

Boston University
CAS HI 545: ISSUES IN MODERN TERRORISM
Anna Geifman

Summer II, 2010
MTR 3:00-6:00
School of Management (SMG), Rm. 228

This course addresses a variety of historical, political, socio-cultural, and psychological issues related to modern terrorism--a unique 20th- 21st-century phenomenon, essentially different from political murders in the past. By analyzing patterns of terrorist activity, students will learn how the perpetrators' objectives have shifted from punishment of individual adversaries and attempts to intimidate political elites to indiscriminate *en masse* violence against civilians and symbolic attacks. Over the 20th century terrorism has detached itself from a particular ethno-national-cultural context. It exceeds a political rejoinder, an extreme reaction to detrimental socioeconomic circumstances, adherence to a particular set of ideological objectives, or a manifestation of religious fanaticism. The course emphasizes modern terrorism as a global psychological warfare, a means of communication through intimidation, and a contemporary form of death-worship. Students will familiarize themselves with diverse methodologies and controversial interpretations of modern terrorism by specialists from various fields. Some readings and video assignments will expound upon terrorist (or pro-terrorist) viewpoints, extolling and justifying violence as a legitimate political weapon.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- 1). Regular attendance and class participation.
- 2). Oral Reports: During each class, one or more students will give a 20-minute report analyzing supplemental readings (listed next to report numbers). Reports should be well-prepared yet informal; i.e. not to be read from prepared texts. Students are welcome to use notes and/or outlines.
- 3). A 3-5-page critical review essay. For this exercise in analytical criticism student will be given a choice of topics (to be announced). All papers are due on JULY 27. Late work will be allowed only in exceptional circumstances.
4. Final Exam

GRADING:

Oral reports and class participation: 25%

Critical review essay: 25%

Take-home final: 50%

REQUIRED READINGS:

Paul Berman, *Terror and Liberalism* (W W Norton, 2004)

Joseph Conrad, *Under Western Eyes* (Penguin, 1996)

Anna Geifman, *Death Orders: Vanguard of Modern Terrorism in Revolutionary Russia* (Praeger Security International, 2010)

Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror* (Random House, 2001)

Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill* (HarperCollins, 2004)

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

Andrei Bely, *St. Petersburg*

Avishai Margalit and Ian Buruma, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies*

Richard M. Pearlstein, *Fatal Future?: Transnational Terrorism and the New Global Disorder*

Jerrold M. Post, Robert S. Robins, *Political Paranoia: The Psychopolitics of Hatred*

Ahmed Rashid, et al., *The New Terrorism: Threat and Response*

Vamik D. Volkan, *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Conflict to Ethnic Terrorism*

CALENDAR

Week 1 (June 28-July 1): Introduction. Definitions of modern terrorism. The early 20th- century origins

Reading: Joseph Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*; Anna Geifman, *Death Orders*, Introduction and Chapter 1

Reports:

1. Franklin L. Ford, *Political Murder: From Tyrannicide to Terrorism*
2. Walter Laqueur, *The Age of Terrorism*
3. Michael J. Mazarr, *Unmodern Men in the Modern World: Radical Islam, Terrorism, and the War on Modernity*

Week 2 (July 5-8): Political violence and the issue of “historical dislocation.” The uniform as symbolic target. Civilians under fire

Readings: Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror*; Anna Geifman, *Death Orders*, Chapters 2-3

Reports:

4. Robert J. Lifton, *Boundaries: Psychological Man and Revolution*
5. Bernard Lewis, *The Multiple Identities of the Middle East*
6. Subhash C. Inamdar, *Muhammad and the Rise of Islam: The Creation of Group Identity*
7. Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer*

Week 3 (July 12-15): Is there an Archetypal terrorist? Ideology Abused. Recruitment. Terrorists as Common Criminals. Child-terrorists.

Readings: Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill*; Anna Geifman, *Death Orders*, Chapters 4-5

Reports:

8. Luciano Pellicani, *Revolutionary Apocalypse: Ideological Roots of Terrorism*
9. Anna Geifman, *Thou Shalt Kill*
10. Vamik D. Volkan, *The Need to Have Enemies and Allies: From Clinical Practice to International Relationships*
11. Jerrold M. Post, *The Mind of the Terrorist: The Psychology of Terrorism from the IRA to Al Qaeda*

FILM: "Sweet Death"

Week 4 (July 19-22): Psychology and psychopathology of terrorism. Camouflaged Suicide. Left-liberal response to political violence

Readings: Anna Geifman, *Death Orders*, Chapters 6-7; Paul Berman, *Terror and Liberalism*

Reports:

12. Andrei Bely, *St. Petersburg*
13. Albert Camus, *The Rebel*
14. Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Western Intellectuals in Search of the Good Society*
15. Anna Geifman, *Entangled in Terror: The Azef Affair and the Russian Revolution*
16. Anat Berko, *The Path to Paradise: The Inner World of Suicide Bombers and Their Dispatchers*

Week 5 (July 26-29): The "Stockholm syndrome". When Terrorists Become State Leaders. The Culture of Death

Readings: Anna Geifman, *Death Orders*, Chapters 8-Epilogue; children interviewed on Hamas-controlled television, discussing Jihad and Shahada (transcripts and video excerpts available on the Web)

Reports:

17. Diego Gambetta, ed., *Making Sense of Suicide Missions*
18. Jerry Piven, *Jihad and Sacred Vengeance: Psychological Undercurrents of*

History Volumes II and III

19. Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*

20. Erich Fromm, *Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*

FILM: "The Baader Menihof Complex"

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

As defined in the Academic Conduct Code, plagiarism is: "Representing the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following: copying the answers of another student on an examination, copying or restating the work or ideas of another person or persons in any oral or written work (printed or electronic) without citing the appropriate source, and collaborating with someone else in an academic endeavor without acknowledging his or her contribution." Acts of commission (appropriating the words or ideas of another) or omission (failing to acknowledge/document/credit the source or creator of words or ideas) can be qualified as plagiarism. Any violations of BU's standards of academic honesty will be subject to official investigation and administrative action in accordance with the university's policies.

OFFICE HOURS:

Mondays and Thursdays, 1:30-3:00pm, Rm. 205, Dept of History, 226 Bay State Rd. Tel: 353-8316