

PSY344 Psychology of Terrorism

(3 credit hours)

Course Syllabus

Course Description

This course provides a comprehensive review of the scientific and professional literature analyzing key research findings on the “psychology of terrorism.” The course will identify, describe, and evaluate what contribution psychological theory and research have made to understanding terrorists and terrorism and its impacts on the victims. Typologies and group differences in terrorism will be explored. Current and future research directions in studying terrorism and counterterrorism are offered.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Show an awareness of the problems associated with defining terrorism.
2. Analyze what psychologically motivates an individual terrorist to commit an act of terrorism by looking at questions such as "Is there a terrorist psychology?" and "What motivates a suicide bomber?"
3. Identify the psychological impact of terrorism on victims and witnesses and the various treatment strategies needed to facilitate recovery from trauma.
4. Demonstrate the ability evaluate the role of the behavioral sciences to deter terrorism and aid counter-terrorism efforts.
5. Apply psychosocial analyses to a terrorist group, a particular event of terrorism, and an individual terrorist.
6. Differentiate terrorism from other forms of violent behavior.

Required Textbook(s) and Resources

Koomen, W., & van der Pligt, J. (2016). *The psychology of radicalization and terrorism*.
Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group

A digital copy of your textbook is included with your DragonACCESS fees for this course. Use the DragonACCESS tool in Moodle to view your book.

Be sure to also review the weekly **Explore** sections for additional library or web resources. For access to databases, research help, and writing tips, visit the [Tiffin University Library](#). You might consider registering for one of the library's many webinars on library research, source evaluation, copyright, and other topics, at the [Library Events - Upcoming Events](#) web page. For further assistance email a librarian, at: library@tiffin.edu.

Time Commitment

Effective time management is possibly the single most critical element to your academic success. To do well in this online class you should plan your time wisely to maximize your learning through the completion of readings, discussions, and assignments. Because of our accelerated, seven-week term, TU online courses are designed with the expectation that you dedicate a little over **six (6)** hours per credit hour to course activities and preparation **each week**. For example, for successful completion of a three-credit, seven-week online course you should reserve roughly **twenty (20) hours per week**.

To help plan your time and keep on track toward successful course completion, note the distinctive rhythm of assignment due dates:

1. All times assume Eastern Time (GMT-4).
2. Weeks begin at 12:00 a.m. ET on Monday and end at 11:55 p.m. ET on Sunday.
3. Unless otherwise noted, initial assignments or discussion posts are due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Wednesdays**.
4. Additional assignments or follow-up discussion posts are due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Saturdays, and**
5. Major assignments and reflections are typically due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Sundays**.

Learning Activities

Throughout this course, we will examine the process of becoming a terrorist using a multilevel approach. We will investigate various causal factors, motivations, and determinants related to the behavior of various domestic and global terrorist organizations. People respond to their environments physiologically, psychologically, socially, culturally, societally, and globally; there is no “terrorist personality” that can be diagnosed by psychological or psychiatric methods, no reliable “terrorist profile,” no “terrorist religion,” and no common cause one can point to as “the terrorist motivation.” As Borum points out, “People become terrorists in different ways, in different roles, and for different reasons” (p. 3). Understanding fundamental human needs, such as safety from individual and social vulnerabilities, needs for perceived justice, belonging, and identities that are accepted and welcomed, in addition to basic needs such as food, shelter, and safety, are vital to any real understanding of how terrorism becomes an option for any human actor.

Grading

The chart below identifies the individual contributions from each type of activity, per week.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Total
Forums Activity 1.1 (n/a)	(n/a)	(n/a)	(n/a)	(n/a)	(n/a)	Presentation Activity 7.1 (100)	100
Assignments Activity 1.2 (20) Activity 1.3 (20) Activity 1.4 (10)	Assignments Activity 2.1 (20) Activity 2.2 (75) Activity 2.3 (45) Activity 2.4 (10)	Assignments Activity 3.1 (20) Activity 3.2 (50) Activity 3.3 (40) Activity 3.4 (10)	Assignment Activity 4.1 (20) Activity 4.2 (75) Activity 4.3 (65) Activity 4.4 (10)	Assignment Activity 5.1 (30) Activity 5.2 (75) Activity 5.3 (65) Activity 5.4 (10)	Assignment Activity 6.1 (20) Activity 6.2 (100) Activity 6.3 (40) Activity 6.4 (10)	Assignment Activity 7.2 (20) Activity 7.3 (40)	900
50	150	120	170	180	170	160	1000

Grading Scale

A: 90-100%

B: 80-89%

C: 70-79%

D: 60-69%

F: <60%

Please see the [Academic Bulletin](#) for grade appeal information.

Course Schedule and Weekly Checklist

Start Here

- ☐ MON: Activity 1.1: I Want to Know... - Introductory Post

Week 1 – Introduction to Terrorism

- ☐ WED: Activity 1.1: I Want to Know... (Secondary Posts)
- ☐ SAT: Activity 1.2: Defining Terrorism
- ☐ SUN: Activity 1.3: Contextual Modeling
- ☐ SUN: Activity 1.4: Weekly Reflection

Week 2 – Causes and Consequences of Stereotypes, Prejudice, Economic Deprivation, and Discrimination

- ☐ WED: Activity 2.1: Defining Intelligence
- ☐ SAT: Activity 2.2: Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) Report 1
- ☐ SUN: Activity 2.3: Contextual Modeling
- ☐ SUN: Activity 2.4: Weekly Reflection

Week 3 – Cultural, Social, Economic, and Individual Factors Related to Radicalization, Extremism, and Terrorism

- ☐ WED: Activity 3.1: Shaping Group Dynamics
- ☐ SAT: Activity 3.2: Defining Your Radical Group
- ☐ SUN: Activity 3.3: Psychological Impact Assessment – Cause
- ☐ SUN: Activity 3.4: Weekly Reflection

Week 4 – Social Identity, Religion, and Group Behavior

- ☐ WED: Activity 4.1: Examining Propaganda
- ☐ SAT: Activity 4.2: Radical Group Report 1
- ☐ SUN: Activity 4.3: Intelligence Briefing
- ☐ SUN: Activity 4.4: Weekly Reflection

Week 5 – Radicalizing mechanisms of Interpersonal Interactions, Group Engagement, and Group Disengagement

- ☐ WED: Activity 5.1: Process Mapping
- ☐ SAT: Activity 5.2: Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) Report 2
- ☐ SUN: Activity 5.3: Intelligence Briefing
- ☐ SUN: Activity 5.4: Weekly Reflection

Week 6 – Bringing It All Together

- ❑ WED: Activity 6.1: Threat Assessment
- ❑ SAT: Activity 6.2: Concept Project Development
- ❑ SUN: Activity 6.3: Psychological Impact Assessment – Consequence
- ❑ SUN: Activity 6.4: Weekly Reflection

Week 7 – Final Presentation

- ❑ WED: Activity 7.1: Concept Project Presentation
- ❑ SAT: Activity 7.2: Weekly Reflection
- ❑ SAT: Activity 7.3: Final Thoughts

Tips for Success

Online learning requires self-discipline and self-direction. As seekers of the truth, we should be willing to challenge one another's academic work in a spirit of respectful comradery. Your course is a place for you to grow as you benefit from the expertise, experience, and diverse perspectives of your instructor and peers. Constructive feedback will challenge you to stretch your own thinking, thereby expanding your knowledge and understanding.

To get the most out of your learning experience, you should actively engage (participate) in **ALL** course activities. Course elements are arranged chronologically. To complete a week, simply work your way "down the page" through all of the course materials and activities.

Your Instructor Will Expect You to:

- Thoroughly review orientation materials (Start Here) within the first 48 hours of the term.
- Monitor your TU email account **daily** for important updates and announcements.
- Take ownership of your learning experience and act in a proactive, self-directed manner. That means:
 - Fully participate in all learning activities.
 - Complete assignments as described in rubrics or other instructions.
 - Submit all work on time and in the specified format (e.g. APA format for citations).
 - Utilize and incorporate instructor provided feedback to improve your work.
 - Ask questions so you can better understand course material or assignments.
 - Use the highest standards of intellectual honesty and integrity. For more information, see the TU Library guide: [Digital Literacy: Netiquette and Internet Safety](#).
 - Treat others respectfully and demonstrate "netiquette" (online politeness and respectfulness) at all times. TU celebrates cultural uniqueness and expects all students to be considerate and thoughtful throughout their learning experiences.

You Should Expect Your Instructors to:

- Post an introductory announcement/email at the beginning of each week to provide updates and help you prepare for the week's activities.
- Maintain an active and engaged presence in all course activities and throughout the course.
- Respond to your emailed questions within 48 hours, if not sooner.
- Clearly communicate any absences or expected non-participation due to extenuating circumstances. For example, "I will be traveling to attend a funeral this week and may not be able to respond to questions or participate in forums for a couple of days."
- When grading your work:
 - clearly indicate their grading approach (what they like to see in submitted work as well as what types of errors they tend to penalize more harshly),
 - thoroughly review and evaluate your submissions in a timely manner (in less than 5 days for most assignments), and
 - provide constructive feedback that indicates the strengths and weaknesses of your work and provides suggestions on how you can improve your performance on future assignments.
- Advocate for your success as a learner and help guide you toward successful completion of the course activities and most importantly, attainment of the course learning outcomes.

Accommodations (Disability Services)

The Office of Disability Services supports the institutional commitment to diversity by providing educational opportunities for qualified individuals with disabilities through accessible programs and services in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. If you need reasonable accommodations due to a documented disability, contact the Office for Equity, Access, & Opportunity via email at disabilityservices@tiffin.edu or by calling 419-448-3021.

Technical Support

For Moodle support, either email moodlesupport@tiffin.edu or call the 24/7 Technical Support Call Center at 855-664-1200 (3430, Option 2, from on-campus). For non-Moodle support, contact the Tiffin University ITS helpdesk at the number above or submit a [support ticket](#).

Veterans

The Veteran and Military Resource Center assist veterans, active Military, and spouses of current service members in utilizing their education benefits. VMRC provides information regarding benefit processes and procedures, as well as support in navigating the transition from military to academic life by facilitating connections with the appropriate support services on campus. More information can be found on the Veteran and Military Resource Center website, at <http://www.tiffin.edu/va>.

Comments or Concerns

TU's online programs are designed to be student *driven*: to empower you with a voice and stake in your learning. Our courses feature multiple and varied ways that you can share feedback, and we invite you to become an active voice and help drive our improvement efforts. In addition to providing in-course feedback, we encourage you to submit questions or comments directly to the online team at online@tiffin.edu.