SUBJECT MATTER OF THE COURSE

In a survey conducted in the mid-1980s among scholars studying terrorism, Schmid et al. found that more than two-thirds of the respondents were of the view that theoretical progress in the field was very slow, and that existing theories suffered from a lack of applicability and a dearth of empirical support. These findings were an indication of the impression among scholars at that time, that after more than thirty years of research, the academic community was able to produce very few insights regarding terrorism and its features, causes and implications.

During the 1990s and especially since the beginning of the new millennium, a significant number of researchers from different disciplines have become more interested in terrorism. This increasing trend has been prompted by two main factors. First, in the wake of the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attack in New York, a dramatic increase in the amount of resources was set aside by governmental and other bodies in various countries for unraveling the phenomenon of terrorism. Second, the last decade has been witness to a notable increase in the amount of accessible databases and empirical findings on terrorist attacks worldwide, which has made it feasible to undertake solid, empirical-based research relying on innovative methods.

GOALS

The goal of the seminar is to assess the current state of the field. We will use an interdisciplinary perspective and put emphasis on developing critical and innovative perspectives.

EVALUATION

The final grade will be based on:

1) Attendance and active participations in class discussions (10%) Receiving full grade for active participation requires work. I exercise discretion when assigning grades for active
participation. I usually consider the following elements: class attendance, active participation in class discussions and the display of extra interest in the class and the materials.

2) Leading a full session in class (40%)

3) Take home final exam (50%).

PLAN OF THE SEMINAR

TOPIC 1 - THE CHALLENGES IN STUDYING TERRORISM

TOPIC 2 - THE MAKEUP OF TERRORISTS - WHAT CAN BIOLOGY TEACH US?

(Thayer and Hudson 2010)

(Bloom, Thayer et al. 2010)

TOPIC 3 - THE MAKEUP OF TERRORISTS

(Victoroff 2005)

(O'Rourke 2009)

TOPIC 4 - THE TERRORIST’S ENVIRONMENT

(Argo 2009)

TOPIC 5 - THE ECONOMETRICS OF TERRORIST BEHAVIOR

(Krueger and Maleckova 2003)

(Berrebi and Klor 2008)

TOPIC 6 – CAUSES FOR TERRORISM

(Abrahms 2008)

(Chenoweth, Miller et al. 2009)

TOPIC 7 – TARGET SELECTION

(Goodwin 2006)

TOPIC 8 - TERRORIST LEADERS AS STRATEGISTS – SUICIDE ATTACKS

(Pape 2003)

(Ashworth, Clinton et al. 2008)
TOPIC 9 - TERRORIST LEADERS AS POLITICIANS – SUICIDEAttacks

(Bloom 2004)

(Brym and Araj 2008)

TOPIC 10 - TERRORISTS AS INNOVATORS - AN ORGANIZATIONAL APPROACH

(Horowitz 2010)

TOPIC 11 - COUNTERTERRORISM

(Jordan 2009)

CONCLUSION

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.