Colloquium on
Political Violence and Terrorism
Political Science BC 3055
Spring 2012
Mondays 2:10-4:00pm

Prof. Kimberly Marten
Office: Lehman Hall 402
Tel: 212-854-5115, email: km2225@columbia.edu
Office hours: Thursdays 2-4pm

Course Description and Objectives
What causes acts of terrorism? Is terrorism caused by the same factors that lead to other forms of non-state political violence, such as armed rebellion? Can governments take effective action to prevent or counter 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 help prepare Barnard students to write the senior thesis in the political science major.

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 9pm on each Sunday evening before 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) on the Columbia Courseworks discussion page. The response should first provide a 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 of email postings will be included in the student’s course participation grade.

Three times during the semester, each student will also write a short (3 to 5-page) essay on the assigned weekly reading, due at the start of class on the assigned day. Two of these topics will be chosen at the start of the semester by students based on their own preferences; one paper is required. The required paper is due on April 16, and it should relate the assigned readings to the film The Battle of Algiers. The film will not be shown in class so students must see it on their own time, but doing so will be considered the makeup assignment for our missed class meeting the week of April 2. The film may be viewed in either the Barnard or Butler library media rooms, and it is also widely available via Blockbuster, Netflix, the New York Public Library, etc.

Students will also write a major research paper of 25-30 pages on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor; this paper will be due at the start of class on the last day of our class, April 30. Students will turn in a carefully written, well thought-out topic statement (1-2 pages) for this longer paper at the start of class on February 13, and an annotated draft bibliography (of at least 15 sources) for this paper at the start of class on March 5. On April 9, each student will bring a 3-page outline to go over with Prof. Marten individually, to discuss progress on the paper.

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

Three short review papers: 10% each (30% total)

Major research paper: (50% total)
  Topic statement: 5%
  Annotated bibliography: 5%
  Outline: 5%
  Final paper: 35%
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.

**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.

- Pape, Robert A. *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005).

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**January 23. 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.)

- **Article, available from Columbia Library Web:**
- **Web-based reading:**

**January 30: Setting the baseline: what social scientists think they know.**
- **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. For a well-done example that supports Krueger see Alexander Lee, “Who Becomes a Terrorist? Poverty, Education, and the Origins of Political Violence,” World Politics 63, no. 2 (April 2011): 203-45. This article focuses on terrorism in the province of Bengal in the Indian empire in the early 20th century—indicating that Krueger’s relationships hold true before our current era.


February 27: Terrorism and religion: prophesy and theater.

Juergensmeyer: entire. First read his sections on terrorism as theater (ch. 7, pp. 119-44), and on gender and terrorism (ch. 10, pp. 187-215). Then read at least two of the “major religious traditions” chapters in detail (2-5), and be prepared to discuss how the arguments of ch. 7 and ch. 10 apply to your examples.

March 5: 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 12: Spring break, no class meeting.

March 19. Al Qaeda then and now: diffuse network, or defined organization?

Articles, available from Columbia library web:


Suggested reading: for good-quality press reports about the significance and likely consequences of Osama bin-Laden’s death, see:


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 of Cat? [Sri Lanka]” both in *Female Suicide Bombers: Dying for Equality?* ed. Yoram Schweitzer, Memorandum 84 of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv
April 2. No class meeting. Prof. Marten will be attending the International Studies Association annual meeting in San Diego. Students are highly encouraged to use this week to watch the required film, *The Battle of Algiers*.

April 9. Individual meetings with Prof. Marten to discuss paper progress. Please note: 3-page paper outline due at the start of class today.

April 16. Counterterrorist methods: Interrogation and detention. Please note: *The Battle of Algiers* paper is due at the start of class today.

Articles, available from the Columbia Library Web:

April 23. Which works better when: negotiation, or repression?

Articles, available from the Columbia Library Web:

Book chapter, on e-reserves:

April 30. A final note on the U.S. experience.
Note: Final paper due at the start of class today. You should be spending most of your time this week on finishing your paper, and there will be no Courseworks posting due this week. However, please take some time to read through this assigned article and its conclusions, and we will spend class today summarizing its findings and relating them to themes considered earlier in the course.