

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
Department of Political Science

**W3922, Section 2 (Spring 2008): Terrorism and Counterterrorism  
(Fridays 11-12.50)**

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 1-2 and Fridays, 1-3

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**Course Description:** The seminar is designed to illuminate students' understanding of the most important aspects of domestic and international terrorism with an emphasis on the United States as target of and responder to this sort of political violence.

**Course Requirements:** Attendance at all sessions is required except for excused absences on religious holidays for observant students. If a student misses more than two classes without proof of sickness or other exceptional reasons, the final grade will be lowered by ½ point for each missed class; if a student misses five or more sessions without proof of serious sickness, he/she will fail the class.

Students must read the assigned material in preparation for each session and participate in class discussions. To make sure that everyone is well prepared, each student will compile a short list (one page or less) of important points, issues, and questions concerning the assigned readings for each class. In our first class meeting each student will select one particular past or present terrorist organization in various countries that are described in Martha Crenshaw's book Terrorism in Context or other sources, up-date the information, and co-lead our class discussions about these groups.

Every member of the class will write a research paper (about 25 type-written, double-spaced pages) that examines one particular aspect of terrorism or counter-terrorism. We will discuss suitable topics in class. The deadline for handing in a proposal with a list of sources is February 29; the complete term paper is due in our last class session. Grades will be based on class participation and short presentation of research findings (one third of the final grade) and the final paper (two thirds).

Topics and Mandatory Readings:

Session 1 (Jan. 25)	<b>Introduction: How Serious is the Terrorist Threat?</b> Discussion of class format/ requirements
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Session 2  
(Feb. 1)

**A Perennial Dispute: What is Terrorism? Why differentiate between State and Non-State Actors? Is Terrorism Ever Justified?**

Readings:

Brigitte L. Nacos, Terrorism and Counterterrorism, chapter 2;  
Martha Crenshaw, Terrorism in Context, chapter 1;  
Richard E. Rubinstein, Alchemist of Revolution, chapters 1-3.

Session 3  
(Feb. 8)

**The Global Context: Is there a New Terrorism?**

Readings:

Nacos, Terrorism and Counterterrorism, chapter 3 and Appendix  
(The Appendix lists and summarizes major international and domestic terrorist incidents from the early 1970s to the present time so that students get a basic understanding of past terrorist acts and respective perpetrators, victims, methods, and outcomes. This material will be helpful in understanding many aspects of terrorism and comparing various terrorism waves, groups, targets, methods, etc ).

Steven Simon and Daniel Benjamin, "The Terror." *Survival*, vol. 43, no. 4 (Winter 2001), pp. 5-18.

Alexander Spencer, "Questioning the Concept of 'New Terrorism'", *Peace, Conflict & Development*, Issue 8, Jan. 2006.

Session 4  
(Feb. 15)

**The Domestic Context**

Readings:

Nacos, Terrorism and Counterterrorism, chapter 4;  
Kenneth Stern, A Force Upon the Plain, pp. 179-258  
"The Army of God Manual, Third Edition, available at  
<http://www.armyofgod.com/AOGhistory.html>

Session 5  
(Feb. 22)

**The Making of Terrorists (Causes, Conditions, Influences, Traits) and the Role of States**

Here we will also discuss female terrorists

Readings:

Nacos, Terrorism and Counterterrorism, chapters 6 and 7  
pp. 85-93; pp. 99-106.  
Walter Reich, Origins of Terrorism, chapters 1-10;  
Laqueur, No End to War, chapter 1.

Session 6: **Terrorist Groups: Case Studies**  
(Feb. 29) Crenshaw, Terrorism in Context (Students report on the case studies they selected and co-lead class discussion)

**Today is the last day to hand in your paper proposals including a list of sources**

Session 7 **Terrorist Goals, Targets, Tactics. What is Religious Terrorism?**  
(March 7) Readings:  
Nacos, Terrorism and Counterterrorism, chapters 5 and 8  
Mark Juergensmeyer, Terrorism in the Mind of God, chapters 1, 8, 9.  
Louise Richardson, ed., The Roots of Terrorism, chapters 11, 12  
Mia Bloom, Dying to Kill, chapter 4.

Session 8 **Inside Terrorism: Organizational Structures and the Financing of Terrorism**  
(Mar. 14) Readings:  
Nacos, Terrorism and Counterterrorism, chapter 9;  
Sageman, Understanding Terror Networks, chapters 3 and 4.  
Aidan Kirby, "The London Bombers as 'Self-Starters.'" Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, vol. 20, no. 5 (May 2007).

**SPRING BREAK: No Class Meeting on March 21**

Session 9 **Balancing Security and Civil Liberties/Human Rights in the Face of Terrorist Threats**  
(Mar. 21) Readings:  
Nacos, Terrorism and Counterterrorism, chapter 10  
Richard Pious, The War on Terrorism and the Rule of Law , chapters 2, 7, 8, 9.  
Mark Danner, Torture and Truth, pp. 215-275.

- Session 10  
(Apr. 4)      **Responding to Terrorism: Military and Non-Military Means**  
Readings:  
Nacos, Terrorism and Counterterrorism, chapter 11;  
Louise Richardson, What Terrorists Want, chapter 8  
Audrey Kurth Cronin and James M. Ludes, eds., Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy, chapter 3 and 7.
- Session 11  
(Apr. 11)      **Prevention, Preparedness, and Post-9/11 Reforms**  
Readings:  
Nacos, Terrorism and Counterterrorism, chapters 12 and 17  
Stephen Flynn, America the Vulnerable, chapters 1-7  
Richard A. Falkenrath, Prepared Statement of Testimony before the U.S. Senate's Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Sept. 12, 2006.
- Session 12  
(Apr. 18)      **Media/Communication and the Calculus of Terrorism and Counterterrorism**  
Readings:  
Nacos, Mass-Mediated Terrorism, chapters 13-16  
Gabriel Weimann, Terror on the Internet, chapters 2-4
- Session 13  
(April 25)      **Can Terrorists Succeed?**  
Readings:  
Audrey Kurth Cronin, How al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups." International Security 31 (1) (Summer 2006): 7-48.  
Max Abrahms, Why Terrorism Does Not Work." International Security 31 (2) (Fall 2006): 42-78.  
Louise Richardson, What Terrorists Want, chapter 7  
Tom Parker, "Fighting an Antaeon Enemy: How Democratic States Unintentionally Sustain the Terrorist Movements They Oppose." Terrorism and Political Violence, vol. 19, no. 2 (Summer 2007).
- Session 14:      **Last Class: Students present summaries of their research**  
(May 2)

**Term Papers are due at the beginning of this last class session!**

**I have ordered just two books in the Columbia Bookstore:**

**Brigitte L. Nacos, Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Understanding Threats and Responses in the Post-9/11 World, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York: Longman, 2007 (Make sure to get the 2<sup>nd</sup>, not 1<sup>st</sup> edition..**

**We will use this textbook as the basic course reading and all chapters are listed as required readings.**

**Walter Reich, ed., The Origins of Terrorism. 10 chapters are assigned and I suggest you read the rest of the chapters as well.**

**The following books are on reserve in Butler Library**

Bloom, Mia. Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Crenshaw, Martha, ed. Terrorism in Context. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995.

Danner, Mark. Torture and Truth: America, Abu Ghraib, and the War on Terror. New York: The New York Review of Books, 2004.

Flynn, Stephen. America the Vulnerable. New York: HarperCollins, 2004.

Juergensmeyer, Mark. Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

Kurth Cronin, Audrey and James M. Ludes. Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy. Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2004.

Laqueur, Walter. No End to War: Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century. New York: Continuum, 2003.

Nacos, Brigitte L. Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Understanding Threats and Responses in the Post-9/11 World, Second Edition.. New York: Longman, 2007.

Pious, Richard. The War on Terrorism and the Rule of Law. Roxbury Publishing, 2006.

Reich, Walter, ed. Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Richardson, Louise, ed. The Roots of Terrorism. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Richardson, Louise. What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy and Containing the Threat. New York: Random House, 2006.

Rubenstein, Richard E. Alchemists of Revolution: Terrorism in the Modern World. New York, Basic Books, 1987.

Sageman, Marc. Understanding Terror Networks. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

Stern, Kenneth S. A Force Upon the Plain: The American Militia Movement and the Politics of Hate. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.

Weimann, Gabriel. Terror on the Internet. Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 2006.

**The following articles are available electronically on the Columbia Library web site under “course reserves” and can also be accessed via the Courseworks site.**

Max Abrahms, “Why Terrorism Does Not Work.” International Security 31(2) (Fall 2006): 42-78.

Richard A. Falkenrath, “Prepared Statement of Testimony before the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, United States Senate, Sep. 12, 2006.

Aidan Kirby, “The London Bombers as “Self-Starters”: A Case Study in Indigenous Radicalization and the Emergence of Autonomous Cliques.” Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, vol. 30, no. 5 (May 2007).

Audrey Kurth Cronin, “How al-Qaida Ends.” International Security 31 (Summer 2006): 7-48.

Tom Parker, “Fighting an Antaeon Enemy” Terrorism and Political Violence, vol. 19, no. 2 (Summer 2007).

Steven Simon and Daniel Benjamin, “The Terror.” Survival, vol. 43, no. 4 (Winter 2001).

Alexander Spencer, “Questioning the Concept of ‘New Terrorism’” Peace, Conflict & Development, Issue 8, Jan. 2006.