INR 4084: Politics of International Terrorism

Fall 2019

Course syllabus

Instructor: Andrew Boutton

Office: 302 Howard Phillips Hall

Office hours: Tuesday 1-3pm & Thursday, 3-5pm

Email: andrew.boutton@ucf.edu

Location: Online

Credit hours: 3

Prerequisites: ENC 1102 or POS 2041

Teaching Assistants: Salah Benhammou (contact via Canvas)

Overview

Concern about terrorism is a relatively recent development for US officials and citizens, having increased significantly since the early 1970s (and particularly since the September 11 attacks). However, for many countries around the world, terrorism has been a persistent security concern—even a fact of daily life—for much of the past 150 years, and probably longer. Today, there are perhaps only a handful of countries for which terrorism is not a factor in one form or another. In many others, terrorist groups conduct decades-long campaigns, hold and govern territory, and often kill thousands of people in the process.

We will begin this course by discussing what exactly constitutes terrorism, as the definition has become heavily politicized and is often a point of contention. We will then discuss the history and evolution of terrorism over time. Then, we will move from individual- and group-level motivations for terrorism to issues of state sponsorship and the effect of terrorism on politics. We will finish by covering counterterrorism strategies and some contemporary cases of terrorism.

While I will be happy to meet with students during regular office hours, this class will take place entirely online, with no scheduled face-to-face meetings. This format works well for some people, but you should seriously reconsider taking this class in this format if you a) are not comfortable reading, communicating, or otherwise working online; or b) will not have unlimited, continuous access to high-speed internet between August 26 and December 8.

Course objectives

This is not a history class, or even one about current events. The overarching goal of this class is to develop broad knowledge about general patterns and regularities of terrorism, and then be able to apply them to specific cases. Specifically, by the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Define terrorism, and distinguish it from murder, guerrilla warfare, and other forms of violence
2. Identify the motivations for terrorism
3. Evaluate empirical terrorism research
4. Discuss the relative merits and drawbacks of different counterterrorism tools
5. Communicate and think critically about abstract ideas

Course materials

The two required books for this class are listed below:.

- Paul Pillar. 2003. Terrorism and US Foreign Policy. Brookings Institution Press
- Bruce Hoffman. 2017. Inside Terrorism. Columbia University Press (3rd edition)

Other required readings will take the form of articles in academic journals, newspapers, and blog posts by academics and policy analysts. These will be readily available online or through the online journals database on the UCF library website. I will make PDFs of some of the readings available in a folder for the corresponding module under the "Files" tab in Webcourses.

Additionally, we will watch at least one film—possibly more—during the course of this class. If they are not available online through a reputable website, they will be available for purchase for $2.99 through Amazon, YouTube, Google Play, or some other source, so please make the necessary arrangements to access them through some digital distribution service.

Requirements & Grading

This class will consist of three different types of assignments: discussion posts, quizzes, and short papers. These are explained in more detail below. The value of each assignment varies, but the total value of all assignments is 400 points. Thus, your final grade is based directly upon how many of the 400 points you earn throughout the semester.

Discussion posts: 100 points (10 @ 10 point each)

For most of the course modules, I will post a discussion prompt/question related to the assigned material. You are expected to make two (2) kinds of online posts in response: an initial response post and a follow-up post for each of the course modules we will be covering. Initial posts are worth 10 points and follow-up posts are worth up to an additional 5, depending on quality. These will be graded according the rubric criteria, which can be found here. Please read the rubric carefully. The total points you can accumulate for discussion posts over the course of the semester will be incorporated into the final grade according as discussed below.

Note that these discussions will take place in small groups of 5-10 students. This will make it much more manageable for you to respond to one another without having to read through 50+ posts by everyone else in the class. Engaging with classmates will also be easier; it's easy to get lost in a relatively large online class. I will do my best to change up the groups every week.

Quizzes: 150 points (10 @ 15 points each)

There will be ten (10) quizzes of equal value throughout this course. These will be based directly on the assigned reading for that module.

Final paper: 150 points (25 for the proposal, 125 for the paper)

As your project for this class, you will write final paper on a terrorist (or non-terrorist) campaign of your choosing. Once you decide which group you want to write about, you will then pick two (2) of the major themes we will cover in class this semester (listed below), and apply them to your group.

- Strategies of terrorism (as discussed in class)
- Counterterrorism (What strategies did governments use to try to combat or disarm the group?)
- Effects of terrorist campaign on politics/voting
- Use of media
- State sponsorship
- Governance (Did the group govern territory and deliver services to people living there? If so, how? What was their relationship with the population like?)

The project will consist of:

1. A 500-750-word proposal describing 1) the group you've chosen to write about, and 2) which two (2) themes from class you will analyze in the context of your group. The proposal will be due sometime around mid-semester.
2. A 2,500-2,800 word final paper on the same topic. The final paper should be a more detailed expansion of what you wrote in the proposal. **The final paper will be due on Wednesday, December 4, 2019**.

You're free to choose any violent/non-violent group that you wish. I'll post a list of terrorist/insurgent campaigns soon, both ongoing and historical. You may choose a group from that list, but please also feel free to choose one that is not listed. My only request is that you do not write about ISIS, al-Shabaab, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, the IRA, or cyberterrorism. The media are saturated with news and information about these groups, so I'd like for you to use this opportunity to study a lesser-known groups. I will post more details about the papers at a later date.

Grading

Your grade can be calculated using the following formula:

Percentage grade = (Total discussion points earned + Total quiz points earned + Total paper points earned)/400

Once you have calculated your percentage grade, this table will help you find the corresponding letter grade:

Letter grade	Percentage grade
A	93 – 100
A-	90 – 92
B+	87 – 89
B	83 – 86
B-	80 – 82
C+	77 – 79
C	73 – 76
C-	70 – 72
D+	67 – 69
D	63 – 66
D-	60 – 62
F	59 and below

Late work policy

All assignments are due at 11:55 PM Eastern Standard Time on the date indicated on the course schedule and syllabus. **You may submit late papers or quizzes without a university excuse up to four (4) days after the due date**, but with a 15% deduction per day from your grade on that assignment. I will not accept anything beyond four days past the deadline.

The exception to this rule is discussion post submissions. If you miss the deadline for a discussion posts for a non-approved reason, there is no make-up. Online discussion fora happen in a 3-4 day window; once the due date passes, the discussion is over, and it's no longer possible to contribute. So please keep in mind that if you miss the deadline for a discussion posting, those points are lost.

Make-up policy

Students with a university-approved excuse (hospitalization, jury duty, family emergency) may be asked to provide documentation in order to turn in graded assignments without a penalty. Students with an approved excuse must also contact me **before** the assignment in question is due, otherwise the late penalty will apply.

If you are unable to complete an assignment ahead of the due date because of an emergency or a university-approved scheduling conflict, you must let me know as soon as possible and provide the relevant documentation. I will try to be as accommodating as possible for students with legitimate conflicts, but as a general rule, I will only consider granting extensions if you contact me ahead of time (email is fine). Make-up quizzes should be taken within three (3) days of the original exam date, and will not be given before the quiz date. If you miss a discussion posting for a university-approved reason, I'll have you submit something else in its place.

Extra credit/grade rounding policy

There will be absolutely no extra credit offered in this class, so please do not ask. Final grades will be rounded up to the nearest whole number **if and only if the percentage grade is within 0.5 points of the next highest whole number**. For example, a grade of 89.5 will be rounded to 90, but a grade of 89.49 will not be. There will be no discussion on this point. I realize this may be frustrating in some cases, but you are all adults, and the line must be drawn somewhere.

Plagiarism

The penalty for plagiarism and "cheating" of any kind may vary, but as a general rule, plagiarism will result in a 0 for the assignment and may result in an F for the entire class, depending on the severity of the case. Particularly egregious instances may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct if further action is needed. Despite what some students seem to think, plagiarism is quite easy to detect. Fortunately, it is easily avoidable by following citing your sources correctly. For this class, please follow the Chicago Manual of Style's citation guide (http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html).

Communication

If you have any questions about readings, specific assignments, or anything else that is not answered in the syllabus, please either email me directly (andrew.boutton@ucf.edu) or get in touch via the email feature in Webcourses. The TA for the course, Salah Benhammou (contact via Canvas), will also be able to answer questions that pertain specifically to grading. I will be traveling quite a bit throughout the semester, but I will make every effort to respond to emails within 48 hours of receiving them. I will post important class announcements and reminders on the Announcements page in Webcourses, so be sure to check that multiple times per week. **Please to not attempt to contact me by simply replying to an announcement. It is unlikely that I will notice that**

Disability Access

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Ferrell Commons Room

185, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

Academic Conduct Policy

Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. If you are uncertain as to what constitutes academic dishonesty, please consult The Golden Rule, the University of Central Florida's Student Handbook (http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/) for further details. As in all University courses, The Golden Rule Rules of Conduct will be applied. Violations of these rules will result in a record of the infraction being placed in your file and receiving a zero on the work in question AT A MINIMUM. At the instructor's discretion, you may also receive a failing grade for the course. Episodes of plagiarism will result in an automatic failure of the class and will see the case forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct with a recommendation for expulsion.

University Writing Center

The University Writing Center (UWC) is a free resource for UCF undergraduates and graduates. At the UWC, a trained writing consultant will work individually with you on anything you're writing (in or out of class), at any point in the writing process from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information or to make an appointment, visit the UWC website at http://www.uwc.ucf.edu, stop by MOD 608, or call 407-823-2197.

Campus Safety Statement for Students in Online-Only Courses

Though most emergency situations are primarily relevant to courses that meet in person, such incidents can also impact online students, either when they are on or near campus to participate in other courses or activities or when their course work is affected by off-campus emergencies. The following policies apply to courses in online modalities.

- To stay informed about emergency situations, students can sign up to receive UCF text alerts by going to <https://my.ucf.edu> and logging in. Click on "Student Self Service" located on the left side of the screen in the toolbar, scroll down to the blue "Personal Information" heading on the Student Center screen, click on "UCF Alert", fill out the information, including e-mail address, cell phone number, and cell phone provider, click "Apply" to save the changes, and then click "OK."
- Students with special needs related to emergency situations should speak with their instructors outside of class.

Deployed Active Duty Military Students

Students who are deployed active duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

Religious Observances

Students are expected to notify their instructor in advance if a holy day of their religious faith is expected to influence their participation in the class. Given the online nature of the class, this is not expected to be an issue. If a conflict does exist, immediately notify the instructor. For a current schedule of major religious holidays, see the Faculty Center's main web page under "Calendars," and for additional information, contact the Office of Diversity Initiatives at 407-823-6479.

Course schedule **Fall 2019**			
Week	**Topic**	**Assignment**	**Due**
8/26-9/1	Course introduction	Financial aid activity	8/30
	What is terrorism?	Discussion 1	9/1
9/2-9/8	How does the public define terrorism?	Discussion 2	9/4
	None	None	
9/9-9/15	Historical "waves"	Quiz 1	9/11
	Motivations for terrorism I	Quiz 2	9/15
9/16-9/22	Motivations II	Discussion 3	9/18
	Motivations III	None	
9/23-9/29	Strategies of terrorism	Quiz 3	9/25
	Terrorist groups I	Quiz 4	9/29
9/30-10/6	Terrorist groups II	Discussion 4	10/2
	Effects of terrorism in dictatorships	None	
10/7-10/13	Effects of terrorism on voting	Quiz 5	10/9
	Terrorism & the media	Discussion 5	10/13
10/14-10/20	Terrorism, failed states, & "safe havens"	Quiz 6	10/16
	Governance by terrorists	Quiz 7	10/20
10/21-10/27	State sponsorship I	Discussion 6	10/23
	None	None	
10/28-11/3	State sponsorship II	Quiz 8	10/30
	Counterterrorism I	Discussion 7	11/3
11/4-11/10	Counterterrorism II: Drones	Discussion 8	11/6
	Counterterrorism III: Economic & military aid	Discussion 9	11/10

11/11-11/17	Counterterrorism IV: Israel	Quiz 9	11/13
	Afghanistan	None	
11/18-11/24	Islamic State	None	
	Terrorism in Europe	Quiz 10	11/24
11/25-12/1	**Thanksgiving break**		
12/2-12/4	Future of terrorism	Discussion 10	12/4