



## National Security Seminars Course Syllabus Summer 2009

### Knowing Terrorist Groups

Professor: Christopher Steinitz  
Office Hours: By appointment

CLASS MEETINGS: Monday and Wednesday, 10:30 AM - Noon

#### Course Description & Objectives

The class is designed to increase students' knowledge of the ideology, motivations, tactics, and strategies of groups that use terrorism to advance their goals. Such understanding of terrorist groups will greatly benefit students as they pursue careers in intelligence, counter-terrorism, law enforcement, and homeland security. As the course is offered in conjunction with Arabic language, there will be a necessary focus on terrorism related to the Arab world. However, the course will also put those issues into context with the broader Arab world, Islam, as well as unrelated sources and varieties of terrorism. The ultimate goal of the course is to provide applicable knowledge that will facilitate the student's ability to understand the many paradigms of violent extremism and assess legitimate threats from other trends and ideologies of the Islamic world.

#### **Resources:**

The students will be provided extensive readings taken from both primary and secondary expert sources that will deepen the students' understanding of terrorist groups, their ideologies and tactics. Student will benefit from interaction with a broad spectrum of guest speakers. There will also be designated discussion periods for students to share their observations, thoughts, and analysis of the origins, motivations, goals, and tactics of various violent groups.

#### **Grading:**

15% Overall Participation  
15% Each reaction paper for designated discussion periods  
20% Individual paper  
20% Final group project related to Capstone Exercise

## **Schedule:**

### **Week 1: Understanding Muslims & Islam**

**9 June:** Basics of Islam & Discussion

5 pillars, the Quran,

*Who Speaks For Islam?: What a Billion Muslims Really Think*

by John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed

“The Amman Message” Introduction and pp. 3-21.

<http://ammanmessage.com/media/Amman-Message-pdf-booklet-v-2-5-2-08.pdf>

“Precision in the Global War on Terror” by Sherifa Zuhur (to page 22, at least)

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/PUB843.pdf>

“10 terms not to use with Muslims” Chris Seiple, CSM, 28 March 2009

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2009/0328/p09s01-coop.html>

“Dar al-Uloom Anti-Terror Declaration”

**10 June:** Arabic names & dialects, Islamic jargon

**13 June:** Weekend trip: Visit National Islamic Center

### **Week 2: Salafi terrorism**

**15 June:** the Salafi-Jihadi movement

Through Our Enemies Eyes, Michael Scheuer

Milestones (Introduction, Chapter 4: 47-69)

Selection of Al-Qaeda statements & videos

**17 June:** Discussion, paper due

### **Week 3: Terrorism Issues**

**22 June:** Weapons of Mass Destruction

Readings TBD

**24 June:** Cyber-terrorism

Readings TBD

### **Week 4: Terrorism in the US**

**29 June:** Right-Wing Extremism

DHS report on Right-wing Extremism:

<http://www.fas.org/irp/eprint/rightwing.pdf>

Eric Rudolph Statement:

<http://www.armyofgod.com/EricRudolphStatement.html>

**1 July:** Discussion, paper due

### **Week 5: Community Policing & Counter-Insurgency**

**6 July:** Counter-terrorism and the “global jihad”

“British Engagement with Muslims,” H.A. Hellyer

[http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2007/12\\_counterterrorism\\_hellyer.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2007/12_counterterrorism_hellyer.aspx)

“Connecting the Dots,” U.S. Department of Justice

[http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/files/RIC/Publications/connecting\\_the\\_dots.pdf](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/files/RIC/Publications/connecting_the_dots.pdf)

“28 Articles,” David Kilcullen

<http://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/28articles.pdf>

“Lessons Learned from the Armed Jihad Ordeal in Syria,” Abu Musab al-Suri

<http://www.ctc.usma.edu/aq/pdf/AFGP-2002-600080-Trans.pdf>

**8 July:** Law Enforcement & US Muslims

## **Week 6: Intelligence**

**13 July:** Research paper due – email to instructor.

**15 July:** Counter-Intelligence

Reading: “9/11 Commission Report”

## **Week 7: U.S. Law Enforcement at Home and Abroad**

**20 July:** Joint Terrorism Task Forces

Readings TBD

**22 July:** Guest lecture TBD

## **Week 8: Future Trends of Guerilla Tactics & Terrorism**

**27 July:** Serena Hotel & Mumbai Attacks

Readings TBD

**29 July:** Final discussion

## **Research paper:**

Students will choose one of the following themes:

- 1) Choose any theological principle of Islam (*tawhid, kufr, takfir, salat*, etc.). In brief what different arguments exist on this issue? Is there consensus (*ijma'*)? What is the majority opinion? How does the interpretation of various radical groups differ from the majority opinion?
- 2) Choose an Islamist organization or individual that does (or has previously) espoused the use of violence to achieve a goal. Define that goal from the subject's perspective. Explain the concepts that legitimize the tactics and operations they have conducted. Has their perspective changed over time? What groups and individuals have provided criticism of those goals, tactics, and operations? What is the substance of those arguments?

## **Capstone project:**

As a group, students will conduct a case study analysis of a terrorist attack. They will need to assess the attack not only from the traditional perspective, but also from the perspective of the perpetrators.

They will seek to answer the following questions: How was the attack conducted? Why was the attack successful? Where did the authorities fail to prevent the attack? What could have prevented the attack?

What motivated the group to conduct the attack? What tactical and ideological factors drove the selection of that particular target? What gaps in security was the group able to exploit? What are the lessons learned for the perpetrators and other future perpetrators?

And finally, what were the government and community responses to the attack? And what were the effects of those responses? Did the aftermath mitigate or exacerbate the damage of the attack itself? Remember to consider the perpetrators' perspective, as well.

Students will present the results of their analysis at the end of the course.

## **Required textbooks:**

*Who Speaks For Islam?: What a Billion Muslims Really Think* by John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed

*Through Our Enemies' Eyes* by Michael Scheuer

*Inside Terrorism* by Bruce Hoffman