

Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Theory, Evidence, and Outlooks



SYLLABUS

VU Amsterdam Summer School

8 – 19 July 2024



Any general questions for the Summer School support team? Contact amsterdamsummerschool@vu.nl.

Course Details

Title	Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Theory, Evidence, and Outlooks
Coordinator(s)	Michael Jetter
Other lecturers	N/A
Study credits	3 ECTS
Form(s) of tuition	On campus
Approximate contact hours	35
Approximate self-study hours	45

Teaching staff (in order of appearance)

Michael Jetter

Course description

What do we know about the roots and motivations of ISIS, the KKK, al-Qaeda, or the Lord's Resistance Army beyond speculation, snippets of incomplete information, and stereotypical assessments? This course considers modern-day terrorism from a theoretical and especially from an empirical perspective. First, we study whether, when, and why terrorism has been successful to varying degrees. Second, we turn to the intimate relationship between terrorism and the media; exploring whether and how news coverage is likely so crucial for terror groups; and what this means for a free press. Third, we consider the role of religion in terror movements and radicalization (e.g., for Islamist extremism). Fourth and final, we evaluate counterterrorism strategies, exploring a few successful and unsuccessful cases for which empirical evidence is available.

At the end of this course, you will have acquired a better understanding of the drivers and consequences of terrorism; what makes these groups ticks; and what we as a society can do to stop these groups. In addition, you will have worked through several scientific papers that employ a variety of statistical strategies to analyze real-world data, particularly focusing on isolating causal effects.

Learning objectives

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

1. Understand how terrorism is similar and different from more traditional forms of large-scale organized violence, such as intra- and interstate wars.
2. Distinguish between correlation and causality when it comes to the drives and consequences of terrorism.
3. Formulate their own research ideas related to the topic.
4. Read and assess empirical studies pertaining to terrorism and terrorism-related topics.

Assignments and Assessment

Students will be marked in equal parts for their group presentation and an essay that will be due 1-2 weeks after the course finishes (max. 5 pages). Attendance at all sessions is required.

Provisional reading list

The following is a preliminary list of papers we will touch upon (some will be discussed in more detail than others):

Akerlof, George A., and Rachel E. Kranton. "Economics and identity." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 115.3 (2000): 715-753.

Brodeur, Abel. "The effect of terrorism on employment and consumer sentiment: Evidence from successful and failed terror attacks." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 10.4 (2018): 246-82.

Dell, Melissa, and Pablo Querubin. "Nation building through foreign intervention: Evidence from discontinuities in military strategies." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 133.2 (2018): 701-764.

Depetris-Chauvin, Emilio, Ruben Durante, and Filipe Campante. "Building nations through shared experiences: Evidence from African football." *American Economic Review* 110.5 (2020): 1572-1602.

Durante, Ruben, and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya. "Attack when the world is not watching? US news and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." *Journal of Political Economy* 126.3 (2018): 1085-1133.

Enke, Benjamin. "Moral values and voting." *Journal of Political Economy* 128.10 (2020): 000-000.

Gaibullov, Khusrav, and Todd Sandler. "What we have learned about terrorism since 9/11." *Journal of Economic Literature* 57.2 (2019): 275-328.

Gould, Eric D., and Esteban F. Klor. "Does terrorism work?." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 125.4 (2010): 1459-1510.

Huntington, Samuel P. "The clash of civilizations?." *Culture and politics*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2000. 99-118.

Iyer, Sriya. "The new economics of religion." *Journal of Economic Literature* 54.2 (2016): 395-441.

Jetter, Michael. "The effect of media attention on terrorism." *Journal of Public Economics* 153 (2017): 32-48.

Jetter, Michael. "The inadvertent consequences of al-Qaeda news coverage." *European Economic Review* 119 (2019): 391-410.

Jetter, Michael, and David Stadelmann. "Terror per capita." *Southern Economic Journal* 86.1 (2019): 286-304.

Kis-Katos, Krisztina, Helge Liebert, and Günther G. Schulze. "On the heterogeneity of terror." *European Economic Review* 68 (2014): 116-136.

Mahmood, Rafat, and Michael Jetter. "Gone with the wind: The consequences of US drone strikes in Pakistan." (2023). *The Economic Journal* 133.650: 787-811

Montalvo, Jose G. "Voting after the bombings: A natural experiment on the effect of terrorist attacks on democratic elections." *Review of Economics and Statistics* 93.4 (2011): 1146-1154.

Voigtländer, Nico, and Hans-Joachim Voth. "Persecution perpetuated: the medieval origins of anti-Semitic violence in Nazi Germany." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 127.3 (2012): 1339-1392.

Voigtländer, Nico, and Hans-Joachim Voth. "Nazi indoctrination and anti-Semitic beliefs in Germany." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 112.26 (2015): 7931-7936.

Course Schedule

Broad outline:

1. Conceptualizing terrorism – intersecting literatures from political science, psychology, economics, communication studies, history, and religious scholarship
2. Does terrorism work? If so, when and why? Consequences for society
3. Terrorism and the media
4. Religion, radicalization, and stereotypes

5. Counterterrorism strategies – theory and empirical evidence

Timetable:

July 8 (Monday):	10am-12pm & 1-3pm
July 9 (Tuesday):	9-11am & 11.15am-12.45pm
July 10 (Wednesday):	9-11am & 11.15am-12.30pm
July 11 (Thursday):	9-11am & 11.15am-12.45pm
July 12 (Friday):	9-11am & 11.15am-12.45pm
July 15 (Monday):	9-11am & 11.15am-12.45pm
July 16 (Tuesday):	9-11am & 11.15am-12.45pm
July 17 (Wednesday):	9-11am & 11.15am-12.30pm
July 18 (Thursday):	9-11am & 11.15am-12.45pm
July 19 (Friday):	9-11am & 11.15am-12.45pm

