

Suicide Terrorism

GOV 365N – Fall 2010

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Subject matter of the course

Suicide terrorism in its modern form appeared in the early 1980s. The first organization to use this strategy was the Shiite Hezbollah in Lebanon. Later, it was adopted by many organizations in the Middle East, Asia and Europe. The fact that the majority of these organizations were either Arab or Muslim led many scholars emphasize the role of Islam in suicide terrorism's emergence and spread. The general purpose of the class is to reassess the root causes of suicide terrorism at elite, community and rank-and-file levels. It will juxtapose the role of religion, and specifically Islam, in generating suicide terrorism, which is represented by the cultural approach, with coercion theories, power struggle explanations and social networks approach. It will also address the perplexing question of whether suicide terrorism is an unbeatable weapon that will ultimately threaten the existence of all or most political regimes in the twenty-first century.

Format and Procedures

This class meets twice a week for 1½ hour each session. Please plan to arrive a few moments before class begins. Course lectures will build from the readings; they will not replace or reiterate them. Students can expect to spend 2-3 hours reading/writing for every hour of class. You are responsible for reading all of the assigned material.

We strongly believe every student is capable of learning the material presented in this course, but the responsibility to make the required effort rests on you. We want to reward hard work and dedication, not just an ability to take tests. Therefore, the course is structured so that regular attendance of lectures, thoughtful reading of the text, responses to posed questions, and assimilation of the concepts are a large part of what determines your grade.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

In compliance with the UT Austin policy and equal access laws, the TA is available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities. Students who require special accommodations need to get a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students (voice: 471-6259 or TTY: 471-4641). Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except for unusual circumstances.

The University of Texas Honor Code:

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Required Readings

All the readings for the course will be available on Blackboard under Course Documents. It is your responsibility to download and/or print them for your use.

Assignments and Exams

This course combines Quizzes, Exams, Participation, and Reading Questions to allow multiple opportunities to track your learning process. They are spread across the semester and the earlier assignment and test grades should be used as a guide—letting you know if you need to make adjustments in the amount of time you are dedicating to the class or if you need to explore different approaches to increase your performance. The breakdown for the course is as follows:

I. Class attendance and active participation: 20%

Daily class attendance is mandatory and will be recorded, your attendance at, and participation in, lectures is crucial to the success of this course.

II. Weekly Reading and Questions: 20%

Course readings are a vital part of this class and should be completed prior to the class meeting listed on the syllabus. Each week you will be responsible for formulating an answer to a question based on that week's readings. Your answer should be one to two double spaced pages and are due at the end of class every Thursday. I will grade your answers on a scale of 0 to 2, with 2 being excellent work and 0 being unacceptable. These are designed as engaging and thought provoking questions to help you navigate the course and the exams. Please note: We do not accept late work.

III. Quizzes: (10% each for 20% total):

There will be two quizzes given during the semester. These will cover some of the basic background and key foundational concepts that will be needed in order to proceed in the course. The format will be a combination of fill in the blank and multiple choice.

IV. Exams (20% each for 40% total):

There will be two exams given during the semester. These will cover the larger conceptual and topical aspects of the course. They will incorporate the ideas we have learned through the lectures and readings and ask you to comment on the contemporary debates and issues in the study of suicide terrorism. The format will be a combination of multiple choice and essay questions.

Other issues that may arise:

If there are specific circumstances relating to your performance in this class that we should be made aware of, please come and talk with one or both of us as close to the beginning of the semester as possible (or as problems arise). Our office hours are a good time for us to touch base with each other and to discuss any problems you might be having with the course material. Please feel free to come by when ever you have the time.

We are looking forward to an exciting semester exploring the many complex and fascinating aspects of suicide terrorism with you. The following section outlines what you can expect the schedule of the course to be. Some weeks are a bit heavier than others are, but we have tried to make sure that the schedule does not leave you overloaded at the end of the semester and be assured that all of the readings are essential to our time together.

Course Plan

Introduction

1st meeting Introduction to the course

Topic 1 - Definitions and History

2nd meeting Martha Crenshaw. "Explaining Suicide Terrorism: A review essay" *Security Studies*, Vol. 16 No. 1 (2007): pp. 133-162.

U.S. State Department's Country Reports on Terrorism (2008) Strategic Assessment: Read and take notes on all of the section on the strategic assessment: <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122411.htm> Organizations: Read and take notes on the entries on Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, Ansar al-Islam, Aum Shinriko, Hamas, Hizballah, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (aka. LTTE or the Tamil Tigers), Al-Qe'ida (all variations), Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Skim the rest. <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122449.htm>

3rd meeting If you want to look at the whole report see: <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/> Assaf Moghadam. "Defining Suicide Terrorism" in Ami Pedahzur (ed.). *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism: The Globalization of Martyrdom*. London: Routledge, 2006: 1-19.

Topic 2 - Psychological/Individual Approach

4th meeting Ellen Townsend. "Suicide terrorists: Are they suicidal?" *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, Vol 37 No. 1 (2007): pp. 35-49.

Ami Pedahzur, Arie Perliger and Leonard Weinberg. "Altruism and fatalism: The characteristics of Palestinian suicide terrorists". *Deviant Behavior*, Vol. 24 No. 4 (2003): pp. 405-423.

David Lester, Bijou Yang, and Mark Lindsay. 2004. "Suicide Bombers: Are Psychological Profiles Possible?" *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 27 (4): 283-295.

Shaul Kimhi and Shmuel Even, 2004. "Who are the Palestinian Suicide Bombers?" *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 16 (4): 815-840.

- 5th meeting
- Arie W. Kruglanski, Xiaoyan Chen, Mark Dechesne, Shira Fishman, Edward Orehek. "Fully Committed: Suicide Bombers' Motivation and the Quest for Personal Significance" *Political Psychology* Vol. 30 No. 3 (June 2009): pp. 331-357.
- Martha Crenshaw. "Intimations of Mortality or Production Lines? The Puzzle of "suicide terrorism"" *Political Psychology* Vol. 30 No. 3 (June 2009): pp. 359-364.
- Alex Mintz and David Brule. "Methodological Issues in Studying Suicide Terrorism" *Political Psychology* Vol. 30 No. 3 (June 2009): pp 365-371.
- Fathali M. Moghaddam. "The New Global American Dilemma and Terrorism" *Political Psychology* Vol. 30 No. 3 (June 2009): pp 373-380.
- Jerrold M. Post. "Reframing of Martyrdom and Jihad and the Socialization of Suicide Terrorists" *Political Psychology* Vol. 30 No. 3 (June 2009): pp 381-385.
- Jeff Victoroff. "Suicide Terrorism and the Biology of Significance" *Political Psychology* Vol. 30 No. 3 (June 2009): pp 397-400.

Topic 3 - The Strategic Approach

- 7th-8th meetings
- Robert A. Pape. "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism". *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97 No. 3 (2003): pp. 343-361
- Assaf Moghadam. "Suicide Terrorism, Occupation, and the Globalization of Martyrdom: A Critique of Dying to Win". *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 29 No. 8 (2006): pp. 707-729.
- Karen Rasler. Review. *Perspectives on Politics* Vol. 5 No. 1 (March 2007): pp. 118-122.
- 9th-10th meetings
- Scott Ashworth, Joshua D. Clinton, Adam Meirowitz, and Kristopher W. Ramsay. "Design, Inference, and the Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism" *American Political Science Review* Vol. 102 No. 2 (May 2008): pp. 269-273.
- Douglas Macgregor, Marvin Weinbaum, Abdullah Ansary, and Robert Pape "The "Global War on Terror": What Has Been Learned?" *Middle East Policy* Vol. 15 No. 4 (Winter 2008): pp 1-25.

Topic 4 - The Outbidding Thesis

- 11th-12th meetings
- Mia M. Bloom. "Palestinian Suicide Bombing: Public Support, Market Share, and Outbidding". *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 119 No. 1 (2004): pp. 61-88
- Robert J. Brym and Bader Araj. "Palestinian Suicide Bombing Revisited: A Critique of the Outbidding Thesis". *Political Science Quarterly* Vol. 123 No. 3 (Fall 2008): pp. 485-500.

Topic 5 - Culture

- 13th-14th meetings
- Raphael Israeli. "Islamikaze and their Significance". *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 9 No. 3 (1997): pp. 96-121.
- Mohammed Hafez. 2006. "Dying To Be Martyrs: The Symbolic Dimension of Suicide Terrorism". In Pedahzur (ed.). *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism: The Globalization of Martyrdom*. London: Routledge. 54-80.

Topic 6 - Communities

- 15th-16th meetings Assaf Moghadam. "Palestinian Suicide Terrorism in the Second Intifada: Motivations and Organizational Aspects". *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 26 No. 2 (2003): pp. 65-92.
- Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger. "The Changing Nature of Suicide Attacks." *Social Forces*, Vol. 84 No. 4 (2006): pp. 1983-2000.
- 17th meeting In class watch "Paradise Now"
- 18th meeting **Midterm**

Topic 7 - The road to 9/11

- 19th-20th meetings Assaf Moghadam. "Motives for Martyrdom; Al-Qaida, Salafi Jihad, and the Spread of Suicide Attacks." *International Security* (Winter 2008/2009).
- Marc Sageman. 2006. In Pedahzur (ed.). "Islam and al-Qaeda" *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism: The Globalization of Martyrdom*. London: Routledge. 122-131.

Topic 8 - The War on Terrorism and its Outcomes

- 21st-22nd meetings Bruce Hoffman. 2008. "The Myth of Grass-Roots Terrorism: Why Osama bin Laden Still Matters" *Foreign Affairs* (87)3: 133-138.
- Marc Sageman. "Does Osama Still Call the Shots? Debating al Qaeda's Containment and Grass-roots Jihad" *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 87 No. 4 (2008): pp. 1-3.
- Yoram Schweitzer. 2006. "Al Qaeda and the Global Epidemic of Suicide Attacks" in Ami Pedahzur, *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism*. 132-151.
- Mohammed Hafez. (Sept. 2006). "Suicide Terrorism in Iraq: A Preliminary Assessment of the Quantitative Data and Documentary Evidence" *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*. 29(6): 591-619.

Topic 9 - Counter-terrorism and Anti Terrorism

- 23rd-24th meetings Max Abrahms. "What Terrorists Really Want; Terrorist Motives and Counterterrorism Strategy." *International Security* (Spring 2008).

Topic 10 - The Future of Suicide Terrorism

- 25th meeting Audrey Kurth Cronin. "How al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups" *International Security* Vol. 31 No. 1 (Summer 2006): pp. 7-48.
- 26th meeting **Final Exam**

Reading Questions:

1. What do you consider the most appropriate and academically useful definition of "suicide terrorism?" Should the term be used at all? Why or why not? (Due)
2. Hafez and others have emphasized the "culture of martyrdom" in Palestine yet; in the past several years, Palestinians have turned away from suicide attacks and have begun using rockets. What explains this shift from martyrs to rockets? Can any of the studies on the emergence of suicide attacks also account for its decline? (Due)
3. Before countering terrorism, it is important to understand the nature of the threat. Which of the characterizations of the terrorist threat to the U.S. and its allies that we have covered so far in this semester do you find most convincing and why? What policy recommendations would you make to a U.S. administration if you had the power to do so? (Due)
4. The government has a limited budget from which to implement counterterrorism policies. Which of the counterterrorism models are most effective, given the real constraints on governments, and why? (Due)