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HSTR 272E.01: Terrorism - Violence in the Modern World

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Objectives of the Course

In its annual edition of *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, the United States Department of State has acknowledged that “No one definition of terrorism has gained universal acceptance.” The term poses serious semantic difficulties. Terrorism is generally held to be political violence that is illegitimate, but what confers legitimacy on some acts of political violence and illegitimacy on others? Is terrorism simply the name we give to the violence we do not like or support, while finding euphemisms for the violence we do like or support? This is the morally problematic approach that I take throughout the course, beginning with the 1793-1794 Reign of Terror in France and ending with major episodes of contemporary terrorism in both its state and group forms.

Classroom Manners

“Life is short, but there is always time for courtesy.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Emerson believed, as I do, that manners matter a great deal in life. Insofar as our course is concerned, I expect a relationship of reciprocal courtesy to exist between us. For my part, I will take all my teaching responsibilities with the utmost seriousness. In return, you need to be dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and to study hard. In addition, I expect you to come to class on time, to stay for the entire lecture, and to refrain from all forms of behavior that might distract me or the students around you. I begin lecturing on the hour, and I expect students to be seated by then. Please do not talk with your neighbors or read newspapers during the lecture. Turn off your cell phones. Try to have breakfast before class. The lecture hall is not a dining room or a coffee house. It is imperative that we create and maintain a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning.

Required Readings

Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer* (Harper)
Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon* (Bantam)
Mark Danner, *Massacre at El Mozote* (Knopf)
Osama bin Laden, *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama bin Laden*, ed. by Bruce Lawrence (Verso)

Articles on Moodle

Copies of all or most of these books are on the Reserve Shelf in the Library under my name and the course number.

**Required Films**

*Danton*

*The Battle of Algiers*

*American History X* or *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Movement*

The films make up a vital component of this course. They all will be available on Moodle.

**Grading Policy**

I will give three unannounced short-answer quizzes during the semester. The quizzes will be worth approximately 10 percent of the semester grade. There also will be three examinations in the course. Each will be worth approximately 30 percent of the semester grade. The examinations will consist of both essay and short answer questions. The final examination will not be cumulative. If you are unable to take the examinations at the scheduled times, see me about a make-up. Quizzes cannot be made up at a later date. If you have a legitimate excuse for missing class on a quiz day, your absence will not be held against you. A grader will assist me with the quizzes and examinations. The grader will be available for consultation with students after each of the quizzes and the first two examinations. Before each examination, I will post review outlines on Moodle.

I set great store by students who demonstrate a capacity and eagerness for growth as readers and writers. Steady improvement during the semester will be an important factor in the final grade for this course.

The required articles for are available on Moodle.

For students who take the course on a Pass/Not Pass basis, the minimum grade for a Pass is “C.”

If you take an incomplete in the course, you will have one year in which to finish all requirements before the “I” becomes an “F.” Students should take care of incompletes as soon as possible.

Students who have need of the Disability Services Center should make certain that they are properly registered there. Let me know which special arrangements you will require for the examinations.

I regard plagiarism in any form as akin to the unique atrocity of the sin against the Holy Ghost. Please consult the Student Conduct Code for a description of the penalties that will result from cheating. The Code is available for review online.

**Office Hours**
My office hours for the semester are MWF 10-11 in University Hall 314, on the Provost’s side of the building. If you are not free at those times, please see me about making an appointment at a mutually convenient hour. You can reach me by telephone at 243-2981. My e-mail address is richard.drake@umontana.edu. Although I do have a twitter account, I do not conduct any school business through that medium.

Lectures, Film Showings, and Reading Assignments

Week 1

F  11 January  Introduction

Week 2

M  14 January  Theories about Terrorism
W  16 January  Eric Hoffer, The True Believer
F  18 January  The French Revolution and the Beginning of Modern Terrorism: Maximilien Robespierre (In conjunction with this lecture, the film Danton will be discussed. You can find the film on Moodle).

Week 3

M  21 January  Holiday
W  23 January  The Legacy of Terrorism in Napoleonic Europe: Francisco Goya’s Disasters of War (Slide Lecture)
F  25 January  Anarchism and the Propaganda of the Deed

Week 4

M  28 January  Joseph Conrad, Under Western Eyes
W  30 January  Marxist-Leninism and Terror: The Black Book of Communism Debate
F  1 February  The Stalinist Terror

Week 5

M  4 February  Arthur Koestler, Darkness at Noon
W 6 February       Fascism and Terror (Slide Lecture)
F 8 February       Nazism and Terror

Week 6
M 11 February      The Final Solution
W 13 February      First Examination (A review outline for this examination is on Moodle)
F 15 February      Terrorism in Latin America: An Overview

Week 7
M 18 February      Holiday
W 20 February      The “Disappeared” of Argentina
F 22 February      Mark Danner, Massacre at El Mozote

Week 8
M 25 February      Peru: The Shining Path
W 27 February      Terrorism in the Middle East: The Historical Background
F  1 March         Israeli Perspectives

Week 9
M  4 March         Arab Perspectives
W  6 March         Islamic Fundamentalism in Egypt
F  8 March         The Historical Background of Shi’ite Radicalism in Iran

Week 10
M 11 March         The Thought of the Ayatollah Khomeini (Reading: selected articles from Islam and Revolution available on Moodle)
F 15 March         Second Examination (A review outline for this examination is on Moodle)

Week 11
M 18 March  The FLN in Algeria (In conjunction with this lecture, the film *The Battle of Algiers* will be discussed. You can find the film on Moodle)

W 20 March  Islamic Fundamentalism in Algeria

F 22 March  The Case of Muammar al-Qaddafi in Libya

**Spring Vacation: 25-29 March**

**Week 12**

M 1 April  The Tragedy of Rwanda

W 3 April  Terrorism in Europe: An Introduction

F 5 April  Italian Terrorism: (Reading: Drake, “The Children of the Sun” and “Italy in the 1960s: A Legacy of Terrorism and Liberation” can be found on Moodle)

**Week 13**

M 8 April  The Baader-Meinhof Gang and Neo-Nazism in Germany

W 10 April  The ETA in Spain

F 12 April  The Damnable Question:” Terrorism in Ireland

**Week 14**

M 15 April  Terrorism in the United States: The Historical Background

W 17 April  The Case of the Weather Underground

F 19 April  Terrorism in the United States Today (In conjunction with this lecture, the film *American History X* will be discussed; alternatively, students may choose to see *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Movement*, which will be discussed. Both films can be found on Moodle).

**Week 15**

M 22 April  The War on Terror (Reading: Selectionsed from Osama bin Laden listed on Moodle).

W 24 April  “Blowback:” U.S. Foreign Policy and Terrorism

F 26 April  Conclusions (A review outline for this lecture will be posted on Moodle)
Final Examination: 10:10-12:10 Thursday, May 2.