


GOV 365 Sp21 - SUICIDE TERRORISM-WB (38745)

Syllabus

 Class Meets: Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8 am

 Mode: Online

 key: gov365

  Instructor: Ami Pedahzur

Pronouns: he/him/his

 Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9.30 am - 11 am via [Zoom](#)


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  TA: Olgahan Cat

Office Hours: Wednesday 12-3 on [Zoom](#)

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  TA: Oguzhan Alkan

Office Hours: Monday 11-2 on Zoom

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Over the last three decades, suicide attacks turned from an obscure phenomenon that only a handful of scholars addressed a focal theme in the research on terrorism and political violence.

The exhaustive research effort into the issue has generated hundreds of academic publications and ignited heated debates among scholars.

In this course, we will follow the recent evolution of research in the field by drawing attention to the following topics and the main debates.

Background and Concepts

We will begin by introducing the phenomenon.

1. We will define 'suicide', 'terrorism', and related concepts.
2. We will trace the historical roots of suicide attacks.
3. We will contextualize the recent manifestations of suicide attacks.

Explanations - Society and Groups Levels

We will then discuss the various theoretical debates within this area of study:

1. The roles of culture and religion in facilitating suicide operations.
2. Do suicide attackers operate within organizations or networks?
3. Is there a strategic logic behind suicide operations?
4. If so, is it complemented by political and organizational logic?

Explanations - Individual Level

1. The debates regarding the individual motivations of suicide attackers.
2. We will assess the extent to which economic and societal variables contribute to individuals' decisions to kill themselves as a means of killing others.
3. We will evaluate the advances that the scholarly community has made in understanding the phenomenon and delineate the questions that are yet to be answered.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The objective is to equip you with critical perspectives for analyzing contemporary political issues.

The course builds on theories and methods in the social sciences.

We will address historical examples and case studies and frame them using relevant concepts and theories.

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- I. Identify and explain the phenomena of terrorism and suicide terrorism in the contexts of political violence and warfare.
- II. Analyze political events through different theoretical prisms and levels of analysis.

- III. Evaluate debates among scholars who represent different theoretical perspectives.
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REQUIRED MATERIALS

We will read articles from academic journals and magazines, which you will find on Canvas. We will also watch documentaries and films.

I work with the library to obtain access to all the audiovisual materials.

I will let you know in advance how to reach any source.

REQUIRED DEVICES

Access to the internet is essential. It would be best if you had a reasonably fast internet connection, both for downloading and uploading.

Such a connection is important for watching lectures and participating in discussions via zoom. Computers and tablets are better suited for such purposes than smartphones.

FORMAT AND PROCEDURES

The class meets online twice a week for 75-minute sessions.

You can expect to spend 2-3 hours reading or watching for every hour of class.

On Tuesdays

- Lecture.
 - We will refer you to the articles or audio-visual contents that we will discuss at the second meeting each week (Thursdays).
 - We will provide you with guiding questions for reading articles or watching videos.
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On Thursdays

- We will engage in discussions about the readings or the documentaries that you watched.
- The discussions will be held online, mostly in breakout rooms.
- We will let you know in advance if they include graded quizzes.

HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE

Your success in this class is important.

If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible.

I want to reward hard work and dedication.

Therefore, the course is structured so that regular attendance of lectures, thoughtful reading of the text, active participation, and assimilation of the concepts are a large part of what determines your grade.

Together we will develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

I also encourage you to reach out to the student resources available through UT.

COURSE PLAN

Class 1 - Introduction


Class 2 - Suicide and Terrorism

Class 3 - History

Class 4. History - Discussion and Quiz


Class 5. Radicalism, Terrorism, and the Media

Class 6. Radicalism, Terrorism, and the Media - Discussion and Quiz

 Macdonald, Kevin. 2000. One Day in September. United States: Sony Pictures Classic.


Class 7. Culture Wars



Class 8. Culture Wars - Discussion and Quiz

 Hufnail, Mark. 2002. Inside Islam

Class 9. Warfare - Rational Approaches


Class 10. Warfare - Rational Approaches - Discussion and Quiz


 Horowitz, M. C. (2010). Nonstate Actors and the Diffusion of Innovations: The Case of Suicide Terrorism. *International Organization*, 64(01), 33-64

 Gilli, A., & Gilli, M. (2014). The Spread of Military Innovations: Adoption Capacity Theory, Tactical Incentives, and the Case of Suicide Terrorism. *Security Studies*, 23(3), 513-547 

Class 11. The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism - Hezbollah


Class 12. The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism - Discussion and Quiz


 Pape, R. A. (2003). The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism. *The American Political Science Review*, 97(3), 343-361.


 Moghadam, A. (2006). Suicide Terrorism, Occupation, and the Globalization of Martyrdom: A Critique of Dying to Win. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 29(8), 707-729.

Class 13. The Political Logic

Class 14. The Political Logic - Discussion and Quiz


 Bloom, M. M. (2004). Palestinian Suicide Bombing: Public Support, Market Share, and Outbidding. *Political Science Quarterly*, 119(1), 61-88.

 Acosta, B. (2016). Dying for survival: Why militant organizations continue to conduct suicide attacks. *Journal of Peace Research*, 53(2), 180-196.

 Brym, R. J., & Araj, B. (2008). Palestinian Suicide Bombing Revisited: A Critique of the Outbidding Thesis. *Political Science Quarterly*, 123(3), 485-500.


Class 15. Testing Theories

Class 16. Testing Theories - Discussion and Quiz

 Batty, David, and Kevin Toolis. 2006. *The Cult of the Suicide Bomber*.



Class 17. Networks

Class 18. Networks - Discussion and Quiz

 Kamen, Colleen. 2005. *The 9/11 Hijackers: Inside the Hamburg Cell*



Class 19. Psychological Motivations

Class 20. Discussion & Quiz

 Victoroff, J. (2005). The Mind of the Terrorist: A Review and Critique of Psychological Approaches. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 49(1), 3-42. 


Class 21. Sociological Motivations

Class 22. Discussion & Quiz

 Krueger, A. B., & Maleckova, J. (2003). Education, Poverty, and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection? *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 17(4), 119-144. 


Class 25. Group Processes

Class 26. Discussion & Quiz

 Abu-Assad, Hany. 2005. *Paradise Now*. Film. Palestine: Frenetic Films.

Class 27. Isis And The New Theater Of Terror

Class 28. Discussion & Quiz

 The Rise And Fall Of ISIS: The Most Brutal Terrorist Group In Modern History. Youtube. October 9, 2019.

GRADING

Flexibility is built into the assignments to support your success in this course.

If you miss a quiz or don't do as well on your early ones, your grade will not be impacted significantly.

A	100% to 94%	C	<77% to 74%
A-	< 94% to 90%	C-	<74% to 70%
B+	< 90% to 87%	D+	< 70% to 67%
B	< 87% to 84%	D	< 67% to 64%
B-	< 84% to 80%	D-	< 64% to 61%
C+	< 80% to 77%	F	< 61 to 0%

ASSIGNMENTS

- This course requires active participation, which is crucial to your success in becoming a critical thinker. The more you put into it, the more you will get out of it.
- Active participation includes being prepared to discuss readings, assignments, and concepts, engage yourself in activities and discussions, and put your best effort in formal and informal assignments.
- Best 10 open-book quizzes (10% each).
- All instructions, readings, and essential information will be on the canvas website.
- Check this site daily and use it to engage with your peers and with us.
- Changes to the schedule may be made if circumstances require.

LATE WORK AND ABSENCES

Late work will be handled on a case-by-case basis. The only absences that will be considered excused are for health-related issues, religious holidays, and extenuating circumstances due to an emergency.

OTHER ISSUES

If there are particular circumstances relating to your performance in this class that I should be aware of, please come and talk to us as close to the beginning of the semester as possible (or as problems arise).

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

This course is a safe place to explore controversial issues, ideas, and arguments. To keep this class safe for exploring multiple perspectives, respect for fellow students is mandatory, especially if you disagree.

Please read the policies of UT as they appear in the Catalog (app 11; app 13) as well as Handbook of Operating Procedures 9-1810. By participating in the class, you express your understanding of and consent to these regulations.

Students must not record activity in classrooms by any means without my written permission. Authorized recordings must be used only by the student who received my consent during the semester in which the student is enrolled in the class. Also, an authorized student-initiated recording must not be made available to anyone else in any fashion; this includes but is not limited to posting online or through other media.

PERSONAL PRONOUN PREFERENCE

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are essential concerning individuals and topics dealing with differences in race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name.

I will gladly honor your request to address you by a name different than what appears on the roster and by the gender pronouns you use. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester to make appropriate changes to my records.

STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

- You have a right to a learning environment that supports mental and physical wellness.
- You have a right to respect.
- You have a right to be assessed and graded fairly.
- You have a right to freedom of opinion and expression.
- You have a right to privacy and confidentiality.
- You have a right to meaningful and equal participation.
- You have a right to learn in an environment that is welcoming to all people.
- No student shall be isolated, excluded, or diminished in any way.
- You are responsible for taking care of yourself, managing your time, and communicating with the teaching team and with others if things start to feel out of control or overwhelming.
- You are responsible for acting in a way that is worthy of respect and always respectful of others.
- Your experience with this course is directly related to the quality of the energy you bring to it, and your energy shapes the quality of your peers' experiences.
- You are responsible for creating an inclusive environment and for speaking up when someone is excluded.

University Information/Policies

Course Drop Policy

At the beginning of each semester, you can add and drop classes without penalty. Check the [academic calendar](#)

for specific dates. Refer to the General Information Catalog for all [official add/drop policies and procedures](#)

Title IX Reporting

UT Austin is committed to fostering a learning and working environment free from discrimination in all its forms. Faculty members and certain staff members (TAs) are considered “Responsible Employees” or “Mandatory Reporters,” which means that they are required to report violations of Title IX to the Title IX Coordinator. For more information about reporting options and resources, visit titleix.utexas.edu

[\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

or contact the Title IX Office at titleix@austin.utexas.edu.

Academic Integrity

A fundamental principle for any educational institution, [academic integrity](#)

[\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

is highly valued and seriously regarded at The University of Texas at Austin. More specifically, you and other students are expected to maintain absolute integrity and a high standard of individual honor in scholastic work undertaken at the University. This is a very basic expectation that is further reinforced by the University's Honor Code. At a minimum, you should complete any assignments, exams, and other scholastic endeavors with the utmost honesty, which requires you to:

- acknowledge the contributions of other sources to your scholastic efforts;
- complete your assignments independently unless expressly authorized to seek or obtain assistance in preparing them;
- follow instructions for assignments and exams, and observe the standards of your academic discipline; and
- avoid engaging in any form of academic dishonesty on behalf of yourself or another student.

[Maintaining Your Academic Integrity in Online Learning](#)

[\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

UT's [Standards of Conduct](#)

University Resources for Students

- Contact [University Health Services](#)
- [\(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- if you feel physically unwell.
- Contact the [Counseling and Mental Health Center](#)
- [\(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- if you need counseling or psychiatric services.
- Visit the [Staying Well While Staying Home](#)
- [\(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- page for tips and things to consider as you take care of yourself and others during this time.

Services for Students with Disabilities

- [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)
- [Using Accommodations at UT](#)
- [How to register with SSD](#)

COVID-19 University Information/Policies

Safety and Class Participation/Masks

*Here is a disclosure regarding safety and the wearing of masks that **everyone teaching an in-person or hybrid class should include in their syllabus:***

Safety and Class Participation/Masks: We will all need to make some adjustments in order to benefit from in-person classroom interactions in a safe and healthy manner. Our best protection against spreading COVID-19 on campus are masks (defined as cloth face coverings) and staying home if you are showing symptoms. Therefore, for the benefit of everyone, this means that all students are required to follow these important rules.

- **Every student must wear a cloth face-covering properly in class and in all campus buildings at all times.**
- **Students are encouraged to participate in documented daily symptom screening.**

This means that each class day in which on-campus activities occur, students must upload certification from the symptom tracking app and confirm that they completed their symptom screening for that day to Canvas. Students should not upload the results of that screening, just the certificate that they completed it. If the symptom tracking app recommends that the student isolates rather than coming to class, then students must not return to class until cleared by a medical professional.

- Information regarding [safety protocols with and without symptoms](#)
- [\(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- can be [found here](#).
- [\(Links to an external site.\)](#)
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If a student is not wearing a cloth face-covering properly in the classroom (or any UT building), that student must leave the classroom (and building). If the student refuses to wear a cloth face covering, the class will be dismissed for the remainder of the period, and the student will be subject to disciplinary action as set forth in the university's Institutional Rules/General Conduct 11-404(a)(3). Students who have a condition that precludes the wearing of a cloth face covering must follow the procedures for [obtaining an accommodation](#) working with [Services for Students with Disabilities](#)

Sharing of Course Materials is Prohibited:

No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It is a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. I am well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course.

FERPA and Class Recordings

Class Recordings: Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

For any instructors of in-person or hybrid courses with some in-person meetings, you might want to share the following information about social distancing, monitoring, quarantine, and self-isolation.

COVID Caveats: To help keep everyone at UT and in our community safe, it is critical that students (and faculty and staff) report COVID-19 symptoms and testing, regardless of test results, to the HealthPoint Occupational Health Program (OHP) as soon as possible. Please see this [link](#)

[\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

to understand what needs to be reported. In addition, to help understand what to do if a fellow student in the class (or the instructor or TA) tests positive for COVID, see this [University Health Services link](#)