

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
Department of Criminology, Law, and Society

CRIM 475 -C01, SUMMER 2013

Mondays thru Thursdays, Noon – 2:15pm, Robinson B205
July 1 – August 1

TERRORISM: THEORY AND PRACTICE

INSTRUCTOR: Dennis Pluchinsky
dpluchin@GMU.edu and dpluchinsky@rocketmail.com

Course Objective: This is an overview course that will provide students with a basic set of analytical frameworks to better understand and evaluate political terrorism and counter-terrorism strategies, programs, and tools. Specifically, the course will examine the problems, concepts, goals, strategies, tactics, targeting, operational mindset, propaganda and marketing strategies, and ideologies of contemporary domestic and international terrorist groups. Emphasis will be placed on the terrorist threat from al-Qaeda and the global jihadist movement. Basic counter-terrorism strategies will be discussed as well as a cursory examination of U.S. counter-terrorism programs and tools. Class lectures, course texts, handouts, outside readings, power-point slides, and DVDs will be used to accomplish the above objectives. **STUDENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO TAPE LECTURES.**

Course Blackboard Site: *You must frequently check the course web site for announcements and new files. All students have access to this site.*

Student Learning Goals:

1. Students can apply the set of course analytical frameworks to the problem of political terrorism in the world today to better understand and evaluate its impact on government and society.
2. Students can understand how terrorists and different terrorist organizations emerge from discontented societies and what organizational and operational processes and components are necessary for the organization to form, evolve, and survive.
3. Students can understand why and how terrorists and terrorist organizations select certain targets, tactics, weapons and to carry out terrorist attacks.
4. Students understand the nature, objectives, ideology, strategy, operational manifestations, and structure of the current global jihadist terrorist threat.
5. Students can understand the role of innovation, science, and technology in enhancing the operational capabilities of terrorists and terrorist organizations and how they contribute to successful counter-terrorism programs and actions.
6. Students can understand how and why a government establishes and applies certain counter-terrorism tools.

Required Textbooks (5) :

A.R. Oppenheimer. Bombs and Bullets: A History of Deadly Ingenuity (2008: Irish Academic Press) ISBN: 978-0-7165-2895-1. Paper.

Magedah E. Shabo. Techniques of Propaganda and Persuasion (2008: Prestwick House) ISBN: 978-1-58049-874-6. Paper. (AVAILABLE AS AN E-BOOK ON AMAZON)

Mitchell D. Silber. The Al-Qaeda Factor: Plots Against the West (2012: University of Pennsylvania Press) ISBN: 978-0-8122-4402-1. Hardcover.

Jeffrey Simon. Lone Wolf Terrorism: Understanding the Growing Threat (Prometheus publishers) ISBN 978-1-61614-646-7. Hardcover. (AVAILABLE AS AN E-BOOK ON AMAZON)

Mark Mazzeti. The Way of the Knife: The CIA, A Secret Army, and a War at the Ends of the Earth (2013:Penguin Press)ISBN-10: 1594204802. **AVAILABLE AS AN E-BOOK ON AMAZON**.

ALL COURSE TEXTS AND ASSIGNED READINGS ON BLACKBOARD MUST BE READ BY STUDENTS!!!
Students are required to read all introductions, conclusions, and appendices in course texts.

Course Requirements:

Student Research Paper = 35% - Due July 25

Students will write a 20 page, double-spaced research paper on the following topic:

Students will read all 10 issues of the global jihadist online English-language magazine “Inspire” [provided on blackboard] and apply all relevant course analytical frameworks (especially propaganda and narratives) and concepts from lectures, course texts, and course readings. The paper grade will be determined by the correct application of these frameworks and concepts; injection of student’s opinion, level of research, research sources, understanding of key aspects of the topic, and the student’s presentation of logical and coherent arguments.

For every course day that the paper is late, the student will lose 5 points from the paper.

Class Attendance = 15% ----- 18 Class meetings

Attend all classes = 15 points
Absent 1 class = 14 points
Absent 2 classes = 13 points
Absent 3 classes = 12 points
Absent 4 classes = 11 points

Absent 5 classes = 9 points

Absent 6 classes = 7 points

Absent 7 classes = 5 points

Absent 8 classes = 3 points

If students notify the instructor in advance that they will be absent, and depending upon the reason, the instructor may at his discretion take off no points for the absence or only $\frac{1}{2}$ point.

Class Participation = 10%

Participate in all 18 sessions = 10 points

1 session = 9.5 points

-2 sessions = 9 points

-3 sessions = 8.5 points

-4 sessions = 8 points

-5 sessions = 7.5 points

-6 sessions = 7 points

-7 sessions = 6.5 points

-8 sessions = 6 points

-9 sessions = 5.5 points

-10 sessions = 4 points

-11 sessions = 3 points

-12 sessions = 2 points

Final Exam = 40%

Grading: I will use the following grading scale –

A = 95-100

A- = 90-94

B+ = 87-89

B = 84-86
B- = 80-83
C+ = 75-79
C = 70-74
D = 65-69
F = 0 - 64

Statement on Academic Integrity: I believe very strongly in the principle of academic integrity, and I will simply not accept any violations of the University Honor Code in my class. The Honor Code contains provisions on cheating, lying, plagiarizing, and stealing. If I witness any violations of the Honor Code, I will follow the standard reporting procedures as outlined in the University catalog. **Please read the Honor Code again for this class.**

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Course Lecture Schedule

This syllabus is subject to minor changes as the course progresses.

July 1 - Course objectives, organization, terms, and analytical frameworks.

July 2 - Evolution of a militant group. Readings: Oppenheimer, chapters 1-2; Simon, chapters 1-2.

July 3 - Leaderless vs. Command terrorism. Readings: Simon, chapters 3-4; Oppenheimer, chapters 3-4.

July 4 ----- **NO CLASS** -----

July 8 – Typology of political terrorism. Readings: Simon, chapter 5.

July 9 – Typology of political terrorism. Readings: *Blackboard*.

July 10 – The mechanics of terrorism. Readings: *Blackboard*.

July 11 - Spillover lectures. Readings: *Blackboard*.

July 15 – Anatomy of a terrorist attack. Readings: Oppenheimer, chapters 5-6.

July 16 - Terrorist tactics (explosives, weapons, hostage-taking). Readings: Shabo, chapters 1-6; Oppenheimer, chapters 7-8.

July 17 – Terrorist tactics (standoff weapons, suicide attack, materials attacks [CBRN]) and use of new technologies. Readings: Shabo, chapters 7-11; Oppenheimer, chapters 9-11.

July 18 – Terrorist Propaganda, Narratives, and Radicalization. Readings: Shabo, chapters 12-18; Silber, chapters 1-3

July 22 – Current Global Jihadist terrorist threat. Readings: Shabo, chapters 19-23; Silber, chapters 4-8; Mazzeti, Intro, and chapters 1-2.

July 23 – Current Global Jihadist terrorist threat. Readings: Silber, chapters 9-12; Mazzeti, chapters 3-5.

July 24 – Current Global jihadist terrorist threat. Readings: Silber, chapters 13-16; Mazetti, chapters 6-8.

July 25 – Global jihadist propaganda videos. Readings: Mazzeti, chapters 9-11. **STUDENT RESEARCH PAPER DUE.**

July 29 – Spillover lectures. Readings: Simon, chapters 6-7; Mazzeti, chapters 12-14.

July 30 – Counter-terrorism strategy, policies, programs, toolbox. Readings: Simon, chapter 8; Mazzeti, chapters 15-17.

July 31 – Counter-terrorism strategy, policies, programs, toolbox. Readings: Mazzeti, chapter 18 and epilogue.

August 1 – History of anti-American terrorism; Terrorist threat assessment techniques.

Note:

The final exam will be online. The date will be determined once the final summer calendar is published. The final exam will contain one 10 point question on the April 15 Boston Marathon bombings. Students are required to read up on this incident and the subsequent investigation throughout the summer session.

Dennis Pluchinsky

He was a senior terrorism analyst in the U.S. Department of State's Office of Intelligence and Threat Analysis from 1977-2005 where he was responsible over those years for analyzing terrorism in Western Europe, the Former Soviet Union, and the Middle East and Asia. He was selected in 1992 and 2004 for the Director of Central Intelligence's Exceptional Intelligence Analyst Program. He is a contributing editor for the international journal "Studies in Conflict and Terrorism" and an associate of the U.S. Intelligence Community's Global Expertise Reserve Program. He presents recurring lectures on terrorism at CIA University, the Kent School for Intelligence, the National Foreign Affairs Training Center, the Joint Military Intelligence Training Center, and the FBI Academy. Since 1990, he has taught courses on terrorism, U.S. counter-terrorism policy and programs, homeland security, ethnic conflict, and al-Qaeda and the global jihad movement at George Washington University, the University of Mary Washington, James Madison University, Missouri State University, Georgetown University, and George Mason University.