Terrorism and Information Warfare

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| **Credit level:**Level 5 |
| **Length:** semester 2 |
| **ECTS credit value:** 8 |
| **College and School:** Lazarski University in Warsaw, Faculty of Economics and Management |
| **Module Leader:** Dr.Michal Kuz |
| **Host Course:** BA International Relations |
| **Pre-requisites:**N/A |
| **Co-requisites:**N/A |
| **Special features:**N/A |
| **Access restrictions:**N/A |
| **Summary of module content:** The module critically examines competing theories of terrorism, including the debate over terrorism as a constructed or objective threat. Students will analyze perspectives that view terrorism as a tool of asymmetric warfare, a response to state violence, and a product of ideological narratives. The module introduces students to key theoretical and practical aspects of terrorism and counter-terrorism. It explores contemporary terrorist activities and anti-terrorist measures while also examining the role of information warfare as a tool in modern conflict. The module focuses on real-world applications and case studies, ensuring students gain a clear understanding of the evolving nature of terrorism in the digital era. i.e. the use of media as a tool for substate violence as well interstate conflict. The analysis will be conducted at the backdrop of evolving rules of international law regarding the phenomenon of terrorism and disinformation. A special emphasis will be placed on different types of responses to terrorism and disinformation in Poland and other countries. |

**Assessment Methods**

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| Rank | Assessment type | Assessment name | Weighting | Qualifying set (where the minimum mark required applies across multiple assessments) |
| 1 | Group Presentation | Presentation | 30 |  |
| 2 | Coursework | Policy brief | 30 |
| 3 | Closed Book Exam | Final Exam | 40 |

**Synoptic assessment**

N/A

**Learning outcomes**

By the end of the module the successful student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a detailed understanding of global security threats, including terrorism, and their impact on post-Cold War International Relations.
2. Able to critically identify the geopolitical dimensions of terrorism and information warfare, and integrate them into a narrative on post-Cold War politics.
3. Apply social science methodologies and research skills to analyze the role of information warfare in terrorism, using communication and information technology effectively.
4. Complete an organizational form of work-based learning in an organisational setting, focusing on counter-terrorism strategies and information warfare mitigation.
5. Work collaboratively and individually in a learning and research environment to develop effective responses to terrorism and information warfare threats.

**Course outcomes the module contributes to:**

* L5.1 Detailed understanding of the contemporary agenda of global security and the key issues that have dominated International Relations in the post-Cold War era.
* L5.3 An ability to critically identify the geopolitical dimensions of International Relations and key events into a broad narrative on post-Cold War politics.
* L5.6 An understanding of the role of social science methodologies and political research skills in the research process, including the ability to use communication and information technology for the retrieval and presentation of information.
* L5.8 An ability to successfully complete tasks that are transferrable to an appropriate professional employment setting.
* L5.9 Develop the skills to work collaboratively as well as individually in a learning and research environment.

**Indicative syllabus content**

* Terrorism – origins of the term.
* Defining terrorism from Brutus’s killing of Caesar to ISIS.
* Responses to terrorism – anti-terrorism and counter-terrorism.
* Terrorism or national liberation? – conceptual and moral levels of analysis.
* Globalization and terrorism.
* Religion and Terrorism.
* Terrorism quandary at the backdrop of international law – review of international documents on terrorism.
* Types of terrorist incidents and their perpetrators.
* NGO versus state-sponsored terrorism – terrorism as a weapon of the weak.
* New technologies at the service of terrorists.
* Nuclear terrorism – a real threat?
* Close up examination of anti-terrorism legislation in selected countries – e.g. United States, Great Britain, Israel.
* Terrorism in political communication.
* Political impact of terrorist media coverage.
* Media amplification of terrorist communication.
* Propaganda: Media’s role in recruitment tactics.
* Government messaging in countering terrorism.

**Teaching and learning methods**

This module includes seminars that introduce key theoretical concepts, followed by case study analyses, debates, and group discussions. Presentations will be used to facilitate peer learning and stimulate classroom debates on counter-terrorism strategies. Tutorials will provide structured feedback on written work and assessment preparation.

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| Activity type | Category | Student learning and teaching hours\* |
| Lecture | Scheduled |  |
| Seminar | Scheduled | 60 |
| Tutorial | Scheduled |  |
| Project supervisor | Scheduled |  |
| Demonstration | Scheduled |  |
| Practical classes and workshops | Scheduled |  |
| Supervised time in studio/workshop | Scheduled |  |
| Fieldwork | Scheduled |  |
| External visits | Scheduled |  |
| Work based learning | Scheduled |  |
| Scheduled online learning | Scheduled |  |
| Other learning | Scheduled |  |
| Total scheduled |  | 60 |
| Placement | Placement |  |
| Independent study | Independent | 140 |
| Total student learning and teaching hours |  | 200 |

\*hours per activity type are indicative and subject to change.

**Assessment rationale: why has this assessment been used for this module?**

**The presentation:** The presentation should utilize PowerPoint or comparable software (students opting for a file format other than .pptx must inform the instructor in advance to prevent technical issues). The duration will be 20 minutes for pairs and 30 minutes for groups of three, with each participant allotted equal speaking time (10 minutes) The presentation will be succeeded by a concise Q&A session, assisting students in cultivating abilities for authentic public interaction. This approach will evaluate their communication skills, analytical reasoning, and capacity to apply theoretical principles to case studies, so improving public speaking, critical analysis, and problem-solving abilities. These competencies enhance employability in sectors such as security, policy analysis, public affairs, lobbying, and analogous professions, where effective communication and critical thinking are critical. This assessment tests LOs 4 and 5.

**The policy brief** (up to 1500 words) should demonstrate the student's ability to analyze and synthesize complex information, critically assess policy implications, and communicate concise and actionable recommendations regarding counter-terrorism strategies and information warfare challenges. This assessment aligns with LOs 2 and 3.

Students will also be informed about the ethical considerations of AI usage in preparing their presentation and policy briefs. They may use it for tasks such as preliminary research, literature inquiry, brainstorming ideas, fact-checking, cross-referencing sources, and preparing for potential Q&A sessions.

**The written exam** (90 minutes) consists of an essay-type questions that test students' understanding key theories, concepts, and historical events. Additionally, the exam includes case study-based questions, requiring students to apply theoretical frameworks to real-world counter-terrorism and information warfare scenarios without using source materials. This is important, should a student, as a future analyst, be asked to make a quick assessment of relatively new events or problems, as it often happens in issues related to security. This assessment aligns with LOs 1 and 2.

**Assessment criteria: what criteria will be used to assess my work on this module?**

**Presentations** will be evaluated individually according to the following criteria, each contributing 20% to the overall assessment: 1. Clarity of explanation, 2. Use of sources, 3. Quality of argumentation and analysis, 4. Contextual comprehension and factual accuracy, 5. Ability to answer questions.

**Policy brie**fs will be evaluated according to the following criteria, each of which will be given equal weight within the evaluation process: 1. Quality of writing, 2. Use of evidence, 3. Quality of argument and analysis, 4. Context and factual issue, 5. Use of references and citations.

**Final exams** will be evaluated according to the following criteria, each of which will be given equal weight within the evaluation process: 1. Quality of writing, 3. Consistency of the answers, 3. Background knowledge, 4. Clarity, 5. Critical analysis.

The assessment(s) will examine to what extent the student has demonstrated ability to:

* Apply correctly theoretical tools to the analysis of modern terrorism.
* See analogies between the past and modern terrorist activities.
* Understand the motives and objectives of perpetrators and supporters of terrorism.
* Understand how terrorists and other actors use the traditional and modern media for confrontational purposes.
* Propose adequate anti-terrorism methods.
* Propose adequate methos of dealing with phenomena such as post-truth and political misinformation.
* Understand how information can be weaponized.

**Sources**

* Combs, C.C., 2010. Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century. 6th ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
* Juergensmeyer, M. 2003. Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence. University of California Press.
* Nacos, B.L., 2016. Mass Mediated Terrorism: mainstream and digital media in terrorism and counterterrorism. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
* Winkler, C., Damanhoury, K. 2022. *Proto-state Media Systems The Digital Rise of Al-Qaeda and ISIS,* Oxford University Press.

**Recommended Reading List:**

* Allison, G., 2006. Nuclear Terrorism. The National Interest, 83, pp.63-65.
* Chaliand, G., Blin, A., 2007. The History of Terrorism: From Antiquity to ISIS. Berkeley: University of California Press.
* Hoffman, B., 2006. Inside Terrorism. New York: Columbia University.
* Howard, R.D., Sawyer, R.L., 2008. Terrorism and Counterterrorism. Understanding the New Security Environment. Dushkin/McGraw-Hill.
* Kruglova, A. 2022. Terrorist Recruitment, Propaganda and Branding. Selling Terror Online, Taylor&Francis.
* Lacquer, W. 2001. *A History of Terrorism*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick 2001.
* Matusitz, J., 2015. Symbolism in Terrorism. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefied.
* Norris, P., Montague, K., Just, M. 2004. *Framing Terrorism. The News Media, the Government and the Public*, Routledge.