



Lakehead University
Global Terrorism (2026W)

POLI-3314-WA

Mon/Wed 1:00-2:30PM – RB-1021

Instructor: Dr. Benjamin Maiangwa

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Hours: By appointment

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Course Description

Terrorism, while often regarded as a modern concept, is far from a new phenomenon. Elements of terrorism have been embedded in political violence throughout history. However, it was the events of September 11, 2001, that thrust terrorism into the global spotlight as a critical security threat. In response, states undertook unprecedented measures and invested heavily in new security frameworks to counter this menace. No longer confined to specific regions or communities, terrorism emerged as an international issue transcending borders.

Despite this global recognition, some perspectives still frame terrorism as a consequence of state failure or religious intolerance in the developing world. A dominant argument in the literature suggests that terrorism in these contexts reflects governance challenges—manifested in endemic corruption, authoritarian legacies, weak institutions, widespread unemployment, poverty, and underdevelopment.

Admittedly, certain terrorist groups claim to act in response to these governance failures. Yet, analyses that focus solely on state fragility fail to address a critical question: *Why have movements such as Boko Haram and ISIS adopted distinctly religious and political identities?* This course seeks to provide a comprehensive examination of terrorism in both the Global North and South, exploring how individuals and groups transition from benign ideologues to radical jihadists or secular extremists. More importantly, we will interrogate why these actors resort to violence against civilians to achieve their objectives.

Students will engage with global trends in terrorism and the ongoing debates surrounding its definition. Through comparative analysis, we will examine historical and

contemporary forms of terrorism and consider future trajectories to develop informed recommendations for addressing international terrorism.

Beyond exploring the history and theoretical foundations of terrorism, the course will assess contemporary manifestations and evaluate national and global counterterrorism strategies, particularly the Global War on Terror (GWOT). How effective have these liberal approaches been in mitigating terrorism?

Given the complexity and sensitivity of the subject matter, discussions will be approached with rigor and objectivity. Learning will be facilitated through structured debates, student-led activities, documentaries, and traditional lectures.

Course Objectives

This course aims to:

- Introduce students to global trends in terrorism, highlighting historical and contemporary developments.
- Develop a critical understanding of the controversies surrounding the definition of terrorism, including its political and ideological dimensions.
- Examine the various forms of terrorism—past, present, and emerging—and explore future patterns and trajectories.
- Situate local and global terrorism within broader historical, contextual, and conceptual frameworks, analyzing the nature, forces, and actors driving these trends.
- Assess the effectiveness and ethical implications of diverse counterterrorism strategies, with particular attention to national and international approaches.
- Strengthen research, writing, and presentation skills, enabling students to articulate and defend well-reasoned positions on the complex debates surrounding terrorism and counterterrorism measures.

Required Materials and Texts

Lipman, Mathew, 2019. Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Theory, History and Contemporary Challenges. Cognella Academic Publishing. \$125

Class Format

Active learning instructional strategies will be used to engage with the course material, promote academic knowledge acquisition, encourage interdisciplinary understanding, as well as practice individual and collective reflexivity. In addition to lectures, we will discuss current events and news stories relevant to the course, complete exercises that challenge you to apply theory to practice and engage in group presentations.

I will introduce new material in an informal lecture with ample opportunity for questions and discussion. Lectures will highlight key concepts and arguments of the readings and additional material. To prepare for the discussion, you should attempt to take a stance about the relevant reading or concept and be prepared to back your position with clear arguments, examples, and case studies. Please also dedicate some time during the week to learn about the current news and come to class prepared to discuss news stories on the topic of the day.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Midterm quiz – 20% (Feb 23)
2. Group presentation – 15% (Week 3 to Week 12).
3. Term Paper – 20% (Due on Mar 25)
3. Final Exam – 40% (TBD)
4. Class Participation – 5% (Continuous).

Course Evaluation – Details

Midterm quiz (20%)

A midterm quiz will be administered online (on Zoom). This quiz will cover some of the fundamental facts, concepts and approaches introduced in the first part of our course (Weeks 1-6). The quiz will consist of multiple choice, True/False and short-answer questions.

Group Presentation (15%)

The class will be divided into groups. Each group will be assigned a case study to present using a PowerPoint presentation, and other audio/visual tools. The presentation should cover the following:

- History of the group
- Modus operandi
- Locale/context
- Target audience
- Key concepts
- Resolution or countermeasures

Each group is responsible to divide and assign the responsibilities of preparation of the group presentation, presenting and facilitating the discussion equally among group members. For example, one group member may be responsible for research, another – for putting together presentation slides, while another one – for facilitating the group activity, etc. All group members will receive the same base grade for this assignment. However, extra points may be added or deducted depending on the individual group members' participation and performance in this project. Students are encouraged to collaborate to ensure that each member participates equally in preparation and presentation of this assignment.

Class Participation (5%)

Students are expected to attend weekly classes and actively participate in class discussions and activities by making comments, asking follow-up questions, and/or relating the discussion back to the course themes. Students will be marked on how well their comments reflect an engagement with the course material, not merely on how often they speak. Students are expected to be respectful and are encouraged to be kind to their colleagues.

Attendance is mandatory and will be considered in the participation grade as it is necessary to attend the class to be able to participate in it. Please let your instructor know if illness or other emergencies keep you from attending a class.

Students will also work with their group members to choose one current news story that covers one or several aspects of the topic covered on the assigned day. Please attempt to choose current news (e.g., that happened within the past week or month). It is important to choose the news story that would illustrate some of the specific aspects of the topic covered in that day's lecture. For example, if the topic of the lecture is "religious terrorism", a news story should address specific religious terrorist groups in any part of the world or concrete efforts by individuals or organizations to counter radicalization.

Term Essay (20%)

The major essay for this term will be an independent argumentative essay with an original research component. You are to choose from a set of 12 essay questions

below. The questions require you to: apply concepts and approaches in political science and international relations, most of which will be from our lectures and readings; conduct additional independent and original research using academic journals and books (up to 8 sources); and compose an original argument in response to the question prompt. It should be 7 (double-spaced) pages long, including references.

Some topics to consider:

1. How does terrorism differ from other forms of political violence? Judging by historic and current examples, to what extent is terrorism an effective means for groups or individuals to achieve political objectives, and why?
2. 'One person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter'. Discuss.
3. In what ways have terrorist tactics and strategies changed over time? What are some possible reasons for these changes?
4. Extensive media coverage of terrorist attacks contributes to the continuing terrorist threat. Discuss.
5. How does religious terrorism differ from other forms of terrorism?
6. What do Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programs entail, and what are their goals and challenges? What are the similarities and differences among these programs in countries where they have been tried?
7. How much of a threat do individual terrorists who are not formally connected to any terrorist group pose to national or global security? How can such individuals best be stopped?
8. What is the legacy of 9/11?
9. Assess the ways that post-9/11 shifts in U.S. policy have affected the daily lives of American citizens?
10. Counterterrorism policies that infringe on civil liberties are a necessary and justifiable means of combating terrorism. Discuss.
11. Has the U.S counterterrorism policies been effective in reducing the global terrorist threat?
12. Can terrorism ever be defeated?

Final Exam (40%)

The final exam will be held in-class and will include the material covered in the course. It will consist of multiple choice, True/False, short answer, and essay questions that will require students to explain the various concepts and theories we have learned in class and provide specific examples to illustrate these concepts and theories.

Please Note:

- Essay questions will be provided by the instructor. However, students are also free to come up with their own topics based on their individual interests. Such topics should first be cleared with the instructor.
- All essays should have a title page indicating the title of the essay, the name of the student, the course number, the name of the instructor, and the department.

- In terms of formatting, all essays should be doubled-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point fonts, 1 inch margin. Manipulating the margins or font size will be penalised.
- Barring any extenuating circumstance, all written assignments must be submitted on time, otherwise a 2 per cent penalty will apply each day the essay is late.
- For citation and referencing, please use the APA referencing style 6th edition for all written work. Failure to follow these instructions will affect your grade.
- The essays will be evaluated based on grasp of the topic, quality of argument, depth of analysis, originality of approach, familiarity with the issues and literature, as well as structure, organisation, grammar, referencing and formatting.

Students with Special Needs

Students with special needs may request accommodations in accordance with the Senate Policy on Students with Disabilities. Such students should at the earliest opportunity advise the Student Accessibility Services (formerly the Learning Assistance Centre) and the instructor of such needs so that appropriate arrangements can be made to accommodate their needs. Those who encounter extenuating circumstances which may interfere with the successful completion of the course should, as soon as possible, discuss these circumstances with the instructor and the Student Accessibility Services.

Lakehead Policy on Academic Dishonesty

As academic integrity is crucial to the pursuit of university education, students are expected to uphold the academic honour code at all times and are advised to familiarise themselves with the university's policy on academic dishonesty, especially in relation, but not limited, to plagiarism, cheating, impersonation etc. In order to make sure that a degree awarded by Lakehead University is a reflection of the honest efforts and individual academic achievement of each student, Lakehead University treats cases of academic dishonesty very seriously and severely penalises those caught in violation of the university's policy on academic honesty.

Policy on Electronic Devices

Cell phones are distracting and therefore should be turned off and kept out of sight during lectures. A visible phone will be assumed to be used. In such a scenario, the instructor may ask the offending student to leave the class. Except where prior permission is sought from the instructor and given, no audio or video recording of lectures is allowed. Where permission is sought and granted, such recordings should be only for the student's private use.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 Introduction: Defining Terrorism

Readings:

Lipman, Mathew, 2019. Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Theory, History and Contemporary Challenges. Cognella Academic Publishing (Introduction/Chapter 1)

Week 2 Theories of Terrorism

Readings:

Lipman, Mathew, 2019. Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Theory, History and Contemporary Challenges. Cognella Academic Publishing (Chapters 2).

Week 3 Terrorist Tactics and Strategies

Readings:

Lipman, Mathew, 2019. Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Theory, History and Contemporary Challenges. Cognella Academic Publishing (Chapters 3).

Group 1 Presentation

The French Revolution and the Reign of Terror.

Week 4 Foundations of Modern Terrorism

Readings:

Lipman, Mathew, 2019. Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Theory, History and Contemporary Challenges. Cognella Academic Publishing (Chapter 4).

Group 2 Presentation

Russian Revolutionary Violence

Week 5 Ethnonationalist and Revolutionary Terrorism

Readings:

Lipman, Mathew, 2019. Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Theory, History and Contemporary Challenges. Cognella Academic Publishing (Chapter 5).

Group 3 Presentation

The IRA in Northern Ireland

Week 6: Religious Terrorism

Readings:

Lipman, Mathew, 2019. Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Theory, History and Contemporary Challenges. Cognella Academic Publishing (Chapter 6).

Group 4 Presentation

Boko Haram/Islamic State West Africa Province

Week 7 Reading Week

Week 8 State Terrorism

Readings:

Lipman, Mathew, 2019. Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Theory, History and Contemporary Challenges. Cognella Academic Publishing (Chapter 7).

Mid-Term: Feb 23

Week 9 Terrorism in the United States

Readings:

Lipman, Mathew, 2019. Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Theory, History and Contemporary Challenges. Cognella Academic Publishing (Chapter 8).

Group 5 Presentation

The Unabomber (Netflix Documentary)

Final Date to Withdraw November 8, 2024

Week 10 The Media and Terrorism

Readings:

Lipman, Mathew, 2019. Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Theory, History and Contemporary Challenges. Cognella Academic Publishing (Chapter 9).

Group 6 Presentation

9/11 Attacks (Netflix Documentary)

Week 11 Counterterrorism

Readings:

Lipman, Mathew, 2019. Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Theory, History and Contemporary Challenges. Cognella Academic Publishing (Chapter 11).

Group 7 Presentation

U.S Invasion of Afghanistan

Week 12 Exercises and Case Studies

Readings:

UNODC. <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/terrorism/module-2/exercises.html>

Week 13 Looking Ahead: Future Trends

Revisions and presentation of Essay topics

Draft Generative AI Policy/Syllabus Statements

The following Generative AI Policy/Syllabus Statements are being made available for instructors for use in their course outlines. Instructors are encouraged to adapt and modify the statements as they see fit.

GenAI Use Prohibited

Generative artificial intelligence (Generative AI or GenAI) is a category of AI systems capable of generating text, images, or other media in response to prompts. These systems include ChatGPT and its variant Bing (built by OpenAI) and Bard (built by Google) among several others. Other Generative AI models include artificial intelligence art systems such as Stable Diffusion, Midjourney, and DALL-E.

Any use of GenAI systems to produce assignments for this course is not permitted. All work submitted for evaluation in this course must be the student's original work. The submission of any work containing AI generated content will be considered a violation of academic integrity ("Use of Unauthorized Materials").

GenAI Use Permitted

Generative artificial intelligence (Generative AI or GenAI) is a category of AI systems capable of generating text, images, or other media in response to prompts. These systems include ChatGPT and its variant Bing (built by OpenAI) and Bard (built by Google) among several others. Other generative AI models include artificial intelligence art systems such as Stable Diffusion, Midjourney, and DALL-E.

GenAI tools can provide valuable assistance and support in academic work. However, it is essential to use them responsibly and ethically. The following information and guidelines apply to the use of AI-based tools in this course:

- a. **Student Responsibility** – It is the responsibility of the student to understand the limitations of AI-based tools. While these tools can provide suggestions and insights, final decisions and critical thinking should come from the student's own understanding and effort. Before submitting, review your work with this in mind. If you don't understand

what type of GenAI usage is appropriate, ask the course instructor for clarification.

- b. **Formative Usage** – In this class, you may use GenAI for formative, but not summative, work. That means it can be used as a “possibility engine” (brainstorm tool), a “study buddy,” a “collaboration coach,” a “guide on the side,” a “personal tutor,” a “co-designer,” etc. to help you learn course content, but it cannot be used as the primary vehicle for any work that is submitted for marks or evaluation. (See UNESCO’s [ChatGPT and Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education Quick Start Guide](#), page 9, for explanations and examples of these and other roles GenAI can productively serve in a formative capacity.)
- c. **Error & Bias** – AI content is created by computer algorithms that have been trained using large amounts of data. The AI learns from patterns and examples in the data to generate new content that resembles what it has been trained on. If the training data used to train the AI model is biased or limited in scope, the AI may reproduce content that is inaccurate, incomplete, offensive, and/or biased. Students should weigh this as they consider material produced by AI.
- d. **Trustworthiness** – Generative AI can be vulnerable to manipulation and misuse. It can be used to generate fake news, misinformation, or deepfake content, which can have harmful consequences. Students should check AI generated content against reputable sources.
- e. **Plagiarism** – Since [writing and critical thinking ability] are learning outcomes of this course, all work submitted for evaluation must be the student's original work. Using the work of others (including content curated/generated by AI) without proper citation is considered plagiarism. See [Citing Artificial Intelligence](#) for assistance with correct documentation.
- f. **Citation of Sources** – If you use material generated by an AI program for an assignment in this course, it must be cited like any other source (with due consideration for the quality of the source, which may be judged as poor). Failure to do so will be considered a violation of academic integrity. See [Student Code of Conduct – Academic Integrity](#).

LAKEHEAD RESOURCES

If you find yourself having difficulty with the course material or any other difficulties in your student life, don't hesitate to ask for help! If it is about an issue beyond this class, please contact your academic advisors, or get help from any number of other support services on campus, including:

The Student Success Centre has many programs and support services in place to help you achieve your academic and personal goals while studying at Lakehead University. They provide academic support through tutoring services, career exploration, co-operative opportunities and leadership development. More information is available here <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-success-centre>.

The Lakehead Library provides access to resources, study rooms, and research support both online via chat and in person with more details available here <https://library.lakeheadu.ca/>.

Public Computer Labs are available on campus where you may write and/or print out your work. For more details go to <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/helpdesk/computer-labs>.

Student Life and Services offers health and wellness resources both on and off campus, as well as opportunities for involvement in health and wellness activities. More information is available here <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-services/or>.

Office of Human Rights and Equity. You have the right to an education that is free from any form of discrimination. A wide variety of resources are available here <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/human-rights-and-equity/resources>.