

Senior Seminar : Psychology of Terrorism

Instructor: Roger Sambrook **Room :** COB 303 **Tues :** 1:40 - 4:20
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Phone: 719 262 3856 , **Office Hours:** Mon & Wed 3:30-4:30 in COB 4041 & By appt at UH 107c

This is a senior seminar, and as such will consist of a series of facilitated discussions (rather than lectures) based on readings (which is the major "work" in the course). We will examine how various psychological theories applied to terrorism. It will address the phenomenon using aspects of social, behavioral, cognitive, abnormal, clinical and other perspectives. The emphasis is on critical thinking applied to terrorist-related phenomena. The course will include elements of personality theory applied to the psychology of terrorists, and will address psychological phenomena relating to terrorism - including, but not limited to terrorist strategy, perceptions of risk, treatment of victims, and counter-terrorism measures.

Textbooks & Other Materials :

Required : Terrorism, C. Townsend, Oxford University Press (2003)
Required : Psychology of Terrorism, Edited by Bruce Bongar et. al., Oxford, (2004)
Recommended : Inside Terrorism, B. Hoffman , Columbia University Press (2006)
Additional required readings will be posted through the semester.
This is a senior seminar - heavy emphasis is placed on reading and participation

Assessment & Grading

Reading (20%): You are required to read and remember the required material. At any point in the class I might ask you to summarize the readings either verbally or in writing (like a quiz), while at other times I may just ask you to write a short summary for homework.

Profile (10%): Each participant in the class will create & submit a short presentation on a terrorist group prominent terrorist leader or major terrorist event, either current or historical. Participants may pair up - with one participant presenting an organization, and another presenting an individual or event. Participants should be able to provide a 10-15minute presentation, and submit their presentation notes / materials for grading. These will occur throughout the semester.

Research Paper (50%): This is a major research paper between 6,000 and 10,000 words (equivalent to a journal article) on a subject of interest relating to psychology and terrorism. The goal of this exercise is to produce an article that can be published in a refereed journal. Participants may work in pairs on this project and will be required to meet with me at least three times during the semester. This is to give you help, so I know you're on track, and to prevent you from procrastinating.

Participation (20%): Come prepared to participate in class. I will attempt to call on each and every person in class to put forward an idea, opinion, argument or answer a question. You will be assessed based on your level of enthusiasm / interest, how well prepared you are, and how effectively you participate in class discussions, exercises, and presentations.

Participation Grading

I expect each student to be present for class on every Monday and Tuesday evening; to be ready for class (having read the material ahead of time) and to actively participate in class discussions including answering questions posed by the instructor. You will be provided with points in the following manner:

4 pts if: You know your material and participate actively (volunteer without being called on)

3 pt if: You know your material but do not participate actively (stay quiet until directly called on)

2 pt if: You partially know your material and make an effort to participate in discussion.

1 point if: You don't know your material and/or don't really participate

0 points if: You're absent; do not participate at all in the discussion or are unavailable during the class period by being excessively late, leaving excessively early, taking excessive breaks, talking with others out of turn.

Course Outline (Readings are posted weekly on the website)**Part 1 : Terror**

Aug 26th The Psychology of Fear

Sep 9th Debate - What is Terrorism (history and definitions)

Sep 16th On being terrorized - mechanisms, effects, treatments

Part 2 : Terrorism

Sep 23rd Terrorist Motivations - Why choose terrorism?

Sep 23rd Debate - Pathology vs. Strategy, why are "they" viewed as "crazy" ?

Sep 30th Effective Terrorism Strategies - Being an effective terrorist

Oct 7th Debate - The pro's & cons of the various types of terrorism

Part 3 : Terrorists

Oct 14th Becoming a terrorist (motivations, recruitment)

Oct 21st Profiling a Terrorist - The role of personality profiling in counter-terrorism

Oct 28th Training a terrorist (indoctrination & training)

Nov 4th Social / cultural psychological factors in terrorist individual & group behaviors

Part 4 : Counter-terrorism

Nov 11th Information Extraction - Interviews, Interrogations, Intelligence and Torture

Nov 18th Red-Team Exercise (Scenario Development)

Nov 25th Red-Team Exercise (Execution)

Dec 2nd Red-Team Exercise (Debriefing)

Dec 9th Overflow Session - Term Papers Due

Students with disabilities - turn in your disability verification letter within the first 2 weeks of class. For further information, contact Student Support Services, Main Hall 132, Tel 262-3065

Use of electronic devices during class is forbidden. First offenders will be asked to leave the classroom for the remainder of the session. Repeat offenders will receive an F for the class.