Course program and reading list

Semester 2 Year 2024

School: Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy & Strategy B.A

Terrorism and Extremism on Social Media

Lecturer:

Prof. Gabriel Weimann   gabriel.weimann@post.runi.ac.il

Teaching Assistant:

Daniel Haberfeld   haberfeld.daniel@post.runi.ac.il

Course No.:	Course Type :	Weekly Hours :	Credit:
4788	Lecture	2	2

Course Requirements :	Group Code :	Language:
Final Paper	241478801	English

◎ Course Description

Terrorism and Extremism on Social Media

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Introduction

Terrorism and extremists have always relied on the mass media for publicity,

psychological warfare, propaganda and political achievements. But then came the Internet. Terrorist groups started using the network to distribute their propaganda, to communicate with their supporters, to foster public awareness of and sympathy for their causes, and even to execute operations. Moreover, terror groups started using social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Gab, 8Chan, Telegram and even TikTok to spread their messages, recruit members and gather intelligence. This course examines the relationships between modern terrorists and extremist groups and the new online platforms, how terrorists use theses online channels, how democracies can respond to the challenge, and what are the prices of various measures.

Course format

This course involves multimedia presentations and discussions is class including live surfing onto online contents (terrorist websites, social media, online archives, etc.). Thus, attendance in class is highly recommended. All the required material including the PowerPoint presentations, video clips, reading material – will be posted online.

Please note this warning: Due to its subject, **t**his course involves viewing hateful and violent videos, images, and texts.

Course Learning Objectives

This course is focused on online terrorism and extremism from the communication perspective and theory, thus applying concepts, theories, and methods from communication studies to achieve these goals:

1. To understand the emergence of online terrorism on the Internet in general and social media in particular including the most recent platforms.
2. The enhance understanding of the strategies, tactics, appeals and platforms used by cyber-savvy terrorists, applying concepts and methods from the studies on psychological warfare, propaganda, digital marketing and more.
3. To introduce and examine some of the possible counter measures, examining the effectiveness of various counter campaigns.

Course Requirements and Grading

Student grades are based on final work that will cover the course material and should be prepared during the course. Detailed instructions for the assignment will be given during first week of the course.

 Course Outline

(The reading items for each chapter will be provided every week)

1. Opening: The Theater of Terror Conceptualization
2. The Emergence of Online Terrorism

3. Terrorists on social media (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Gab, Telegram, TikTok, etc.)
4. The New Trend: Far-Right Extremism Online
5. Psychological Warfare on Social Media
6. Propaganda on Social Media
7. Online Narrowcasting: Targeting Sub-Populations
8. Lone Wolf or Virtual Packs? The Online Networks of Lone Operators
9. Going Darker: Moving to The Dark Net
10. Counter Measures, Their Effectiveness and Prices
11. Future Trends and Course Conclusion

About the Lecturer

Gabriel Weimann is a Full Professor of Communication at IDC, and a Professor (Emeritus) at the Department of Communication at Haifa University, Israel. 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.

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A+ Grading

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Lecturer Office Hours

Office hours are before and after class.

Teaching Assistant

Teachging Assistant is Ms. Daniel Haberfeld, mail: haberfeld.daniel@post.runi.ac.il

Additional Notes

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Reading List

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