INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND COUNTERTERRORISM

Spring 2014

Political Science 379 - 01

MWF 1200-1250, Maybank 316

Dr. Mary Desjeans

Office Hours: MW1100-1145 and by arrangement.

Office Address: 26 Coming Street, Room 302

E-Mail: desjeansmf@cofc.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines terrorism and counterterrorism in the context of democratic society, focusing on the United States, the United Kingdom, Israel, France, and Russia. It will trace the history of terrorism, but focus substantially on developments since World War II when terrorist campaigns became a common tactic of asymmetric conflict for non-governmental individuals and groups. We will analyze the three post-WWII phases of terrorism, that is anti-colonial, ethno-nationalist and ideological, and religiously-motivated. We will examine whether terrorism is a rational or criminal tactic and whether terrorists are crusaders, criminals, or crazies.

We will also study the counterterrorism tactics of these key western democratic states, pointing to the similarities and differences, their legality in terms of domestic and international laws, as well as the ethics of various counterterrorist strategies. In particular, we will look at the various tactics the United States has utilized to fight Al Qaeda since the late 1990s.

While acts of terrorism are universally condemned, we will evaluate the motives and philosophies of terrorist campaigns, striving to understand the dynamics at work. At the same time, we will see that each democracy attempts to thwart terrorism in different ways—some of which challenge many Western citizens’—especially US citizens’—standards of ethics, morality, religion, and civic consciousness. We will draw from the material both an intellectual understanding of terrorism and counterterrorism, as well as a personal sense of what is fair, defensible, and sustainable in terms of counterterrorism tactics.

An additional focus of the course will be to stimulate students’ critical thinking and analytic skills. Although I likely will lecture for parts of every class meeting, I will also look for student
participation via the expression of varied points of view backed by fact, cogent reasoning, or historical precedent—not unsubstantiated opinion. Moreover, I will look for this same critical approach in the writing assignments and will work directly with students to hone effective and clear writing skills. The goals of this course are not simply to equip students with an informed understanding of terrorism and the counterterrorism strategies of Western democracies, but also to increase students’ analytic capabilities and quality of writing.

**REQUIREMENTS**

Students will be expected to attend class regularly and to participate in class discussions. Attendance and participation will represent 10 percent of your grade.

- There will be a 50 minute examination in mid-February which will represent 20 percent of your grade. The purpose of this first exam is twofold: 1) to test how well you are absorbing the key points of the course and 2) to acclimate you to the kinds of questions you will be asked in all other course written requirements and to my expectations in terms of the critical thinking skills you should display in your answers.

- You will be required to watch the movie *Battle of Algiers* (available on OAKs) and in a paper of no more than four-double-spaced pages to identify and discuss what issues highlighted in the FLN terrorism or the French Government response are germane to 21st century terrorism and counterterrorism issues. This paper will be worth 20 percent of your final grade.

- There will be a cumulative final examination which will represent 20 percent of your grade.

- You will be required to produce a 5-6 page (double spaced) paper in which you will evaluate the 2011 US Counterterrorism Strategy and Lisa Monaco’s 2013 speech on US CT (in OAKS). This paper will be worth 30 percent of your grade. You will be expected to assess the likely effectiveness of the strategy informed by your understanding of Cronin’s theses on how terrorism ends and the counterterrorism strategies of other Western democracies, as well as the previous US CT strategies. I will provide detailed review comments of both the substantive information and critical thinking of your analysis. In addition, as a means to hone your writing skills, I will provide extensive editorial comments on your writing, but will not deduct points from your grade unless the writing is so ambiguous as to obfuscate your message.

Grades for individual assignments will be numerical on a 100 point scale and the final grade will be calculated based on the following scale: 93-100 A; 90-92 A-; 88-89 B+; 83-87 B; 80-82 B-; 78-79 C+; 73-77 C; 70-72 C-; 68-69 D+; 63-67 D; 60-62 D-; below 60 F.
REQUIRED TEXTS


RECOMMENDED TEXT


TO BE FOUND ONLINE

*Stray Dogs and Virtual Armies: Radicalization and Recruitment to Jihadist Terrorism in the United States Since 9/11*, Brian Michael Jenkins, RAND Occasional Papers @ RAND Corporation Online Reading, Occasional Papers 2011

READINGS IN OAKS


Isaac Kfir, British Middle East Policy: The Counterterrorism Dimension, in The Middle East Review of International Affairs, vol 10, no 4, December 2006


Alia Brahimi, Al-Qaeda resurgent? Aljazeera, 8 November 2012.


The Unquenchable Fire, The Economist, 28 September, 2013

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Council on Foreign Relations, 15 October 2012


**VIDEOS**

The Battle of Algiers

Terror in Mumbai

**GROUND-RULES**

- **Attendance:** I expect you to attend class (period.)

- **Late Work:** Late work will be penalized. Work that is turned in after the date and time it is due will lose five points off the total automatically (i.e. a paper with a numerical grade of 75 becomes a 70) and an additional five points will be deleted for every subsequent day. I consider work to be late if it is not handed in at the time requested. **If there are extenuating circumstances that prevent you from passing in your assignments on time, I expect you to discuss these with me before the time the assignment is due.** Any student who misses an exam and does not inform me of the legitimate, substantiated reason for their absence within 24 hours will fail the missed exam automatically and will have no opportunity for a make-up exam.

- **Electronic Submissions:** NO work may be submitted to me electronically for credit unless I authorize it. You must provide a legible, printed hardcopy of your work at the time the assignment is due.

- **Academic Dishonesty:** Don’t even think about it! When you enrolled in the College of Charleston, you were bound by an Honor Code. I expect you to abide by that code. If you are found to have cheated on an exam or plagiarized any of your written assignments, you will fail this course and be turned over to the Honor Board for further disciplinary action.

- **Courtesy and Professionalism:** Given the nature of the subject matter of this course, you will doubtlessly find that some of your ideas do not always match the views of your fellow students, the authors of your texts, or your instructor. As I noted in the first paragraphs of this syllabus, I expect that your point of view will be backed by fact, cogent reasoning, or historical precedent. We are not here in this class to provide speculative opinions, to provide only emotional arguments, or to use volume in place of logic. We are here to share with one another our thinking and the reasons for it. In this same spirit, I expect that you will listen to the thoughts of others and to remain open
to questions. We must base these questions and answers on something more than opinion.

- **Special Circumstances**: If you have any kind of special circumstances that I should be aware of, please inform me right away. If you have SNAP accommodations of any kind, please make the appropriate notifications and arrangements with the Center for Students with Disabilities within the first week of class. Alternatively, if you have any sort of undiagnosed learning disability, a physical impairment of any kind that will require special arrangements for exams or papers, if you are an athlete or member of any club or organization that will travel, let me know. I will keep any information you share with me confidential, but in order to create the best learning environment for you, I need to know if there are circumstances that may interfere with your performance in the course.

- **Electronic Devices**: We will collectively discuss class policy on the use of laptops in class. However, cell phones or other personal communications equipment must be turned OFF throughout the class. If you have special contact requirements you should discuss these with me.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**W 8 January**  Introduction Day

Over the next few weeks we will use historical precedent and scholarly research in an attempt to define terrorism. In the next two classes we will examine the historical record, emphasizing how long terrorism has played a role in the politics and national security of Western countries. Is terrorism the tool of the weak or the strong? Do states practice terrorism? Is terrorism a tool of non-state actors? Is terrorism positive or negative?

**F 10 January**  Defining Terrorism -- Revolution and Reaction

- Hoffman, 1-16

**M 13 January**  Post World War II Terrorism

Although terrorism is a centuries’ old tactic, our current understanding derives mostly from developments since the Second World War. Why is that? Why did post war groups adopt terrorism? Has it been a tactic or a strategy? Are some terrorists sympathetic figures? Why is it so hard to define terrorism?

- Cronin, “Behind the Curve” in Contending

**W 15 January**  The Definition of Terrorism

- White, 3-29
F17 January  The Definition of Terrorism Continued

W22 January  The Definition of Terrorism Continued
  • Primoratz, “Terrorism: What is it?”

F24 January  International Terrorism
  What causes or movements have utilized terrorism in pursuit of their goals? Is terrorism a religious or secular tool? How have states and publics reacted to the use of terrorism? Why do some scholars say that terrorism is the tactic of the weak?
  • Hoffman, 63-80

M27 January  Examining the Three Phases in Detail -- Anti-colonial Terrorism
  • The Battle of Algiers
  • Hoffman, 44-62

W29 January  Examining the Three Phases in Detail -- Ideological Terrorism
  • Hoffman, 74-78

F31 January  Examining the Three Phases in Detail -- Religious Terrorism
  What is different about religiously-motivated terrorism? Do all religions have extremist elements that utilize terror tactics? Are some religions more prone to utilize terrorism than others? Is religious terrorism uniquely difficult to contain?
  • Hoffman, 81-101

F3 1 January Battle of Algiers Paper Due

M3 February  Christian and Jewish Religious Terrorism
  • Hoffman, 101-118

W5 February  Islamic Religious Extremism—Ideology and Justification
  • White, 258-267, 279-284, 306-317
  • Wiktorowicz, Genealogy, Terrorism and Counterterrorism

F7 February  Who Are the Shia and Sunni Terrorist Groups?
  • White, 376-387

M10 February  Who Are the Shia and Sunni Terrorist Groups?
  • White, 387-399

W12 February  EXAMINATION

F14 February  Video in Class – Terror in Mumbai
M17 February  Palestinian Terrorist Groups

Are Palestinian terrorist groups motivated by religion? If not, what motivates them? Is Palestinian terrorism a threat to the US?

- White, 290-306, 318-331

W19 February  Suicide Terrorism

What is suicide terrorism? Which groups practice it and why? Does suicide terrorism impact government and publics differently from other terrorist tactics? Is suicide terrorism a religious and secular terrorist tactic?

- Hoffman, 131-171

F21 February  The Impact of Suicide Terrorism Today

- Moghadam, Motives in Contending

M24 February  The Media and Terrorism

Why is the media a key factor in the “new” terrorism? How do terrorists wield it? How do governments wield it? Is the media a positive or negative aspect of today’s terrorism? Is it simply an issue of freedom of the press? Or is it also a question of the responsibility of the press?

- Hoffman, 173-195

W26 February  Terrorist Use of the New Media

- Hoffman, 197-228

F28 February  Criminals, Crazies, or Crusaders

Are terrorists rational actors? Are suicide bombers crazy? Why do individuals join terrorist organizations? Are such people different from the rest of us?

- Combs, 52-79; Hoffman, 229-256

M10 March  Terrorist Demographics Continued

- Sageman, 3-25, 47-70

W12 March  Law Enforcement or War

Is terrorism a crime or an act of war? What’s the difference? Why does it matter? Do all western democracies evaluate terrorism the same way?

- Combs, 214-223

F14 March  How Terrorism Ends
If terrorism has been around for centuries, what do we mean by asking “How does terrorism end?” What methods are most effective in ending terrorism? Do these methods work in all cases?

- Cronin, 14-34, 1-6

**M17 March**  Negotiation
- Cronin, 35-72

**W19 March**  Success
- Cronin, 73-93

**F21 March**  Repression and Reorientation
- Cronin, 115-166

**M24 March**  Threat Today -- AQ Core

What is the nature of the terrorism threat we face today? Is it a static threat or an evolving threat? Is today’s terrorism threat the same as we faced in September 2001?


**W26 March**  Threat Today: AQAP


**F28 March**  Threat Today: AQI and AQIM


**M31 March**  Threat Today: Pakistan’s Jihadists: LeT, Haqqanis, and TTP


**W2 April**  Threat Today: Stray Dogs and Leaderless Jihad in the US

- *Stray Dogs and Virtual Armies*, RAND Corporation (Found online, not in OAKS)

**F4 April**  Counterterrorism Strategies in Western Democracies -- Russia

Some scholars argue that there is more terrorism in democracies than in authoritarian countries. Why would this be the case? Do you agree? Can democracies fight terrorism effectively?
- Cronin, 28-29, 131-137

**M7 April**  **Israel**
- Tucker “Strategies”

**W9 April**  **UK/ France**
- Kfir, *British Middle East Policy*; Shapiro and Suzan, *French Experience*; Silke, *Case Study: UK*, pp 12-16; *Better than cure – but different*, *The Economist*.

**F11 April**  US **Counterterrorism**

* Are US counterterrorism tactics ethical? Do all western democracies handle terrorist threats and terrorists ethically? Does it make a difference if the country considers terrorism a crime or an act of war? How much differs between the Bush Administration policies and those of the Obama Administration? If terrorists break international human rights protocols, is it okay for countries to do the same in countering them? Are drone strikes legal and ethical?

**F11 April – US Counterterrorism Policy Evaluation Paper Due**

**M14 April**  US **Counterterrorism**
- Monaco, *Remarks on America’s Counterterrorism Strategy*

**W16 April**  **Domestic CT Controversies**
- White, 537-562 ****(*NEED READING ON DOMESTIC SURVEILLANCE*)

**F18 April**  **Domestic CT Controversies**

**M21 April**  **International CT Controversies**
- Yoo and Cole, *Counterterrorism and Constitution*
- Hoffman, *Nasty Business*, *Terrorism and Counterterrorism*
- Rubin, *Military Strategies*

**W23 April**  **International CT Controversies**
- *The Unquenchable Fire*, *The Economist*

**Cumulative Final Examination**