INSTRUCTOR:
Dr. Amanda Murdie
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Online or In-Person Office Hours: 10:00 am to 12:00 pm on Tuesdays and by appointment

Video - https://zoom.us/my/murdie
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Course Description and Objectives

What motivates a terrorist? When are people likely to rebel? Are counterterrorism or repression efforts successful? This course focuses on the social scientific study of terrorism. We will focus on scientific explanations for rebellion, the rise of terrorist organizations, political and economic explanations for terrorist attacks, and the effects of efforts to combat terrorism. After this class, you will have not only an understanding of the major players and factors influencing terrorism, but a base understanding of the social scientific processes which govern political violence and rebellion more generally. As such, this class is not a history class or a class on current events. Though current and historical events will be discussed, your grade will not depend on your rote memorization of these events. Instead, the focus will be on understanding the underlying interests of important actors for international security, the arenas in which these actors interact, and the rules which govern their interactions. This focus on the basic principles will provide you with a rich practical knowledge of the study of terrorism.

This course will be divided into four major sections: (1) terrorism basics, (2) what motivates terrorists, (3) the logic of terrorism, and (4) the consequences of terrorism and counterterrorism. At the end of the course, you should be able to convey an advanced understanding of terrorism and insurgency research to prospective employers, including government security and intelligence agencies, risk analyst organizations, and think tanks.

Online Course Format

This course is completely online! All materials are available online through UGA’s eLearning Commons (ELC) portal. The course is asynchronous; you can work on the materials at your own scheduled time throughout the week.

The course consists of 16 topics divided across four modules. You’ll have a new topic a week and a new module every month. Each topic will include:

1. A required reading of current or canonical academic research on the topic;
2. A short video (around 5-10 minutes) of me explaining the key concepts of the week;
3. A longer set of slides for you to go through at your own pace;
4. A set of additional materials/video links to explore for further information on the topic.

You will have to complete a topic a week. The topic-related discussion board will be due each week by Sunday night at 11:59 pm (Eastern Standard Time).

There are many ways to work through the course, and I have no problem with you working ahead. You could think of each week’s work like a M/W/F class and divide your work into the required reading (Monday), video and slides (Wednesday), additional materials and discussion post (Friday). Or, you could think of each week’s work like a T/U class and divide your work into the required reading and video (Tuesday) and then the slides, additional materials, and discussion post (Thursday). I don’t recommend it, but you could also wait until the weekend and do the reading and video on Saturday, and then the longer slide set, additional materials, and discussion post on Sunday.

Any way you want to tackle the work of the week is fine with me! As long as each topic is completed before the weekly deadline, you can work whenever and wherever works for you best!

I’m here to help however I can. Please feel free to email at any time. I strive to answer all emails within 24 hours. I'll also have weekly sessions in Zoom, and you can always drop by my office. I'm also happy to schedule a time to chat on the phone or over video.

Grading

Your course grade is calculated from the following components:

- 24% - Weekly discussion board posts (1.5% each for 16 weeks)
- 60% - Tests (4 tests at 15% each)
- 4% - Short overview paper on one of the recommended readings
- 12% - Final paper (5-10 pages, double spaced) on a terrorist event or organization

Discussion Board Contributions

There will be a discussion board for each topic (each week). I will start off the discussion board with some question about the topic for that week. For each module, you will contribute at least one thoughtful response to the discussion board question with references to the the course materials. Discussion board responses are due weekly by 11:59 pm Sunday. A rubric can be found on eLC. Please note: I will allow one late discussion board contribution without penalty.

Tests

At the end of each module, there will be a test. Each tests will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The tests are open note, open book but must be completed within 2 hours of you opening the test. You can take the tests at anytime (you are free to work ahead) but you must complete the tests by the following dates. To note if you work ahead: I will not grade tests until after the due dates. Doing the reading, watching the short video, and going over the longer set of slides for each of the module’s topics should prepare you for each test.

Test 1: Due by September 12th at 11:59 pm in eLC
Test 2: Due by October 10th at 11:59 pm in eLC
Test 3: Due by November 7th at 11:59 pm in eLC
Test 4: Due by December 12th at 11:59 pm in eLC
Short Overview Paper

For each topic, there are a series of recommended readings that should aid in your understanding of the course materials. Of course, I don't expect you to read all of the recommended readings. However, for one topic over the course of the semester, please read one of the starred recommended readings and provide a short overview of the reading (2-4 pages, double spaced). The assignment can be completed any time but is due by November 21st at 11:59 pm in eLC. A rubric for the assignment is available on eLC.

Final Paper

As much as it is necessary to have a broad understanding of the dynamics and logic of terrorism, it is also important to have an in-depth knowledge of certain terrorist events or groups. On a group or event of your choosing, please write a 10-15 page paper (double spaced) on one of the following topics covered in the course:

(1) Group grievances - Why is this group fighting?
(2) Group leadership and recruitment - Who is in charge of the group? How does the group get its members?
(3) Group funding and attention - How does this group get its funds? How does the group get media attention?
(4) Group attacks - What type of attacks has the group carried out? Why were these attacks carried out?
(5) Counterterrorism efforts - What efforts have countries taken to stop this group and its activities? Were these efforts successful?

In your paper, you will outline the information you have found on this topic and how your findings relate to the readings we have covered in the course. A rubric for this assignment is available on the eLC page for this course. This paper is due on December 3rd at 11:59 pm in eLC. I am happy to discuss the group/event of your choosing and offer suggestions!

Grading Scale

Your final grade will be calculated on the following scale. Please note that I do not round grades.

- 94 to 100 - A
- 90 to 93 - A-
- 87 to 89 - B +
- 84 to 87 - B
- 80 to 83 - B-
- 77 to 79 - C +
- 74 to 77 - C
- 70 to 73 - C-
- 60 to 69 - D
- 59 and below - F
Useful Information and University Policies

Late Quiz/Discussion Board Submissions

This course is completely asynchronous, meaning that you can work at your own pace throughout each week. This should help you manage the course materials and avoid any missed due dates. If you miss a discussion board, I will allow all students one “freebie” or late submission request. Grades are due immediately after the course is over; late or missing assignments at this time may cause difficulties in grade reporting.

Beyond the one free late submission request, please refer to the UGA class attendance policy: LINK.

University Honor Code and Academic Honesty Policy

The following is taken verbatim from LINK:

UGA Student Honor Code: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." A Culture of Honesty, the University’s policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at www.uga.edu/ovpi.

I expect that the Student Honor Code will guide your efforts in this course. A lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy does not explain a violation. Please email me with any questions.

Changes to the Syllabus Could Occur

The following is taken verbatim from LINK:

"The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary."

FERPA Statement

The following is taken verbatim from LINK:

"The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants students certain information privacy rights. See the registrar’s explanation at www.reg.uga.edu/general-information/ferpa/. FERPA allows disclosure of directory information (name, address, telephone, email, date of birth, place of birth, major, activities, degrees, awards, prior schools), unless requested in a written letter to the registrar."

Disability Services

The following is taken verbatim from LINK:

"If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting http://drc.uga.edu"

The following is taken verbatim from LINK:

"Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations in order to participate in course activities or meet course requirements should contact the instructor or designate during regular office hours or by appointment."

I want to help all students succeed in this course!
Mental Health and Wellness Resources

The following is taken verbatim from [LINK](https://sco.uga.edu):

“If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit [https://sco.uga.edu](https://sco.uga.edu). They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services [https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga](https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga) or crisis support [https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies](https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies). If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA [https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga] for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center. Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.”

Some material in this course contains references to violence. I urge you to take your mental health seriously. There are campus resources to help.

Course Readings

No textbook is necessary for this class. All of the readings come from academic journal articles and book chapters. These readings can all be found on the eLC page for this course. I would plan on reading the assigned reading **before** watching the video for the day. When doing all of your readings, it works best to identify each reading’s research question, theory, hypotheses, empirical analysis, and conclusion. Also, try to identify one or two problems or questions you have with the work. I remember readings best when I’ve actually taken the time to write out some notes; it might work for you, too. If nothing else, it will definitely help in preparing for the quizzes.

Course Outline

Module 1: Terrorism Basics

**Topic 1: Intro to Course (Week 1: August 18-22)**

- **Required Reading:** Syllabus
- **Video:** Topic 1: Introduction to the course
- **Slides:** Topic 1: Introduction to the course
- **Recommended Readings/Links:** None

**Topic 2: Intro to Social Science and Defining Terrorism (Week 2: August 23-29)**

- **Video:** Topic 2: Defining terrorism
- **Slides:** Topic 2: Reviewing social science basics and defining terrorism
- **Recommended Readings/Links:**
  - Video: Terrorism Research Before and After 9/11, Gary LaFree - [LINK](https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga)
Topic 3: History of Terrorism & Common Ideologies of Terrorists (Week 3: August 30-September 5)

- **Video:** Topic 3: History of terrorism in 10 minutes
- **Slides:** Topic 3: History of terrorism & common ideologies of terrorists
- **Recommended Readings/Links:**
  - Video: Terrorism Time Lapse - [LINK](#)

Topic 4: Mobilization for Violence (Week 4: September 6-12)

- **Video:** Topic 4: How to mobilize an insurgency
- **Slides:** Topic 4: Mobilization for Violence
- **Recommended Readings/Links:**
  - Video: The rise of ISIS, explained in 6 minutes - [LINK](#)
TEST 1: Over Module 1, Must be completed by September 12th at 11:59 pm

Module 2: What Motivates Terrorists

Topic 5: Terrorism Truisms to Remember and Strategies of Terrorism (Week 5: September 13-19)


- **Video:** Topic 5: Terrorism truisms and strategies of terrorism

- **Slides:** Topic 5: Terrorism Truisms to Remember and Strategies of Terrorism

- **Recommended Readings/Links:**

Topic 6: Causes/Goals of Terrorism 1: Psychological Theories of Terrorism & The Role of Religion (Week 6: September 20-26)


- **Video:** Topic 6: Causes of terrorism - looking at religion and psychology

- **Slides:** Topic 6: Causes/Goals of Terrorism 1: Psychological Theories of Terrorism & The Role of Religion

- **Recommended Readings/Links:**

Topic 7: Causes/Goals of Terrorism 2: Poverty & Belonging/Brotherhood (Week 7: September 27-October 3)


- **Video:** Topic 7: Causes of terrorism - poverty and belonging
• **Slides**: Topic 7: Causes/Goals of Terrorism 2: Poverty & Belonging/Brotherhood

• **Recommended Readings/Links:**
  - Blogpost: Today’s Highly Educated Terrorists [LINK]

**Topic 8: Female Terrorists (Week 8: October 4-10)**


• **Video**: Topic 8: Female terrorists

• **Slides**: Topic 8: Female Terrorists

• **Recommended Readings/Links:**
  - Video: TEDxPSU - Mia Bloom - Seeing the New Face of Terrorism - [LINK]
  - Video: Why Are Women Joining ISIS? - [LINK]

**TEST 2: Over Module 2, Must be completed by October 10 at 11:59 pm**

**Module 3: The Logic of Terrorism**

**Topic 9: Suicide Terrorism (Week 9: October 11-17)**


• **Video**: Topic 9: Why suicide terrorism can be logical

• **Slides**: Topic 9: Suicide Terrorism

• **Recommended Readings/Links:**
Topic 10: Terrorism and the Media (Week 10: October 18-24)


- **Video**: Topic 10: How the media can help terrorism

- **Slides**: Topic 10: Terrorism and the Media

- **Recommended Readings/Links**:
  - Video: Terrorism and the media | Ariela Marcus-Sells - [LINK](#)

Topic 11: Terrorists and Money/Sponsorship (Week 11: October 25-31)


- **Video**: Topic 11: How to get the money necessary for terrorism

- **Slides**: Topic 11: Terrorists and Money/Sponsorship

- **Recommended Readings/Links**:
  - Video: Which Countries Are Accused of Supporting Terrorism? - [LINK](#)
  - Video: How fake handbags fund terrorism and organized crime | Alastair Gray - [LINK](#)

Topic 12: “New” Forms of Terrorism: CBRN and Cyberterrorism (Week 12: November 1-7)


- **Video**: Topic 12: “New” methods of terrorism
- **Slides:** Topic 12: “New” Forms of Terrorism: CBRN and Cyberterrorism
- **Recommended Readings/Links:**
  - Video: Governments don’t understand cyber warfare. We need hackers | Rodrigo Bijou - [LINK](#)

**TEST 3:** Over Module 3, Must be completed by November 7 at 11:59 pm

**Module 4: The Consequences of Terrorism and Counterterrorism**

**Topic 13: Consequences of Terrorism - Psychological & Political (Week 13: November 8-14)**

- **Video:** Topic 13: What happens after an attack
- **Slides:** Topic 13: Consequences of Terrorism
- **Recommended Readings/Links:**
  - Blogpost: Psychiatric and Societal Impacts of Terrorism - [LINK](#)

**Topic 14: Counterterrorism Options and Strategy 1 - Harden Targets and Hearts and Minds (Week 14: November 15-21)**

- **Video:** Topic 14: The tools to fight terrorism
- **Slides:** Topic 14: Counterterrorism Options and Strategy 1 - Harden Targets and Hearts and Minds
- **Recommended Readings / Links:**
  - Blogpost: On Winning Hearts and Minds: Key Conditions for Population-Centric COIN - [LINK](#)
Blogpost: Cruel to be Kind: Authoritarian Counterinsurgency and the Winning of Hearts and Minds - [LINK]


Short Overview Paper: Must be completed by November 21 at 11:59 pm

Topic 15: Counterterrorism Options and Strategy 2 - Human Rights Abuses (Week 15: November 22-28)


- **Video**: Topic 15: Why Torture May Not Reduce Terrorism

- **Slides**: Topic 15: Counterterrorism Options and Strategy 2 - Human Rights Abuses

- **Recommended Readings/Links**:
  - Video: Torture to Combat Terrorism? It Doesn’t Work, but Good Cop Bad Cop Does | Juliet Kayyem - [LINK]

Topic 16: Counterterrorism Options and Strategy 3 - How Terrorism Ends (Week 16: November 28-December 5)


- **Video**: Topic 16: Why Its Hard to Leave A Terrorist Organization

- **Slides**: Topic 16: Counterterrorism Options and Strategy 3 - How Terrorism Ends

- **Recommended Readings/Links**:
  - Video: How Christmas lights helped guerrillas put down their guns - [LINK]


**Final Paper:** Must be completed by December 3 at 11:59 pm

**TEST 4:** Over Module 4, Must be completed by December 12th at 11:59 pm