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

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Spring 2023

Richard Drake
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Syllabus for Terrorism in the Modern World (HSTR 272E)

MWF 11:00-11:50

In person, Urey Lecture Hall 101

CRN 30737

Terrorism as a Moral Problem

In its annual edition of *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, the United States Department of State has acknowledged, “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 its state, group, and individual forms.

Learning Goals for the Course

As HSTR 272E offers Ethics credit in UM’s General Education program, we have a special obligation to pay close attention to the ethical questions arising from our course materials. Using works of literature, philosophy, journalism, art, and film, we encounter in their secular and religious variations the four principal ideological traditions in the modern world: liberalism, conservatism, socialism, and reaction. All four rest on distinctive ethical foundations. The course readings, films, and lectures deal with these foundational ethical concerns.

I have designed this course with two principal learning goals in mind. First, HSTR 272E should give the students a clear understanding of the ethical claims made by proponents of the leading ideological traditions. The main political actors in this course draw their political motivation from one or another of these four schools. Second, students should emerge from the course with a deeper understanding of their own ethical values. Having gained exposure through rigorous historical analysis to actual human consequences of the liberal, conservative, socialist, and reactionary traditions, students should be better prepared to identify which of these traditions holds the most promise for the creation of a genuinely ethical society. The course readings, films, and lectures are intended to illustrate these primary learning goals while conveying basic historical information needed to understand the major forms that terrorism has taken in the modern world.

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 turn off your cell phones and do not talk with your neighbors. 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.

Classroom Attendance

Please make it a practice to attend the lectures regularly. Lectures will not be posted on Moodle. If you miss class, be sure to obtain reliable notes from a student.

Required Readings

Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer* (Harper)
Joseph Conrad, *Under Western Eyes* (Oxford University Press)
Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon* (Bantam)
Mark Danner, *Massacre at El Mozote* (Knopf)
Ahmed Rashid, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia* (Penguin)
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.

Other required readings and study guide questions are posted on Moodle.

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.

Warning

Please be advised that this is a course on terrorist violence. The readings and the films contain graphic images. In a course committed to an analysis of difficult aspects of history, there is no way around direct encounters with subject matter that will make some students uncomfortable.

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 test. 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. Graders will assist me with the quizzes and examinations. The graders 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.

Review grading options on the Registrar's website. The default mode for this course is traditional grading.

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 atrocity of a 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 at <http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321>.

Office Hours

My office hours for the semester are MWF 1-2 and by appointment 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 (406) 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

W	18 January	Introduction
F	20 January	Theories about Terrorism

Week 2

M	23 January	Eric Hoffer, <i>The True Believer</i>
W	25 January	The French Revolution and the Beginning of Modern Terrorism: Maximilien Robespierre (In conjunction with this lecture, the film <i>Danton</i> will be discussed. You can find the film on Moodle.)
F	27 January	The Legacy of Terrorism in Napoleonic Europe: Francisco Goya's <i>Disasters of War</i> (Slide Lecture)

Week 3

M	30 January	Anarchism and the Propaganda of the Deed
W	1 February	Joseph Conrad, <i>Under Western Eyes</i>
F	3 February	Marxist-Leninism and Terror: <i>The Black Book of Communism</i> Debate

Week 4

M	6 February	The Stalinist Terror
W	8 February	Arthur Koestler, <i>Darkness at Noon</i>
F	10 February	Fascism and Terror (Slide Lecture)

Week 5

M	13 February	Nazism and Terror
W	15 February	The Final Solution
F	17 February	First Examination (A review outline for this

examination is on Moodle)

Week 6

M	20 February	President's Day Holiday
W	22 February	Terrorism in Latin America: An Overview
F	24 February	The Cuban Revolution

Week 7

M	27 February	The "Disappeared" of Argentina
W	1 March	Mark Danner, <i>Massacre at El Mozote</i>
F	3 March	Peru: The Shining Path

Week 8

M	6 March	Terrorism in the Middle East: The Historical Background
W	8 March	Israeli Perspectives
F	10 March	Arab Perspectives

Week 9

M	13 March	Islamic Fundamentalism in Egypt
W	15 March	The Historical Background of Shi'ite Radicalism in Iran
F	17 March	The Thought of the Ayatollah Khomeini (Reading: selected articles from <i>Islam and Revolution</i> available on Moodle)

Spring Break Monday, 20 March-Friday, 24 March

Week 10

M	27 March	Ahmed Rashid, <i>Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia</i>
W	29 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.)

F	31 March	Islamic Fundamentalism in Algeria
Week 11		
M	3 April	The Case of Muammar al-Qaddafi in Libya
W	5 April	The Tragedy of Rwanda
F	7 April	Second Examination (A review outline for this examination will be on Moodle.)
Week 12		
M	10 April	Terrorism in Europe: An Introduction
W	12 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.)
F	14 April	The Baader-Meinhof Gang and Neo-Nazism in Germany
Week 13		
M	17 April	The ETA in Spain
W	19 April	“The Damnable Question”: Terrorism in Ireland
F	21 April	Terrorism in the United States: The Historical Background
Week 14		
M	24 April	The Case of the Weather Underground
W	26 April	Terrorism in the United States during the 1990s (In conjunction with this lecture, the film <i>American History X</i> will be discussed.

Alternatively, students may choose to see *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Movement*, which also will be discussed. Both films are listed on Moodle.)

F	28 April	The War on Terror Following 9/11 (Reading: Selections from Osama bin Laden are listed on Moodle.)
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Week 14

M	1 May	“Blowback:” U.S. Foreign Policy and Terrorism
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W	3 May	Terrorism Today
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F	5 May	Conclusions
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Final Examination: Tuesday, May 9, 10:10-12:10