The Challenges of Terrorism

Course prefix: INTA

Course number: 3103

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):
90613

Instructor First Name: Jenna

Instructor Last Name: Jordan

Semester: Fall

Academic year: 2025

Course description:

This course offers a comprehensive introduction to the study of terrorism and political violence. Students will explore foundational questions about how terrorism is defined, why individuals and groups engage in terrorist violence, and how terrorism evolves across time and space. The course examines a range of explanatory frameworks, including strategic, psychological, organizational, structural, and ideological approaches to understand the causes, trajectories, and consequences of terrorism. Key topics include the radicalization and recruitment process, suicide terrorism, terrorist financing, state sponsorship, and group dynamics. Students will assess counterterrorism strategies such as leadership decapitation, drone warfare, and deradicalization programs. Drawing on both historical and contemporary case studies, from the Red Army Faction and the Weather Underground to al-Qaeda and ISIS, the course emphasizes empirical research, critical analysis, and policy relevance. The semester concludes with a multi-day simulation that integrates theoretical insights with practical decision-making in a complex terrorism-related scenario.

Course learning outcomes:

Critical Thinking and Analytical Skills

- **Critically evaluate competing explanations for the causes and consequences of terrorism**, drawing on interdisciplinary frameworks and relevant historical and contemporary case studies.
- **Assess the effectiveness and unintended consequences of counterterrorism strategies**, with attention to political, ethical, and strategic trade-offs.

Theoretical and Methodological Competency

- **Demonstrate familiarity with core theoretical frameworks in terrorism studies**—including strategic, psychological, organizational, and structural approaches—and apply them to real-world challenges in global security.

Communication and Argumentation

- **Demonstrate the ability to communicate complex ideas clearly and persuasively**, both in writing and oral discussion, analytical essays, and active participation in simulation-based exercises.
- **Engage critically with foundational and emerging theoretical frameworks** for understanding terrorism, including strategic, psychological, organizational, structural, and ideological perspectives.

Required course materials:

N/A

Grading policy:

Class participation: 15%

Midterm: 20%

Op-Ed 15%

Simulation 20%

Final Exam: 30%

A: 90-100

B: 80-89

C: 70-79

D: 60-69

F: 0-59

Attendance policy:

Attendance is required for this course. Exceptions are allowed for Institute-approved absences and situations such as illness or emergencies (documented by the Office of the Dean of Students). Students are expected to actively participate in discussions and have

completed the assigned readings prior to class. Course grades and value derived are directly proportional to student attendance, reading, and engaged participation. The participation grade will reflect your regular, thoughtful, informed participation in class discussion as well as the submission of discussion questions.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. All students enrolled at Georgia Tech, and all its campuses, are to perform their academic work according to standards set by faculty members, departments, schools and colleges of the university; and cheating and plagiarism constitute fraudulent misrepresentation for which no credit can be given and for which appropriate sanctions are warranted and will be applied. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/ or Academic Honor Code.

Any student suspected of cheating, plagiarizing, or using AI software on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Students are prohibited from submitting written work generated by and written by artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT or Grammarly. Asking ChatGPT to write a response for you is plagiarism for the simple reason that you did not write the answer or the essay. Furthermore, ChatGPT generates a written response using the writing of others without any credit or citations of the authors or websites. Student papers flagged as having been AI generated will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.

Course content, activities, and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion