

HISC 80S War and the Media: Critical Approaches to Terrorism Studies

Instructor Information

Instructor: Robin Jones

Email: ronjones@ucsc.edu

Course Meetings: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1:00pm-4:30pm (via Zoom: [link](#))

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 10:00am-12:00pm (via Zoom: [link](#)), or via appointment

Reader: Will Parrish

Email: wparrish@ucsc.edu

Course Description

Dominant approaches in the field of “terrorism studies” have been shaped by the geostrategic needs and policy imperatives of states engaged in the global “war on terror.” Instead of fostering rigorous intellectual engagement with the (centrally Islamist) movements and factions studied by this literature, such approaches have tended to produce instrumental analyses aimed at “knowing the enemy” in order to defeat it. Equally, global media and public discourse have often addressed Islamist terrorism through tropes of primitive regression or irrational fanaticism. Seeking to challenge these assumptions, this course will interrogate the ways in which Islamist radicalism is deeply intertwined with capitalist modernity and mutually constitutive with contemporary militarism and imperialism. We will situate radical Islamist movements within their historical and geopolitical contexts, accounting for their emergence, growth, and how they may claim popular appeal. We will explore the ways that Islamist radicalism might darkly mirror other important aspects of contemporary politics, drawing connections with authoritarian populisms, transnational universalisms, and mediatized events of mass violence. We will ultimately aim to consider what the category of Islamic terrorism can reveal and obscure about political life today.

Learning Outcomes

1. Develop a critical awareness of the relationships between media representation, knowledge production, and state policies, as concerns terrorism and the “war on terror.”
2. Learn about theoretical approaches to issues of radicalism, violence and terror and their potential utility for thinking critically about radical political Islam in the current moment.
3. Demonstrate familiarity with key contemporary Islamist movements and situate them historically and geographically in the context of broader armed conflicts.
4. Consider the phenomenon of Islamist radicalism in relation to wider political questions concerning modernity, capitalism, and imperialism.
5. Engage closely with a range of course materials and readings through annotations and class discussions.
6. Identify key arguments in a text, analyze them critically, and develop one’s own perspectives through written assignments.

Assignments & Assessment

Attendance and Participation (20%) - Students are expected to attend class, having read all course texts, and contribute to discussions and group activities to the best of their ability.

Students will receive a letter grade for this assignment based on their attendance and participation throughout the quarter.

Reading & Annotations (20%) - Students are expected to read all course texts and post between 2 and 5 annotations for each reading on Hypothesis before class.

Annotations will be graded at the end of each week on a Complete / Complete + / Incomplete scale. Complete is for all satisfactory work, Complete + is reserved for work that demonstrates strong effort and insight. A Complete grade on all annotations for the quarter would correspond to a B+ for this assignment, with adjustments made based on the number of Complete + and Incomplete grades received.

Class Map and Timeline Contribution (20%) - Students will work collaboratively throughout the quarter in assigned groups during class time on a map and timeline to situate key organizations, movements, conflicts and events within their historical and geographical contexts.

Students will receive a letter grade for this assignment based on their contribution to the class map and timeline throughout the quarter.

Two Reading Responses (10% each) - Students will write two reading responses of approximately 2 full pages each, double spaced. The first response must focus on a reading from Module 1 (excluding Fanon), and the second must focus on a reading from Module 2 (excluding Cesaire). Responses are due at 11:59pm on the day of the class session in which the reading is discussed.

Reading responses will receive a letter grade and written feedback.

Final Paper (20%) - Students will write a final paper of approximately 4 full pages, double spaced. Final papers will build on one of the reading responses, addressing instructor feedback on that response, extending the themes and ideas developed within it, and drawing connections with the key theoretical reading for that Module (i.e. Fanon for Module 1, Cesaire for Module 2).

Final papers will receive a letter grade. Students who wish can request to receive written feedback or meet to discuss the paper after the end of the quarter.

Student Hours

Each week of the 5-week summer session, students can expect to spend:
7 hours in class (lecture, collaborative work, activities & discussion)
14 hours reading
2 to 3 hours preparing reading annotations

6 to 7 hours preparing written assignments (reading responses and final paper)
(30 hours total)

Required Materials

All required materials will be made available on the course Canvas page.

Communication

Robin's office hours are via Zoom or by appointment. Students who wish to sign up in advance for office hours can do so at [LINK]. The best way to contact me is via email (ronjones@ucsc.edu).

Academic Policies

Attendance and Lateness

Attendance is crucial for succeeding in this course. Please contact me as soon as possible if your current living conditions and/or health make it very difficult or impossible for you to follow synchronous course content. The norms and expectations regarding timeliness of arrival in class for face-to-face instruction are also valid for remote instruction.

You must discuss necessary absences with me in advance, and we need to work together to ensure that you can be consistently present and engaged in the course, should you be facing barriers to your attendance. Attendance and full engagement with all material is crucial for succeeding in this course. More than 3 unexplained absences will result in a failing grade.

Late Assignments

Late work will be penalized unless you have made explicit arrangements with me before the due date. Each full day of unexplained lateness will result in a deduction of 1/3 of a letter grade on the assignment (e.g. A to A-, B+ to B). If you register during the add/drop period, you are responsible to catch up on any missed assignments and coursework.

Community & Respect

The University of California, Santa Cruz expressly prohibits students from engaging in conduct constituting unlawful discrimination, harassment or bias (see more [here](#)). I am committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity and supports inclusivity. We need to work together to build this community of learning.

We are intentionally dealing with a range of intellectually difficult material in this course. In addition, you might find some of the assigned material startling or offensive. You might not like or agree with everything we read or discuss in class. We will also sometimes make mistakes in our speaking and our listening. Disagreement is very welcome, but you are always expected to

be respectful to all members of our class. Please always begin from the assumption of good faith engagement on the part of all parties.

Content Advisory

Due to the topic of this course, we will frequently examine texts that contain descriptions of violence. More occasionally, we might examine images or videos that depict violence more directly or graphically. I will do my best to provide individual warnings in presentation slides for class content that is particularly sensitive. My hope is that these notifications will help your engagement by allowing you to prepare to work through challenging material. I encourage you to do what you need to care for yourself. If taking care of yourself means that you need to take a break during class, either for a short time or for the rest of the class, you may do so without academic penalty. If you do leave the class for a significant time, please make arrangements to get notes from another student or connect with me individually.

Academic Conduct & AI Policy

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and conform to norms regarding how to properly cite others' work or recognize collaboration. Information is available here: <http://guides.library.ucsc.edu/citesources>.

Academic misconduct is strictly forbidden and has disciplinary repercussions as regulated by the university. For more information, please see UC Santa Cruz Academic Misconduct Policy for Undergraduates, https://www.ue.ucsc.edu/academic_misconduct.

In this class, I ask that you complete your work without using AI-generated sources to augment, think through, or write your assignments. There is one exception: you are welcome to use AI tools for pre-submission editing (spell-check and grammar-check) as long as you do not use them for thinking or drafting.

If you submit work that appears to have been written using AI sources, I will ask you to meet with me to discuss your thinking and writing process. If, after our conversation, I conclude it's more likely than not that you did not personally complete an assignment you submitted under your name, I may refer you to your college provost for further conversation. If you have questions about AI use and/or proper attribution of other people's work, please come ask me!

Access, Equity and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities

UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please affiliate with the DRC. I encourage all students to benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu. For students already affiliated, make sure that you have requested Academic Access Letters, where you intend to use accommodations. You can also request to meet privately with me during my office hours or by appointment, as soon as possible. I would like us to discuss

how we can implement your accommodations in this course to ensure your access and full engagement in this course.

Title IX

Title IX prohibits gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. If you have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence, you can receive confidential support and advocacy at the Campus Advocacy Resources & Education (CARE) Office by calling (831) 502-2273. In addition, Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) can provide confidential, counseling support, (831) 459-2628. You can also report gender discrimination directly to the University's Title IX Office, (831) 459-2462.

Resources for Students

[Remote Learning](#): The “keep learning” website includes important information and ways to get help regarding a range of issues, including DRC accommodations, advising, internet access, canvas, zoom, student services and more.

[Slug Support](#): Slug Support offers case management and financial support for students in crisis-related to issues of food insecurity, housing insecurity, and mental and medical health challenges. This can include support with copays and/or help identifying mental health resources.

[Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#): Phone: 831-459-2628 | Open M-F, 8-5

[College Advising](#): email and phone contact information for individual college advising offices

[Hate/Bias Report Form](#): to report an incident of hate or bias.

Course Schedule

Course Introduction & Approaches

W1 - Tuesday June 25

“A Jihadism Anti-Primer,” Li (5 pages)

W1 - Thursday June 27

“Thinking about terrorism and just war,” Asad (21 pages)

Fanaticism, Toscano, intro and conclusion (22 pgs)

Module 1 - Anticolonial Violence (Fanon)

W2 - Tuesday July 2 (not eligible for reading response)

“Concerning Violence” in *Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon (62 pgs)

excerpt from *A Dying Colonialism*, Fanon (5 pages)

W2 - Thursday July 4 (NO CLASS - HOLIDAY)

“Hijacking Human Rights,” Slaughter, excerpt from pg. 762-775 (14 pgs)

“Decolonizing the Civilian,” Perugini (25 pages)

W3 - Tuesday July 9

“Oil Empires and Resistance,” Lindisfarne and Neale (100 pages)

“The Urbanization of Empire: Megacities and the Laws of Chaos,” Davis (7 pgs)

W3 - Thursday July 11

“An Inevitable Rupture: al-Aqsa Flood and the End of Partition,” Tareq Baconi

“Vengeful Pathologies,” Adam Shatz

“Hopeful pathologies in the war for Palestine: A reply to Adam Shatz,” Abdaljawad Omar

First reading response due by end of Module 1 (Thursday July 11)
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Module 2 - Colonial Boomerang (Cesaire)

W4 - Tuesday July 16 (not eligible for reading response)

Discourse on Colonialism, Cesaire (50 pgs)

W4 - Thursday July 18

“McJihad,” Timothy Mitchell (30 pages)

“Good Muslim, Bad Muslim” (article version), Mamdani (9 pages)

W5 - Tuesday July 23

Our Wound is Not So Recent, Badiou, entire (75 pgs)

W5 - Thursday July 25

The Age of Violence, Bertho, Introduction, Ch6-End (52 pgs)

Second reading response due by end of Module 2 (Thursday July 25)

Final paper due by Monday July 29