

RESEARCH METHODS IN TERRORISM AND COUNTERTERRORISM (BSOS 633)

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CLASS DAY/TIME: M 8:00 PM-10:30 PM (DEC. 6TH, 2010-FEB. 21ST, 2011)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course provides students with the opportunity to conduct original research, while exposing them to analytical tools relevant to the study of terrorism. The main goal of the class is for each student to produce an original piece of academic research focusing on terrorism and/or counterterrorism. This course involves the practical aspect of the role quantitative research methods and statistics play in understanding terrorism by the scientific and intelligence communities. The course should provide students with 1) a basic understanding of the methods of quantitative research available to social scientists studying terrorism, 2) the connection between information and data, and 3) how to make sense out of a body of data. It will cover a variety of design issues, methodological issues and analytic techniques.

Prerequisite(s): Motivations and Intents of Terrorists and Terrorist Groups; OR Societal Impacts of, and Responses to Terrorism; OR Development of Counterterrorism Policy and Programs

COURSE MATERIALS:

This course requires the purchase of the following text:

- The Practice of Research in Criminology and Criminal Justice (4th edition). ISBN is 978-1-4129-7875-0
- Criminology and Public Policy, Special Issue: Homeland Security and Terrorism, August 2009, Volume 8, Issue 3, Pages 431–665 (You can download the whole issue from UMD electronic database).

RECOMMENDED TEXT:

1. John Creswell and Vicki Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (Sage Publications), 2006.
2. Maxfield, M. G., & Babbie, E. (2006). *Basics of Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology* (1st Ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
3. American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th Ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Additional readings will be available through electronic reserve.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students will have developed:

- Knowledge of a range of quantitative and qualitative social science research methods;
- Ability to develop a social science research design;
- Experience conducting substantive original research related to terrorism and/or counterterrorism.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS:

This will be a demanding course. Students will be required to complete required readings in addition to designing and implementing their original research. The process of research will be broken up into increments, both to make it easier to manage and also to ensure that students make continuous progress throughout the course. Students will also be required to provide peer reviews to each other periodically throughout the course.

Grades will be assigned as follows:

- Midterm: 25%
- Individual research project: 40%
 - Draft research question with annotated bibliography: 5%
 - Draft literature review with hypotheses: 10%
 - Draft method: 10%
 - Final paper: 15%
- Final project presentation: 10%
- Peer reviews: 10%
- Participation: 10%
- Miscellaneous assignments: 5%

Each of the above components is outlined below. Additional information regarding specific assignments will also be made available on the course website. I do not entertain grade appeals (except in the case of mathematical error). However, I am happy to explain why any assignment received the given grade and to help you prepare so as not to repeat mistakes.

Individual research project

The individual research project will comprise 40% of your total grade. It is an opportunity for you to explore a question of interest to you in a theoretically grounded and methodologically sound way. The individual research project may explore any theoretically grounded research question in the realm of terrorism studies. All projects will have a methods approach. Students will be grouped into 2 panels in order to present their projects the final 2 weeks of class. The project is broken down into the following increments:

Draft research question with annotated bibliography: For this assignment you will outline what research question you wish to pursue. In addition, you will summarize 8 sources that will help you pursue this question. Of these 8 sources, at least 5 must come from peer-reviewed academic journals or books published by university presses.

Draft literature review with hypotheses: For this assignment, you will draft a review of the literature relevant to the research question you are exploring, identifying

the major theories invoked. Additionally, you will set out your own theoretical point-of-view and state what specific hypotheses you plan to test.

Draft method design: In this section, you will outline the research method you will use to test your hypotheses. It may be either quantitative or qualitative in nature. You will identify data sources. You will also identify what your selection strategy is for sampling. Finally, you will outline what specific methodology will be used, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of that method.

Final paper: This is a final product combining all your efforts up to this point of the semester, with changes made based on feedback from instructors and peers. Each paper will consist of an introduction, in which the research question is clearly stated; a literature review; a theoretical statement with hypotheses; a methodology section, an analysis section, which implements either the quantitative *or* the qualitative research design and relates the results of the analysis back to the original hypotheses and to the overarching theoretical framework; a conclusion, which summarizes findings and their relative importance and discusses avenues for future research. Further information on each of these sections is available on the course website.

Final project presentation

The final project presentation is 10% of your final grade. Students will be grouped into panels (the staple of academic conferences), based on thematic similarities, in order to present their research. You will have 10 minutes to present your research design and findings. Instructors and other students will have the opportunity to ask questions regarding your research. You need to be able to defend your research.

Peer reviews

Students will be assigned to peer review groups of 3 people each. As much as is possible, groups will be formed based on similarities in research questions. At various points during the course, you will be asked to read group members' work and provide feedback. For each assignment, a form will be posted on the course website for you to fill out and submit both to the individuals whose work you are reviewing and to course instructors. There will be 2 peer reviews: of the literature review and hypotheses; and of the draft method.

Participation

Participation is 10% of your final grade. Each week, you should come to class prepared to discuss that week's topic and having completed any assigned readings. Class attendance is not sufficient although necessary to receive full credit for participation.

Miscellaneous Assignments

Assignments related to specific topics are 5% of your grade. The topic of the assignment will be announced later in the semester.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 (DEC. 6TH): **INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE**

LECTURE: The Purpose of Research

Reading Assignments Due:

- Bachman and Schutt, Ch. 1

Week 2 (Dec. 13th): **RESEARCH PROCESS**

Reading Assignments Due:

- Bachman and Schutt, Ch. 2

Week 3 (Dec. 20th): **LINKING THEORY AND RESEARCH: DEFINING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Activity: Brainstorm potential research questions based on previous courses in certificate program

Reading Assignments Due:

- Bachman and Schutt, Ch. 2
- Laura Dugan, Gary LaFree, and Alex R. Piquero, "Testing a Rational Choice Model of Airline Hijackings," *Criminology*, 43 (4): 1031-1065, 2005.
- Gary LaFree, Laura Dugan, and Raven Korte, "Efficacy of Counterterrorism Approaches: Examining Northern Ireland," START Research Brief Series, October 2006

WEEK 4 (DEC. 27TH): **MEASUREMENT AND CONCEPTUALIZATION**

Activity: Level of Measurement

Reading Assignments Due:

- Robert Adcock, David Collier. 2001. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research." *The American Political Science Review*. 3:529-546
- Bachman and Schutt, Ch. 3

Written Assignments Due: Draft research question with annotated bibliography

WEEK 5 (JAN. 3RD): **SAMPLING AND SELECTION BIAS IN RESEARCH DESIGN**

Student Presentations: Research Questions for Original Paper

In-class Activity: identify unit of analysis of each study in the CPP special issue

Reading Assignments Due:

- Bachman and Schutt, Ch. 4
- David Collier, James Mahoney. 1996. "Research Note: Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research." *World Politics*. 1:56-91.

WEEK 6 (JAN. 10TH): QUANTITATIVE METHODS: SURVEYS, EXPERIMENTS, RECORD DATA ANALYSIS, AND CRIME MAPPING

Reading Assignments Due:

- Bachman and Schutt, Ch. 6
- Gary LaFree, Sue-Ming Yang and Martha Crenshaw. Trajectories of terrorism : Attack patterns of foreign groups that have targeted the United States, 1970–2004, pages 445–473.

Written Assignments Due: Draft literature review with statement of hypotheses

WEEK 7 (JAN. 17TH) LAURA DUGAN GUEST LECTURE

Reading Assignments Due:

- Gary Lafree (2009). Criminology's Third War: Special Issue on Terrorism And Responses To Terrorism: 431–444.
- Baumeister, Roy F. and Mark R. Leary. 1997. "Writing Narrative Literature Reviews." *Review of General Psychology*. 1(3): 311-320.

Written Assignments Due: Peer reviews of literature review with hypotheses

WEEK 8 (JAN. 24TH) MID-TERM AND APPLICATION OF THE GTD DATA**

Reading Assignments Due:

- LaFree, Gary, and Laura Dugan. 2007. Introducing the global terrorism database. *Political Violence and Terrorism* 19:181-204.

WEEK 9 (JAN. 31ST): QUALITATIVE METHODS: INTERVIEWING, ETHNOGRAPHY AND CASE STUDIES

Reading Assignments Due:

- Bachman and Schutt, Ch. 7
- Andrew Bennett, Colin Elman. 2007. "Case Study Methods in the International Relations Subfield." *Comparative Political Studies*. 40:170-195.
- Joshua D. Freilich, Steven M. Chermak and David Caspi (2009). Critical events in the life trajectories of domestic extremist white supremacist groups : A case study analysis of four violent organizations. CPP. pages 497–530

Written Assignments Due: *Miscellaneous Assignment*

WEEK 10 (FEB. 7TH): PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IN THE STUDY OF TERRORISM

Reading Assignments Due:

- Lum, Cynthia, Leslie Kennedy And Alison Sherley. (2006). Are Counter-Terrorism Strategies Effective?: The Results Of The Campbell Systematic Review On Counter-Terrorism Evaluation Research. *Journal Of Experimental Criminology* 2(4): 489-516.

- Dugan (2010) The Making Of The Global Terrorism Database And Its Applicability To Studying The Life Cycles Of Terrorist Organizations.

Written Assignments Due: Draft methods section

WEEK 11 (FEB. 14TH): **STUDENT RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS**

Written Assignments Due: Peer reviews of draft methods section

WEEK 12 (FEB. 21ST): **STUDENT RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS**

Written Assignments Due: Final Paper