

## **Dangerous Minds: Terrorism, Political Violence, and Radical Orthodoxies**

### **Syllabus**

#### **Course Objectives**

At the end of this course, students will have developed an understanding of the social and political conditions that give rise to terrorism and the radical ideologies and orthodoxies that incite their adherents to violence. The course explores the history of terrorism and political extremism in Europe, Latin America, the Islamic World, and Asia. Students will be asked to do careful study and analysis of conflicts in each region, using scholarly books and articles as well as internet resources, films, and documentaries to investigate terrorism in a dozen countries. Students will be given an opportunity to conduct research on terrorism in countries that are not covered in the four regions and will be given a methodological template to use in their investigations.

#### **Academic Integrity Policy**

Please review UNCG's policies regarding plagiarism before you begin work on the course (<http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu>). You are expected to abide by these policies for all work submitted in this course. Violations of the policies will incur sanctions that at the very least include an F for individual assignments and could result in a failing grade for the entire course and expulsion from the graduate program. Submitting someone else's work for your own, borrowing outside material without attribution, and failing to cite all sources could result in failure and expulsion. Consult the MALS online handbook, the MLA Handbook, or the Chicago Manual of Style if you have questions about appropriate citations. You are expected to conduct graduate level research and follow acceptable academic protocol on all assignments.

#### **Required Texts**

Hoffman, Bruce, *Inside Terrorism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.

Maalouf, Amin, *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*. New York: Penguin Books, 2000.

Chaliand, Gerard and Arnaud Blin, *The History of Terrorism*. Berkeley, CA: UC Press, 2007.

#### **A note on the textbooks**

The three books provide important historical, political, and psychological insight about global terrorism. One assignment derives directly from Maalouf's analysis

of identity and group violence. The books by Hoffman and Chaliand/Blin are references that should inform your essays. In grading your essays, I look for specific references and insights gleaned from your reading of these required source materials.

### **General Description of Course Activities**

The course is divided into five regional units—Europe, Latin America, the Islamic World, Asia, and the United States—with a sixth unit serving as the primary research component. The first three regions contain studies on 9 countries, 3 in each area. The unit on Asian terrorism focuses on one country. The final regional study examines terrorism in the United States. Each country section contains readings from articles and Internet sources, discussion topics, films and documentaries, and requires a journal essay and active participation in a group discussion. Most assigned essays are posted in the journal section, which is graded by the professor, but in most cases you will also be required to post your written assignments in your group discussion forum so that your colleagues can read your work and make comments. In addition to written assignments and discussions, you will be required to complete four interactive learning exercises in the course. The final section of the course, Unit 6, requires that you submit an original research project on a country or terrorist group from a list provided by the professor. See ‘Final research project’ below and more details in Unit 6.

### **Some useful Internet resources**

- Brian Michael Jenkins, “The New Age of Terrorism,” Senior Adviser, The RAND Corporation  
[http://www.rand.org/pubs/reprints/2006/RAND\\_RP1215.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/reprints/2006/RAND_RP1215.pdf)
- Bruce Hoffman, “Islam and the West: Searching for Common Ground.” July 18, 2006, Senate Foreign Relations Committee testimony on the terrorist threat and the counter-terrorism effort.  
[http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/2006/RAND\\_CT263.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/2006/RAND_CT263.pdf)
- Bill Mahre’s interview with Thomas Ricks on Amazon Fishbowl.  
[http://www.amazon.com/Fiasco-American-Military-Adventure-Iraq/dp/159420103X/ref=pd\\_bxgy\\_b\\_text\\_b/104-0947721-1546323](http://www.amazon.com/Fiasco-American-Military-Adventure-Iraq/dp/159420103X/ref=pd_bxgy_b_text_b/104-0947721-1546323)
- Global index of political violence Major Episodes of Political Violence 1946-2006. Compiled by Monty G. Marshall Director, Center for Systemic Peace. <http://members.aol.com/cspm/gm/warlist.htm>
- U.S. State Department reports on global terrorism, divided into regions:  
<http://www.state.gov/www/global/terrorism/1999report/1999index.html>
- Library of Congress Country Studies/Area Handbooks. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html>

### **Regional studies**

Middle East:

- <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/E796CA4D-03EB-4D2D-99CD->

[5C29D295B520.htm](#).

- See also Norman Solomon's analysis of U.S. media coverage of the war in Iraq: <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/9CB9527E-EB74-4791-99F8-20256B21598A.htm>.

Latin America:

- <http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/region/news/arc/lasnet/1995/0470.html>
- Internet Resources for Latin America, a service of New Mexico State University: <http://lib.nmsu.edu/subject/bord/laguia/>
- Sendero Luminoso: A Pathfinder. An online resource from UNC Chapel Hill for researchers on the Shining Path, the Peruvian Maoist insurgency. <http://ils.unc.edu/~marsc/sendero.htm>. See also the UNC websites link to a famous interview with Abimael Guzman (Presidente Gonzalo), jailed leader of Sendero Luminoso: [http://www.blythe.org/peru-pcp/docs\\_en/interv.htm](http://www.blythe.org/peru-pcp/docs_en/interv.htm), translated and uploaded by the outlawed Peruvian Communist Party.
- See also the U.S. Navy website's Terrorist Group Profile: <http://library.nps.navy.mil/home/tgp/sendero.htm>
- Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1999. Washington, U.S. Dept of State, April 2000. 107 p. Peru, p 25. Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path, SL), p 88. Also available online at: <http://www.state.gov/www/global/terrorism/1999report/1999index.html>

## Discussion forums

Generally students will post comments in their assigned group discussion forum in Blackboard. Some students may elect to participate in live video group discussions. If you have a webcam and would prefer to be in a synchronous discussion group, notify the professor the first two days of class. Topics assigned by the professor are based on the content of the learning areas, including readings, documentaries, movies, Internet resources, and current events.

## Written assignments

For all country studies, you will be asked to post a written assignment (essay) in addition to the discussion forum contribution. In some cases, the essay may be identical to what you will be asked to share with your group. All essays and reflections should be considered formal academic assignments. Be sure to provide full documentation for all borrowed information. Good essays provide solid arguments and analysis laid out in a logical structure that flows from a clearly stated thesis or organizing principle, and culminating in persuasive conclusion.

In some units, you will be asked to write an reflection essay or journal entry on a film. Do not rehash the plot of the film. Instead, think of the assignment as an opportunity to do original critical analysis of the film that supports your argument

about the causes of terrorism and possible solutions.

Instructions will be given for each country to clarify written assignments and discussion topics.

### **Interactive assignments**

The course contains at least one interactive learning opportunity in each regional unit. These require responding to a situation that is described in detail. For example, in the first unit you will be asked to investigate a terrorist group and interview its members, and write a report based on your findings.

### **Media (movies, videos, or other outside assignments)**

Individual country studies may require watching a film or documentary. All the films assigned are available as rentals through Netflix or may be purchased. If you are not a member of Netflix, you should join when the course begins.

### **Final research project**

By February 1 you will be expected to choose a country not covered in the course learning area as your primary research focus. The final four weeks of the course will be devoted to your research project. We will provide a template at the beginning of Unit VI and suggest a methodology for your research and presentation. Essentially it will involve writing an essay of 1000 to 1500 words on the history of terrorism in your chosen country. You will also be asked to provide a list of useful Internet sources, scholarly articles or books, films and videos, discussion questions, a brief learning object, and suggestions for further research. The learning object should be an interactive assignment, activity, or game whose concept you design.

### **Grading**

Written essay assignments and reflections will be graded on clarity of expression, depth of analysis, and scholarship. Discussion forums are monitored by the professor and receive grades based on the quality and level of engagement of each student's contributions and responses.

Essays and reflections: 5 points each / 45 points total

Participation grades (discussion forum): 2 points per unit / 10 points total

Interactive assignments: 3 points per region / 12 points total

Final project: 45 points

