invest in Real Estate, UN Says”

b) Media Operations (Nov. 2, Nov. 9 – no class meeting on Nov. 4)

- Reading guide
- Power point slides

- Hoffman, chapters 6,7
- S. Frenkel and B. Hubbard, “After Social Media Bans, Militant Groups Found Ways to Remain”
- M. Squire, “How big tech and policymakers miss the mark when fighting online extremism”
- G. De Vynck and E. Nakashima, “Far-right groups move online conversations from social media to chat apps – and out of the view of law enforcement”

c) Weapons and Tactics (Nov. 11-16)

- Reading guide
- Power point slides

- Hoffman, chapter 5, and pp. 280-297
- M. Bloom, “Vehicle Ramming: The Evolution of a Terrorist Tactic Inside the US”
- A. Doctor and J. Igoe Walsh, “The Militant Drone Playbook”
- S. Hummel and F.J. Burpo, “Small Groups, Big Weapons”

No class meeting on Nov. 18

******* EXAM # 3 DUE by Thursday, November 18 at 4 pm *******

MODULE 4: Assessing the Threat from Terrorism (Nov. 30 - Dec. 9)

Western Online readings (to be determined)

******* FINAL ESSAY DUE by Thursday, December 16 at 5 pm *******