



# American University

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## Countering Terrorism: Spring 2012

SIS 419-055

SIS 653-010

Room Hearst: Class hours 8:10 – 10:40

### Description

Countering Terrorism will view terrorism primarily from the perspective of counter terrorist practitioners. The class will examine the characteristics of terrorist organizations and individuals. Significant time will be spent developing an in-depth understanding of terrorism and how the U.S. and other Western nations have attempted to control them. We will look closely into terrorism from the perspective of the terrorists themselves to help understand their mind sets and what drives them. Finally, the course will examine a variety of ideas about what approaches to controlling terrorism work and which do not. The solutions will focus on how the terrorist threat helps direct new ways that the intelligence community needs to collect, analyze and integrate information.

The class has both undergraduates and graduate students. The workload is identical for both graduate and undergraduate students, but the standards are higher for the graduate students. Graduate papers, class participation and exercise participation will be held to a higher standard than are the assignments for the undergraduates. The grade scales below reflect the graduate and undergraduate standards.

You should assume that you will have to devote considerable time to the course in order to succeed.

### Goals

There are three goals to the class. The first is the development of an in-depth understanding of terrorism, including the characteristics and motivations of terrorist individuals and the strategies and tactics, resources and vulnerabilities of terrorist organizations.

The second goal is to understand and evaluate how the United States and other Western nations have attempted to combat terrorism.

The third goal is to develop an effective approach to combating terrorism.

## **Class Structure**

The class will be taught as a seminar. Classes will be centered around discussions of terrorism based on the readings. I will lead the discussions and will bring out important aspects of the readings. I will also provide thoughts from other valuable readings that are not assigned (because you already have plenty to read). Class participation will be very important in determining your grade. I strongly believe that students learn best when they contribute. Sitting and listening rarely leads to significant learning. If students do not voluntarily participate, I will call on them.

I enjoy being challenged in class. It shows me that you are thinking. I will sometimes argue with you, but disagreeing with me is more likely to gain you points than agreeing with me.

There will be a large 6 week class exercise dealing with terrorism during the course. The exercise is intended to provide the students with an experience similar to what the government and terrorists experience in stopping and launching terrorist attacks. The exercise will not be conducted during class periods. Nearly all of the exercise activities will be conducted through e-mails and group meetings held outside of the classroom. Some students will play the part of terrorists who are trying to terrorize the United States. The other students will be government officials trying to figure out what the terrorists are planning to do and how to stop them. Students should expect that the large exercise will take a substantial amount of time.

There will be at one other simulation that will be conducted on the last day of class

## **Learning Objectives**

- 1) Understanding of counter terrorism issues, the changes in the terrorist environment after the death of Osama Bin Laden.
- 2) Understanding of the factors that lead individuals to become terrorists and the most effective means of countering them.
- 3) Knowledge of key actors, institutions, and processes involved in counter terrorism world
- 4) Analysis of the future of terrorism as a tool of those who want to advance their goals.

## **Learning Outcomes:**

### **Students will be able to:**

- ✓ Describe, analyze and evaluate the underlying motivators for terrorism and to evaluate the likelihood of success of counter measures
- ✓ Participate in counterterrorism efforts in the government or private organizations
- ✓ Identify, define and explain prominent concepts, themes, institutions, theories and issues.

## **Required Readings**

- Required readings are specified in the approximate schedule below. Most of the reading material is contained in the assigned texts.
- A small amount of additional required reading material is identified on Blackboard.
- There is a very large and excellent literature on terrorism. While the reading for the course is significant, there is a great deal of additional reading that is informative. The most valuable chapters have been identified as required, but if you have the time, you are encouraged to also read the excluded chapters.
- The book list describes the required books and some additional books that are worth reading.
- The reading list is a mixture of academic writings and personal stories of those who have participated in terrorism or counter terrorism. You will find the latter to be compelling stories that are easy and quick to read.
- Occasionally, the class will be assigned to read news stories dealing with important current events about terrorism. These materials will be discussed during class.

## **Papers**

One papers of approximately 10 double-spaced pages will be assigned midway through the course..

Short Paper "Through the Eyes of a Terrorist". You will have read two books by terrorists. This paper is a description of what the world looks like from the perspective of a terrorist. You should imagine yourself to be a terrorist (You may pick any terrorist issue you wish.) The papers should be a presentation you would give to a class such as ours about what your "terrorist" organization is doing, why you are doing it and how you justify actions that result in the death and injury to people who see themselves as innocent bystanders. I am not looking for a rant. I am expecting you to be a thoughtful terrorist who has seriously considered the substantive issue that troubles you and who has seriously considered terrorism as the approach (s)he has adopted. The presentation should be candid and honest from the perspective of a terrorist.

A 15-20 double spaced page research term paper will be required. A suggested list of topics is included in this syllabus. Students are permitted to write on a different subject if I approve the subject. The term paper is a research paper and not an essay. Students are required to establish an hypothesis and perform research to test it. The research need not be quantitative. Students can read the findings and views of experts on their hypothesis. After analyzing the results of their research they should present their evidence and draw a conclusion about whether or not their hypothesis is supported. Essays that simply present the student's views will not receive high grades regardless of how brilliant the views are.

### Submitting papers

I prefer to work electronically. Please submit your papers as attachments to e-mails using the following address: ct.assignments@gmail.com PAPERS MUST BE SUBMITTED IN MSWORD FORMAT. Please use the following naming convention so that I can keep track of your submissions across the semester:

Last name initial: short paper 1 or 2 or term paper  
e.g. "jones b short paper 2" or  
"jones b term paper"

I will return papers electronically with comments. I find it easiest to provide feedback with MS Word.

If you wish, you may hand in hard copy.

## Quizzes and Tests

No quizzes or tests are planned for the course.

## Books

### Required

Five of the six required books are available from the bookstore and also on the Internet from vendors such as Amazon.com, Powell.com and numerous others.

Wright, Lawrence *The Looming Tower*, Vintage Books, New York, 2007  
Hoffman, Bruce *Inside Terrorism*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2006  
Baer Robert *See No Evil*, New York, Three Rivers Press 2007  
Richardson, Louise *What Do Terrorists Want?* New York, Random House, 2006  
Nasiri, Omar *Inside the Jihad* Basic Books, New York, New York  
Zaeef. Abdul Salam *My Life With the Taliban*, Columbia University Press, New York 2010

### Suggested but Not Required

Bamford, James *The Shadow Factory*, New York, Doubleday 2008  
There is a lengthy required reading from this book. It is available on line from e-reserves, but previous students have said that they liked the book a lot and would have preferred purchasing the book and reading the physical book

Seierstad, Asne *The Bookseller from Kabul*. London, Little Brown & Co, 2003  
This is a great non-fiction book that is written in the form of a novel. It addresses the Afghan culture after 9/11. Seierstad lived as a Muslim woman with the family of a Kabul bookseller. She wore a burka (a.k.a. abaya) and made a serious attempt to fit into the culture (although that is tough for a Norwegian woman to do even in a burka).

Collins, Aukai *My Jihad*, Guilford Connecticut, Lyons Press, 2002 Reaktion Books, 2007  
The book is short and easy to read. Collins is an American who fought with fundamental Islamics in Afghanistan and Chechnya. He later worked for a while for CIA and FBI. He was on his Jihad but did not consider himself to be a terrorist. He saw himself as fighting against the enemies of Islam. The book is not polished and probably contains significant exaggerations. However, it is, in many ways fascinating. It talks about the day to day life as a terrorist in ways that none of the other assigned texts do. It was an assigned book for the course for two semesters.

Cronin, Audrey Kurth *How Terrorism Ends* Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford. 2009  
I almost assigned this book, but guilt about giving you too much to read overcame me. It is an excellent book that describes how terrorism campaigns have actually ended. I found the book interesting and will talk about its contents during the course.

Gabriel, Mark *Journey Into the Mind of an Islamic Terrorist*, Lake Mary, Florida, Frontline, 2006  
This is an excellent book about how Islam can be (mis)interpreted to support terrorist activity. Gabriel is a serious Muslim scholar who converted from Islam to Christianity.

Wright, Lawrence *The Looming Tower*, New York, Vantage Books, 2007  
If I had not assigned *Ghost Wars* I would have assigned *The Looming Tower*. It won a Pulitzer Prize and presents an excellent picture of the birth of al Qaeda.

Yallop, David *Tracking the Jackal*, New York, Random House, 1993  
This is the exciting true story of Carlos the Jackal, one of the world's most feared and successful terrorists.

Nagl, John A. *Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife*, Westport, Connecticut, Prager Books, 2002  
This is based on LTC Nagl's first-hand experiences in Malaya and Vietnam . He adapts traditional military doctrine to new ways to combat terrorism.

Jensen, Derrick *Endgame*, New York, Seven Stories Press, 2006

This is an unsettling book by a radical environmentalist. In class, we will discuss future forms of terrorism and radical environmentalists are one of the challenges of tomorrow.

Chandler, Michael and Rohan Gunaratna *Countering Terrorism* Reaktion Books 2007, London

I assigned this book last fall and really liked it. I only removed it because I wanted to add *My Life With the Taliban* and was reluctant to ask you to buy 7 books for the course. It is an excellent European perspective on terrorism.

## **Communication**

I enjoy communicating with students and do so frequently. You will receive many e-mails from me during the semester. I monitor my e-mail closely and respond pretty quickly. If you need to talk matters over, let me know and I will set up a meeting with you.

## **Grading**

### Short Paper

The paper described above will be graded on how thorough and insightful they are. The ten-page estimate is only a guide. In the past, some students have been very successfully concise while others are far more verbal. You will not be held to any page limit.

### Class participation guidelines

You will be graded for your class participation every week. If you miss a class you can submit a one-page review of the day's reading to make up for the lack of participation.

Participation is heavily weighted by frequency of participation. Those who volunteer frequently will receive higher participation grades than those who do not. In every two week period everyone will either volunteer or be called upon at least once. The base grade for participation is an 80%. That will go up the more and better you participate. It will go down if you participate infrequently and/or poorly. The potential range for class participation will be from 60% to 100%.

I have found over the years that students rarely say anything foolish in class although some will occasionally say something brilliant. While I realize that you will not all feel comfortable speaking out in class, it is the best way for you to learn and it is a skill you will need in most jobs you may get after school. Employees who sit silently and contribute little are often assumed to have nothing to say at all. That is worse than speaking up and occasionally saying something you do not think reflected well on you. The bottom line is that without satisfactory class participation, it will be difficult to get an A in the class.

### Class exercise

There will be a single large terrorist exercise. It will address the evolution of a major terrorist event. Some students will be the terrorists and will try to successfully launch a major terrorist event. The rest of the students will be government officials who will have to figure out what is happening and prevent it. This exercise will take place largely through e-mail and meetings that you arrange. You will be graded based on your level of involvement in the exercise. Reading material will be distributed about a week before the class exercises. You are expected to read the material and be prepared to adopt the roles you are assigned for the exercises. You will be graded on how well-prepared you are for the exercises and how well you carry out your assigned roles.

### Senate Hearings

Based on the results of the large exercise, we will hold mock senate hearings that will examine what happened during the terrorist attacks. Students will be responsible for designing and conducting the hearings.

### Term Paper

The term papers will be primarily graded on the thoroughness and insights about intelligence that they address. The term papers are research papers and not essays. You are expected to do serious research about the subject you choose. You are encouraged to voice your conclusions and opinions, but the papers need to be grounded in data and findings from experts. Undergraduates should aim for about 15 pages. Graduate students should aim for about 20 pages. As with the short papers, the length is a guide. You will not be penalized for papers that are longer than or shorter than the recommendation. However, unless you are a particularly skilled writer, it is hard to imagine a successful term paper that is several pages shorter than the recommendations.

## GRADING

Item	% of Grade
Class Participation	20%
Short papers	20%
Class exercises	20%
Senate hearings	20%
Term paper	20%

I will use the following standard for grading undergraduates:

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	0 -59

I will use the following standard for grading graduate students:

A	97-100
A-	93-96
B+	89-92
B	86-88
B-	83-85
C+	80-82
C	77-79
C-	74-76
D+	71-73
D	67-70
D-	63-66
F	0 -62

## Approximate Schedule

### Assignments: Countering Terrorism Fall 2011

Dates	Subject	Readings, Pages	Assignments
Jan 23	Introductions and class overview	One Tribe at a Time in Blackboard Course Docs	
Jan 30	Towards an understanding of terrorism	Richardson: Chapters 1-4 Hoffman: Chapters 1-3	
Feb 6	From the perspective of the terrorist	Zaeef entire book	Preparation for major exercise
Feb 13	From the perspective of the terrorist	Nasiri entire book	Team planning for exercise
Feb 20	On the line fighting terrorism	Baer Chapters 1-8	Begin major exercise Short paper 1 - <b><u>Through the eyes of a terrorist</u></b> due.
Feb 27	On the line fighting terrorism	Baer Chapter 8 through Epilogue	
March 5	The roots of Islamic Fundamentalism	Wright chapters 1-3	
March 19	Road to 9/11	Wright Chapters 4-16	
March 26	Terrorism Arrives	Wright Chapters 17 - 20	
Apr 2	NSA and 9/11	Bamford pgs 7-98 e-reserves	End of major exercise
Apr 9	Suicide Terrorism	Movie "Paradise Now" Richardson Chapter 5, Hoffman chapter 5	
Apr 16	A Different Kind of Terrorism	Jensen, Derrick "Endgame" (Selections in e-reserves)	Term Paper Due

Apr 23	The Demise of Terrorist Campaigns and How Do We Combat Terrorism?	Richardson Chapters 7&8 Hoffman Chapters 7-9 Cronin - How Terrorism Ends (Selections in e-reserves)	
Apr 30	Senate Hearings		

## **Suggested Combating Terrorism Term Paper Subjects**

The following are suggested term paper topics for the course on Combating Terrorism. You should feel free to select other topics if there is something that particularly interests you. If you want to write on a different subject than one of these five, you should let me know so that I can advise you on whether there is sufficient credible research material available.

The papers are intended to be research papers and not essays reflecting primarily your opinions. I do not want to discourage you from voicing your opinions, but I definitely want the papers to be supported by facts and conclusions of respected scholars and authorities. For a paper to warrant a good grade, it should tell me something about terrorism I do not already know.

### ***Through the Eyes of a Terrorist***

These papers would present a detailed examination of terrorism as seen from the perspectives of terrorists. This is not an exhaustive list but the papers could address:

- What the enemy looks like to a terrorist
- What keeps them motivated?
- Description of life as a terrorist
- Examination of the actual conduct of terrorist attacks from the viewpoint of the attacker

### ***The Role of the Military***

These papers would address the role of the military in combating terrorism. They would address the range of tactics that the military has used in combating terrorism. They would evaluate the successes and failures of the different tactics and make suggestions about the ways that the military could/should address threats from terrorists.

### ***Terrorist Profiling: What Makes a Terrorist?***

Among the many possibilities, these papers could address:

- Who becomes a terrorist?
- Who becomes a suicide terrorist?
- The papers should examine the various theories of why individuals turn to terrorism and/or become suicide bombers (psychologies, sociopolitical/-economic, strategic choice, ideologies, etc.)

As a note of caution, this is a very difficult (but fascinating) subject. We will talk in class about the fact that most of the time terrorists are remarkably normal people. By and large they are not crazed, mentally unbalanced, depressed, fanatical or any of the stereotypes the media uses to portray them. If you choose to write on this subject, I will assume that you know what terrorists are not. The challenge for you is to figure out what does characterize them. Essentially, a paper that concludes, "I really do not know what makes a terrorist." will not satisfactorily address the question.

### ***Terrorist Leadership***

There are many important issues concerning leaders of terrorist organizations. Among them are:

- Characteristics of leaders of terrorist organizations
- Review of what traits produce successful leaders of terrorist organizations
- What a terrorist leader needs to accomplish:
  - Planning, motivation, payroll, housing, purchasing, personnel problems, training
  - Staying in front of the media
- Dilemmas that terrorist leaders face
- Vulnerabilities of leaders

### ***The Lone Wolf***

The papers would address the threat from American home grown terrorists. The papers would examine of the question of how severe a threat they are. They would examine the challenges facing home grown terrorists as well as the factors that would make it easy for them to carry out successful attacks.

### ***Terrorism on Different Issues***

The papers would address other terrorist threats (including evolving threats) from groups other than Islamic fundamentalists. The papers would identify the causes and groups (if they exist) and examine the level of potential threat including issues associated with the circumstances that could lead to their development.

### ***Terrorism: Human Rights and Civil Liberties***

The papers would address ethical issues concerning human rights and civil liberties affect and are affected by the rise of terrorism. This is especially relevant for Western societies. Do terrorists follow a set of moral principles regarding human rights and civil liberties? Do we? Is there a need for some kind of moral conduct of war for wars involving terrorists? How does terrorist activity affect civil liberties of Americans and others? Does it cause us to rethink the larger issue of civil liberties and justice in the world?

### ***Terrorism and the Media***

The papers would address the relationship between the media and terrorism. They should address how terrorists and counter terrorists use the media to attempt to achieve their ends. The papers might address alternate approaches to using the media.

### Academic Integrity Code

All students must adhere to the Academic Integrity Code (<http://www.american.edu/provost/registrar/regulations/reg80.cfm>). As the code states, "By enrolling at American University and then each semester when registering for classes, students acknowledge their commitment to the Code. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their rights and their responsibilities. In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, examinations of whatever kind, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Students are responsible for learning the conventions of documentation and acknowledgment of sources. American University expects students to complete all examinations, tests, papers, creative projects, and assignments of any kind according to the highest ethical standards, as set forth either explicitly or implicitly in this Code or by the direction of instructors."

### **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease), American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students.

These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site ( [www.prepared.american.edu](http://www.prepared.american.edu) ) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/ college-specific information.