Spring 2017

Political Science 386—002

Politics of Terrorism

**Professor**:

Charles Joshua Horn, Ph.D.

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**Course Description:**

No other political movement has shaped the contemporary global sphere and especially the American mindset than terrorism. While terroristic actions are certainly not a new phenomenon, they have nevertheless fundamentally altered the political landscape. Despite its immense importance, there is wide disagreement on how we are to understand terrorism. This course will examine the historical and social context of terrorism, demonstrate the philosophical difficulty of defining terrorism, analyze particular international and domestic terrorist groups, and finally examine the moral distinctiveness and possible permissibility of terrorism.

Some of the questions to be considered from the standpoint of both political science and philosophy will be:

1. What is terrorism and is there anything particularly distinctive or morally corrupt about its actions?
2. Is terrorism *relative*? That is, is the cliché true that one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter?
3. What is the relationship between state-sponsored terrorism and counterterrorism?
4. Is terrorism ever an acceptable means of political change?
5. How does terrorism relate to concepts of rights and justice?
6. How has terrorism been understood and used in its social and historical context?
7. In what ways can we respond to terrorism?
8. Is the use of torture ever morally permissible?

**Course Goals:**

By carefully examining the political and philosophical underpinnings of terrorism, students will develop critical thinking skills by engaging, analyzing, and evaluating texts in order to write well, speak articulately, and argue persuasively.

**Text:**

For Rental

*Terrorism and Homeland Security* (THS)

Jonathan White

Cengage

ISBN #: 978-1-285-06228-0

For Purchase

*Terrorism: A Philosophical Investigation* (TPI)

Igor Primoratz

Polity

ISBN #: 978-0-7456-5144-6

*Political Ethics in the Age of Terror: The Lesser Evil* (LE)

Michael Ignatieff

Princeton University Press

ISBN #: 0-691-12393-4

**Grading Criteria:**

Final grades will be based upon (1) *two exams* worth 25% each (50% total), and (2) *one final project* worth 20%*,* and (3) *one final paper* worth 30%. Assignments turned in late will *not* be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the professor.

1. Each exam will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and brief essay. Exam I will be related to international terrorism and Exam II will be related to domestic terrorism. Exams will be taken on D2L and must be completed within the time parameters specified in the course schedule.
2. During the last two weeks of the course, students will research a terrorist organization of their choice and approved by Dr. Horn. Students must create a PowerPoint presentation discussing the historical, social, and philosophical underpinnings of the terrorist organization and submit it by May 10 at 5:00pm.
3. The final essay must be submitted to the D2L DropBox by Monday, May 1, 2017 by 9:35am. Essays turned in after the deadline will *not* be accepted. The essay should be between 1,250—1,750 words (roughly 5—7 pages). Additional requirements will be provided on the prompt. The final essay must offer *both* an explication *and* analysis of the relevant topics. In grading your essays, I will consider whether you have a sufficient understanding of the relevant texts, have answered the questions *clearly, concisely, and thoroughly*, and have argued your position persuasively.

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| **A Range**  **(90—100%)** | **B Range**  **(80—89%)** | **C Range**  **(70—79%)** | **D Range**  **(64—69%)** | **F Range**  **(0—63%)** |
|  | B+ (87—89) | C+ (77—79) | D+ (67—69) | F (<63) |
| A (94—100) | B (84—86) | C (74—76) | D (64—66) |  |
| A- (90—93) | B- (80—83) | C- (70—73) |  |  |

**Academic Integrity:**

Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism or helping others to commit these acts will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty could result in severe disciplinary action including, but not limited to, failure of the student assessment item or course, and/or dismissal from the University.

**Course Schedule:**

*Week 1*

Syllabus/Course Introduction

*Week 2* ***Terrorism in Historical and Social Contexts***

Chapter 1: Defining Terrorism in Modern History THS

Chapter 1: Defining Terrorism TPI

Chapter 2: The Social Underpinnings of Terrorism THS

*Week 3—5* ***International Terrorism:***

***National and Ethnic Movements, Ideological and Religious Movements***

Chapter 8: Background to the Middle East THS

Chapter 9: Terrorism in Israel and Palestine THS

Chapter 10: Revolutionary and Counter Revolutionary Terrorism THS

Exam I (Opens 2/20, 12:00am; Closes 2/22, 11:59pm)

Film: Zero Dark Thirty—Available on D2L

Film: Zero Dark Thirty—Available on D2L

*Week 6—7* ***Domestic Terrorism and Homeland Security***

Chapter 12: Domestic Terrorism THS

Chapter 13: An Introduction to Homeland Security THS

Chapter 15: Homeland Security and Constitutional Issues THS

Exam II (Opens 3/8, 12:00am; Closes 3/10, 11:59pm)

*Week 8—10* ***The Possibility of Ethical Terrorism?***

Chapter 2: State Terrorism and Counterterrorism TPI

Chapter 3: Complicity of the Victims TPI

Chapter 4: The Consequences of Terrorism TPI

Chapter 5: Terrorism, Rights, and Justice TPI

Chapter 6: Terrorism, Supreme Emergency, and Moral Disaster TPI

Chapter 7: Is Terrorism Morally Distinctive? TPI

*Week 11—13* ***Political Ethics in an Age of Terror***

Chapter 1: Democracy and the Lesser Evil LE

Chapter 2: The Ethics of Emergency LE

Chapter 3: The Weakness of the Strong LE

Chapter 4: The Strength of the Weak LE

Chapter 5: The Temptations of Nihilism LE

Chapter 6: Liberty and Armageddon LE

*Week 14—15* ***Terrorist Organization Final Project Analysis***

Research

Research

Research

Research

Final Project Due (May 10, 5:00pm)

\*The Professor reserves the right to adjust the course schedule to best satisfy the needs of the class.\*