

**PSC 407W/607W Terrorism**  
Wintermester 2018

**Number of Credits**

3

**Instructor**

Susanne Martin, Assistant Professor of Political Science

Dr. Martin studies extremism, political violence, and warfare.

**Catalog Description**

Examination of different types of terrorism. Exploration of theories on the causes, motivations, strategies, outcomes, and ends of terrorism. Political impact of terrorism.

Prerequisite(s): PSC 231 or PSC 211

**Required Textbooks/Materials**

There is no course textbook. All readings are available through electronic course reserves, WebCampus, the UNR Knowledge Center website, and online.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to

- define terrorism, suicide terrorism, and tactics, recognizing the inclusions and limitations of various definitional elements;
- critically examine the complex nature of terrorism, including why individuals and groups use (or do not use) these tactics and why (or why not) societies support the use of terrorism;
- identify existing gaps in the literature and research on terrorism;
- analyze changes in the use of different tactics over time and the relevance of terrorism as part of a growing global problem through relevant scholarly literature;
- evaluate competing explanations for the use of suicide tactics and the types of resources that are available to conduct research in this area;
- recognize connections between geographically or politically distant places and periods with regard to the use of suicide tactics;

- articulate and evaluate the connections between local, national and international actors, including governmental and non-governmental actors; and
- explain and apply key theories of comparative politics relevant to terrorism.

## First Week of Materials/Assignments

The following schedule is subject to change:

- January 2:* Read: US Department of State's Country Reports on Terrorism (most recent): "Strategic Assessment" (chapter 1, online); Weinberg et al, "Challenges of Conceptualizing Terrorism"  
Begin reviewing: US Department of State's Country Reports on Terrorism (most recent): "Terrorist Organizations" (chapter 6, online)
- January 3:* Read: Jeffrey Kaplan, "History and Terrorism"; David C. Rapoport, "The Fourth Wave: September 11 in the History of Terrorism"; Walter Laqueur, "Postmodern Terrorism"; Mark Jurgensmeyer, "Understanding the New Terrorism"
- January 4:* Read: Whitney Kassel, "Terrorism and the International Anarchist Movement of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries"; Wayne Lucero, "The Rise and Fall of the Shining Path"; George Kassimeris, "Greece: The Persistence of Political Terrorism"; Asfura-Heim and Espach, "The Rise of Mexico's Self-Defense Forces"; Jacob Aasland Ravndal, "A Pre-Trial Profile of Anders Behring Breivik"  
Background reading on terrorist groups (e.g., LTTE, IRA, ETA, Kashmiri separatists, Sikh separatists, Israeli and Palestinian groups, Algerian groups):  
TBA

## Course Details

This course is designed to provide a foundation for understanding many of the key issues and debates in the study of terrorism. Throughout the course, we will address a number of questions, such as: What is terrorism? Has terrorism changed over time? Why do organizations and groups use terrorist tactics? Under what conditions is terrorism more likely to be used? Is terrorism more likely to be found in democratic or democratizing states? Do the same explanations apply to all types of terrorism? Many of the assigned readings provide different, sometimes divergent, answers to these questions. The purpose of the course is to stimulate a conscientious debate over the merits and limitations of these diverse understandings of terrorism.

The principal objective of the course is to encourage the development of a sophisticated understanding of key issues in the study of terrorism and to promote thoughtful evaluations of some of the answers that have been provided. Upon completion of this course, students will recognize key definitional issues, such as how to define "terrorism," identify characteristics of terrorist groups and the contexts within which they operate, know the various explanations for why individuals and groups use terrorist tactics, and understand the various approaches to countering terrorism. In addition to topical knowledge and analytical

skills, students will practice and receive feedback on writing, giving presentations, and class participation.

## **Grade Breakdown**

The course grade is assessed with a weighted average summarized below:

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Quizzes (two worth 15 percent each)	30
Exam 1	25
Exam 2	30
Assignments (multiple)	10
Participation	5
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>

The final course grade for the course is based on the following:

<b>Letter</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	93-100
A-	90-92.9
B+	87-89.9
B	84-86.9
B-	80-82.9
C+	77-79.9
C	74-76.9
C-	70-72.9
D+	67-69.9
D	63-66.9
D-	60-62.9
F	below 60