

Syllabus of Record

Program: CET Barcelona

Course Code / Title: BC/INTR 340 Inside Terrorism: Past, Present, and Future

Contact Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: International Relations / History, Psychology, Spanish Studies

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites / Requirements: None

Description

This course examines terrorism through a multidisciplinary approach, exploring its history, dynamics, and impact on society and global security. It addresses the intrinsic definitional issues of terrorism and the theoretical approaches to its study, situating the state of the art within the current security paradigm. The course explores the dynamics of terrorism, including the structure of terrorist cells, organizations, and the systems of actors who directly or indirectly influence these activities. Additionally, it delves into the human dimensions of terrorism, examining the experiences of both victims and perpetrators and analyzing the psychological, social, and political factors involved. The course fosters dialogue on the past, present, and future of terrorism, leveraging Spain's extensive experience in combating terrorism and its historical suffering because of it. Field study components may include visits to the sites of past terrorist attacks and relevant institutions, and discussions with guest speakers.

Content warning:

At times, this course intentionally invites students to engage with readings and content that are controversial. Students might find this disturbing. The intention is not to endorse perspectives, but rigorously engage with them. If certain material is emotionally challenging, students can discuss with the faculty before or after class. Students may also leave the classroom without academic penalty, if the discussion becomes too emotionally challenging. Students are, however, responsible for all missed material, and so should arrange to get notes from another student or see the faculty member individually.

Objectives

Through their participation in this course, students will:

- Develop an understanding of the multiple definitions and approaches to terrorism and demonstrate the ability to critically engage with them.

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- Learn to conceptualize and analyze terrorist cells, organizations, and their broader systems, identifying key actors and understanding the roles they play.
- Explore the human and psychological dimensions of terrorism by examining its impact on victims and gaining knowledge about radicalization processes.
- Creatively develop counter-terrorism ideas and present them to peers.
- Acquire first-hand knowledge about the impact of terrorism in Spain through informal conversations with locals, case studies, documentaries, field visits, discussions with relevant stakeholders.
- Conduct secondary research on a specific topic related to terrorism and write an academic paper.

Requirements

Active participation is essential in this course. Students are expected to attend each class and field study course component, as outlined in the CET Attendance Policy. Students are expected to read all assigned materials before the relevant class session and come prepared to participate thoughtfully in class discussions. Regular assignments include reading 20-30 pages per class session (8 topics) or watching documentaries of 30-60 minutes per class session (2 topics). All assignments must be submitted via Canvas unless otherwise noted.

Graded assignments include:

- **Participation:** Engage in class discussions, ask questions when needed, participate in the questions section of your peers' presentations, and actively engage in the field visits.
- **Homework:** Maintain 3 informal conversations with local people about topics related to terrorism and write an anonymized report about each conversation (including the key ideas of each participant and their connection with at least 3 references of the course). Each report should be 800-1,000 words, and one of them must be briefly presented in class (up to 5 minutes oral presentation). The presentation is expected to serve as an opportunity to share with peers the experiences of engaging with locals. Its purpose is to exchange strategies for initiating conversations and posing difficult questions effectively, as well as discussing the challenges encountered. While the presentation is not graded, it is a mandatory part of the assignment – failure to present will result in the homework not being evaluated.
- **Quizzes:** 3 short quizzes (essay format) to test students' comprehension of readings and documentaries, conducted throughout the course after finalizing each content part.

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- **Group activity and presentation:** In groups of 3-4 people, students will design and present an idea to counter a terrorism-related issue. The presentation should last 10 minutes, with 10 minutes for questions, and demonstrate a deep understanding of the problem addressed, the current solutions (if any), and gaps when addressing this problem. The design and presentation of the idea will be graded separately: 50% will be allocated to the presented content (shared by all group members), and 50% will be based on individual grades considering presentation clarity and response quality.
- **Final paper:** Write between 4,000 and 5,000 words (excluding references and appendices) on a topic agreed upon with the faculty member. The paper must clearly define a research question and demonstrate the student's understanding of the academic knowledge on the topic, including key concepts, different theoretical approaches, contrasting theories, and the main challenges of the subject. It should engage with at least 10 references and include a title page, introduction, related literature, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion. The paper should be formatted in a single-column layout, using Arial font, 11-point size, and single spacing.

Grading

The final grade is determined as follows:

- Participation (*see rubric below*) 5%
- Homework (3 at 10%) 30%
- Quizzes (3 at 10%) 30%
- Group activity and presentation 15%
- Final Paper 20%

Class Participation Grading Rubric

	A – 90-100% Exemplary	B – 80-89% Proficient	C – 70-79% Developing	D – 60-69% Unacceptable	F – 0-59% Missing
Frequency of class participation	Actively contributes 2+ times per meeting	Actively contributes at least 1 time per meeting	Actively contributes at least half of the time during term	Actively contributes less than half of the time during term	Does not contribute
Quality of class	Contribution is always	Contribution is mostly	Contribution is somewhat	Contribution is rarely	Does not contribute or

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participati on	thoughtful, accurate, and constructive, frequently interacting with peers	thoughtful, accurate, and constructive, usually interacting with peers	thoughtful, accurate, and constructive, sometimes interacting with peers	thoughtful, accurate, and constructive, rarely interacting with peers	interact with peers
Level of class preparatio n	Always fully prepared and on task	Mostly prepared and on task	Somewhat prepared and on task	Rarely prepared and on task	Consistently unprepared and not on task

Readings / Resources

Alonso, Rogelio. 2021. "Why Did so Few Become Terrorists: A Comparative Study of Northern Ireland and the Basque Country." *Terrorism and Political Violence*, April, 1–20.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2021.1905631>.

Alonso-Villota, Marina, and Rubén Arcos. 2024. "The Coercion-Manipulation-Persuasion Framework: Analyzing the Modus Operandi of Systems of Non-State Actors." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 0 (0): 1–19.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2024.2357082>.

Auger, Vincent A. 2020. "Right-Wing Terror: A Fifth Global Wave?" *Perspectives on Terrorism* 14 (3): 87–97.

Berntzen, Lars Erik, and Tore Bjørgo. 2021. "The Term 'Lone Wolf' and Its Alternatives: Patterns of Public and Academic Use from 2000 to 2020." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 15 (3): 132–41.

Bjørgo, Tore, and Jacob Aasland Ravndal. 2020. "Why the Nordic Resistance Movement Restrains Its Use of Violence." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 14 (6): 37–48.

Centro Memorial Víctimas del Terrorismo, dir. 2024. *Testimonios de Las Víctimas Del Atentado de ETA Contra La Cafetería Rolando de Madrid En 1974*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQ1mLmZZz0>.

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- García-Calvo, Carola, and Fernando Reinares. 2022. "How Members of the Islamic State-Linked Ripoll Cell Grouped, Radicalized and Plotted Mass Casualty Terrorist Attacks in Barcelona." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 0 (0): 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2022.2097585>.
- González Gómez, Fernando, dir. 2023. *27 Minutos*. Shortfilm. Fiction. La Dalia Films. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GDXzkJhzg8Y>.
- Hoffman, Bruce, Jacob Ware, and Ezra Shapiro. 2020. "Assessing the Threat of Incel Violence." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 43 (7): 565–87. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2020.1751459>.
- Institute for Economics and Peace. 2024. "Global Terrorism Index 2024: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism." Sydney. <http://visionofhumanity.org/resources>.
- International Center for Counter-Terrorism, and Alex P. Schmidt. 2023. "Defining Terrorism." ICCT. <https://doi.org/10.19165/2023.3.01>.
- Jarvis, Lee. 2023. "Critical Terrorism Studies and Numbers: Engagements, Openings, and Future Research." *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 16 (4): 720–43. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2023.2267280>.
- Kingdon, Ashton, and Briony Gray. 2022. "The Class Conflict Rises When You Turn up the Heat: An Interdisciplinary Examination of the Relationship between Climate Change and Left-Wing Terrorist Recruitment." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 34 (5): 1041–56. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2022.2069935>.
- León, Elías, dir. 2022. *800 metros*. Documentary. Netflix. <https://www.netflix.com/es/title/81275696>.
- López Romo, Raúl, and Eduardo Mateo Santamaría, dirs. 2023. *Video testimonios - Víctimas educadoras*. Documentary. Fundación Centro Memorial de las Víctimas del Terrorismo and Fundación Fernando Buesa Blanco. <https://www.memorialvt.com/video-testimonios/>.
- Macklin, Graham. 2022. "The Extreme Right, Climate Change and Terrorism." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 34 (5): 979–96. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2022.2069928>.
- Margolin, Devorah, and Joana Cook. 2024. "Five Decades of Research on Women and Terrorism." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 0 (0): 1–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2024.2357178>.

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- Millington, Chris. 2024. "Bad History: A Historian's Critique of Rapoport's 'Four Waves of Modern Terrorism' Model." *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 17 (3): 488–505. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2024.2360266>.
- Morrison, John, Andrew Silke, and Eke McGowan. 2021. "The Development of the Framework for Research Ethics in Terrorism Studies (FRETS)." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 33 (2): 271–89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2021.1880196>.
- National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). n.d. "Global Terrorism Database." <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>.
- Orsini, Alessandro. 2023. "What Everybody Should Know about Radicalization and the DRIA Model." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 46 (1): 68–100. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2020.1738669>.
- Rapoport, David C. 2004. "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism." In *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy*, edited by A. K. Cronin and J. M. Ludes, Georgetown University Press, 46–74. Washington, DC. https://www.iwp.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/20140819_RapoportFourWavesofModernTerrorism.pdf.
- Schuurman, Bart. 2020. "Research on Terrorism, 2007–2016: A Review of Data, Methods, and Authorship." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 32 (5): 1011–26.
- Silke, Andrew, Lara A. Frumkin, and John F. Morrison. 2023. "Chapter 1. Contemplating a Research Agenda for Terrorism Studies." In *A Research Agenda for Terrorism Studies*, edited by Lara Frumkin, John Morrison, and Andrew Silke, 1–20. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781789909104.00005>.
- Stuven, Hugo, dir. 2020. *The Challenge: ETA*. Documentary. Prime Video. <https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/B08JG3Q2KV>.
- Vidino, Lorenzo, and Sergio Altuna. 2021. "The Muslim Brotherhood: Pan-European Structure." Austrian Fund for the Documentation of Religiously Motivated Political Extremism (Documentation Centre Political Islam). https://www.dokumentationsstelle.at/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Report_EU_Strukturen_final.pdf.

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Content

Part I – Terrorism: definitions, history and the state of the art

Topic 1 – What is terrorism?

- Definitions of terrorism and its core elements
- Perspectives on terrorism studies: Should a definition be agreed upon?
- Implications of definitional issues in counterterrorism

Topic 2 – A brief history of terrorism

- The political nature of terrorism
- The so-called “waves” of modern terrorism
- Emerging forms of terrorism

Topic 3 – Understanding terrorism in the current security paradigm

- The current nature of warfare: hybrid threats and a multi-domain arena
- Terrorist cells, terrorist organizations, and systems of non-state actors
- The role of non-violent actors connected to terrorism

Topic 4 – Terrorism hotspots

- Current hotspots and key terrorist organizations
- (Guess) Statistics on terrorism: differences across databases and datasets on terrorism
- Practical exercise: searching information in databases on terrorism

Part II – Dynamics of terrorism

Topic 5 – Researching terrorism

- Key elements of the research on terrorism: security, sources, and privacy.
- Qualitative and quantitative methods: strengths and challenges.

Topic 6 – Who is who in a terrorist cell?

- Structures and roles of terrorist cells
- Women in terrorism
- Social Network Analysis applied to terrorism studies
- Case study of the terrorist attack of 2017 Barcelona Attacks

Topic 7 – The terrorist organization ETA and its broader system

- The history of ETA (1950s - present)
- The broader system of ETA: military front, political front, cultural front, media front, economic front, etc.

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- Is ETA still active?

Part III – The faces of terrorism

Topic 8 – Victims of terrorism

- The relevance of victims' testimonies
- It affects all: direct and indirect victims
- Physical and psychological impacts
- Legal consequences

Topic 9 – Why do they join? Why do they disengage?

- Radicalization processes
- The influence of the micro, meso, and macro levels
- Narratives and propaganda techniques

Part IV – Future considerations

Topic 10 – What is next?

- Future organizations
- Future tools
- Future challenges

Field study and experiential learning components may include:

- Visiting the location of the terrorist attack on 17 August 2017 in Barcelona
- Visiting the location of the terrorist attack on 19 June 1987 in Barcelona
- Conversations with guest speakers, such as researchers on terrorism from the Victims of Terrorism Memorial Centre, counter-terrorism practitioners from victims' associations in Spain, and law enforcement professionals.

** Syllabus is subject to minor changes in term-specific syllabus at instructor discretion.*