Instructor(s)
Prof. Laura Huey
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Office hours: by appointment (or just drop by my office before class!)

Course Description

This course is designed to give students direct access to research currently being conducted in the field of violent extremism. Drawing on Prof. Huey’s own research in the area of pro-Jihadist networks, students will be afforded empirically tested insights into the following topics: Al-Qaeda and the birth of the Islamic State, processes of radicalization (online and in the real world), foreign fighters, women’s roles within pro-jihad networks and different techniques for studying pro-jihadist groups.

To be clear: this is NOT a survey course and students will NOT be introduced to wider theoretical and empirical discussions on the use of terrorism and other forms of violent extremism conducted by a range of actors. It is meant to give students an opportunity to take a birds-eye view into work currently being conducted by UWO’s CVE Research Lab.

Prerequisite(s): Enrolment in fourth year of the Honors program (old) or one of the Honors Specializations (new) offered in Sociology. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Antirequisite(s): none

Learning Objectives

1. To learn how research into violent extremism is conducted.
2. To better understand processes of radicalization.
3. To gain insight into the different roles actors play within pro-jihadist networks.
Learning Outcomes

1. The student will be able to explain specific subject knowledge in the area of pro-jihadist forms of violent extremism.
2. The student will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the strengths and limitations of different methodological techniques in conducting research on violent extremism.
3. The student will be able to critically evaluate the merits of various concepts and theories used to explain pro-jihadist violent extremism.
4. The student will be able to hone their critical thinking, reading and presentation skills through the process of providing a critical annotated bibliography, which they will present in class, as well as through their term assignment.

Required Texts

There is no text for this class.

Evaluation

Responses – October 22 – (2 responses x 10% each) 20%
Documentary assignment 20%
Digest of weekly terrorism events (5 briefings x 10% each) 50%
Participation 10%

Because of concerns about grade inflation, final grades in this course will be centered on a mean of no higher than 78 (as per the Dept. guidelines). This means that your final grade depends on your ranking relative to other students and I reserve the right to take corrective measures to ensure against grade inflation (which means that students who are looking for a ‘bird course’ may be severely disappointed … if you know me, you know it’s true!). Dept. policy on grading is appended at the end of this syllabus.

Weekly terrorism digest:

Each week you will be responsible for producing a succinct 1-2 page overview (‘digest’) of terrorism-related events that occurred across the globe in the preceding week (check the attached course schedule for all dates digests are due). These ‘digests’ will be printed out and handed to me at the beginning of each class. Ideally, I am looking for one paragraph per event up to two pages in content. This assignment will do two things for you:

1. improve your knowledge of current events, and;
2. teach you to focus on details and not word quantity (no over-writing!). This is an useful skill for those of you not planning on going into academia.

Note: students who come in late – at the half way point of the class – will not have their assignments accepted in order to avoid giving any student an unfair time advantage.
Response papers:

Phil Gurski is a security consultant and former CSIS agent, who writes a column on terrorism issues. His columns can be found at: https://pkgursk.wordpress.com/

Each student will be expected to select two of Phil’s columns and write a 1-2 page (double spaced) response to each column selected. That response should provide:

a. General overview of the topic and central point Phil is making
b. Your assessment of the validity of Phil’s argument (agree? Disagree?) that is fact-based (in other words, if you agree/disagree you can point to something from class, from the news, from other legitimate sources and use it to back up your point).

Documentary assignment:

Students will be expected to find a documentary film that focuses on an issue related to one of the core topics of the class: pro-jihadist movements, radicalization, women and terrorism, the growth of Al Qaeda, the Syrian revolution, the development of the Islamic State. You will be expected to:

1. watch the film and provide a succinct overview of its main points;
2. provide a critical analysis of the film and its merits (just as you would with the annotated bibliographies);
3. demonstrate your knowledge of information from this class and the guest lectures and relate it to aspects of the film (either in support of the film’s points or in order to critique it);
4. demonstrate your knowledge of current events (gleaned through your weekly briefings).

I will provide a more detailed evaluation checklist online; however, things I will be looking for include:

1. quality of your overview
2. quality of your analysis
3. strength of your writing ability
4. originality of ideas you bring to the assignment

The write up should be 3 to 4 pages double-spaced (standard formatting). You may complete this assignment at any time during the semester. HOWEVER, I will not be accepting assignments after November 26th unless you have a documented emergency that precluded you from handing in the assignment earlier in the term. Otherwise November 26th is the final due date.

Class participation

Students in 4th year seminars are expected by the Department to be attending classes and actively participating in class discussion - this is also my expectation.
Each week I will be taking notes on who is present and who is actively participating (asking questions, offering comments, engaging in debate and discussion, etc.). To be clear: being present is not enough if you spend 3 hours being silent.

Missed assignment policies

Social Sciences has implemented the following policy with respect to missed exams:

“Make-up exams will be granted with approved documentation only. If you have a conflict with one of the exam dates, it is your responsibility to discuss it with the Academic Counseling office at least one week before the regularly scheduled exam and provide documentation of the conflict. If approved, you will be allowed to schedule a make-up exam.

If you miss an exam date or the due date for an assignment due to illness or for any other unforeseen reason, you must provide notification of and documentation for the reasons for your circumstances to your Academic Counselor within 48 hours. If your problem is medical in nature, you should be seen by your doctor on the date of the exam or on the date the assignment is due. If your Academic Counselor agrees that your reasons are legitimate and are supported by your medical doctor’s documentation, you will be allowed to write a makeup exam or hand in your assignment at a later date.”

What to do if you have to miss an exam/assignment deadline

Send me an email then take yourself and all relevant document immediately to the relevant Academic Counseling office. Academic Counseling will then send me an email informing me of a request to provide accommodation. Please do NOT bring your documentation to me or ask me about making exceptions for you or your situation.

Plagiarism/ Plagiarism Checking

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com).
If you hand in work that is too similar to the work of another student – ie. it appears that students have colluded to share ideas/workload – I also reserve the right to deduct marks for each assignment.

Please note that this syllabus does NOT constitute a legal contract. Although we will stick fairly closely to the topics/schedules outlined herein, I reserve the right to make adjustments as necessary.
Lecture Schedule

Week 1 - September 10 – Course introduction

Week 2 - September 17 – The origins and rise of the Islamic State
Film: The Al Qaeda Menace (Intl. Terrorism: The Global War on Terror) (25 min.)
Weekly briefing due

Week 3 - September (24) – Impact on the Muslim community
This week you’ll be having a guest lecturer, Kamran Bhatti, who will be sharing some of the issues facing the Muslim community in the post-9/11 environment.
Weekly briefing due

Week 4 – October 1 – Security intelligence and counter-terrorism
This week you’ll be having not one but two guest lecturers. Instead of meeting in our usual tiny room, you’ll be meeting at 1:30 (on your usual class day – Thursday) in seminar room 5220. Enjoy!
Weekly briefing due

Week 5 - October 8 – radicalization and recruitment
Weekly briefing due

Week 6 – Friday, October 16 – Foreign Fighters lecture
Instead of having class this week at our usual time/place, I have arranged for Amar Amarasingam to come and give a talk on his work on foreign fighters as part of the UWO Sociology colloquium series.

**** The talk will be held on Friday, October 16 at 12:30 pm in room 3022

Week 7 - October 22 - propaganda (and some thoughts on countering it)
Gurski response papers due

Week 8 - October 29 – Fall study break

Week 9 - November 5 – Kamran Bhatti guest lecture (rescheduled)

Weeks 10 – November 12 – women’s roles within pro-jihadist networks
Weekly briefing due

Week 11 - November 19 – Counterterrorism online (cybervigilantism and twitter wars).
Week 12 - November 27 – The Threat Within

I am arranging to have Phil Gurski, the author of The Threat Within deliver a lecture on Al Qaeda in Canada. More details will be available shortly.

Week 13 - December 3 – Course wrap up
GRADE DISTRIBUTIONS - UNDERGRADUATE

Sociology 020 and 021E

• “A”s not to exceed “B”s
• Means in the range of 65-68%

Sociology courses at the 100 and 200

• “A”s not to exceed “B”s
• Means in the range of 66-70%

Sociology courses at the 300-level (INCLUDING Soc 300a and 302b)

• Means in the range of 70-74%

Sociology courses at the 400-level

• Means in the range of 73-78%

Sociology courses with less than 5 students enrolled

• Up to individual faculty members to assign appropriate grades with some underlying standards in mind

Sociology courses offered during the Spring and Summer Session and/or on-line

• Subject to the same guidelines as outlined above
PLAGIARISM*

In writing scholarly papers, you must keep firmly in mind the need to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged borrowing of another writer’s words or ideas. Different forms of writing require different forms of acknowledgement. The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs.

In using another writer’s words, you MUST both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer. In acknowledging a source from which a quote has been taken, you are to use the Style Guide recommended by your professor.

Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B: In adopting other writers’ ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers’ trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement standard in Sociology (in-text citations). Since the words are your own they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own: where you must use words or phrases from your source, these should be enclosed in quotation marks and an in-text citation should follow the end quotation mark.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgement and, when necessary, quotation marks if necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction, your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offense which may result in a student’s receiving an F in a course or, in extreme cases, in their suspension from the University.

If you are unsure, ask your Professor or T.A. for guidance.

*This document was originally prepared by the Department of History, and subsequently adopted by the Faculty of Social Science; the section relating to the acknowledgement of sources has been modified.
POLICY ON ACCOMMODATION FOR MEDICAL ILLNESS: UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

The University recognizes that a student’s ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student’s overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the appropriate Dean’s office (the Office of the Dean of the student’s Faculty of registration/home Faculty) together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. These documents will be retained in the student’s file, and will be held in confidence in accordance with the University’s Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy*. Once the petition and supporting documents have been received and assessed, appropriate academic accommodation shall be determined by the Dean’s Office in consultation with the student’s instructor(s). Academic accommodation may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements for classes/labs/tutorials, arranging Special Exams or Incompletes, re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawals without academic penalty. Academic accommodation shall be granted only where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete his/her academic responsibilities. (Note – it will not be sufficient to provide documentation indicating simply that the student “was seen for a medical reason” or “was ill.”)

Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner.

Documentation from Family Physicians and Walk-In Clinics

A UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC)* is required where a student is seeking academic accommodation. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician or walk-in clinic. An SMC can be downloaded under the Medical Documentation heading of the following website: www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf. Hard copies are available from Academic Counselling in the Faculties.

Documentation from Student Health Services

Students obtaining documentation from Student Health Services should sign a “release of information.” This form authorizes Student Health Services to provide information to the student’s home Faculty. Release of information forms are available from, and can be arranged through, the student’s home Faculty Academic Counselling service.
Documentation from Hospital Urgent Care Centres or Emergency Departments

Students should request that an SMC be filled out. Students may bring this form with them, or request alternative Emergency Department documentation. Documentation should be secured at the time of the initial visit to the Emergency Department. Where it is not possible for a student to have an SMC completed by the attending physician, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that his/her ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities was seriously affected.

Accommodation by Instructor for work worth less than 10% of the overall grade in a course

Instructors are encouraged, in the first instance, to arrange participation requirements and multiple small assignments in such a way as to allow students some flexibility. A student seeking academic accommodation for any work worth less than 10% must contact the instructor or follow the appropriate Department or course specific instructions provided on the course outline.

In arranging accommodation, instructors will use good judgment and ensure fair treatment for all students. Instructors must indicate on the course outline how they will be dealing with work worth less than 10% of the total course grade. In particular, instructors must indicate whether medical documentation will be required for absences, late assignments or essays, missed tests, laboratory experiments or tutorials, etc.

Where medical documentation is required, such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Dean’s office, and it will be the Dean’s office that will make the determination whether accommodation is warranted. Given the University’s Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy, instructors may not collect medical documentation. In all cases where accommodation is being sought for work totalling 10% or more of the final grade in a course, students will be directed to the appropriate Faculty Dean’s office. Students who have been denied accommodation by an instructor may appeal this decision to the appropriate Faculty Dean’s office but will be required to present appropriate documentation.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html for a complete list of services.