



# Course program and reading list

Semester 1 Year 2023

**School:** Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy & Strategy M.A

## The New Theater of Terror: Online Terrorism

### Lecturer:

Prof. Gabriel Weimann [gabriel.weimann@post.runi.ac.il](mailto:gabriel.weimann@post.runi.ac.il)

### Teaching Assistant:

Mr. Alexander Pack [alexander.pack01@post.runi.ac.il](mailto:alexander.pack01@post.runi.ac.il)

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<b>Course No.:</b>	<b>Course Type :</b>	<b>Weekly Hours :</b>	<b>Credit:</b>
2639	Lecture	2	2

<b>Course Requirements :</b>	<b>Group Code :</b>	<b>Language:</b>
Final Exam	231263900	English

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### Course Description

#### **The New Theater of Terror:**

#### **Online Terrorism 2022/3**

#### **Prof. Gabriel Weimann (Ph.D.)\***

E-Mail: [Weimann@com.haifa.ac.il](mailto:Weimann@com.haifa.ac.il)

Teaching Assistant: Ms. Mrs. Lorena Atiyas-Lvovsky

E-Mail: [latiyas@idc.ac.il](mailto:latiyas@idc.ac.il)

## **Introduction**

Terrorism have always relied on the mass media for publicity, psychological warfare, propaganda and political achievements. But then came the Internet. As it burgeoned, the Internet was hailed as an integrator of cultures and a medium for businesses, consumers, and governments to communicate with one another. It appeared to offer unparalleled opportunities for the creation of a forum in which the "global village" could meet and exchange ideas, stimulating and sustaining democracy throughout the world. However, with the enormous growth in the size and use of the Internet, utopian visions of the promise of the online media were challenged by the proliferation of pornographic and violent content on the web and by the use of the Internet by extremist organizations of various kinds. Terrorist groups started using online platforms to distribute their propaganda, to communicate with their supporters, to foster public awareness of and sympathy for their causes, and even to execute operations. After appearing with their own websites, terrorists and extremists added social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Telegram, 8Chan, TikTok and more to spread their messages, recruit members and gather intelligence. Recently the Dark Net was added to their online arsenal and the Metaverse is emerging and presenting additional opportunities.

This course examines the relationships between modern terrorists and the new media, how terrorists use the online platforms, how democracies can respond to the challenge, and what are the prices of various measures.

## **Course format**

This course was reformatted to fit the online design as well as the hybrid format. All the material including the PowerPoint presentations, video clips, reading material, notes, assignments' guidance, etc. – will be posted online. Either in class or online, the students will be active, responding to questions, making comments or asking questions.

Actual attendance (live or online) will be checked in every lesson. Thus, if you are online, you will be required to keep your camera open.

Both the lecturer and the TA will be accessible online by emails and will respond to every question or comment. So do not hesitate to write us.

**Please note this warning:** This course, on terrorism and violent extremism, involves viewing unpleasant and even gruesome material.

## **Course Outline**

**(The reading items for each chapter will be provided)**

1. **Opening: The Theater of Terror Conceptualization**
2. **The Emergence of Media-Oriented Terrorism**
3. **Terror on the Internet: The New Arena**
  1. **Terrorist websites**
  2. **Terrorist forums and chatrooms**
  3. **Terrorists on social media (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram, TikTok, etc.)**
4. **Terrorist Online: Psychological Warfare**
5. **Online radicalization and recruitment**
6. **Online terrorist instruction and virtual training**
7. **Lone Wolf or Virtual Packs? The Online Networks of Lone Operators**
8. **Online Narrowcasting: Targeting sub-populations**
9. **Cyberterrorism: the emerging Nightmare**
10. **The Dark Web: A new terrorist Safe Heaven?**
11. **The New Trend: Violent Extremism Online**
12. **Countering Online Terrorism: Measures, Effectiveness, and prices**
13. **Conclusion**

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**Required Readings:**

Most of the reading material is taken from two books but there will be additional readings for some chapters.

All the reading material will be accessible online; you will not need to go to the library or the bookstore.

1. Gabriel Weimann, *Terror on the Internet: The New Arena, The New Challenges*, Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2006.

Online at:

<http://books.google.com/>

[books?id=19iCbNOoYmIC&dq=weimann+terrorism&printsec=frontcover&source=bn&hl=iw&ei=Bs4oTMSCIsScIgf0\\_6i](http://books.google.com/books?id=19iCbNOoYmIC&dq=weimann+terrorism&printsec=frontcover&source=bn&hl=iw&ei=Bs4oTMSCIsScIgf0_6i)

2. Gabriel Weimann, *Terrorism in Cyberspace: The Next Generation*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2015.

**Requirements:**

1. **Attendance is obligatory**
2. **Submission of Mid-Term Paper**
3. **Final exam**

**Final Grade will be based on the Mid-Term Paper (40%) and the final exam (60%).**

**\* About the Lecturer:**

Dr. Gabriel Weimann is a Full Professor of Communication at Reichman University, and a Professor (Emeritus) at the Department of Communication at Haifa University. His research interests include the study of media effects, political campaigns, persuasion and influence, modern terrorism and the mass media. He published nine books:

*Communicating Unreality* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2000); *The Influentials: People Who Influence People* (State University of New York Press, 1995); *The Theater of Terror* (New York: Longman, 1994); *Hate on Trial* (Toronto: Mosaic, 1986); *The Singaporean Enigma* (Jerusalem: Tzivonim, 2001); *Terror in the Internet: The New Arena, the New Challenges* (Washington, DC: USIP Press, 2006), *Freedom and Terror* (London: Routledge, 2011); *Social Research in Israel* (Jerusalem: Tzivonim, 2015), and *Terrorism in Cyberspace* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015). His papers and research reports, about 210 publications, have been published in scientific journals such as *Journal of Communication*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *Communication Research*, *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *American Sociological Review* and others. He received numerous grants and awards from international foundations, including the Fulbright Foundation, the Canadian-Israel Foundation, the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung, the German National Research Foundation (D.F.G.), the Sasakawa Foundation, United States Institute for Peace (USIP), The Woodrow Wilson Center, the Australian Research Council and others. Prof. Weimann was a Visiting Professor at various universities including the University of Pennsylvania, Stanford University, American University (DC), Hofstra University, Lehigh University (in USA), University of Mainz and University of Munich (in Germany), Carleton University (in Canada), NYU branch in Shanghai, China, and the National University of Singapore.



## Course Goals

Terrorism have always relied on the mass media for publicity, psychological warfare, propaganda and political achievements. But then came the Internet. As it burgeoned, the Internet was hailed as an integrator of cultures and a medium for businesses, consumers, and governments to communicate with one another. It appeared to offer unparalleled opportunities for the creation of a forum in which the "global village" could meet and exchange ideas, stimulating and sustaining democracy throughout the world. However, with the enormous growth in the size and use of the Internet, utopian visions of the

promise of the online media were challenged by the proliferation of pornographic and violent content on the web and by the use of the Internet by extremist organizations of various kinds. Terrorist groups started using online platforms to distribute their propaganda, to communicate with their supporters, to foster public awareness of and sympathy for their causes, and even to execute operations. After appearing with their own websites, terrorists and extremists added social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Telegram, 8Chan, TikTok and more to spread their messages, recruit members and gather intelligence. Recently the Dark Net was added to their online arsenal and the Metaverse is emerging and presenting additional opportunities.

This course examines the relationships between modern terrorists and the new media, how terrorists use the online platforms, how democracies can respond to the challenge, and what are the prices of various measures.

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## Grading

### **Requirements:**

1. **Attendance is obligatory**
2. **Submission of Mid-Term Paper**
3. **Final exam**

**Final Grade will be based on the Mid-Term Paper (40%) and the final exam (60%)**

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## Lecturer Office Hours

Office hours: after class

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## Teaching Assistant

Teaching Assistant: Ms. Mrs. Lorena Atiyas-Lvovsky

E-Mail: [latiyas@idc.ac.il](mailto:latiyas@idc.ac.il)

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## Reading List

Reading items will be provided every week, free, on Moodle.