

# **SOCIAL DYNAMICS OF TERRORISM**

**CONF 240 - 001**

(CRN # 11266)

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Class Meetings: Innovation Hall, Room 206  
Mon and Wed 1:30 – 2:45 p.m.

► To access the course website, go to: <http://webct41.gmu.edu>

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Since September 11, 2001, the United States has been increasing its efforts to mobilize resources on an international scale to target what it has defines as “transnational terrorist networks.” Citizens, government officials tell us, must be ready to sacrifice many of their civil rights (“civil liberties”) in order to make room for the kinds of technologies, practices, and policies that are necessary to fend the threats of terrorism. It has framed domestic debate around the question of whether or not the suspension of civil and human rights, and the economic and diplomatic costs of preemptive international military campaigns and extraordinary rendition programs are worth the benefits of living in a world free of terrorism. But framing the debate in this way, until recently, has squelched a more fundamental question: whether or not such a foreign policy will serve only to produce more terrorism?

In addition to such immediate questions, these changes that we are so eagerly making in the name of fighting “terrorism” raise some deeper ones: Is there such thing as a good terrorist (as implied by the popular term “freedom fighter”)? Under what social conditions is the political violence of terrorists to be distinguished from that of mobs, rioters, rebels, revolutionaries, activists and protesters, private military firms, CIA agents, or soldiers? What distinguishes the use of political violence in the name of terrorism from that used in the name of counterterrorism? What distinguishes state-sponsored terrorism from religious terrorism, anti-corporate terrorism, technological terrorism, narco-terrorism, or cyber-terrorism? And if transnational terrorist networks blur the boundaries between “domestic” and “foreign” threats, then what are they? What’s new and what’s not about these terrorist networks? How would we know one if we saw one?

This course presents a wide-range of competing theories of terrorism to examine the social processes and relationships through which terrorist consciousness, identities, and organizations are produced. We pay careful attention as well to the role that culture and power play in their formation. Surveying numerous contexts of terrorism that vary over time and place, and in scope and scale, we will explore such issues as how terrorists justify their violence; how they strategically choose their targets and deploy symbolism; how they finance their operations; how they recruit and mobilize their followers; and how their mode of attack and their type of target affect their expression of terrorism – as well as the social, political, legal, and moral responses to it. We will also compare how states differently regulate and impact transnational networks of terrorists from those of corporations and activists for social and political change (around such issues as human rights, civil rights, corporate governance, women’s rights, labor rights, and environmental rights). (3 Semester Credits).

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

Reynolds, David S. 2006. *John Brown, Abolitionist: The Man Who Killed Slavery, Sparked the Civil War, and Seeded Civil Rights*. Vintage Books. **ISBN: 0375726152**

Burnett, John S. 2003. *Dangerous Waters: Modern Piracy and Terror on the High Seas*. Plume. **ISBN: 0-452-28413-9**

Kegley, Charles W., Jr. 2002. *The New Global Terrorism: Characteristics, Causes, Controls*. Prentice Hall. **ISBN: 0130494135**

Sageman, Marc. 2004. *Understanding Terror Networks*. University of Pennsylvania Press. **ISBN: 0-8122-3808-7**

Yoo, John. 2006. *War By Other Means: An Insider’s Account of the War on Terror*. Atlantic Monthly Press. **ISBN-10: 0871139456**

Tigar, Michael E. 2007. *Thinking about Terrorism: The Threat to Civil Liberties in a Time of National Emergency*. **ISBN-10: 1590318420**

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

The course format mixes lectures, group discussion, and film/video presentations. Students should take notes, both on lectures and on the reading, and films, with the intention of addressing the key themes of the course.

### ***Class Participation*** (10% of your final grade)

Class attendance is required. It is your responsibility to sign the class roster which I will circulate at the beginning of each class. Unexcused absences will lower your participation grade. If you must miss class, be sure to let the instructor know (in advance, if possible), because you may be eligible for an excused absence. Regardless of whether or not your absence is excused, it is your responsibility to arrange for a classmate to brief you on the material in class that you missed. Please do not ask the instructor if you “missed anything important” in your absence.

I will post a full schedule of assignments for the semester on the course website. The course requires a healthy dose of reading, and you should keep pace with the scheduled assignments. Class participation starts before you come to class, with having done the readings and thought about what seems useful and illuminating, what seems wrong or unclear. A good practice would be to take brief notes on your day’s reading – indicating what issues you found most interesting or most problematic – and therefore most

worth attention during class meetings. Doing so will facilitate not only your comprehension of the lectures, but also regular class discussion, which is a central aspect of the course. Ten percent of your final grade will be based on class participation, measured not only in terms of how often, but how well, you contribute to class discussion and activities.

Active, effective contribution means being attentive to the flow of the class' discussion, and being able to distinguish an apt intervention in an ongoing argument from an attempt to redirect the discussion to a new topic. Students are expected to actively engage with issues raised in classroom discussions and in homework assignments.

The readings are demanding and require intensive examination of a broad variety of issues and modes of thought. We will be discussing contentious political issues in this course. Students are encouraged to express diverse perspectives. You are likely to encounter strong opinions and it is inevitable that at least some of these opinions will make you or your colleagues uncomfortable. You will be expected to strike a healthy balance in conference between arguing your own position on these issues, listening to others, and helping the class as a collectivity to explore how the sociologists you read defend their approaches. Students and the instructor should interact with each other in a mutually respectful manner. They should articulate their ideas, concerns, arguments, critical questions and responses without alienating, marginalizing, or humiliating anyone. (For example, please avoid disrespectful *ad hominem* arguments, slanderous statements, hurtful stereotyping, or intentionally offensive non-verbal gesturing.) I am not requiring you to be "PC" (politically correct), but rather "BC" (basically civil).

#### ***Critical Reflection Papers*** (50% of your final grade)

You will write five critical reflection papers (4-5-pages each) – one to cover each book that we are reading this semester (with the exception of the *New Global Terrorism*, which will instead be the focus of our mid-term exam). Each reflection paper will be worth 5% of your overall grade.

Why critical reflection papers? (1) To encourage you to read and engage the material; (2) to ensure that class discussion involves you and your classmates, and not just me giving the "re-cap" of the main points from the reading; (3) to provide you with grades early in the semester that give you a sense of how well you are progressing in terms of understanding the course material; and (4) to substitute for a final exam (that's right – no final exam in this class). I will provide with criteria on how to write a short critical essay.

#### ***Mid-term Exam*** (20% of your final grade)

The Mid-term exam will be on Wednesday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, and will be an in-class exam. It will be largely short answer, and based upon the variety of theories of terrorism that we have surveyed up to that point in the semester.

#### ***Group Presentation*** (20% of your final grade)

Each of you will be assigned to working research groups of 5-6 people. Each group will be required to give a class presentation (**not a paper**) analyzing a case study of terrorism or an issue relating to themes or topics that emerge in our class discussions and/or readings. **Each group will submit a topic proposal for approval from the instructor no later than last class before we leave for Spring Break.**

Students will have great leeway in determining what their final presentation will look like. In the past, students have presented their research in the form of a website; a Powerpoint presentation; a video; slides/photographs; multi-media presentations combining the use of the internet and overheads; and have also used creative techniques for generating effective educational interaction with the audience. The idea is to effectively convey to the audience what the group's case study tells us about terrorism, how they have *thematized* the case study that they have been researching to address key issues and debates that we have been discussing during the semester, and to showcase their research efforts and what they have discovered in the process. This assignment is worth 20% of your final grade.

Ideally, the group will share the same grade, so every group member is expected to contribute to the project in a way that all members of the group agree is fair. However, “free riders” who fail to pull their share will be penalized and receive substantially reduced grade. **Your group must submit to me (at the time of your presentation at the end of the quarter) a list of the activities in which each group member participated and the work that they contributed to the research and presentation.** Your group will be scheduled to present their work to the class on one of the following dates: Monday, April 28<sup>th</sup>; or Wednesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>. I will do my best to ensure that your group gets to present on the day that you prefer; however, all students are expected to attend all of the presentations. Part of your grade for this assignment will be based on the evaluations of your peers in the audience attending the presentation. I will provide in advance each group with formal criteria upon which both I and your peers will evaluate your group’s presentation.

## GRADING

### *Course Grades and Relative Weighting of Assignments*

Your overall course grades will be determined according to the following point scheme:

Class Participation: Your grade (out of a possible 100 pts) x .10= \_\_\_\_  
 - Each unexcused absence [- 1 point]  
 - Quality of participation in class discussions [x .10]

Critical Reflection Papers: Your grade (out of a possible 100 pts) x .10 = \_\_\_\_  
 #1 Your grade (out of a possible 100 pts) x .10 = \_\_\_\_  
 #2 Your grade (out of a possible 100 pts) x .10 = \_\_\_\_  
 #3 Your grade (out of a possible 100 pts) x .10 = \_\_\_\_  
 #4 Your grade (out of a possible 100 pts) x .10 = \_\_\_\_  
 #5 Your grade (out of a possible 100 pts) x .10 = \_\_\_\_

Mid-Term Exam: Your grade (out of a possible 100 pts) x .20 = \_\_\_\_

Group Presentation: Your grade (out of a possible 100 pts) x .20 = \_\_\_\_

Course Grade: The sum of the grades for class participation, the critical reflection papers, mid-term exam, and group presentation will be translated into a letter grade according to the corresponding ranges below.

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Range of Number Grades</u>
A	100-94
A-	93-90
B+	89-87
B	86-84
B-	83-80
C+	79-77
C	76-74
C-	73-70
D	69-60
F	Below 60

### *Late Assignments*

Late assignments will not be accepted for a grade unless authorized by the instructor prior to the due date.

### *Incomplete Grades*

The instructor discourages incomplete grades and will give them only in unusual circumstances and, even then, only when formally arranged in advance between the student and the instructor.

The following grade scales should help you to assess your grade on various assignments throughout the quarter:

**Grading Scale**

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D	F
100 Points	100-94	93-90	89-87	86-84	83-80	79-77	76-74	73-70	69-60	Below 60
55 Points	55.0-51.7	51.2-49.5	49.0-47.9	47.3-46.2	45.7-44.0	43.5-42.4	41.8-40.7	40.2-38.5	38.0-33.0	Below 33.0
35 Points	35.0-32.9	32.6-31.5	31.2-30.5	30.1-29.4	29.1-28.0	27.7-27.0	26.6-25.9	25.6-24.5	24.2-21.0	Below 21.0
10 Points	10.0-9.4	9.3-9.0	8.9-8.7	8.6-8.4	8.3-8.0	7.9-7.7	7.6-7.4	7.3-7.0	6.9-6.0	Below 6.0

**PERCENTAGE RANGE LETTER GRADE COMMENTS**

100 - 94 A

Given for work that meets all expectations, and also goes beyond an analysis of course material to develop new, creative, and unique ideas. An A is rarely given.

93 - 90 A-

Given for work that meets all expectations, and also contains some unique elements of insight and effort. You will have to work very hard to receive an A-.

89 - 87 B+

Given for very good to excellent work that analyzes material explored in class and is a reasonable attempt to synthesize material.

86 - 84 B

Given for work that meets most expectations, but contains some problems.

83 - 80 B-

Given for work that meets some expectations, but contains numerous problems.

79 - 77 C+

Given for adequate work that satisfies the assignment, but offers a more limited analysis of material explored in class.

76 - 74 C

Given for work that is of average quality.

73 - 70 C-

Given for work that does not meet basic expectations.

69 - 67 D+

Given for unsatisfactory work; but which nevertheless reflects a high degree of participation and effort.

66 - 60 D

Given for unsatisfactory work; and reflects a low degree of participation and effort

59 - 0 F

Given for unsatisfactory work; and reflects unsatisfactory participation and effort.

## **CONTESTING GRADES**

I strongly encourage you to talk to me about any grade I give you in this course. The best time for this is during my office hours or by appointment. While there is no guarantee that I will change your grade, at the very least you will get a better sense of what my expectations are - and this may help you on future assignments.

## **GETTING ASSISTANCE DURING THE COURSE**

I strongly encourage you to contact me if you want to discuss or clarify any course material. I check my email regularly, and am also willing to chat any time I am in my campus office. Please do not hesitate to let me know if there is anything I can do to make your experience in this course more positive for you.

## **ARRANGING SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS**

I am very happy to work with students in need of special accommodations in order to ensure that everyone is able to learn and participate fully in the course. If you need disability-related accommodations in this class, or if you have emergency medical information, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please see me privately after class or at my office. The Disability Resource Center is the campus office responsible for verifying that students have disability-related needs for academic accommodations, and for planning appropriate accommodations in cooperation with the students themselves and their instructors. The Disability Resource Center is located in SUB I, Room 222, where you can make an appointment, or call 703-993-2474 or 703-993-2476 (TDD/TTY).

A web page describing the Center's resources and policies regarding accommodations is available at <http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/>.

## **HONOR CODE POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

I expect you to understand and abide by the University's policy regarding the Honor Code, which may be found at <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12>.

In short, the University's policy regarding the Honor Code prohibits any form of cheating on exams or written assignments. It also prohibits plagiarism, so be certain to properly cite all information that you use in your papers. Also, make extensive, very specific references to our course materials in your papers. Cheating and plagiarism are very serious infractions, and I deal with them severely in this course. If I receive a paper that has few specific references to our course materials, I will be inclined to assume that you have downloaded it off the Internet. If I determine that the paper has been plagiarized, then I will give you a failing grade. I will also likely report this alleged violation to the Honor Committee, who will consider further sanctions. If you have any questions about this policy I encourage you to come and talk with me about it.

For additional help in identifying and avoiding plagiarism, see the Georgetown University Honor Council's article presenting excellent examples and tips on what NOT to do when writing a paper at the following website: <http://www.georgetown.edu/honor/plagiarism.html>. This article includes an ethical statement and definition related to plagiarism.

Also, you can always consult the Student Academic Affairs Ombudsman Dolores Gomez-Moran, who provides students with a neutral, independent, informal, and confidential resource for resolving academic concerns fairly. Her office is located at the Johnson Center, Room 245. Phone: 703-993-3306; E-mail: [ombuds@gmu.edu](mailto:ombuds@gmu.edu); Web: [www.gmu.edu/departments/ombudsman](http://www.gmu.edu/departments/ombudsman).

## **GUIDELINES FOR WRITTEN WORK**

Always put your name on your paper. Give your paper a title and page numbers. Do not insert double-returns between paragraphs. Unless I request it, do not turn assignments in with report covers. Use 1 inch margins, a normal font size, and double-spacing on each page. Please do not use small fonts or single spacing, as this makes it hard to insert comments.

### **\*\*KEEP MULTIPLE COPIES OF ALL YOUR WORK\*\***

Always keep a duplicate copy of your paper or any other course work in a safe place, in case the original gets lost or you run into computer problems. Save a copy of your paper on a separate computer diskette, and update frequently as you are writing. Keep extra copies of all your assignments until after the semester ends and you have received your official grades from the Registrar's Office. This is a crucial point: *No credit can be given for papers that are lost (by you or me) or rendered un-retrievable because of computer problems.* There are no exceptions to this rule, so be extremely careful to keep a backup copy of all your work!

### **THE "THREE ERROR" RULE**

I will allow up to three basic grammatical or formatting errors to slide without penalizing you. However, I will deduct one percentage point from your final paper grade for every subsequent basic error of grammar or formatting. In other words, if I was going to give you a 90 percent on your paper, but I identified thirteen basic grammatical errors, you will receive an 80 percent. Basic grammatical errors include: incorrect spelling; incorrect punctuation; incorrect verb agreement; sloppy paragraph construction; run-on sentences; and other basic errors. If you are concerned about your ability to write error-free papers, you can do one or more of the following: 1) turn in an initial draft to me, and I can give it back with suggestions for revision, 2) work with a friend or someone at the writing center on an initial draft, or 3) read Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* -- an invaluable resource for improving your writing, and which is now online at <http://www.bartleby.com/141/>.

### **TEN POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN WRITING ESSAYS/PAPERS**

- 1) Begin your paper with an engaging introductory paragraph. Make the reader really wants to read your paper.
- 2) In the first or second paragraph of your paper, insert one sentence that clearly states what your paper is about.
- 3) In general, use normal terminology in your papers. Avoid the use of overly-complicated phrases or jargon.
- 4) Avoid relying on over-generalizations. Refer to specific cases and evidence to build your arguments.
- 5) In general, do not begin or end paragraphs with quotations from sources.
- 6) Do not turn in papers that are mostly quotations. Make sure most of the words in your paper are yours.
- 7) Make sure that every sentence in your paper is very straight-forward and clear.
- 8) Make sure that every sentence in your paper builds on the last. Organize your ideas carefully.
- 9) Carefully construct your paragraphs. Make certain all sentences in a paragraph are connected with one another.
- 10) End your paper with a strong conclusion. Leave the reader with something intriguing to think about.

**NOTE:** In addition, see "**How to Write a Short Critical Essay**" on our course website.

## GRADING CRITERIA FOR WRITTEN WORK

### 1) Logical coherence (33%)

- Organize your thoughts and information in a clear order.
- State your observations and conclusions clearly.
- Use evidence to support your conclusions.

### 2) Engagement with course issues and concepts (33%)

- In every paper, make use of concepts/methods of analysis discussed in class.
- Unless I give you specific permission, you should be sure to incorporate at least **three** course readings/lectures into any research paper you write. Shorter critical essays must incorporate the key concepts from at least **one** course reading/lecture.

### 3) Quality of your particular analysis (33%)

- Try to make your paper interesting and unique.
- Try to go beyond simply re-stating someone else's argument.
- Always make sure that your paper ends with a clear and interesting conclusion.

## GUIDELINES FOR CITING YOUR SOURCES

In your papers, you must cite all sources of information used in the body of your paper and then include a complete list of references at the end of your paper. Below I provide examples of the format that is most widely used in the fields of sociology and anthropology, and that I prefer you use. This format is from the Chicago Manual of Style (Documentation Two). For a more complete list of citation examples than those that I provide below, see <http://library.gmu.edu/resources/sources/citation.htm>.

Remember, you must cite not only direct quotations (which should be identified with quotation marks and page numbers), but also summarized information you got from a text. I expect you to look over these examples carefully, and utilize this format in your written work. Failure to do so will seriously impact your grade.

Here are a couple of examples of easy ways to cite your sources. Let's say you have written a paper on a new kind of energy system, the fuel cell, in which you have collected information from a variety of sources (from books, journal articles, newspapers, organizations or companies, and Internet sources). Within the body of the paper, place in parentheses the author's last name, year, and page where the information comes from. Then, at the end of your paper, list each of the sources in a reference section, called "Works Cited." If the source has been published by an organization, use the organization's name in place of the author name for in-text citations.

### TEXT FROM THE BODY OF THE PAPER:

The competitive race to bring fuel cell-powered products to the consumer market has become particularly intense in the automotive industry. The opening phase in this race came in October 1997, when Japanese automobile companies unveiled several fuel cell cars at the Tokyo Motor Show. In January 1998 General Motors, Ford, Chrysler and the German company Daimler-Benz all announced they were intensifying their own efforts to manufacture fuel cell vehicles (Bradsher 1998: 10). By 1999 a number of joint ventures had been formed to work towards the mass- production of fuel cell vehicles. The current leader in this effort is a partnership between the Daimler-Chrysler, Ford, and Ballard Power corporations. This partnership has already entered into an agreement with the state of California to supply fuel cell vehicles beginning in 2000, and the group hopes to market as many as 40,000 fuel cell cars by 2004. Meanwhile, General Motors and Toyota have teamed up to develop their own fuel cell cars. Similar efforts are being undertaken by Honda, BMW, and Mitsubishi Motors (Ball 1999: 2; Evarts 1999: 122; Smith 1999).



Fuel cells can be assembled in different sizes, from systems small enough for use in electronic devices to systems large enough to generate electricity in grid-connected power stations. Indeed, a recent survey of the commercial prospects of fuel cell systems conducted by the Electric Power Research Institute concluded that competitively priced fuel cells would be providing electricity in a wide variety of applications within five years in the United States (EPRI 1997). Numerous companies have already begun developing small fuel cells for use in laptop computers, roadside warning signs, and other electronic components. Meanwhile, firms such as Analytic Power and Plug Power are engaged in a competitive race to mass-produce fuel cell systems for use in residential homes. And finally, corporations such as Siemens have also begun manufacturing large fuel cells designed to generate electricity in commercial buildings and utility plants (Johnson 1999).

**WORKS CITED** (To be included at the end of your paper)

Ball, Jeffrey. 1999. "Auto Makers are Racing to Market 'Green' Cars Powered by Fuel Cells," *Wall Street Journal*, Mar. 15, p. 2. [This is how to reference a newspaper article.]

Bradsher, Keith. 1998. "US Auto Makers Showing Interest in Fuel Efficiency," *New Energy Systems*, vol 2(1), pp. 10-20. [This is how to reference an article in a journal.]

Evarts, Eric. 1999. "The Refueling of America," *Environmental News Network*, April 22, URL: <http://www.enn.com/99/refuel.html>. [This is how to reference an article from the Internet.]

EPRI. 1997. *The Market Potential of Fuel Cells*. Electric Power Research Institute: Boulder, CO. [This is how to reference a study put out by an organization.]

Johnson, Karl. 1999. "Fuel Cells for a Sustainable Future," pp. 13-26 in: John Smith (ed.). *New Energy Technologies*. Norton Publishers: Westport, CN. [This is how to reference a chapter from an edited volume.]

[Note: In the text you cite the chapter author name, **not** the name of the book editor]

Smith, John. 1999. *Fuel Cells for a Sustainable Future*. W.W. Smith Publishers: Westport: CA. [This is how to reference a book.]

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