

Media and Terrorism

COMM 3597.02

Fall 2018

LOCATION	INSTRUCTOR	OFFICE HOURS
133 Caldwell Lab T/Th 1:50 – 2:45 P.M. 3 credits	Nick Polavin Polavin.1@osu.edu	3047 Derby Hall Tue: 12:00p – 1:40p Thur: 12:00p – 1:40p (or by appointment)

Course Description:

This is a hybrid course consisting of online work (readings, videos, some PowerPoint files) and two in-person class meetings a week. As a student, expectations for your independent work are high, and you will be responsible for keeping up with the schedule for both your personal success and the benefit of class discussion. Our in-person time will be precious, so do the readings! I want intelligent and informed discussions to take place as we supplement the online experience. All exams will be in the classroom to allow for questions.

This course uses a case study format to examine the provocative relationship between the political violence known as terrorism and the mass-mediated messages that depict it. We will utilize communication theories to explore how the framing of those depictions, in both the news and fictional material, affect the public's understanding of terrorism and counterterrorism. Additionally, we will examine how terrorist groups use media to disseminate their messages.

Required Text:

There is no textbook for this course. All required readings will be posted on Canvas.

GE Requirements and Goals:

COMM 3597.02 fulfills the General Education requirements for Cross-Disciplinary Seminar and GE Diversity: Global Studies. The Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committees have specified certain learning outcomes for the course. These are as follows:

Diversity

Goals: Students understand the pluralistic nature of institutions, society, and culture in the United States and across the world in order to become educated, productive, and principled citizens.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

Social Diversity in the United States

1. Students describe and evaluate the roles of such categories as race, gender and sexuality, disability, class, ethnicity, and religion in the pluralistic institutions and cultures of the United States.
2. Students recognize the role of social diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values regarding appreciation, tolerance, and equality of others.

Global Studies

1. Students understand some of the political, economic, cultural, physical, social, and philosophical aspects of one or more of the world's nations, peoples and cultures outside the U.S.
2. Students recognize the role of national and international diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values as global citizens.

Cross-Disciplinary Seminar

Goals: Students demonstrate an understanding of a topic of interest through scholarly activities that draw upon multiple disciplines and through their interactions with students from different majors.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand benefits and limitations of different disciplinary perspectives.
2. Understand benefits of synthesizing multiple disciplinary perspectives.
3. Synthesize and apply knowledge from diverse disciplines to topic of interest.

Grading and Assignments

Categories (*More specific info for each item will be given during the semester*)

Exam (24%)

There will be two exams during the semester, which will cover lecture material and the readings – mainly covering theoretical perspectives discussed and case studies. The exams will be in short answer and multiple choice format. (30 pts each)

Short Papers (24%) – use APA Format

Short Paper 1: Defining terrorism. You will construct a definition for terrorism and defend it, noting inclusions and exclusions, with rationalizations for both. (30 pts - 1-2 pp)

Short Paper 2: Terrorism in Entertainment: Find an example of terrorism in entertainment media (preapproved by me before writing begins) and write an overview and analysis of the work utilizing concepts and theories discussed in class. (30 pts – 1-2 pp)

Long Paper (30%) – use APA Format

Final Paper: After gaining approval from me, research the happening and coverage of a specific terrorist group or event in the last half century. Using theoretical lenses and concepts from the semester, examine and critique the coverage and compare with coverage of similar events. (75 pts - 3-6 pp)

Participation (22%)

This course is designed to fuel debate on the ethics and implications of media representation of terrorism. Without your voice, these discussions will be bland and one-sided. Attendance alone will not get you the most out of this class. I will work to ensure that everyone gets an opportunity to earn these points, and quality will be valued above quantity of input. To ensure a spirited debate, ***thoughtful discussion questions for certain readings will be submitted by you via Canvas no later than 8 p.m. before the class in question*** (6 DQ's @ 5 pts each = 30pts). These, along with in-class contributions (25 pts), will make up your participation grade (55 pts)

Policies and Expectations

Attendance: Attendance is expected at all class sessions, **but you may miss three classes without penalty. For every class you miss beyond two, your participation grade will be affected by 5 pts.** University approved absences are exempt from this policy. Absences due to medical concerns will be excused with appropriate documentation, provided the documentation is submitted *within one week* of the absence. As any issue you may have, please let me know ahead of time. Ask for permission rather than forgiveness.

Missed or Late Exam: You are required to take the exams on the scheduled days and times(see schedule below). If you do not take an exam, you will receive 0 points for the exam. An exam may only be made up when approved by me for one of the following reasons: (a) the absence is a university-excused activity, necessary documentation is provided, and arrangements for make-up are made in advance; or (b) the absence is due to a medical or family emergency, necessary documentation is provided, and arrangements for make-up are made within 24 hours of the missed exam. If the requirements for (a) or (b) are not fully met, you will receive 0 points for the exam. If you arrive after the first person has completed and/or left the exam, you will receive 0 points for the exam.

Late Assignments: Assignments must be submitted as indicated below (see Written Assignments) *no later than midnight* on the assigned due date (unless otherwise stated). Assignments may be accepted late via Carmen but will receive a grade penalty based on the following:

Submission	Penalty
Due date – 24 hrs later	-10%
24-48 hrs late	-20%
more than 48 hrs late	No credit

Written Assignments: In-class assignments may be handwritten, but all other work must be typed and must conform to APA formatting, citing, and referencing guidelines (see http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html). Unless otherwise noted, assignments must be uploaded to the Dropbox *no later than midnight* on the assigned due date.

Communications: Because of the dynamic nature of this subject matter, there is a high likelihood that changes to the syllabus in terms of topic and reading assignments will occur. I will post class updates, extra credit opportunities, and/or additional materials as announcements on Canvas which should send updates to your email. Please check Canvas and read your email regularly (at least 2-3 times per week) because you are responsible for this information, just as you are responsible for information in class. I will announce changes in class as well so any questions can be addressed in person.

Classroom Civility: This class will involve a great deal of controversial subject matter. We want to build a classroom climate that is comfortable for everyone. In a communication class, it is especially important that we (1) display respect for all members of the classroom, including the instructor and students; (2) pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities; (3) avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, doing work for other classes, making/receiving cell phone calls, text messaging, etc.); and (4) **avoid racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, or ableist language** that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom. This is not an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, they represent

the minimal standards that help make the classroom a productive learning environment for all concerned.

Technology Policy: Please turn cell phones OFF for the duration of our class time and keep them out of sight. Laptops are permitted for note-taking and research, but this policy is subject to change if I find that students are distracting themselves with web surfing during lectures. *Research shows that those who use laptops in class for alternate activities lower both their grades and those of the students around them!*

Challenging a Grade: I am always willing to discuss your grades with you, but I will not do so during class time. To challenge a grade, contact me between 1 and 14 days after the assignment being graded to set up a meeting. When we meet, you must present your concerns via solid written arguments. Your grade may be raised, lowered, or kept the same.

Extra Credit

Extra credit opportunities through non-C-REP studies will be discussed in class/posted to Canvas as they become available <https://osucomm.sona-systems.com/>

Academic Misconduct: Cheating and plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. The Ohio State University's *Code of Student Conduct* (Section 3325-23-04) defines academic misconduct as "any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process" (p. 2). Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's *Code of Student Conduct* is never considered an excuse for academic misconduct, so I recommend you review the *Code of Student Conduct*, specifically the sections dealing with academic misconduct at http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM). If COAM determines you have violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University. If you have any questions about this policy or what constitutes academic misconduct, please contact me or visit COAM at <http://oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html>.

Writing Center: All students, especially those who have difficulty writing, are encouraged to visit the *OSU Writing Center*. Their web address is <http://cstw.osu.edu/writingcenter> and their phone number is 688-5865. Tutors are available at the Mendenhall Lab and in the Science and Engineering Library (third floor). Walk-in hours and scheduled appointments are available; please see the web page for more information.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION POLICY

Students with disabilities who have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. When possible, documentation should be provided no later than the second week of class.

The Office for Disability Services is located in:

098 Baker Hall

113 W. 12th Ave

Phone 614-292-3307

<http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>

Week	Date	Topic & Activity	Read	Assignments
Week 1 Class Introduction	Tu 8/21	Overview of course and assignments; introductions	None	
	Th 8/23	What is terrorism?	Bruce (2013) Kinsley (2001)	
Week 2 Us vs. Them Group Dynamics	Tu 8/28	Social Identity Theory & Moral Disengagement	Sapolsky (2017) Why your brain hates other people	DQs
	Th 8/30		Matusitz Ch. 10 <i>Optional: Bandura (1999)</i>	
Week 3 Framing	Tu 9/4	Framing	Norris, Kern, & Just (2003) Framing Terrorism pp 1-9	DQs
	Th 9/6		Nacos (2005) Portrayal of female terrorists	
Week 4 Fear	Tu 9/11	Cultivation Theory	Mueller (2004) False sense of insecurity	DQs
	Th 9/13	Terror Management Theory	Greenberg & Arndt (2012) Terror Management Theory	Short Paper 1 due by midnight (9/14)
Week 5 Radical Islamic Terrorism	Tu 9/18	DNA of terrorism	Rowland & Theye (2008) Symbolic DNA of Terrorism	DQs
	Th 9/20	News and Islam	Powell (2011) Framing of Islam	
Week 6 ISIS	Tu 9/25	ISIS and Iraq	Atwan (2015) Ch. 2: The Origins – Part one: Iraq	DQs
	Th 9/27			
Week 7 Counterterrorism in the Middle East	Tu 10/2	Journalism in the lead up to the Invasion of Iraq	Kilcullen (2009) <i>The Accidental Guerrilla</i> Ch. 1	DQs
	Th 10/4	Counterterrorism or Counterinsurgency?	Massing (2003)	
Week 8 Exam	Tu 10/9	Review		
No Class 10/11 – Fall Break				
Week 9	Tu 10/16	Cyber terrorism	Greers (2009) Nacos (2007) Ch. 4	DQs

Terrorism and technology	Th 10/18	ISIS and the internet	Atwan (2015) Ch. 1: Masters of the Digital Universe	
Week 10	Tu 10/23	Trends in TV and movies	<i>TBD</i>	DQs
Terrorism in entertainment media	Th 10/25	Stereotypes	Matusitz Ch. 7	
Week 11	Tu 10/30	Gaza	<i>Paradise Now</i>	DQs
Gaza	Th 11/1		Shamir & Shikaki (2002) <i>Self-serving perceptions</i>	Short Paper 2 due by midnight (11/2)
Week 12	Tu 11/6	Timothy McVeigh & Militia groups	<i>PBS American Experience: Oklahoma City</i>	DQs
Domestic Terrorism	Th 11/8	Lone Wolf Terrorism	<i>Manhunt</i> Unabomber	
Week 13	Tu 11/13	White supremacist terrorism		DQs
White Nationalism	Th 11/15	The Norway Massacre	Booker (2011) The news coverage of the Norway Massacre	
Week 14	Tu 11/20	Profiling Terrorists	<i>TBD</i>	DQs
Week 15	Tu 11/27	The Insanity Defense	Vidmar & Hans (2007) Ch. 10	
Terrorists on Trial	Th 11/29	Wrap up discussion and exam review		
Wrap up & final exam				
Week 16	Tu 12/4	Exam 2		
Final Paper due Sunday, 12/9 by 11:59 pm on Carmen				