Teaching about Terrorism: Lessons Learned at SWOTT

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ABSTRACT This article discusses some of the challenges and lessons for teaching undergraduate-level courses related to terrorism. The author outlines some of the primary issues that instructors can expect to face, and provides strategies for dealing with several of these challenges. The goal is to relay useful information to those teaching, or planning to teach, courses on terrorism, with the larger hope of strengthening the community of terrorism scholars and possibly developing some best practices for teaching courses on terrorism.

The Summer Workshop on Teaching about Terrorism (SWOTT) is a one-week crash course for graduate students and faculty wanting to improve their research and/or teaching on terrorism. Through the eight workshops held from 2005 to 2008,[1] several issues frequently arose that are worth sharing with the larger community of scholars that teach courses on terrorism.[2] Specifically, this article addresses seven common lessons I learned by teaching terrorism courses, and which are often discussed at SWOTT.

Although I have been studying terrorism since 1996, teaching about it since 2001, and interacting with experts since the inception of SWOTT, I do not consider myself to be an expert. As such, the discussion here is intended to be instructive and illustrative, but is hardly the last word. I learn something new at every SWOTT workshop, so I welcome comments and suggestions from the handful of true experts who taught about terrorism before 9/11, as well as from new instructors who may approach the subject from an original point of view. Although one goal is to share my experiences, the real purpose of this article is to begin a conversation about some of the most complicated issues involved in teaching terrorism courses.

LESSON 1: KNOW YOUR COURSE

One early challenge, first apparent at SWOTT, is that instructors have different ideas about what should be covered in a terrorism course. There are courses devoted to the economics of terrorism, the psychology of terrorism, the sociology of terrorism, and so on. Likewise, some courses emphasize history or the study of specific terrorist groups, while others focus on game-theoretic approaches to terrorism; still others emphasize statistical work that has been done in the field.

These differences are understandable, but the first critical point is that regardless of the *content* of the course, instructors should know exactly what *subject* they want to teach before the first day of class. Students should not be surprised by a course called Terrorism that turns out to focus exclusively on the war on terror. Likewise, students taking Homeland Security will be disappointed if the course focuses exclusively on 9/11. More important as instructors, knowing which course we want to teach helps in the development of the syllabus, including the selection of readings and assignments.

Based on a quick online search, terrorism courses—and related textbooks—tend to fall within one of five categories (though multiple class topics fall within each category). The first two focus more on theoretical issues, while the other three emphasize practical issues.

Option 1: Terrorism

Courses in this category tend to be general surveys, or specialty courses dealing with one particular aspect of terrorism. Courses typically include topics like the history of terrorism, terrorist finances, and the psychology of terrorism, and usually spend some class time studying specific terrorist groups, or categories of groups. For instance, my survey course devotes one day each to national-separatist, revolutionary/left-wing, reactionary/right-wing, religiously motivated, and single-issue terrorism, briefly discussing several groups that fall within each category.

One advantage of these courses is that instructors are able to cover more terrorism-related material than courses in the other categories. My survey course primarily focuses on key concepts and debates in the field. I also created a course on the history of terrorism that lets me focus more on the evolution of terrorism over time, while spending more time in my survey course on contemporary topics. Although my courses both fall into this category, through discussions with colleagues, often at SWOTT, I hope to provide information and advice that is applicable to a variety of courses in the other four categories as well.

Option 2: Terrorism and Political Violence

These courses focus on terrorism as one type of political violence, but also cover topics like guerilla warfare, genocide, and civil war,

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or examine general theories of political violence, such as relative deprivation, or Charles Tilly's resource mobilization theory. Many of the courses that fall within this category are taught by comparative politics scholars, whereas the majority of international relations scholars teach courses in the first category.

One issue that is more likely to come up in these courses than in the previous group is the need to distinguish terrorism from the other forms of political violence. When a course focuses almost entirely on terrorism, its content helps define terrorism. However, a course that examines several types of violence requires the instructor to provide some definitional clarity so students can understand the characteristics of different forms of political violence. This can be positive or negative, depending on the instructors' level of comfort with their own definitions of terrorism (see lessons 4 and 5 below for some definitional issues). Instructors who can clearly distinguish terrorism from other forms of political violence will likely have more success teaching these courses than those who have trouble identifying distinctions between, say terrorism and guerrilla warfare.

Option 3: Terrorism and Counterterrorism

These courses study both terrorism and state responses to terrorism. They may include game-theoretic work on the rationality of different state responses, or case studies that examine the approaches states historically used to respond to terrorism. Many of these courses are taught by instructors with a criminal justice or law enforcement background. Perhaps as a result, many are aimed at training future counterterrorism professionals as well as influencing the behavior of governments.

The challenge of these courses is being able to include enough material on both terrorism and counterterrorism to provide more than just the bare minimum. In contrast, I believe that effective counterterrorism requires a more thorough understanding of terrorism, and students cannot get that from this class alone. A counterterrorism course may be an extremely useful complement to a terrorism course—perhaps the second in a sequence of courses. However, the danger is that in a single course that tries to cover both, too much useful information can easily be overlooked.

Option 4: Homeland Security

These courses are often less about terrorism than about state responses to terrorist acts, and also to natural and manmade disasters. Depending on the instructor, a significant component of the course might also focus on the bureaucracy and administration of homeland security. Such courses are more likely to be taught by individuals trained in public policy or public administration, or who have a practical background in homeland security or emergency response. These courses also seem to have the least terrorism content, emphasizing the institutions involved in counterterrorism rather than the concept of terrorism.

As with the courses in option 3, my concern is that effective homeland security requires a thorough understanding of terrorism, and because there is so little terrorism content in these courses, students may not become as knowledgeable about the subject. On the other hand, because homeland security includes several issues not related to terrorism, those who desire a career in homeland security rather than counterterrorism may not need to understand the details as much as they need to learn how to deal with the consequences of terrorism.

Option 5: The War on Terror

This class is more of a foreign policy course, emphasizing the U.S. reaction to 9/11 (and possibly the reactions of other states and international organizations). On the surface, these courses appear to be a mixture of options 1 and 3, but they focus exclusively on policymaking after the al-Qaida attacks. As a result, while they are also worthwhile, these courses do not necessarily improve students' understanding of terrorism or counterterrorism beyond that single case. Moreover, a concern with these types of courses is that instructors need to situate 9/11 in the larger context of terrorism, so that students do not leave the course with the skewed impression either that terrorism began on 9/11, or that al-Qaida is the only terrorist group. Those who teach these courses should impart to students that focusing only on al-Qaida does not suggest that it is the only terrorist threat. Instead, they could discuss with students how the course is like studying U.S. foreign policy in the cold war—U.S. policy existed both before and after the cold war, but some courses sacrifice breadth of knowledge to enhance depth of knowledge about a particular time period, actor, or event.

My goal in this section was not to suggest which of these five types of terrorism courses should be taught. Instead, I contend that instructors need merely decide ahead of time which topic they plan to teach and clearly communicate that to the students both on the syllabus and at the first class. One last point is that many colleges and universities have existing classes in the catalog, and while full-time faculty may be able to change course titles, graduate students and visiting faculty have less flexibility to do so. However, even if one is unable to officially change the course title, early communication about the nature of the course is the best way to avoid student confusion.

LESSON 2: KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE, PART I—KNOWING WHAT STUDENTS KNOW

For many of our current students who are between the ages of 18 and 22, 9/11 was the first international event that caught their attention. Before long, we will have students who were not yet born on 9/11. As a result, what the majority of students know about terrorism is what they have seen on television, or more frightening, what they have read on the Internet. This means that one of the first things teachers should do is dispel the myths that pervade public beliefs about terrorism, despite—or maybe because of—the increased information about terrorism available after 9/11. Below are the four myths that come up frequently at SWOTT and in interactions with my undergraduate students. Some approaches that may help dispel these myths are also discussed.

Myth 1: Most terrorism is carried out by Muslims from the Middle East.

Although the biggest terrorist threat to the West right now may come from radical Islamic terrorists, most of the world's terrorism is carried out by other types of terrorist groups, and occurs all over the world. Getting students out of the Hollywood mindset of the "terrorist as Muslim fanatic" is important for making the rest of the semester successful. Unfortunately, I have seen syllabi that are wonderful in every way except that their case studies focus entirely on groups like Hamas, Hezbollah, Jemaah Islamiyah, and Abu Sayyaf, which I fear perpetuates the myth that terrorism is largely a product of Islam. Even courses that venture outside of the Middle East and South Asia tend to focus on incidents

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perpetrated by Muslim extremist groups, like the Madrid train bombing and the London bombings, without examining violence committed in the name of other religions, much less for secular purposes.

Interestingly, dispelling this myth is a little easier in Oklahoma than in some other places I have taught, perhaps because of the 1996 Oklahoma City bombing, which most students here are aware of even if they are too young to remember it. In my courses, I spend as much time on groups like FARC in Colombia, the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, and the Earth Liberation Front in the U.S. as I do on religious groups. In addition, when I do talk about religiously motivated terrorism, I spend as much time discussing non-Islamic groups, like Irgun in pre-independence Israel, Aum Shinrikyo in Japan, and the Christian Identity movement in the U.S. Not only do discussions of these groups illustrate that terrorists are frequently neither Muslim nor Arab, but they also demonstrate how many different types of terrorist groups exist both globally and in the U.S., and how dissimilar their origins and goals are.

Myth 2: Terrorists are crazy.

Although the terrorism-studies community has believed for decades that terrorists are rational,[3] the majority of the public still has trouble accepting the notion that terrorists, especially suicide bombers, are sane. One strategy is to discuss, from the terrorists' point of views, the costs and benefits of adopting terrorism. For example, benefits can include: (1) free publicity for the group (because terrorism, or propaganda of the deed, is a form of communication), (2) helping lay the groundwork for a larger insurgency movement, (3) inspiring more of the population to act, (4) material gain, (5) illustrating government weakness (particularly its inability to protect the population), and (6) provoking repressive government policies.

In contrast, costs can include: (1) inviting a government reaction that weakens the group (as in Russia after the assassination of tsar Alexander II, or the U.S. crackdown on anarchists after the assassination of president William McKinley); (2) a loss of domestic and international public support for the cause, particularly if an act is especially violent or shocking (such as the Oklahoma City bombing, the Beslan school seizure, or the Jordan hotel bombings); and (3) the loss of one's own life.

Although not perfect, discussing these consequences helps students recognize the thought processes behind the decision to use terrorism, and helps them understand that calling a terrorist rational does not require one to ignore the immorality of the act (this issue of morality and terrorism is addressed again in lesson 5 below).

Myth 3: Terrorism can be defeated.

Terrorism is a tactic and philosophy that has been around for centuries and will be around as long as there are human beings. In fact, this is one reason that studying the history of terrorism is so important. The belief that one can defeat terrorism is no more accurate than the belief that one can defeat air strikes, or drugs, or poverty. Yet, many students cling to this belief, or else confuse the concept of defeating terrorism with that of defeating a specific terrorist group. Simply discussing some of the earliest groups, like the Zealots and the Assassins, can be effective at dispelling this myth. As an added benefit, comparing these early groups with more modern groups, like Irgun and al-Qaida, illustrates how religiously motivated terrorism is not a new phenomenon (Rapoport 1984).

For many of our current students who are between the ages of 18 and 22, 9/11 was the first international event that caught their attention. Before long, we will have students who were not yet born on 9/11. As a result, what the majority of students know about terrorism is what they have seen on television, or more frightening, what they have read on the Internet. This means that one of the first things teachers should do is dispel the myths that pervade public beliefs about terrorism, despite—or maybe because of—the increased information about terrorism available after 9/11.

I do also incorporate enough discussion of counterterrorism into both of my courses to illustrate which government actions were effective at reducing terrorism and which had no effect (or proved counterproductive). It is also helpful to discuss terrorist groups that disappear because of internal group dynamics, such as The Weathermen, rather than the result of any government actions.

Myth 4: Terrorists are poor, uneducated, and have few prospects.

Even if students accept that terrorists are rational, they frequently believe that terrorism must be an act of desperation, dying for a cause rather than continue to live a shameful existence. However, there is little evidence that poverty alone is a cause of terrorism, because the poorest nations in the world suffer very little terrorism, and because many terrorists are better educated and wealthier than the average members of the population from which they come. Even suicide bombers, often assumed to be the most desperate in society, frequently have families and jobs.

One challenge is that erasing this myth makes it more difficult to dispel myth 2 above, because if someone has prospects, but still dies for a cause, then most students assume that person must have some mental disorder. Discussing the biographical profiles of certain terrorists helps weaken this myth for many students. Examples I use are the four London train bombers and the leaders of the Baader-Meinhof Gang. In addition, discussing how some terrorists value personal sacrifice to improve the situation of the community—whether defined by religion, ethnicity,

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or socioeconomic class—may help dispel this myth without perpetuating myth 2. I also find that discussing the willingness of soldiers to die for one another helps some students more easily grasp the willingness of terrorists to die for their cause.

LESSON 3: KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE, PART II—KNOWING WHAT STUDENTS WANT

Terrorism courses are electives in most schools, so students generally enroll because they have a personal or professional interest in the subject. As a result, it is important for students to understand how they can use the information they receive. One thing instructors can do is improve our awareness of the opportunities that exist for fellowships, internships, and careers. This will make even highly theoretical courses more clearly worthwhile for students.

There are two examples of programs I encourage students to pursue. Several U.S. government agencies—State Department, Central Intelligence Agency, and Office of Naval Intelligence—have summer internship programs.[4] Students must apply for these well in advance because of the need for security clearances, but such opportunities make students aware of what those types of jobs are like, and help them decide whether or not to pursue a career in those fields. Although internships do not always directly relate to terrorism, having studied terrorism does seem to help student applications to such government agencies. Unfortunately, most of the programs require U.S. citizenship, and I am less familiar with programs for non-U.S. citizens, so I welcome any information on programs for non-U.S. citizens that readers can provide.

Another opportunity is through the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), which has a summer fellowship program that takes several students to Israel to learn more about terrorism (a similar program exists for faculty).[5] There are fieldtrips and classroom components. In addition, fellows are able to bring terrorism experts to their campus during the academic year to help educate the larger student body.

Finally, many instructors, who recognize the career goals of their students, give exercises to stimulate more practical learning, such as writing a white paper or role playing. Although I do use simulations in my terrorism survey course (see lesson 6 below for more information on one of my simulations), I am not a practitioner and am uncomfortable trying to teach students to write white papers, or grading them in a way that enhances a student's practical training. As a result, I avoid these types of assignments, hoping that the substantive information I provide will serve a purpose by itself. However, I suspect that courses on counterterrorism and homeland security can make significant use of such assignments.

LESSON 4: NOT EVERYTHING BAD IS TERRORISM

Terrorism is ill defined, subject to politicization, and even different agencies within the U.S. government have their own definition of terrorism based on the purpose and interests of that organization. For example, the State Department's definition is: "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents." Meanwhile, the FBI definition is: "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a Government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives."[6] While the FBI definition includes attacks against property, the State Department definition provides no such stipulation. In addition, while the State Department's definition precludes states from being considered terrorists (though they can sponsor terrorism), the FBI definition includes nothing about the identity of the attacker.

While there is no agreed-upon definition of terrorism, that does not mean it should be so broadly defined to include every human plight. In fact, if we describe all bad behavior as terrorism then that contributes to the definitional confusion. Moreover, although all instructors have biases, our students should expect us to present accurate information, and if we lace that information with our personal beliefs, especially without presenting the other side, we do our students a disservice. For instance, I have heard a professor cite slavery as an example of terrorism. Some slaves certainly lived in fear, and the Ku Klux Klan did engage in terrorism, but slavery is not the same thing as terrorism. Nor was the U.S. response to Katrina—or its lack of an effective response—a form of terrorism; poor preparation and bad management are not synonymous with terrorism.

Even if students accept that terrorists are rational, they frequently believe that terrorism must be an act of desperation, dying for a cause rather than continue to live a shameful existence. However, there is little evidence that poverty alone is a cause of terrorism, because the poorest nations in the world suffer very little terrorism, and because many terrorists are better educated and wealthier than the average members of the population from which they come.

However, it is useful to discuss with students those cases that challenge our definitions, such as whether the Allied bombing of Dresden or the use of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, constituted acts of terrorism; or to discuss whether U.S. support for the Contras in Nicaragua and for the Mujahideen in Afghanistan were examples of state-sponsored terrorism. These are legitimate questions that get at the heart of some definitional challenges and also identify the differences between terrorism as a tactic and terrorism as a strategy or philosophy.

The lack of a definition also provides an opportunity for helping students understand how definitions are a product of actors with different interests. For example, the lack of a United Nations definition is a result of two fundamental disagreements. One is whether state actions should be included in a definition, because those who oppose the use of force by the U.S. and Israel want state actions to be included in the definition. The second is whether nationalist struggles should be included, because those who support the Palestinians, or other nationalist groups, want to exclude

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from any definition of terrorism violence carried out in the name of an independence struggle (see lesson 5 below for more on the relationship between terrorism and justification). Complicating things, permanent members of the Security Council can veto any definition that is inconsistent with their interests, so the U.S. can defeat definitions that include state actions, or that exclude violence within nationalist struggles.

Moreover, it is imperative that instructors be comfortable enough with their own definition of terrorism to address the issue of state terror, or violence by a state against its own population. The definition I am comfortable with requires that terrorists be non-state actors. Although states, like any actor, can engage in terroristic acts, in the definition I use states cannot be terrorists. As a result, I am able to move beyond questions of whether the United States and Israel are terrorist states (which too often lead to irresolvable debates in the classroom).

In the end, although I present students with my definition, I do not require them to accept that definition. Instead, after presenting them with the most common definitions, they must develop their own. In fact, one of my final exam questions asks them to define terrorism and justify every part of their answer (as well as explain why they exclude certain elements that are part of other definitions). While it is crucial to define terrorism in our research, it is less critical to do so in the classroom, especially because doing so would require instructors to impose their own definitions of terrorism on students, despite the fact that reasonable scholars would disagree with that definition.

LESSON 5: IS ALL TERRORISM BAD?

Our personal biases may provide a knee-jerk reaction to this question, but it is an important one not only for our students, but for instructors as well. Because I define terrorism in a particular way—one aspect of which includes intentional attacks against civilians—the ends never justify the means. If the cause is just, as with some nationalist struggles, then it would be acceptable to target the military as part of a guerrilla insurgency. But once civilians become intentional targets as part of a strategy to gain independence, then that illegitimate act outweighs any justifiable cause.

This is important, because in teaching these courses instructors sometimes encounter students who identify with, understand, or possibly even support a terrorist group. One common example is the student who refuses to accept that any Palestinians are terrorists, either because they agree with the cause, or because they see Palestinian violence as a justified response to Israeli violence. However, even if one agrees with the rights of self-determination, and therefore might support Palestinian nationalists, Irish Catholics, or Chechen separatists, the cause is not a justification for intentionally attacking civilians. Some students are unable to make the distinction between supporting a cause, while condemning terrorism carried out in the name of the cause. Yet populations around the world do make that distinction (e.g., most Tamil support an independent state even if many do not support LTTE attacks against civilians).

A larger point here is that historically there are cases where groups used terrorism to fight what many would consider a just cause. For example, the Reign of Terror during the French Revolution was implemented to rid society of bad elements so that the new democracy could flourish. Likewise, groups like Narodnaya Volya ("People's Will") in tsarist Russia, employed terrorism to overthrow repressive monarchs. The problem is that most terrorists see their own actions as legitimate, and if we allow some forms of terrorism to be acceptable and others to be unacceptable, the definition of terrorism becomes even more subjective. If instead we focus our attention—and our condemnation—on intentional attacks against civilians regardless of the goal, then it is not only easier to define terrorism, but it also becomes easier to distinguish terrorism from other forms of political violence.

LESSON 6: KNOW WHAT RESOURCES EXIST

There are a number of useful tools for instructors teaching courses on terrorism, many of which are available online. Some of this will be helpful in developing a course, while others will be more useful during the term, although this is not an exhaustive list of resources.

Before Class

There are several places to help in the development of a course syllabus. On the APSA Web site, the Task Force on Political Violence and Terrorism compiled several syllabi, including some courses that were taught by terrorism experts before 9/11.[7] Bibliographic information and datasets are also on the Web site. Because the task force focuses on violence more broadly, not all the information is directly related to terrorism—while some syllabi are about terrorism exclusively, many focus on other aspects of political violence.

The SWOTT Web site also maintains a list of syllabi as well as PowerPoint presentations from speakers and from participants who have taught terrorism courses. These materials are only available to past SWOTT participants, but I hope that will encourage new instructors to apply to SWOTT in the future.

There has also been a significant increase in books related to every aspect of terrorism since 9/11. Not all of them are useful for scholars, and space constraints prevent me from listing even just the best books. This is complicated by my preference for using journal articles and books on specific topics rather than what we think of as textbooks. As a result, this article will not focus on readings, but instead refers readers to the syllabi resources discussed above, as well as my own syllabi, available online.[8] The most comprehensive lists of readings I have seen are annotated bibliographies put out by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point (Forest 2004, 2006).[9] I also refer readers to the three main terrorism journals, all of which publish book reviews—*Terrorism and Political Violence*, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, and *Critical Studies on Terrorism*. Other journals with fairly regular reviews include: *Journal of Conflict Studies*, *Journal of Military History*, and *Journal of Peace Research*.

Many SWOTT participants also ask about relevant films or videos. The most popular film among instructors seems to be *The Battle of Algiers*, which highlights several crucial elements of terrorism that are still applicable (and that I discuss with students after the film): the role of women and children (and how that evolves as the group weakens), the pros and cons of particular group structures, how groups recruit new members, the line between terrorism and insurgency, and the line between counterterrorism and state terror. It is the only film I consistently show in its entirety, though I do use clips from other videos in my History of Terrorism course, such as *Birth of a Nation* (the film itself helped recruit for the second incarnation of the Ku Klux Klan), *The Terrorist* (to get inside the mind of a suicide bomber), *The*

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Weathermen (a documentary about the U.S. revolutionary group), and two *Frontline* videos about al-Qaida—"Hunting bin Laden" (filmed before 9/11) and "Looking for Answers" (in response to 9/11).

During Class

Several Web sites also help students gain a better understanding of the data that exist on terrorism. One is the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) at the University of Maryland.[10] The two existing GTD databases not only include domestic and international terrorism from 1970 to 2007, but allow for different search options, as well as interactive graphs that can be manipulated to illustrate trends in terrorism across time and/or regions.

One Web site that was popular among terrorism instructors was the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT) Terrorism Knowledge Base (TKB), which allowed users to search data in a variety of ways, including by group type, location, and tactic.[11] I used to give my students an exercise that included several questions that they had to answer using the TKB. This not only forced them to use an online terrorism database, but the questions were designed to be informative and to dispel some of the myths discussed in lesson 2. Unfortunately, the TKB database is no longer available in its previous form. It was transferred to the University of Maryland, which plans to incorporate some of the data into the GTD. The group profiles that had been on MIPT are now posted on the GTD Web site as Terrorist Organization Profiles (TOPs),[12] but the incident information is no longer available. Therefore, although I am no longer able to give this exercise to students, a copy is available on my Web page (see note 8), because my hope is that the GTD database will someday be as useful for this kind of assignment as the MIPT database used to be.

Terrorist group Web sites are another source of useful (and sometimes highly entertaining) information. Despite concerns that students might have about going to a group's Web page, doing so provides valuable insight, including how groups portray themselves publicly, justify their actions, and attempt to recruit. For instance, several white supremacist groups have their own Web sites and discussion boards, including dating forums and forums for children. Single-issue groups like the Animal Liberation Front and the Environmental Liberation Front have Web sites where information is posted about attacks carried out in the name of the cause. Aum Shinrikyo's successor group—Aleph—has a Web site where it attempts to distance itself from the Tokyo subway attack. Perhaps one of the most interesting Web sites is that of the Tamil Tigers, which among other things includes an Eelam store where one could purchase DVDs, caps, and Tamil flags (though I discourage students from doing so).[13]

LESSON 7: KNOW THE LIMITATIONS OF A TERRORISM COURSE

In the post-USA PATRIOT Act era, students seem especially concerned about their privacy. While students rarely know what the authorities can and cannot do, and frequently accept myths about the extent to which the government is reading our e-mail, instructors should be aware of legitimate limitations. Some students, particularly non-U.S. citizens, will have concerns about the consequences of purchasing terrorism books, or visiting terrorist groups' Web sites. Even sending e-mail to a professor with "terrorism" in the title of the message causes concern for some.

Moreover, I often give students an assignment to find 10 pieces of publicly available information that would aid a terrorist in recruiting new members, training, or carrying out an attack. The purpose of this exercise is to illustrate to students the ease with which terrorists can use modern technology to carry out a campaign. However, one colleague pointed out to me that, as someone of South Asian decent, he would be uncomfortable assigning that type of exercise out of concern that authorities would be suspicious of him asking students to search for such information. I was aware that non-U.S. students might be sensitive to those types of assignments and always give students the option to write a paper instead. But it had not occurred to me that instructors might feel awkward with certain exercises. The bottom line is that we should be aware of our limitations as instructors in addition to the concerns of our students.

In-class simulations are another potentially sensitive area. Many scholars recognize the value of active learning (Newmann and Twigg 2000; Asal 2005; Shellman and Turan 2006), and several employ simulations to help illustrate different elements of terrorism and counterterrorism.[14] I use a partly online simulation, in which students are put into groups of two, and each is assigned to play the role of either a state or a terrorist group. Groups are given a certain level of resources, and the terrorists must plan attacks that are consistent with their goals (determined at the outset), while the states must use their resources to prevent attacks. Each group is allowed one action per day (submitted online), and events—whether attacks or arrests—are posted to the class Web site as mock newspaper articles.

Beyond concerns about what authorities might think if they find an e-mail outlining a simulated terrorist attack, there is a potential moral dilemma that all faculty must resolve before teaching courses on terrorism. Even though most of us are not teaching a how-to course, there is still the concern that the simulations and exercises discussed above could contribute to the inappropriate use of course information. Colleagues who teach courses on genocide and election fraud have commented that someone taking their courses could also use the information from those classes in an illegal way, though the subject of terrorism seems to have additional red flags associated with it. I have not found a good solution to this issue, other than to tell myself that the likelihood of a student becoming a terrorist is significantly lower than the chance of a student entering a career in counterterrorism. If true, then the benefits of teaching these courses outweigh any potential dangers. But I am happy to hear better solutions.

CONCLUSION

Because of space limitations, this article could not provide an exhaustive list of issues or resources for teaching a course on terrorism. Instead, it focused on some of the common challenges. Where possible, I also provided tips for dealing with these issues, but many require some long-term attention by the community of terrorism scholars. Although there is increased demand for terrorism courses, both out of pure interest in the subject and because students recognize the career opportunities, many courses are being taught by instructors who never formally studied terrorism. As a result, few best practices have developed, and there is still the perception among many that anyone can teach a course on terrorism or that the field is populated by opportunists, rather than a subject worthy of study in its own right. For those reasons, I created SWOTT, and the goal of this article was to discuss some

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of the issues that many of us deal with in our courses, in the hopes of developing a stronger community of terrorism scholars, and ultimately improving the public's knowledge in, and awareness of, terrorism. ■

NOTES

I am grateful to the more than 200 scholars and practitioners who have participated in eight workshops over the last five years (not to mention our many excellent guest speakers). Without their active involvement in SWOTT, both during and after the workshops, many of the ideas in this article would still be undeveloped. And to Steve Shellman, who was critical in helping in the development and early success of SWOTT.

1. The first workshop was held in 2005 •at the College of William & Mary, two were held in 2006 (William & Mary and the University of Georgia), three in 2007 (The University of Maryland-College Park, Morehouse College, and the University of Oklahoma), and two at the University of Oklahoma in 2008. The 2009 workshop was cancelled due to a loss of funding, but SWOTT 2010 is already being planned, and information will be available online at http://www.swott.com/.
2. This article focuses on undergraduate teaching, though many of these tips are also applicable to graduate courses.
3. Robert Pape (2003) was not the first to make this argument, or to provide evidence of it, but was the first to say it after 9/11, once the mainstream political science community began paying attention to terrorism. Martha Crenshaw (1987, 1990), Brian Jenkins (1975), and Bruce Hoffman (1998) are among those who made this argument before 9/11.
4. For State Department programs, see http://careers.state.gov/students/programs.html. For CIA programs, see https://www.cia.gov/careers/student-opportunities/index.html. For ONI programs, see http://www.nmic.navy.mil/internprogram.htm. Many other agencies have student programs, including the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (http://www1.nga.mil/NGAJOBS/INTERNSHIPS/Pages/default.aspx), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (http://www.fbijobs.gov/2.asp), and the Department of Homeland Security (http://www.orau.gov/dhsinternships/).
5. Information about both programs is available at http://www.defendemocracy.org/index.php.
6. The State Department definition comes from Section 2656f(d) of Title 22 of the United States Code, cited in U.S. Department of State's *Country Reports on Terrorism 2007* (http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/105904.pdf). The FBI definition comes from 28 C.F.R. Section 0.85, cited in Federal Bureau of Investigation's report *Terrorism 2002–2005* (http://www.fbi.gov/filelink.html?file=/publications/terror/terrorism2002_2005.pdf).
7. Available at http://www.apsanet.org/section_571.cfm.
8. At http://faculty-staff.ou.edu/M/Gregory.D.Miller-1/.
9. The 2004 version contains two decades of material. The 2006 version includes mostly literature published between 2003 and 2006. See http://www.teachingterror.com/bibliography/.
10. Located at http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/.
11. Previously located at http://www.tkb.org/, but no longer available.
12. Located at http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data/tops/.
13. Maura Conway (2002) gives one list of terrorist group Web sites. There may be more up-to-date or more extensive lists, but I am unaware of any. Group Web pages that I use in class and that are referenced in this article include:
    - Stormfront: http://www.stormfront.org/forum/
    - Animal Liberation Front (ALF): http://www.animalliberationfront.com/
    - Earth Liberation Front (ELF): the original ELF web domain, which was located at http://www.earthliberationfront.com/ is no longer active, but much of the old information can be found at http://earthliberation.org/old/news/, while more updated information can be obtained at http://www.elfpressoffice.org/
    - Aleph: http://english.aleph.to/ (information about the Aum Shinrikyo attacks is under the "Official Announcements")
    - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE): http://www.eelamweb.com/
14. The American Political Science Association Web site lists several simulations and services (though few seem to focus on terrorism): http://www.apsanet.org/content_15404.cfm.

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