Colloquium on  
Political Violence and Terrorism  
Political Science BC 3055  
Spring 2013  
Tuesdays 10:10am-12:00 noon

Prof. Kimberly Marten  
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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES  
What causes acts of non-state political violence and terrorism? Is all political violence  
caused by the same factors, or is terrorism different? Can governments take effective  
action to prevent or counter the threat of terrorism, or are we all doomed to live in  
insecurity?

This course examines these problems through the lenses of both social science theories  
and in-depth historical case studies. The course’s primary goals are to use the problems  
of non-state political violence and terrorism to develop students’ ability to analyze and  
critique competing cause-and-effect arguments, and to pose their own causal arguments  
based on independent research of the existing secondary-source literature. The course is  
designed to prepare Barnard political science majors for the capstone research  
experience.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES  
Students who complete this course successfully will be able to:
- Demonstrate knowledge of social science and policy debates about political  
  violence, terrorism, and counterterrorism.
- Demonstrate factual knowledge of selected historical and current cases where  
  these debates are reflected in real-world events.
- Read critically to assess the explanatory value of competing perspectives and  
  theories.
- Apply contending theories from the social science literature to analyze, compare,  
  and evaluate selected historical and current events, in class discussions and  
  written assignments.
- Synthesize facts and arguments across cases in order to reason critically and argue  
  creatively in class discussions and written assignments.
- Independently design, research, and write a substantial paper of 25-30 pages that  
  explores and takes a stance on a significant debate in the social science literature  
  on non-state political violence, terrorism, or counterterrorism policy.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Students are expected to participate regularly in class discussions, and to demonstrate through this participation that they have completed the assigned readings before class is held.

By 9am each Monday morning before our Tuesday class, each student will post a very brief response to the assigned readings (if there are multiple readings, choose the one that seems most important or interesting to you, or discuss a debate between two authors—do not try to summarize everything) on the Columbia Courseworks discussion page. The response should first provide a very concise, one- or two-sentence summary of the major argument that the author wished to convey. It should then raise one or more critical points about that argument, and conclude with a question that the student would like to have discussed in class the next day. Students are expected to have looked at each other’s postings before class, and to come prepared to talk about the issues that are raised in them. The regularity and quality (NOT length!) of email postings will be included in the student’s course participation grade.

Twice during the semester, each student will also write a 5-page essay on the assigned weekly reading, due at the start of class on the assigned day. At the start of the semester, each student will have the chance to choose two assigned topics off the syllabus.

Students will also write a major research paper of 25-30 pages on a topic chosen in consultation with Prof. Marten. The final paper will be due at 5pm on the last day of Barnard classes, Monday, May 6. Students will turn in a carefully written, well thought-out topic statement (1-2 pages) that involves answering a causal question for this longer paper by 5pm on Friday March 1, and an annotated draft bibliography (of at least 12 high-quality secondary sources) for this paper by 5pm on Friday, March 29. On April 16, class will meet in Prof. Marten’s Harriman Institute office instead of our normal classroom. Students will meet in groups of four for a half-hour period. Each student will bring a 3-page outline to go over with Prof. Marten individually, with groups assigned by topic similarity, in hopes that students can learn from each other’s progress on the paper.

Evaluation
Participation (including email postings and in-class discussion) that reflects independent engagement with the assigned readings: 20%

Two short review papers: 10% each (20% total)

Major research paper: (60% total)
  Topic statement: 10% (due March 1)
  Annotated bibliography: 10% (due March 29)
  Detailed, 3-page outline: graded +, √, -, or 0, folded into the final paper grade (due April 16)
  Final paper: 40% (due May 6)
Late turn-ins will be heavily penalized, except in the case of illness or family emergency. Students who must miss a class session should consult with Prof. Marten about writing a one-page response to the assigned readings as a substitute for participation that day.

Please note: all written assignments are to be turned in electronically via Columbia Courseworks. All uploaded files must be in either Word or PDF format.

**Barnard Honor Code**

All assignments in this class are to be completed in accordance with the Barnard Honor Code. Students affirm that all work turned in is their own, and that they have fully and accurately cited every written source, including web-based sources and unpublished sources, used in their writing. Students are encouraged to consult with each other to get feedback as they are writing their major research papers, but no collaboration is allowed when writing the short papers on the assigned readings.

**Required Readings**

Each of the books has been ordered at Book Culture, 536 West 112th Street. Each has also been put on reserve at the Barnard College Library. In addition to the required readings from books, there are a large number of online sources that are required reading.


COURSE SCHEDULE

January 22. Introduction: defining terms and thinking about causes. 
(Students will be contacted by Prof. Marten before the start of the semester, and asked to read these items before our first class.)

Articles, available from Columbia Library Web:

PART I: SETTING THE THEORETICAL BASELINE

January 29: What social scientists think they know about the causes of terrorism. 
Krueger: entire. Krueger is a professor at Princeton and is currently Obama’s Chairman of the U.S. Council of Economic Advisors. He has completed the most thorough large-N statistical study of the relationship between economics, education, and terrorist acts, and his work is supported by the findings of many other scholars.

Suggested additional reading:
Available through Columbia Library Web:

February 5. Overcoming the collective action problem, part 1: community support and communal pressure in violent rebellion.

Article, available from Columbia Library Web:

Book chapter, available through Columbia online reserves:

Dissertation, available from Columbia Library Web through Proquest Dissertations and Theses database:

February 12. Overcoming the collective action problem, part 2: grievance vs. incentives in violent rebellion.

Please note: these articles are HARD. They are also key for understanding an important set of current analytic approaches to the problem of political violence. Please
ignore sections that you don’t understand, but please don’t give up. Try to understand the key arguments that each article makes.

**Articles, available from Columbia Library Web:**


**PART II: CAUSES OF TERRORISM**

**February 19:** The political goals of leaders of terrorist acts: external and internal audiences.

**Articles, available from the Columbia Library Web:**


**February 26:** Terrorism and religion part 1: prophesy and theater.

**Juergensmeyer:** chapters 1-7, 10. First read chapter one (pp. 3-15) and his sections on terrorism as theater (ch. 7, pp. 121-47), and on gender and terrorism (ch. 10, pp. 190-218). Then read chapters 2-6 (pp. 19-118), looking for evidence of his theoretical themes in his case studies.

**March 5:** Terrorism and religion part 2: sacrifice, service and defection.

**Berman:** chapters 1-7 (pp. 1-208).

**March 12:** The special case of suicide bombers.

**Pape:** entire. Prof. Marten will start class today by summarizing a range of scholarly critiques that have been leveled against Pape, and we will spend the rest of the session debating Pape’s methods and results.

**March 19:** Spring break, no class meeting.

**March 26. Women and acts of terrorism: does gender matter?**

**Articles, available from Columbia library web:**


**Websource:**

Anna Speckhard and Khapta Akhmedova, “Black Widows: The Chechen Female Suicide Terrorists,” and Arjuna Gunawardena, “Female Black Tigers: A Different Breed
PART III: COUNTERTERRORIST METHODS

April 2. Leadership decapitation.

**Articles, available from Columbia library web:**
- Bryan C. Price, “Targeting Top Terrorists: How Leadership Decapitation Contributes to Counterterrorism,” *and*

**Websources:**

April 9. Interrogation and detention.

**Articles, available from the Columbia Library Web:**

April 16. Individual meetings with Prof. Marten in her Harriman Institute office, IAB 1214, to discuss paper progress. 3-page paper outline due during office discussion today; please bring in two copies, one for yourself and one for Prof. Marten.

April 23. “Turning” Collaborators

**Articles, available from the Columbia Library Web:**
Book chapter, on e-reserves:

April 30. The End of Al Qaeda?
Articles, available from Columbia Library Web: