BIOD-609-003: Biodefense Strategy
Fall 2018
Schar School of Policy and Government
George Mason University

Time: Tuesday, 4:30-7:10 PM
Location: Founders Hall 113 (Arlington, VA)

Professor Gregory D. Koblentz
Office: Founders Hall 678
Tel: (703) 993-1266
Email: gkoblent@gmu.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3:00-4:00 PM 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. Class participation is worth 20% of your grade.

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 surprising things you learned from the reading(s), things you disagreed with, or the most important questions that the reading(s) did not answer (at least to your satisfaction). These weekly postings are worth 15% of your grade.

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 three written assignments for this course: a literature review proposal, a literature review, and a book review. All writing assignments should be uploaded to Blackboard as a Word file. The deadline for the assignments 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 that one sees in professional journals. A guideline to writing book reviews and several links to good reviews are posted on Blackboard in the Resources folder. The book review is worth 15% of your grade.

Each student will be assigned to one of six groups: Anthrax, Plague, Smallpox, Ebola, Influenza, and Tularemia. These group assignments will determine when you write your book review. These book reviews are not group efforts, but independent analytical activities. Your group assignment is for administrative purposes only.

Literature Review Proposal

A literature review proposal is due at 4:30 PM EST on October 2. 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) in the Resource folder Blackboard for the broad parameters that your selected topic should fall into. The Resource folder also contains advice on how to write a literature review. The literature review proposal is worth 10% of your grade.
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 at 4:30 PM EST on **December 11**. The literature review should be 16 pages long (maximum of 4,000 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 in the Resource folder on Blackboard to assist you with this assignment. The literature review is worth 40% of your grade.

**Grading**

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Review Proposal</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Review</td>
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<td>Weekly Posting</td>
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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. If you are a member of the group assigned to write a book review for that week you will, of course, have to read the entire book. For the rest of the class, you are expected to read as much of the book as possible. You are encouraged to engage in strategic reading: reading the most important section of the book closely and skimming those less central to the main arguments, theories and evidence presented by the author(s). This typically means closely reading the introductory and theory chapters along with a case study chapter or two and the conclusion. You are required to read enough to participate actively in the
classroom discussion. 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. You should bring the assigned reading to class.

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: Robinson Hall B213; (703) 993-1200; 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

Week 1. Introduction (August 28)


Week 2. The History of Biological Warfare (September 4)


Week 3. Security Implications of Biological Weapons (September 11)


Week 4. Biodefense Strategy Roundtable (September 18)


Week 5. Health and Security (September 25)


Week 6. Global Health Governance (October 2)

***LITERATURE REVIEW PROPOSAL DUE***


Week 7. NO CLASS (October 9)

Week 8. Health and Security Revisited (October 16)


Book Review: Team Anthrax
**Week 9. Assessing the Risk of Bioterrorism** (October 23)


**Week 10. Sociotechnical Analysis of Biological Threats** (October 30)


**Book Review: Team Plague**

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**Week 11. The Dual-Use Dilemma** (November 6)


**Book Review: Team Smallpox**

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**Week 12. Medical Countermeasures** (November 13)


**Book Review: Team Ebola**

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**Week 13. Evolution of U.S. Biodefense Strategy** (November 20)


**Watch: “Biological Warfare Defense 1953 US Navy Training Film,” on YouTube:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTiUTtHUKyc

**Book Review: Team Influenza**

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**Week 14. Barriers to Bioweapons** (November 27)


**Book Review: Team Tularemia**

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**Week 15. Future Biodefense Research Agenda** (December 4)

Please post your 2-3 research questions or puzzles by November 30. Please post your ideas for answering someone else's questions or puzzles by December 3.

**December 11: Literature Review Due at 4:30 PM**