BIOD-609-002: Biodefense Strategy
Fall 2016
Department of Public and International Affairs
George Mason University

Time: Thursday, 7:20-10:00 PM
Location: West Building 1001

Professor Gregory D. Koblentz
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Office Hours: Thursday, 3:00-4:00 or by appointment

Course Description:
The purpose of this course is to introduce students from various backgrounds to the best social science literature on issues related to biodefense. These books are too new to be considered classics but they represent the most important scholarly works in the field of biodefense. Our goal is to confront each of these works as an extended argument and then to determine their value to the field and to our understanding of biodefense issues today. Students who plan to write dissertations in biodefense or security studies will find this approach particularly useful.

Course Objectives:
1. Familiarity with the intellectual foundations of biodefense as a subfield of security studies and an appreciation of how recent research builds on this foundation
2. Knowledge of the key theories and concepts in the field of biodefense and the ability to identify their relevance to current policy debates
3. Ability to analyze and critique theories of security studies and to apply those theories as frameworks for understanding historical and contemporary cases
4. Ability to write a literature review that captures both chronological and thematic dimensions of the research in question
Format and Procedures

This course runs in the seminar format – no lectures! Attendance at all classes is required. Participation will be evaluated in terms of contributions to class discussion.

I expect you to be prepared to discuss the readings and actively participate in discussion. That means developing your own critical appraisal of the assigned reading(s) and being prepared to question the assumptions, analysis, and conclusions of the authors, the professor, and your classmates. To that end, the day before class, you should upload to Blackboard a list of the two or three most thought-provoking or insightful things you learned from the reading(s) or the two or three most important questions that the reading(s) raised but did not answer (at least to your satisfaction).

Students are not expected to have an extensive background in biodefense. However, students are expected to share their thoughts and insights with the class. Those students with direct professional and related knowledge of these subjects are especially encouraged to participate actively in discussion.

Writing Assignments

There are four written assignments for this course: a literature review proposal, a literature review, and two book reviews. All writing assignments should be uploaded to Blackboard as a Word file. The deadline is by the start of class (4:30 PM) the day the assignment is due. The file should be labeled as Your Last Name_Your First Name_Name of Assignment. Writing assignments should be double-spaced with 12-point font, 1-inch margins, numbered pages, and use the Chicago Manual of Style for footnotes.

Book Reviews

Book reviews are a great way for graduate students to practice their analytical skills. The book reviews will run 1,000-1,500 words and follow the general format of book reviews one sees in professional journals. A guideline to writing book reviews and several links to good reviews are posted on Blackboard.

Each student will be assigned to one of five teams: Anthrax (A), Plague (B), Smallpox (C), Ebola (D), and Influenza (E). These team assignments will determine when you write your book review. These book reviews are not group efforts, but independent analytical activities. Your team assignment is for administrative purposes only.

Literature Review Proposal

A literature review proposal is due on September 29. The proposal should be 2-4 pages long (1,000 words maximum) plus a 1/2 to 1-page bibliography. Your research proposal should identify a question or puzzle in the field of biodefense and global health security that is suitable for an independent research project or dissertation. Please see the “Aims and Scope” for the journal Biosecurity and Bioterrorism (now Health Security) on Blackboard for the broad parameters that your selected topic should fall into.

The research proposal should clearly identify the question or puzzle that your literature review will address. A good proposal will also consider why this question is important from both a scholarly and policy perspective (in other words, why you have chosen to study it). You should
select a question or puzzle that allows you to research and write about issues that matter to you. In selecting your topic, you are advised to utilize the course readings (even if we haven’t had the relevant class yet) and the suggested readings. When selecting a question to be addressed by your literature review, start with the questions most central to this course as well as the questions that led you to enroll in the course. You are required to make an appointment with Professor Koblentz (in person, over the phone or via email) prior to submitting the proposal to discuss your proposed research topic.

**Literature Review**

The final assignment is a literature review that is due on **December 15**. The literature review should be 16-20 pages long (4,000-5,000 words). The purpose of the literature review is to critically analyze the existing literature that addresses the question in your research proposal. A literature review is not a compilation of book reviews. Instead it organizes the existing literature thematically or methodologically and explains where and why there are areas of agreement or disagreement regarding the topic. Ultimately, the literature review should identify a theoretical, empirical, or methodological gap in the existing literature. The literature review should conclude with a brief proposal for how you would conduct original research or analysis to fill that gap. The literature review should provide a useful foundation for a future research project or dissertation. Several resources for conducting research on biodefense and articles about writing literature reviews have been posted on Blackboard to assist you with this assignment.

**Grading**

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

- **Class Participation** 20%
- **Literature Review Proposal** 10%
- **Literature Review** 40%
- **Book Reviews (x2)** 15% each

The deadlines for all written assignments are strict and extensions will not be permitted in the absence of a genuine emergency or documented illness. A late assignment will be penalized a full letter grade (for example, from A to B) for every 24 hour period that it is late.

**Course Materials**

Each week we will be discussing a new book. The team assigned to write the book review for that week will have to read the entire book. For the rest of the class, you will be asked to read selections from the book – typically the introductory and theory chapters along with a case study chapter or two and the conclusion. Still the reading load for this course is heavy so please plan accordingly. All of these books are available new and used via the GMU bookstore, Amazon, etc. They are also on reserve or available electronically at the library.

All articles will be available on Blackboard.
**Required Books:**


**University Policies & Information**

*Honor Code*

Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work. Violations of the Honor Code will not be tolerated and will be referred to the Honor Committee for investigation.

Plagiarism encompasses the following:

1. Presenting as one's own the words, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgment.
2. Borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgment.

For more information on this subject, please consult [http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm](http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm)

*Disabilities*: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services at 703-993-2474 or ods.gmu.edu. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

*Email*: Mason uses only Mason email accounts to communicate with enrolled students. Students must activate their Mason email account, use it to communicate with their department and other administrative units, and check it regularly for important university information including messages related to this class.

*Writing Center*: A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200; [http://writingcenter.gmu.edu](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu)
“Ask a Librarian” http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): (703) 993-2380; http://caps.gmu.edu

University Catalog, http://catalog.gmu.edu, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university academic affairs. Other policies are available at http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.
Course Schedule

Note on readings: All readings required by all students unless otherwise indicated.

Week 1. Introduction (September 1)

Week 2. The History of Biological Weapons (September 8)
   Jeanne Guillemin, *Biological Weapons: From the Invention of State-Sponsored Programs to Contemporary Bioterrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006). Team A: read all. All rest read Introduction, Chapter 1 and 10. Team B: read Chapters 2-4; Team C and D: read 5-7; Team E: read Chapters 8 and 9.
   **Book Review: Team Anthrax**

Week 3. Security Implications of Biological Weapons (September 15)
   Gregory D. Koblentz, *Living Weapons: Biological Warfare and International Security* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009). Team B: read all. All rest read Introduction, Chapter 1, and Conclusion; Team A: chap 2; Team C: chap 3; Team D: chap 4; Team E: chap 5
   **Book Review: Team Plague**

Week 4. Biodefense Strategy Roundtable (September 22)

Week 5. Health and Security (September 29)
   ***LITERATURE REVIEW PROPOSAL DUE***
   Andrew Price-Smith, *Contagion and Chaos: Disease, Ecology, and National Security in the Era of Globalization* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008). Team C: read all. All rest read Introduction, Chapter 1, 8, and Conclusion, skim chapter 2 and 7; Team A: Chapter 3; Team B: Chapter 4; Team D: Chapter 5; Team E: Chapter 6.
   **Book Review: Team Smallpox**

Week 6. Global Health Governance (October 6)
   Sara E. Davies, Adam Kamradt-Scott, and Simon Rushton, *Disease Diplomacy: International Norms and Global Health Security* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015). Team D: read all. All rest read Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 5, and Conclusion. Team A and B: Chapter 2; Team C: Chapter 3; Team E: Chapter 4.
   **Book Review: Team Ebola**
Week 7. Health and Security Revisited (October 13)

Stefan Elbe, *Virus Alert: Security, Governmentality, and the AIDS Pandemic* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). Team E: read all. All rest read Chapters 1-3 and 7; Team A and B: Chapter 4; Team C: Chapter 5; Team D: Chapter 6.

**Book Review: Team Influenza**

Week 8. Assessing the Risk of Bioterrorism (October 20)


**Week 9. Sociotechnical Analysis of Biological Threats (October 27)**


**Book Review: Team Anthrax**

Week 10. Dual-Use Dilemma (November 3)


**Book Review: Team Plague**

Week 11. Medical Countermeasures (November 10)

Kendall Hoyt, *Long Shot: Vaccines in National Defense* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012). Team C: read all. All rest read: Introduction, Chapters 1, 6-7; Team A: Chapter 2; Team B: Chapter 3; Team D: Chapter 4; Team E: Chapter 5.

**Book Review: Team Smallpox**

Week 12. Evolution of U.S. Biodefense Strategy (November 17)

Frank L. Smith, III, *American Biodefense: How Dangerous Ideas about Biological Weapons Shape National Security* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014). Team D: read all. All rest read: Introduction, Chapter 1, Conclusion; Team A and B: Chapter 2; Team C: Chapter 3; Team E: Chapter 4.

**Book Review: Team Ebola**

Week 13. NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING) (November 24)

Week 14. Barriers to Bioweapons (December 1)
Sonia Ben Ouargham-Gormley, *Barriers to Bioweapons: The Challenge of Expertise and Organization for Weapons Development* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014). Team E: read all. All rest read Chapter 1-3, 7; Team A and B: read Chapter 4; Team C: read Chapter 5; Team D: read Chapter 6.


**Book Review: Team Influenza**

**Week 15. Future Biodefense Research Agenda** (December 8)


**December 15: Literature Review Due at 4:30 PM**