BIOD 725/GOVT 739/PUAD 738: Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction

Spring 2018

Schar School of Policy and Government
George Mason University

Time: Tuesdays, 4:30-7:10 PM
Location: Founders Hall 475 (Arlington)

Professor Gregory D. Koblentz
Founders Hall 678
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3:00-4:00 PM or by appointment

Course Description

Since September 11, the United States has viewed terrorist acquisition and use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) weapons as one of the gravest threats to national security. This course provides an in-depth understanding of the history of CBRN terrorism, the current challenges posed by this threat, and the range of national and international policy tools available to address this threat. The goal of the course is to familiarize students with the influence of strategy, technology, organization, psychology, ideology, and economics on the threat of CBRN terrorism and the strategies for managing this danger.

The course is organized into three parts. The first part of the course provides theoretical, historical, and methodological frameworks for analyzing the threat of CBRN terrorism. This section will examine methodologies for assessing risk and the ongoing debate about the capabilities and motives of terrorists to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Case studies of terrorists groups that have sought these weapons, as well as those which have not, will be studied.

The second part examines how terrorists could acquire and use nuclear, biological, chemical, and radiological weapons. The incentives for and obstacles to terrorist acquisition and use of each of these types of weapons will be considered in turn.

The third part of the course covers the range of policy tools available to national and international authorities to manage the threat of CBRN terrorism such as intelligence and law enforcement, prevention and deterrence, and crisis and consequence management. Special consideration will be given to how political and economic factors influence homeland security programs. International perspectives on preventing and preparing for CBRN terrorism will also be examined.
The course will conclude with a simulated National Security Council (NSC) meeting to respond to a CBRN terrorism incident.

Course Objectives:
1. Familiarity with the history of terrorist acquisition and use of CBRN weapons
2. Understanding of the incentives and disincentives for terrorists to acquire and use CBRN weapons
3. Understanding of the technical characteristics of nuclear, biological, chemical and radiological weapons
4. Ability to critically analyze and evaluate strategies for reducing the threat posed by terrorists armed with CBRN weapons
5. Appreciation for the role of international organizations in preventing and responding to terrorism with CBRN weapons

Requirements

Readings
All course materials (unless indicated otherwise), aside from the books recommended for purchase, will be available Blackboard. Given the dynamic nature of this subject, additional readings may be assigned during the semester.

The following books are recommended for purchase. These books will also be placed on reserve at the Arlington library:

Attendance and Participation
Attendance at all classes is required. The reading load for this course is heavy. Students are expected to read the assigned readings before coming to class, be prepared to discuss the reading, and actively participate in discussions. Discussion questions will be posted on Blackboard for each week’s reading. Please review these questions before class and be prepared to discuss them during class. Student participation in class discussions will have a major impact on final course grades.

Students are not expected to have an extensive background in terrorism or weapons of mass destruction. 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.

Participation will be evaluated in terms of contributions to class discussion. Attendance and class participation will account for 15% of the final grade.
Simulation and Briefing Paper

Students will participate in a mock National Security Council meeting to discuss options and develop a course of action for dealing with a CBRN terrorist threat. In preparation for the simulation, students will write a 15-page briefing paper. The briefing paper will be due by 4:30 PM on April 24. The paper should be uploaded to Blackboard as a Word file. The file should be labeled as Your Last Name_Your First Name_Briefing Paper. Papers should be double-spaced with 12-point font, 1-inch margins, numbered pages, and use the Chicago Manual of Style for footnotes. The simulation and briefing paper will be worth 35% of your grade. Details about the simulation and briefing paper will be distributed during the semester.

Research Paper

Students are required write a 16-page (4,000-word maximum) research paper on an approved topic. The paper has to be about an issue related to terrorism and CBRN weapons (sometimes I will allow papers that discuss just terrorism or only CBRN, you can ask). For example, the paper can assess the risk posed by a type(s) of CBRN weapon, the threat posed by a particular terrorist group or type of terrorist group or compare two groups, or the paper can analyze national or international efforts to prevent, dissuade, deter, defend against, prepare for, or respond to CBRN terrorism. The paper can also examine political, social, organizational, psychological, economic, technological, international, or cultural issues associated with CBRN terrorism.

A 2-page proposal should be uploaded to Blackboard as a Word file by 4:30 PM on February 27. The file should be labeled as Your Last Name_Your First Name_Proposal. The proposal should include a clear statement of your research question or topic, how you will conduct your research, and a short bibliography of sources you plan on using. The assigned and suggested readings will provide a foundation for your bibliography, but you are expected to find additional sources. Scholarly and academic books and journal articles and reports by reputable think tanks are preferred although for more recent events media reports are acceptable. Reports and studies published online are acceptable but web sites that simply aggregate information from other sources (such as Wikipedia) are not acceptable. Students are required to discuss their proposed topic with Professor Koblentz prior to submitting the proposal. The discussion can be via office hours, email, or on the phone.

The research paper is due at 4:30 PM on May 7. The paper should be submitted as a Word file via Blackboard. The file should be labeled as Your Last Name_Your First Name_Research Paper. The paper should be double-spaced with 12-point font, 1-inch margins, numbered pages, and use the Chicago Manual of Style for footnotes. The deadline for the research paper is strict and extensions will not be permitted in the absence of a genuine emergency or documented illness.

Grading

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Proposal</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Briefing Paper and Simulation</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A late exam or paper will be penalized a full letter grade (for example, from A to B) for every 24-hour period that it is late.

**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. For more information on this subject, please consult honorcode.gmu.edu

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.

**Disability Statement**

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

**Enrollment Statement**

Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class. Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes.
SYALLBUS

WEEK 1 (January 23): Introduction
What is Terrorism?

What are Weapons of Mass Destruction? (Skim These)

WEEK 2 (January 30): Assessing the Risk of CBRN Terrorism

WEEK 3 (February 6): Capabilities and Intentions of Terrorists to Acquire and Use CBRN Weapons
   Hoffman, Inside Terrorism, pp. TBD.
   Jean Pascal Zanders, “Assessing the Risk of Chemical and Biological Weapons Proliferation to Terrorism,” Nonproliferation Review (Fall 1999), pp. 17-34.
WEEK 4 (February 13): Case Studies in Terrorist Acquisition and Use of CBRN Weapons
Lessons Learned From CBRN Terrorism Cases

Rajneeshees

Aum Shinrikyo

Domestic Terrorists
Read one of the following:

Dogs That Didn’t Bark
Read one of the following:
Ehud Sprinzak and Ely Karmon, “Why So Little? The Palestinian Terrorist Organizations and Unconventional Terrorism,” June 2007,
http://www.ict.org.il/Articles/tabid/66/ArticleId/246/currentpage/5/Default.aspx [not on Blackboard]

WEEK 5 (February 20): Jihadists and CBRN Weapons

Jihadist Ideology and CBRN Weapons

_Al Qaeda_


_The Islamic State_


**WEEK 6 (February 27): Biological Terrorism**

**RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSAL DUE**

_Background_


_Assessing the Threat_


_Case Study: The Anthrax Letters_

Department of Justice, *Amerithrax Investigative Summary* (Washington, DC: Department of Justice, February 19, 2010), pp. 1-11 (required), Feel free to skim the rest of the document.

_Consequence Management_


WEEK 7 (March 6): Chemical Terrorism

Background

Assessing the Threat

Consequence Management

WEEK 8 (March 13): NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

WEEK 9 (March 20): Radiological Terrorism

Background

Threat Assessment

Case Study: Chechens

Consequence Management

**WEEK 10 (March 27): Nuclear Terrorism**

**Background**


**Risk Assessment**


**WEEK 11 (April 3): The Prospect of State-Sponsored CBRN Terrorism**

Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, pp. TBD.


**Attribution and Deterrence**


**Potential State Sponsors of CBRN Terrorism**


WEEK 12 (April 10): Nuclear Security

Principles of Nuclear Security


Securing Stockpiles of Fissile Material and Nuclear Weapons


David Albright and Corey Hinderstein, “Unraveling the A.Q. Khan and Future Proliferation Networks,” in Forest and Howard, Weapons of Mass Destruction and Terrorism, pp. 256-269.

Read one of the following:


Detecting and Interdicting Nuclear Materials and Weapons


WEEK 13 (April 17): The Role of International Organizations in Preventing and Responding to CBRN Terrorism


Chatham House, UNSCR 1540 Ten Years On: Challenges and Opportunities (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, November 2014).
WEEK 14 (April 24): The Political Economy of Homeland Security

***BRIEFING PAPER DUE***


Congressional Budget Office, Homeland Security and the Private Sector (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Budget Office, December 2004), pp. 1-8. Plus read one of the following chapters: Chapter 2: Civilian Nuclear Power (pp. 9-20), Chapter 3: Chemical and Hazardous Materials (pp. 21-28), or Chapter 5: Food and Agriculture (pp. 39-44).


WEEK 15 (May 1): NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL (NSC) SIMULATION

May 7:

****RESEARCH PAPER DUE BY 4:30 PM****