

Media and Terrorism COMM 3597.02

Spring 2019

3 credits

Journalism 360

MWF (Hybrid online) **9:10am - 10:05am**

Nathan Silver

3028 Derby Hall

silver.91@osu.edu

Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 10:15am-12:15pm

Text

No textbook (you're welcome). However, I will be asking you to acquire various movies and documentaries (many available on YouTube or Netflix, others available for 2.99 on Amazon or any other means by which y'all acquire movies).

Course description

This course investigates the relationship between modern terrorism and mass media communication about terrorism. This course examines terrorism from both historical and contemporary perspectives, and applies current communication theory to real-world events and coverage.

This course is divided into three major topics. The first focuses on how terrorists use news media to advance their agendas, and how the mainstream media portrays terrorist activity. The second focuses on the effects of terrorism and its media coverage on the public. The third focuses on media other than news outlets: entertainment media such as *24* and *Homeland*, social networking, and even comedy.

Unlike a conventional lecture course, many of the topics we will discuss do not lend themselves well to objective questions with "correct" answers. Terrorism, and media coverage of terrorism, are constantly evolving topics. To that end, this course will be discussion-based and draw on readings from a variety of sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles and books. Many of the assigned readings focus on terrorism in the Middle East; however, perspectives from other countries are included. Students are required to participate in class discussion and to write papers relating to class readings and discussion.

Some of the assigned readings may include academic theories or advanced statistical analysis. While knowledge of these topics may prove beneficial, no prior knowledge of statistics or communication theory is expected or necessary. Also, because this is a MEDIA and terrorism class, we will watch lots of films, documentaries, and other terrorism related media.

A note on the hybrid class format

This is an online/in-class hybrid course. Monday and Wednesday we have class. Friday your physical presence is not required. However, you will be given specific tasks (e.g. activities or readings, group project prep, movies etc.) intended to help you prep for the following week's content. My goal is for this not to be a boring nod-off lecture course. Your adequate preparation and engagement will help make this a reality. I anticipate very interesting, engaging, and informed discussion (in addition to what I will do my best to make compelling and interesting lectures). You will get out of this course what you put in. This is a 3-credit hour course. According to University guidelines you should have about three hours of work (1 in class, two outside) per credit hour. The way I see this is you are on the clock working for me for 9 hours a week. Track your hours. If you're not putting that much time in, and you're not doing well, that is likely why.

Overview

COMM 3597.02 is a General Education (GE) course in the Cross-Disciplinary Seminar and Diversity: Global Studies categories.

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.*

Cross-Disciplinary Seminar Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. *Students understand the benefits and limitations of different disciplinary perspectives.*
2. *Students understand the benefits of synthesizing multiple disciplinary perspectives.*
3. *Students synthesize and apply knowledge from diverse disciplines to a topic of interest.*

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.*

Global Studies Expected Learning Outcomes:

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.*

Expectations for students

- Be prepared for class (i.e. read assigned readings, watch assigned videos, complete assignments)
- Provide informed contribution to class discussions, both during class and on Carmen.
- Construct a coherent, supported, grammatically correct, edited argument for writing assignments.

Expectations for the instructor

- Office hours are the best way to reach me outside of class. Office hours are time I set aside to talk with students regarding the course. If you visit my office during office hours and I appear otherwise occupied, please do not hesitate to interrupt. I will set aside what I am doing (unless I am talking with another student) to talk with you.
- If you cannot attend office hours, the best way to contact me outside of class is through e-mail. When emailing regarding assignments, grades, or other classroom matters, I will not respond to emails unless they are professional and respectful, and for the purpose of scheduling an appointment. Email is not for discussing grades, grievances, or things you didn't listen to in class. Make an appointment and I will find time to help you/ hear you out, etc. If you would like to email me content, thoughts about the material (i.e. discussion points, questions, etc.) you are welcome to do so (even encouraged). I generally respond to emails within 24 hours (on weekdays—my weekends are sacred). If I do not respond, it is not because I didn't see it, it is because you didn't follow my rules ☺.
- I will make every effort to complete grading of assignments as quickly as possible. I ask that you keep in mind that I am also a student with a class and research load, and am tasked with grading the work of 50 or more students at a time, so please understand that grading turnaround will likely be closer to 1-2 weeks than 1-2 days.

Class policies

Attendance: Much of this class is participation based. If you are not in class, you cannot participate. Life happens, and if you have to miss a class for some reason, let me know. My official policy is 3 free absences. You may use them for any reason (except on presentation or test days). However, here is the catch: you only get 3 days—no excused/ unexcused. If you miss three days and then have family emergency, I will dock you points for your fourth absence. Every class you miss over three will result in a 1/3 letter-grade deduction, meaning if you earn an A and have 4 absences, you will receive an A-; five absences, a B+, etc. Obviously, university excused absences are exempt from this policy. However, **YOUR THREE ABSENCES ARE NOT VACATION DAYS.**

Late submission: USE A CALENDAR/AGENDA!!! Written assignments are due via Carmen dropbox by 11:59pm on the due date. I don't take late work. **SERIOUSLY NO LATE WORK!** If you foresee a difficulty in finishing your assignment on time (i.e. need an extension) talk to me **ATLEAST** 48 hours in advanced. I'm very reasonable provided you don't abuse it.

Use of electronic devices: As many readings for this course are distributed electronically, I expect that many of you will be using laptops or tablets during class to refer to readings or take notes. Use of such devices is permitted as long as use is restricted to class-relevant tasks. Facebook, games, etc. are not class-relevant tasks; such uses will both distract other students and detract from your participation grade. I also highly encourage in-class googling to fact check, investigate something more deeply, or just supplement the conversation. **I reserve the right to ban electronic devices if they get to be a problem.**

Academic Misconduct

DO NOT CHEAT! I'LL KNOW, YOU'LL FAIL! It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see section 3335-23-14 of the Code of Student Conduct at <http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/csc/>

Disability Services

Students with disabilities that 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. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>

Warning regarding class content and discussion

This course covers an evolving topic dealing with controversial social and political topics. Students in the course come from a variety of majors and countries of origin. Respectful debate between classmates is not only expected, but encouraged. That said, we all have the responsibility to show civility towards each other regardless of individual views. Keep arguments on the merits of the argument being made and not on the person making the argument.

My job is not to tell you what to think, but rather to teach you how to think better. We will disagree, sometimes you will know something I don't, other times I will know things you don't. That's fine. However, in this class, you are not free to just say whatever you want without evidence. An opinion that is not backed up by evidence is not a good one. The purpose of an education is to have informed opinions—a crucial aspect of democratic citizenship. Do not be afraid to speak up, however, I want you to be very cognizant of the implications of what you say. There is to my knowledge, no evidence of racial or ethnic differences in aggression, intelligence, or anything else that would support the notion that one kind of people is more prone to terrorism than another. Much of what we say, even if it doesn't say this directly, certainly implies this. If what you say boils down to this, consider not saying it—not because I'm censoring you, but because it is incorrect and ill-informed. That said, do not be afraid to share perspectives you've heard from people, the news, or your own, even if you only want to examine it. There are perspectives people should have as well as perspectives people unfortunately have—both are equally important to understanding media effects.

Assignments

Define Terrorism Paper: It's hard to talk about terrorism when we can't agree on what it is. Moreover, how we define it is important. Unfortunately, terrorism is defined by a) the State Department, b) International entities (UN), c) news outlets, d) terrorist organizations themselves, and other subjective sources that often leave us with a "one man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter" definition. In this assignment, you will, in 2-3 pages, 1) define terrorism as you see it, 2) Explain the evidence base of your definition, 3) compare and contrast it to the definition provided by the State Department, 4) provide examples of terrorist and non-terrorist groups that a) fit yours vs. the State Department's definition (i.e. according to you X is a terrorist while the state department would not categorize them as so, b)highlight how your definition improves upon the existing one.

15 points

Test: Informed discussion will require some base level knowledge of vocabulary, geography, history, and ultimately media effects theory that will set the foundation for class discussions and activities. The test will be comprised of 25 multiple choice questions.

25 points

Participation. Before each class (unless otherwise notified) you will usually be asked to post discussion questions on Carmen, read something, watch something, etc. You are to have these posted **before 6am** the day of class. Failure to do so will result in a 1-point deduction from your participation grade. I will also deduct a point for lack of preparation on written assignments—clearly not having completed them or read the assigned reading. Finally, if the absence is not excused (family emergency, serious/ contagious illness, job interview, University related event) you will also lose any participation points from that day.

10 points

Written Assignments: A total of 5 written response assignments will be completed both independently and then combined with group responses to be submitted to me. Each is worth 2 points. These will largely be completion grades, however, if you do not provide cited evidence for claims you make in your responses, you will lose points.

10 points

Group discussion of journal article: Much of the goal of this class is media literacy—understanding how media is used to manipulate and persuade in order to be a more conscientious and active media consumer. I think understanding both how we study the effects of media scientifically, as well as what we know and don't know about terrorism and media effects is a crucial component of media literacy. Therefore, you and your group will select one scientific journal article from: *Media Psychology*, *Political Communication*, or another EMPIRICAL journal (we'll discuss what this means, just check with me if you are unsure) to be read by the class prior to your discussion period. You will provide a list of discussion questions related to 1) The relationship posited by the authors, 2) The importance of that relationship, 3) The argument for that relationship, 4) The evidence the authors provide of that relationship (i.e. data), 5) A

discussion of the implications of what they found. There will be time to work on this in class with my feedback. **15 points**

Final Paper Proposal: You will write what effectively amounts to the first page of your final paper. By the end of that page it should be clear 1) What claim you are making about the media with respect to some aspect of terrorism (e.g. informing us, shaping attitudes, fear, etc.) and why it matters, 2) What theory supports this claim, and 3) An overview of the evidence you will provide to backup this claim (you'll spend the rest of the paper going into detail on this evidence, just overview it here. **5 points**

Final Paper: I do not want to read 48 of the same paper. Therefore, I am going to leave the final paper topic pretty open. You will need to 1) choose a specific aspect of a specific media (e.g. news framing, entertainment, etc.) 2) Determine what theory may be useful in understanding the effect of that media 3) Explain what that affect might be (can be positive or negative) 4) provide a recommendation to improve the state of the world based on that effect (e.g. Hollywood should provide more accurate depictions of torture). In 4-6 pages, fill in the blanks and defend the following statement: (a media event: coverage, depiction etc.) may cause people to (a media effect) . Because (reason why the effect is likely and important) , it is important that (media outlet) (recommendation) . **20 points**

Total: 100 points

A brief note on writing expectations

This is a 3000-level class. As a result, expectations for quality writing will be high. A lack of proofreading, improper formatting, bad grammar, incoherent arguments, **A LACK OF PARAGRAPH BREAKS** are unacceptable for someone pursuing a degree at the flagship University of the state of Ohio. As a teacher, I believe that producing functionally illiterate students is a moral failing. Thus, if you are not a good writer, you will have to devote extra time to improving your approach to writing. I will be here to help you with this. However, a failure to write clear, concise, well-edited work will severely impact your grade. Writing is one of the most important skills you learn from a four-year degree. Invest time in this now, and it will pay dividends in the future. It doesn't matter how profoundly brilliant an idea is if you cannot communicate it clearly—if I don't understand your argument, you're not making it very well.

DAILY READINGS & TOPICS*

1/7 – Introduction to Course

1/19 – Moral disengagement: Why and how do people do bad things

Watch Bandura interview on moral disengagement

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i-azK-Oo2k0>

Social Thinking: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h6HLDV0T5Q8>

1/11 (online/hybrid) – History and context

-Crash course video (start at 4:30 if you want):

<https://hs.elkhartisd.org/apps/video/watch.jsp?v=145462>

-Cold war to war on terror podcast: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3NTFhDdwnLM>

-History of terrorism: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uttAxMqdv1Y>

Helpful website for reference throughout: <https://ourworldindata.org/terrorism#global-terrorism-database-gtd-and-bruce-hoffman>

1/14 – Googling assignment (see ‘assignments’ for worksheet).

Discussion of terms and history

1/16 – Discussion (Googling assignment due by end of class)

-Prepare by reading the ‘definitions of terrorism’ piece and submitting discussion questions on Carmen

-Defining terrorism in class activity and discussion

1/18 – (online/hybrid) Defining Terrorism Paper

Paper due by 11:59pm 1/22

1/21 – MLK day (Wasn’t it nice of me not to make your papers due on this day? Thank me with higher quality work.)

1/23 – Terrorism is communication

-Prepare by reading Rowland & Theye, 2008 and posting a discussion question to Carmen

-Prepare by watching CBC documentary:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJvOJ4F12dE>

-Isis propaganda story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rOVBTqN9XI>

1/25– (online/Hybrid) Watch: *The War You Don't See*: <https://vimeo.com/67739294>

-Provide a discussion question on Carmen by 6am 1/28

-Complete 'Informing the public about terrorism' in assignments folder

-read Mueller, 2004: A false sense of insecurity

1/28 – I don't know when or where, but something awful is going to happen.

Media Effects part 1: Our window to the world

States and Emotions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAMbkJk6gnE&t=314s>

Agenda setting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7qf9gQpoF4>

Framing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SuwNCyYxxlA>

1/30 – Media Effects part 2: Entertainment

Cultivation Theory: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G37OqYfSSYk> and

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=le_1oEs9wWY

Social Cognitive Theory: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=128Ts5r9NRE&t=491s>

Schemas: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WB9raKI-cJY>

2/1 – (Online/Hybrid)

Watch *Zero Dark Thirty*

Prepare by posting a discussion question to Carmen by 6am 2/4

Prepare by completing 'ZDT' in assignments folder

2/4 – Discussion (ZDT assignment due by 11:59pm)

2/6 – An existential perspective

Terror Management Theory: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NELC2NLC3SQ>

Terrorist recruitment propaganda: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZdhseBV7qko>

Prepare by reading ‘Domestic Terrorist profile’ and posting a discussion question

2/8 – (Online/Hybrid)

Watch *The Four Lions*

Complete ‘Four Lions’ in assignment folder

Prepare by posting a discussion question on Carmen by 6am 2/11

2/11 – That’s not funny: Satire and comedy

Read ‘Satire and politics’

Charlie Hebdo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6hU3nhudRg>

Real Housewives of ISIS: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPxs9WQ6ZW8>

2/13 – Media effects activity:

Prepare by watching *Team America: World Police*

2/15 – (Online/ Hybrid)

Prepare by watching *The Baader Meinhoff Complex*

Complete ‘Baader Meinhoff’ in assignment folder

2/18– Analyzing effects: Entertainment v. News

Red Army video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRnKfg2Y9nE>

2/20 – Student-led test review

2/22 – (Online/Hybrid)

Work on final paper proposal (due 11:59 pm 2/22)

Note: I know you have a test Monday. Writing this should help you understand the material (if you're having trouble completing the assignment then the test might get ugly).

2/25 – Test Day Best Day!

Bring a number 2 pencil

2/27 –Peer review and writing workshop for final paper proposal

Prepare by bringing a printed copy of your final paper proposal OR you can use the review function on MS word. Either bring your computer or a printed copy and a pen.

3/1 – (Online/Hybrid)

Read 'video-game violence meta-analysis' AND 'Comment on Anderson meta-analysis'

3/4 – Video games

Call of duty: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1JrS4pV6Jn8>

Read 'controversial_images_media_representation'

Prepare by posting a discussion question by 6am 3/4

3/6 – How do we know stuff: An example of the Group Discussion of journal article project

Read 'Scary Pictures'

Prepare by posting a discussion question on Carmen by 6am 3/6

3/8 – (Online/Hybrid)

Make the edits and clarify what is unclear to your reviewer in your final paper proposal.

Assignment: Bring to class Monday 3/18: your edited proposal (1 page) followed by an outline of the rest of your paper. **Note:** Your outline should not have sentences. Break your claim down into subpoints (you likely need to make more than one point to support your claim). For example, if I say popular media depictions of Arabs fosters Islamophobia, I'm going to have to provide evidence that a) Arabs are depicted in unflattering and inaccurate ways, b) People conflate Arab and Muslim, and c) People who watch a lot of TV have less favorable views of Islam. Make these points in less than a line (4-10 words). Then provide subpoints of the arguments/ evidence you'll need to make each of those points.

3/11-3/15 – Spring Break

Sleep in, watch movies, go on vacation, work for someone who pays you, MAKE GOOD DECISIONS!

3/18 – Peer review and writing workshop for final paper

Same deal as before: bring paper and outline either printed or on computer

3/20- Hate crimes v. Terrorism

Read short and long summaries of Elliot Rodgers Manifesto:

<http://www.w24.co.za/Archive/Summary-of-Elliot-Rodgers-manifesto-part-1-20140527>

Review FBI definition of Hate Crime: <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/civil-rights/hate-crimes>

Use SPLC Hate Map for in-class activity: <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map>

3/22-(Online/Hybrid)

Watch *V for Vendetta*

Living Colour cult of personality: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3tF-EU45TI>

3/25- Populism, Activism, Anarchism, Authoritarianism, and Cats: Internets

Weber on Modernity: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69VF7mT4nRU>

Crash course populism: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bZ8fwJTXWjA>

Social Media : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B264nk8fBcg> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwoxSfq3glg>

3/27- Free Speech: Terry Jones and *The Innocence of Muslims*

Learn about Terry: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/burning-the-koran-is-not-radical-says-controversial-american-pastor-terry-jones-as-he-searches-for-9985986.html>

Watch the first 20 minutes of this ridiculous film: <https://archive.org/details/Muhammadfullmovie#>

Complete ‘Terry Jones’ in assignment folder

3/29- (Online/Hybrid)

Watch *Truth, Lies, and Conspiracies/ 911*

4/1- Conspiracy theories and misinformation

Read (Lewandowsky et al., 2017) and post a discussion question by 6am 4/1

Note: It seems long, but it's only 34 pages if you don't include the references and the type face is huge. If you want to know the current informed thinking around the spread of misinformation, this is good place to start.

Read 'The Psychology of Conspiracy Theories' (it's short)

To prepare, post a discussion question on Carmen by 6am 4/1

4/3- Group 1

4/5- (Online/ Hybrid)

You should have a draft of your final paper at this point. Exchange papers with a member of your group for peer review.

4/8- Group 2

You should have returned the paper you reviewed to the person who wrote it. Address their comments. If they don't understand, there is a good chance you can make something clearer.

4/10-Group 3

4/12- (Online Hybrid) Final Papers due by 11:59 pm

4/15- Group 4

4/17- Group 5

4/19- Group 6

4/22 – Class Wrap-Up

*Schedule subject to change because life happens and we get behind—also stuff happens and when it's relevant, we should talk about it.