

Psychosocial Perspectives on Terrorism

PSYC/ANS0 2000

Instructor: Dr. Linda M. Woolf

Office Hours:

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Text:

- Hoffman, B. (2006). *Inside terrorism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Reich, W. (Ed.) (1998). *Origins of terrorism: Psychologies, ideologies, theologies, states of mind*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.
- Selected readings to be provided or placed on reserve in the library - each noted below.

Course Description:

On September 11, 2001 many of us in the United States experienced for the first time the effects of terrorism. Terrorism is not a new phenomena and many researchers have been struggling to understand the root causes and effects of terrorism. In this class, we will examine the psychosocial roots and impact of terrorism. We will examine the "why" of terrorism. Are terrorists psychopaths? Are terrorists just inherently evil? Or is the issue much more complex than this, particularly when we take into consideration a variety of partisan perspectives? Within this context, we will examine the various types of terrorism such as religious, state-sponsored, and individual acts of terrorism.

During the class we will also examine the impact of terrorism on many levels from the individual to national level. We will discuss topics related to the personal experience of trauma due to terrorism, such as normal emotional reactions to personal attack, PTSD, grief, coping, and the challenge to just world thinking. On a group level we will examine broader issues such as stereotyping, in-group/out-group behaviors, moral exclusion, displacement of aggression, nationalism, propaganda, and dehumanization.

The class is designed to meet credit and course requirements within the following additional programs: International Studies, International Human Rights, Multicultural Studies.

Course Objectives:

1. **Objective:** To examine the question of "What is terrorism?" As part of that examination, we will evaluate the problems associated with defining terrorism.
2. **Objective:** To become familiar with the various forms of terrorism including individual, religious, ideological, and state-sponsored terrorism.
3. **Objective:** To explore and evaluate the various cultural factors which may play a role in the promotion of terrorism including poverty, desperation, fanaticism, political influence, globalization, economic development, greed, and war. These cultural factors will also be examined from the perspective of partisan perceptions.
4. **Objective:** To examine the underlying group factors behind terrorism such as intergroup polarization, within-group glorification, moral exclusion, the power of the situation, nationalism, and partisan perceptions. We will evaluate the research concerning these factors and evaluate the appropriateness of applying these concepts to instances of both domestic and international terrorism.
5. **Objective:** To explore the question of what motivates an individual terrorist to commit an act of terrorism. We will look at questions such as "Is there a terrorist psychology?" and "What motivates a suicide bomber?" and examine what enables individuals to perpetrate acts of terrorism.
6. **Objective:** To evaluate the multifaceted role of the media and its effects on victims of terrorist attacks, groups which promote terrorism, bystanders to terrorism, and the elite from all sides.
7. **Objective:** To examine the psychological impact of terrorism on victims and witnesses and the various treatment strategies needed to facilitate recovery from trauma.
8. **Objective:** To explore and evaluate the broader strategies for group and cultural recovery from terrorism particularly those strategies that facilitate the promotion of peace and tolerance for diversity.
9. **Objective:** To provide students with the opportunity to engage in psychosocial analyses of a particular instance of terrorism and another topic of interest to the student related to terrorism.
10. **Objective:** To further develop students written and oral presentation skills. To provide students the opportunity to learn additional presentation skills specifically those related to poster presentations.

Incoming Competencies:

All students should be capable of working, reading, and writing at the undergraduate level.

Class Meetings:

The class will meet on Thursdays from 5:30 - 9:30. Classroom attendance and class discussion will greatly enhance your understanding of the material presented in this class. Also, material will be presented that is not in any of the books and class participation/discussion will constitute a percentage of your final grade.

This course will be challenging for several reasons. First, it entails a fair amount of reading. If this is to be a good class, it is essential for everyone to do the reading, come to class, and be prepared to participate in the discussion. Second, this course is difficult because of its almost

unrelieved concentration on human suffering and extreme, deliberately inflicted cruelty; the information presented in this class is difficult to read and difficult to discuss. There will be opportunities for class members to discuss thoughts and feelings that arise during the course.

Course Requirements:

Two exams, an analysis paper analyzing an instance of terrorism, group poster projects, and class participation/discussion are required for this course.

All grades will be assigned on a scale of 0 - 100 with:

90 - 100	A-,A	Excellent
80 - 89	B-,B,B+	Above Average
70 - 79	C-,C,C+	Average
60 - 69	D-,D,D+	Below Average
Less than 60	F	Failing

Percent of Grade:

Examinations	60%
Analysis Paper	20%
Group poster projects	15%
Class Part./Disc.	5%

Examinations: The exams are designed to test for an understanding of the terms, theories, ideas, and historical events related to terrorism as presented in text, readings, lecture, and discussion. The exams will include multiple choice, matching, short answer, and essay. Exams will be worth 60 percent of your final grade.

Policy: All exams must be taken on the date scheduled. In case of an emergency, the instructor must be notified. No make-up exams will be given if you fail to notify and discuss your situation with the instructor. It is up to the instructor's discretion whether to offer or not offer a make-up exam. Please note that no extra credit work will be made available to make-up for a poor test grade.

Analysis Paper: The purpose of the analysis paper is to provide you, the student, with the opportunity to explore an instance of terrorism, in depth. Conduct a search of news articles on Lexus-Nexus using the term terrorism. You may decide to narrow your search by including alternate terms or phrases which focus on a particular area of the world (e.g. Ireland,), a particular religious or ideological perspective (e.g. Christian Patriots), or a specific issue (e.g. eco-terrorism). Select a set of articles that represents an instance of the above and use this as a basis to research this issue in more depth. Be sure to gather historical and cultural information as well as gather as much information concerning the current events as possible. You should gather information from books, journal articles, and governmental resources. Once you have gathered your data, write an analysis of the situation using the various psychosocial constructs as discussed in class. For example, be sure to include a discussion of cultural, group, and individual factors; a discussion and evaluation of possible motives and partisan perceptions; a discussion of the role of the media; an overview of the impact on victims; and a discussion of strategies being taken for individual and cultural recovery. In other words, I want a coherent synopsis and analysis of a specific instance of terrorism from a psychosocial perspective. All topics must be approved by the instructor in writing. Submit a paragraph outlining your ideas and provide a list of primary sources to be used in your paper by June 28 to woolfm@webster.edu. The analysis paper is worth 20 percent of your final grade. Deadline for acceptance of papers is July 26.

Note: These deadlines are not suggestions; papers accepted following the deadline will experience a drop in grade(s) except in cases of emergency discussed with the instructor.

All papers must be submitted electronically in Word format to woolfm@webster.edu.

Group poster projects: Group poster projects: Students, in groups, will be required to put together a poster for presentation to the class concerning terrorism. There is a great deal of flexibility on the topic but ALL topics must be approved by the instructor. This will provide you the opportunity to explore another topic related to terrorism from a psychosocial perspective. For example, you might want to focus on the structure and functioning of a particular type of terrorist group or the psychological factors impacting victims of a specific type of terrorist attack. Specifics about how to put together a poster presentation will be discussed in class. Note that use of Powerpoint can facilitate the creation of a poster presentation as the information can easily be printed out for display. Note that poster presentations are a commonly used method of presenting research and ideas at professional conferences (i.e. American Psychological Association Annual Convention or the Great Plains student psychology conference). As such, we will discuss in class the basics of putting together a poster presentation. The group poster project will be worth 15 percent of your final grade.

- All papers must be typed, double-spaced, 1 inch margins, and in APA style format.

If you are in doubt as to what this means, see me for details.

or

- [APA 5th Edition Publication Manual Changes](#)
- [APA Style Guide prepared by Mark Plonsky - http://www.uwsp.edu/psych/apa4b.htm](http://www.uwsp.edu/psych/apa4b.htm)
- [APA Publication format for electronic references](#)
- [Kevin Schoepp's Online APA Interactive Tutorial](#)

All papers must be submitted electronically in Word format to woolfm@webster.edu

Class Participation & Discussion: Please realize that your participation in this class is extremely important. As such, class participation will constitute 5 percent of your final grade. The class participation grade will derive from regular attendance and everyday discussion and analysis. Please be aware that missing class will impact your grade in this area.

Plagiarism (attempting to pass off the work of another as one's own) is not acceptable. Plagiarism includes copying all or part of another's writings (even a single sentence), inappropriate paraphrasing, using another student's paper as your own, submitting a paper for more than one class. All papers will be submitted to the university's plagiarism database for review. Plagiarism, either intentional or unintentional, will result in a grade of 0 for that assignment and will be turned over to the appropriate university source for disciplinary action. In addition, cheating on exams will also result in the same fate.

Here are some Web sites that will help you avoid the problem of plagiarism particularly plagiarism resulting from paraphrasing too closely to the original source. -

- [Establishing Authorship by Paul C. Smith, Alverno College](#)
- [How to Avoid Plagiarism Tutorial](#)

- The University of Indiana's Online Plagiarism Tutorial - You can print out a certificate of completion!

Students are expected to arrive at class meetings having already read the material assigned, and to ask questions to clarify any areas that remain unclear. While every attempt will be made to explain or expand upon particularly difficult areas, the primary purpose of classroom lecture is to enhance, rather than to duplicate, the readings.

Late withdraws from this class will not be approved by the instructor except in cases of emergency discussed with the instructor. No late withdraws will be approved on the basis of poor class performance.

This syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. All changes concerning course requirements will be provided in writing. Changes concerning exam dates may be made at the instructor's discretion and communicated verbally to the class.

It is understood that remaining in this course (not dropping or withdrawing from this course) constitutes an agreement to abide by the terms outlined in this syllabus and an acceptance of the requirements outlined in this document. No grade of Incomplete will be issued for this course.

COURSE OUTLINE

For the readings below, the abbreviation of IT will be used to represent *Inside Terrorism* by Hoffman and OoT will be used to represent *Origins of Terrorism*.

Optional readings are provided as a starting point for those who want to learn more about specific topics discussed in class.

Date	Topic & Readings
June 19	<p>Introduction to class What is terrorism? Types of terrorism</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Defining terrorism - Chapter 1, IT• Terrorism between 'syndrome' and 'tool' by A. W. Kruglanski & S. Fishman, <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i>, 15, 45-48.

<p>June 26</p>	<p>Cultural roots and factors associated with terrorism</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Religion and terrorism - Chapter 4, IT• Intra- and inter- religious hate and violence: A psychosocial model by L. M. Woolf & M. R. Hulsizer, <i>Journal of Hate Studies</i>, 2, 5-26.• Terrorism in democracies: Its social and political bases - Chapter 6, OoT• Sacred terror - Chapter 7, OoT <p>Additional optional readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The globalization process and terrorism from an anthropological perspective by G. Bailey, <i>Terrorism: An interdisciplinary perspective</i>, R. Jucha (Ed.), Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.• Globalism and structural violence by M. Pilisuk, <i>Peace, conflict, and violence: Peace psychology for the 21st century</i>, D. J. Christie, R. V. Wagner, & D. D. Winter (Eds.), Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.• Psychosocial roots of genocide: Risk, prevention, and intervention by L. M. Woolf & M. R. Hulsizer, <i>Journal of Genocide Research</i>, 7, 101-128.• The psychopolitical formation of extreme left terrorism in a democracy - Chapter 5, OoT• Nationalism and war: A social-psychological perspective by D. Druckman, <i>Peace, conflict, and violence: Peace psychology for the 21st century</i>, D. J. Christie, R. V. Wagner, & D. D. Winter (Eds.), Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
<p>July 3</p>	<p>The power of the group and situation</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Terrorist psycho-logic - Chapter 2, OoT• Ethnopolitical and other group violence: Origins and prevention by E. Staub, <i>Ethnopolitical warfare: Causes, consequences, and possible solutions</i>, D. Chirof and M. E. P. Seligman (Eds.), Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.• Hate groups for dummies: How to build a successful hate group by L. M. Woolf & M. R. Hulsizer, <i>Humanity and Society</i>, 28, 40-62.• The staircase to terrorism: A psychological exploration by F. M. Moghaddam, <i>American Psychologist</i>, 60, 161-169. <p>Additional optional readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Psychological dynamics of intractable ethnonational conflicts: The Israeli-Palestinian case by N. N. Rouhana & D. Bar-Tal, <i>American Psychologist</i>, 53, 761-770.• Interpersonal dynamics in a simulated prison, by C. Haney, C. Banks, & P. Zimbardo, <i>International Journal of Criminology & Penology</i>, 1, 69-97.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Zimbardo's Prison Study Slide Show</u>• Behavioral study of obedience, by S. Milgram, <i>Journal of Abnormal & Social Psychology</i>, 67, 371-378.• Opinions and social pressure, by S. Asch, <i>Scientific American</i>, 193, 31-35.• Moral exclusion and injustice: An introduction, by S. Opatow, <i>Journal of</i>

Social Issues, 46, 1-20.

- On pseudospeciation and social speciation by Kai Erikson, *Genocide, war, and human survival*, C. Strozier & M. Flynn, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Social circumstances and factors that incite the upsurge of nationalism in *The mass psychology of ethnonationalism*, D. Kecmanovic, New York: Plenum Press.

Analysis Paper Topics Due! - July 5

EXAM I

Individual motivations and factors

Readings:

- The moral logic of Hizballah - Chapter 8, OoT
- Mechanism of moral disengagement - Chapter 9, OoT
- The readiness to kill and die - Chapter 10, OoT
- Understanding terrorist behavior - Chapter 14, OoT
- Suicide Terrorism - Chapter 5, IT
- Genesis of suicide terrorism by S. Atran, *Science*, 299, 1534-1539.

Additional optional readings:

- White boys to terrorist men: Target recruitment of Nazi skinheads by R. Blazak, *American Behavioral Scientist*, 44, 982-1000.
- The modern terrorist mind-set: Tactics, targets, tradecraft, and technologies - Chapter 8, IT
- Political profiling: Challenges, benefits, and risks [Review of the book, *Leaders and their followers in a dangerous world: The psychology of political behavior*]. by L. M. Woolf, *PsychCRITIQUES*, 50(1), Article 4.

July
10

Terrorism and the media The role of the elite

Readings:

- The old media, terrorism, and public opinion - Chapter 6, IT
- The new media, terrorism, and the shaping of global opinion - Chapter 7, IT
- Is television traumatic?: Dreams, stress, and media exposure in the aftermath of September 11, 2001 by R. Propper, R. Stickgold, & S. Christman, *Psychological Science*, 18, 334-340.
- Hostage taking, the presidency, and stress - Chapter 11, OoT
- Taking vows - Chapter 12, OoT

Additional optional reading:

- Integrative complexity and political decision that lead to war and peace by L. G. Conway, P. Suedfeld, & P. E. Tetlock, *Peace, conflict, and violence: Peace psychology for the 21st century*, D. J. Christie, R. V. Wagner, & D. D. Winter (Eds.), Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

July
17

July 24	<p>Psychosocial effects of terrorism Treatment and recovery Towards peace and tolerance</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Psychological resilience after disaster: New York City in the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attack by G. A. Bonanno, S. Galea, & A. Bucciarelli, A., <i>Psychological Science</i>, 17, 181-186.• Psychosocial Interventions and post-war reconstruction in Angola: interweaving Western and traditional approaches by M. Wessells, & C. Monteiro <i>Peace, conflict, and violence: Peace psychology for the 21st century</i>, D. J. Christie, R. V. Wagner, & D. D. Winter (Eds.), Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.• American Red Cross (2001). <u>Terrorism - Preparing for the unexpected - PDF file download</u>• American Psychological Association (2001). <u>Resilience in a Time of War</u>• American Psychological Association (2001). <u>Managing traumatic stress: Tips for recovering from disasters and other traumatic events</u>• Breaking the cycle of genocidal violence: Healing and reconciliation, by E. Staub, <i>Perspectives on loss: A sourcebook</i>, J. H. Harvey (Ed.), Hants, UK: Taylor & Francis.• Psychologists making a difference in the public arena: Building cultures of peace by M. Wessells, M. Schwebel, & A. Anderson, <i>Peace, conflict, and violence: Peace psychology for the 21st century</i>, D. J. Christie, R. V. Wagner, & D. D. Winter (Eds.), Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. <p>Analysis Paper Due! July 26</p>
July 31	<p>FINAL EXAM Poster Presentations!</p>
<p>Additional optional readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Northern Ireland conflict: Prospects and possibilities by T. Gallagher, <i>Ethnopolitical warfare: Causes, consequences, and possible solutions</i>, D. Chirot and M. E. P. Seligman (Eds.), Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.• Control and the stability of Jewish-Arab Relations in Israel by I. S. Lustick, <i>Ethnopolitical warfare: Causes, consequences, and possible solutions</i>, D. Chirot and M. E. P. Seligman (Eds.), Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.	

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