

# GOV 365T SUICIDE TERRORISM (39065)

## Syllabus

 Class Meets Face to Face WAG 214

 Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:00 a.m.-9:30 a.m

 Instructor: Ami Pedahzur Pronouns he/him/his

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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:

1. Identify and explain the phenomena of terrorism and suicide terrorism in the contexts of political violence and warfare.
2. Analyze political events through different theoretical prisms and levels of analysis.
3. Evaluate debates among scholars who represent different theoretical perspectives.

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

We will read articles from academic journals and magazines, we will also watch documentaries and films.

You will find all the materials on Canvas.

## 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 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

- Lectures - 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.

### 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.

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## 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 us know as soon as possible.

We want to reward hard work and dedication.

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.

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## COURSE PLAN

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Class 1 - Introduction

Class 2 - Suicide and Terrorism

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Class 3 - History

 Taylor, Donathan, and Yannick Gautron. 2015. "Pre-Modern Terrorism: The Cases of the Sicarii and the Assassins." In *The Routledge History of Terrorism*, 42–59. Routledge.

Class 4 - History - Discussion and Quiz

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Class 5 - Radicalism, Terrorism, and the Media

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

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

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Class 7 - Culture Wars

 Hufnail, Mark. 2002. Inside Islam.

Class 8 - Culture Wars - Discussion and Quiz

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Class 9 - Warfare

-  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 10 - Warfare - Discussion and Quiz

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## Class 11 - The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism

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

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## Class 13 - The Political Logic of Suicide Terrorism

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

## Class 14 - The Political Logic of Suicide Terrorism - Discussion and Quiz

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## Class 15 - Putting the Theories to the Test

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

## Class 16 - Putting the Theories to the Test - Discussion and Quiz

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## Class 17 - Networks

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

## Class 18 - Networks - Discussion and Quiz

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## Class 19 - Psychological Motivations

 Victoroff, J. (2005). The Mind of the Terrorist: A Review and Critique of Psychological Approaches. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 49(1), 3–42.  
Recommended Resource: <https://criminologyweb.com/>

## Class 20 - Psychological Motivations - Discussion & Quiz

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## Class 21 - Sociological Motivations

 Gambetta, D., & Hertog, S. (2009). Why are there so many Engineers among Islamic Radicals? *European Journal of Sociology*. 50(2), 201–230.

## Class 22 - Sociological Motivations - Discussion & Quiz

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## Class 23 - Economic Motivations

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

## Class 24 - Economic Motivations - Discussion & Quiz

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## Class 25 - Group Processes

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

## Class 26 - Group Processes - Discussion & Quiz

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## Class 27 - Isis And The New Theater of Terror

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

## Class 28 - Isis And The New Theater of Terror - Discussion & Quiz

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## Class 29 - Coping with Terrorism

## Class 30 - Coping with Terrorism - Discussion & Quiz

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## Class 31 - Concluding Discussion

## Class 32 - Final Thoughts

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## **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%

A- < 94% to 90%

B+ < 90% to 87%

B < 87% to 84%

B- < 84% to 80%

C+ < 80% to 77%

C < 77% to 74%

C- < 74% to 70%

D+ < 70% to 67%

D < 67% to 64%

D- < 64% to 61%

F < 61 to 0%

## **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.

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## **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 especially important 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 so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

## A notice regarding accommodations for religious holidays

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence."

## Course Drop Policy

At the beginning of each semester, you can add and drop classes without penalty. Check the [academic calendar](#) ([Links to an external site.](#)) for specific dates. Refer to the General Information Catalog for all [official add/drop policies and procedures](#) ([Links to an external site.](#)).

## 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](mailto:titleix@austin.utexas.edu).

## A notice regarding academic Integrity

A fundamental principle for any educational institution, **academic integrity** 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.
- UT Honor Code (or statement of ethics) and an explanation or example of what constitutes plagiarism (Link to University Honor Code: <http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/the-university/>) .
- [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 \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Using Accommodations at UT \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [How to register with SSD](#)

## COVID-19 University Information/Policies

**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.

**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.

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