Overview: Much of the mass communication literature suggests that news is not the objective presentation of what is "out there," but instead the product of many social forces both inside and outside media organizations. With terrorist events such as the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center, suicide bombers in the Middle East and large-scale bombings in Paris and Brussels, the concept of terrorism has begun to pervade the minds of Americans, as well as people all around the world. At the same time, the meanings of the word “terrorism” have become more varied and less precise. Media coverage about terrorism has raised more questions than it has provided answers. This ambiguity has surfaced in television shows, movies and the Internet as well.

This course therefore focuses on the interface between media and terrorism. We will explore the concept of terrorism, media portrayals of terrorism, and the cultural meanings and symbols that emerge about terrorism. The study of media and terrorism is evolving and changing, so you should consider our course material a point of entry for thinking more conceptually and systematically about the topic.

This course supports The Iowa Dozen through the following objectives:

- Exploring media institutions and practices, through critical examination of news based on a conceptual framework of terrorism and media.

- Exploring the role of media in shaping cultures, though a consideration of how news both reflects and is reflected by cultural values and diverse perspectives.
Learning to conduct research and gather information responsibly, through carefully informed research papers and class discussions.

Valuing a diverse global community, by becoming familiar with news produced by media organizations both within and outside the U.S.

Class sessions:

In the first part of the semester, we will discuss readings and current news about terrorism. Be prepared and read the assigned material in advance of the class session. A discussion leader will be assigned to each selection, providing an overview and offer some reactions to the basic ideas. Class discussions should summarize key ideas and consider linkages with other readings. Try not to limit your ideas by the label that an author used for a particular concept. As you read articles, think about the key concepts, and how these concepts relate to each other, as well as to other readings.

You are also expected to monitor Google News regularly to read about terrorism-related events. Initially, I will introduce news items and examples through open class discussions; later in the semester, students will be assigned to specific dates for introducing terrorism-related news (part of your participation grade). Be sure to read international news organizations’ coverage as well as from U.S. organizations. During the first week of class, you should set up an alert on Google News for the terms “terrorism” and “terrorist.”

During the two weeks before Thanksgiving, students will participate in discussions about terrorism-related movies (a list will be provided). After Thanksgiving Break, students will be assigned to group presentation sessions discussing key questions about media and terrorism issues. These sessions will incorporate both your conceptual readings and your news monitoring, along with additional research from the Internet and the library (details provided in a separate handout).

Readings: Most readings are drawn from two books available at the IMU Book Store:


Some assigned readings come from other sources, and will be available in PDF form on the ICON site. You can download the on-line articles and read or print them at your convenience.

Assignments and Examinations: Your grade is made up of five components: two Exams, a Movie Discussion/Paper, a Key Issues Discussion/Paper and Attendance/Participation. More details will be provided on the class ICON web site, but the basics of each component include:

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• **Examinations** will involve 3 or 4 short essay (half page) questions on each exam. Dates are September 29 and November 1. You will be allowed one page of notes (12 pt type) during each exam.

• **Movie Presentation & Paper** will involve viewing an assigned movie, showing the movie trailer and possibly some excerpts, presenting an analysis that draws on course concepts, and engaging in a discussion with a small panel of other students who have viewed the same movie. Each presenter will turn in an individually-prepared paper (2 pages, single spaced, 12 pt type) summarizing key points. This should be in outline form or in short bulleted paragraphs.

• **Key Issues Discussion & Paper** will take place after Thanksgiving Break, during Weeks 15 and 16 of the semester. Students will be assigned to groups and provided with a specific question. These questions will require students to draw from assigned readings, media content monitoring, and additional library and online research to provide informed comments. There will also be a short period at the end of each discussion for other students in the class to ask questions of the presenters. Each presenter will turn in an individually-prepared paper (2 pages, single spaced, 12 pt type) summarizing key points. This should be in outline form or in short bulleted paragraphs.

• **Attendance/Participation** is expected of each student. Attendance will be taken randomly at the start of class. Excused absences will not be given except for serious illness, death in the family, or occasions where I have approved the absence in advance. Students are expected to participate in each day’s class discussion, and to offer thoughtful, informed comments. I will bring a chart of student photos to class and will call on students by name on occasion. Students who are usually silent in class or whose comments do not reflect understanding of class concepts, will not receive full credit for this component.

Students unable to turn in a written assignment or make their assigned presentation because of serious, unavoidable circumstances should let me know beforehand. (My phone is on a voice mail system and I check e-mail regularly.) Without prior arrangements, written assignments will not be accepted after the day they are due. Incompletes will be given only in accordance with University policy (that is, where work remaining is small and reasons are acceptable to the instructor). No late papers will be accepted without a very good reason.

Grades will be assigned according to the following percentages:

- Exam 1 .......................................................... 25%
- Exam 2 .......................................................... 25%
- Movie Discussion & Paper .......................... 15%
- Key Issues Discussion & Paper ............ 15%
- Attendance/Participation .......................... 20%
- TOTAL ........................................................ 100%

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Class Policies:

I would like to hear from anyone who has a disability that may require some modification of seating, testing or other class requirements so that appropriate arrangements may be made. Please see me after class or during my office hours.

If you have a complaint regarding any part of this class, please try resolving the issue with me first. If the problem cannot be resolved within the structure of the course, you may contact the director of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, E305B AJB, 335-3482. Please consult the Liberal Arts Bulletin for a full discussion of grievance procedures.

Webster’s New World Dictionary of the American Language defines PLAGIARIZE: “to take ideas, writings, etc. from another and pass them off as one’s own.” The University provides penalties for plagiarism ranging from grade reduction to dismissal from the University. Please consult the Liberal Arts Bulletin for a full discussion of this offense.

Office Hours: My office is located in W309 AJB, in the hallway behind the main office of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. Office hours are Monday 10-12 and Thursday 3-4. E-mail is:

dan-berkowitz@uiowa.edu

The office phone is 335-3477 and voice mail will pick up after about four rings, or if the line is busy.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK 1

Tuesday, August 23: course introduction

Thursday, August 25: reconnaissance of news, YouTube, blogs, TV, film related to terrorism

DUE TODAY: 1 page memo with a link and summary for at least 3 items

WEEK 2

Tuesday, August 30

Nacos: Introduction to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd editions
Tuman: Introduction

Thursday, September 1

Nacos, Ch. 1: Media and terrorism in the twenty-first century
Terrorism in the News discussion
WEEK 3

Tuesday, September 6

Tuman, Ch. 1: The struggle to define terrorism
Nacos, Ch. 2: The communication calculus of terrorism

Thursday, September 8

Tuman, Ch. 2: Terrorism as a communication process with rhetorical dimensions
*Terrorism in the News discussion*

WEEK 4

Tuesday, September 13

Nacos, Ch. 3: Terrorists always found alternative media
Tuman, Ch. 3: Labeling and defining terrorism as rhetoric

Thursday, September 15

Nacos, Ch. 4: Computer-assisted political violence or e-terrorism
*Terrorism in the News discussion*

WEEK 5

Tuesday, September 20

Tuman, Ch. 4: Symbols, symbolism and terrorism
Nacos, Ch. 5: Traditional media, terrorism news, and the virus of contagion

Thursday, September 22

Tuman, Ch. 5: Symbolism in the targets of terrorism
*Terrorism in the News discussion*

WEEK 6

Tuesday, September 27

Review session for Exam 1
Thursday, September 29

Exam 1

WEEK 7

Tuesday, October 4

Nacos, Ch. 6: Attack on America as breaking news: A case study
Tuman, Ch. 6: Methods for studying public oratory about terrorism

Thursday, October 6

Nacos, Ch. 7: Terrorism and mass-mediated gender stereotypes
*Terrorism in the News discussion*

WEEK 8

Tuesday, October 11

Nacos, Ch. 8: Political violence as public entertainment
Tuman, Ch. 7: Case studies for public oratory about terrorism

Thursday, October 13

Nacos, Ch. 9: Terrorism, counterterrorism, and freedom of expression
*Terrorism in the News discussion*

WEEK 9

Tuesday, October 18

Tuman, Ch. 8: Theories of mass media for terrorism
Nacos, Ch. 10: Indexing, propaganda model, and counterterrorism news

Thursday, October 20

Tuman, Ch. 9: Mass-mediated images and construction of terrorism
*Terrorism in the News discussion*
WEEK 10

Tuesday, October 25

Nacos, Ch. 11: Responding to terrorist crises
Nacos, Ch. 12: Conclusion

Thursday, October 27

Review session for Exam 2
*Terrorism in the News* discussion

WEEK 11

Tuesday, November 1

Exam 2

Thursday, November 3

*No class meeting; prep time for movie papers/discussions*
*Prof. Berkowitz available in office*

WEEK 12

Tuesday, November 8

Movie papers/discussions

Thursday, November 10

Movie papers/discussions

WEEK 13

Tuesday, November 15

Movie papers/discussions

Thursday, November 17

Movie wrap-up

WEEK 14: THANKSGIVING BREAK...NO CLASS MEETINGS NOVEMBER 22 & 24
WEEK 15

Tuesday, November 29
Key Issues papers/discussions

Thursday, December 1
Key Issues papers/discussions

Week 16:

Tuesday, December 6
Key Issues papers/discussions

Thursday, December 8
Course wrap-up

Finals Week: December 12 – 16 (no final exam)