

POSC 4931  
TERRORISM  
Spring 2011

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Office Hours: Monday, 10:20-12:20;  
Tuesday & Thursday, 3:20-5:00; and by appointment.  
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Why do militant groups employ terrorist methods? What forces or pressures drive militant leaders to employ such controversial methods in pursuit of their aims? This course provides students an opportunity to study what terrorists do, and why they do it, helping them formulate answers to these questions. To facilitate the inquiry, much of the course is devoted to developing and applying five alternative theories or lenses through which militant groups can be analyzed. These stress the effects on militant action of ideology; social structural and psychological factors; organizational dynamics, and strategic or cost-benefit analysis. The course also examines a diverse array of militant groups, including entities like violent offshoots of contemporary right-wing militias and other al-Qaeda inspired militants in the United States, "Jihadi" groups in Pakistan, the Weather Underground, the Provisional Irish Republican Army, and others.

**Required Texts:**

1. Bruce Hoffman, \_\_\_\_\_, Columbia University Press, 2006.  
NOTE: Make sure you get the SECOND (2006) edition of this book.
2. Walter Reich, ed., \_\_\_\_\_, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998
3. Jessica Stern, \_\_\_\_\_, Harper Collins, 2003
4. Igor Primoratz, \_\_\_\_\_, Palgrave, 2004.

**Optional Texts:**

1. Diego Gambetta, ed. \_\_\_\_\_, Oxford University Press. HEREAFTER  
Gambetta
2. Rosemary H.T. O'Kane, *Terrorism*, Pearson, 2007

Optional texts and optional readings below may be especially useful for graduate student participants.

**Course Requirements:**

One short paper (4-6 pages) = 20%

One hourly exam = 25%

One long paper (9-12 pages) = 35%

Bibliography and three quizzes = 20%

Note on quizzes: completing assigned readings is essential to your performance and participation in the course. Twice during the semester I will ask you to answer a question based directly on the readings in class (you will be given 20-30 minutes). I will grade these with a plus, check, or minus (I expect most students will get a check).

To do well on quizzes, complete the readings for that day and make sure you know what are the author's main arguments and key supporting points. To be especially prepared, spend a few minutes before class thinking about questions or concerns that the reading raised for you, or things that you believe warrant further discussion.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

**Jan '18**

Course introduction

**Jan '20** Putting the into terrorism.

Discussion of 9/11 and Mumbai massacre

1. Bruce Hoffman, , Second Edition (2008), Chapter one
2. Review article at link: [http://reason.com/archives/2006/08/11/dont\\_be\\_terrorized](http://reason.com/archives/2006/08/11/dont_be_terrorized)

### Section I: What is Terrorism?

**Jan '25** Defining Terrorism

Reading:

PLEASE get a head start on reading for next few classes, especially Feb. 3 (which has the heaviest reading of the course); for example it is recommended you read the Vaniak article ahead of time, as it is especially (and unusually) dense

**Jan. 27** Defining Terrorism; Some Controversies

What is distinctive about terrorism as a method of armed conflict? Through what pathways or mechanisms do the strategy/strategies of terrorism supposedly work. What are these strategies of terrorism?

Reading:

1. Handout from Ariel Merari, "Terrorism as a Strategy of Insurgency"  
vol. 5, no. 4 (Winter 1993)
2. Peter R. Neumann and M.L.R. Smith,  
Routledge, 2008, chapter 3

3. A.P. Schmid, "Terrorism and the Media: The Ethics of Publicity,"  
1, no. 4 (1989) **ONLY READ: 539 546**
4. Robert Mackey, "Can Soldiers be Victims of Terrorism," , November 20,

3. Mark Landler, "U.S. Revises Offer to take Sudan off Terror list,"  
November 7, 2010.
4. John F. Burns, "Iranian Exiles aren't terrorist group, British Court Says,"  
5/8/08.
5. Helene Cooper and Nazila Fathi, "Terrorist Label for Iran Guard Reflects U.S. Impatience with  
U.N.,"  
, August 16, 2007.
6. Brian Knowlton, "U.S. Thinking of restoring N. Korea to Terror List," The New York Times,  
June 8, 7Tf2.02730TD0Tc0003Tj/T1Tf1.60660TD0Tc21Tf1.868D0.0002Tc[Ti]5.3(mes,)JJ/TT11Tf2.66120TD0Tc

Reading:

1. Stern, chapter 4, "Temple Mount Faithful"
2. Cindy Combs, Elizabeth Al. Combs and Lydia Marsh, "Christian Militia Training: Arming the "troops" with Scripture, the Law and A good gun," in James J.F. Forest, , Praeger Security International

Optional:

1. News articles on Timothy McVeigh and Oklahoma city bombing
2. Allan C. Brownfeld, "Zionism and the Pursuit of West Bank Settlements," in James J.F. Forest, , Vol. 1: Recruitment, Praeger.
3. News Articles on Hutaree
4. James M. Smith, "Japan and Aum Shinrikyo," Chapter 31 in , Praeger, 548 556 ONLY
5. David. C. Rapoport, Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Religious Traditions, vol. 78, no. 3 Political

1. Jerrold M. Post. "Terrorist psycho logic: terrorist behavior as a product of psychological forces," in Reich (textbook)
2. Excerpt from Jeff Victoroff, "The Mind of Terrorist," , vol. 49, no. 1

## 1. Background

2. Fareed Zakaria, "The Jihad against the Jihadis," [Foreign Affairs](#), February 12, 2010.
3. Brynjar Lia and Thomas Hegghammer, "Jihadi Strategic