

**The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication**  
**COM 300 – Communicating Terror**

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**Instructor:**

**E-mail:**

**Office:**

**Office Hours:**

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*Read this syllabus carefully. By remaining enrolled in the course, you have accepted the conditions and expectations of the course.* The requirements and expectations indicated in this syllabus are non-negotiable. Withdraw from the course immediately if any aspects of the course, its expectations, and/or requirements are not acceptable to you.

**Required Text:**

Matusitz, J. (2012) *Terrorism & Communication* (1<sup>st</sup> Ed.). Sage Publications.

Course readings available on our Blackboard website.

*We will immediately begin using the text in class.*

**Other Required Materials:**

- Other sources (hand-outs, articles, and website references) are required readings and will be posted on Blackboard
- Access to ASU Student Help and Resources

**Course Description:** COM 300 will analyze terrorism as a means of communication. This includes: understanding what terrorism is, how messages are formed and disseminated, the goals of these messages. It examines information gathering and dissemination about terrorism under different cultural and political systems. We learn the media's role in the coverage of terrorism, sometimes even as conduits for the terrorist message, especially now in our multi-platform information environment. Beyond contemporary names and places, we will seek linkages – possible new turning points - relevant to the terrorism and communication from the fields of broadcasting, journalism, social networking, geography, political science, sociology, media culture, religious studies, government-press relations, conflict resolution, peace studies, group communication, interpersonal communication, rhetoric and technology.

## Course Objectives:

- After course completion students will have a basic knowledge terrorism and understand the definitions and historical perspectives of this topic
- Students will understand a wide range of communication perspectives as they relate to terror.

**Course Readings:** It is expected that you will come to class having read any assigned reading so you may participate in discussion and activities. I will periodically throughout the course call on students at random to contribute to the discussion. You can only do this by coming to class having done all assigned readings/viewings.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** I do not “give” grades. Grades are earned based on individual and group performance over the semester. Individual graded assignments do not determine your final grade. Consistent work over the entire semester is totaled to determine a final letter grade based on points earned. Thusly, the point breakdown listed here will be strictly followed; points are NOT “rounded.”

You may be tempted to skip assignments that appear to have a small point value. Be aware that each 0 score creates a major drag on your potential points for the course, and those deficiencies quickly add up.

**GRADE CHALLENGES:** Grade challenges need to be submitted to the instructor in writing within one week.

### General Course/Instructor Expectations

#### 1. *You will be prepared for class.*

The interactive nature of this class requires your preparation and engagement.

Students who require special assistance or accommodation, and students participating in university-sanctioned absences (including religious holidays), should let me know within the first week of class. Students with university-sanctioned travel generally will need to complete assignments and exams in advance.

No late work will be accepted without advance arrangements made with the instructor or extensive documentation of an emergency situation.

#### 2. *You will accept that your classmates are here to learn.*

When the instructor is speaking, you should not be speaking. A quiet environment helps support the learning of others around you.

Because communication courses by their very nature cover personal topics, it is important that we work together for an atmosphere of respect and support. Please respect the privacy of your classmates outside the classroom. It can be a very small world. An important part of your development as a scholar is modeling how to disagree with the concept versus the person.

Any form of disruptive behavior can result in loss of attendance points. Verbal or physical aggression before, during or after class will result in permanent removal from the class and notification of proper authorities. See the Student Conduct information, below.

#### 3. *You will attend all class sessions.*

Your input is valuable to your classmates, to the instructor, and to your learning. You cannot participate if you are not present. We will start promptly; be on time. Expect the class to last the full period. If a class session is missed, you are responsible for getting any notes from your classmates. See Attendance Policy, below.

#### 4. *You will maintain high standards of personal civility.*

What you learn in this course is highly relevant to today’s workplace and marketplace. We will model ourselves on standards of behavior reflecting professionalism and respect. For a detailed discussion of expected standards, see the Student Conduct section, below.

5. *You will maintain the highest standard of academic integrity.*

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication strongly believe in academic integrity; thus, instructors in the College and School do not tolerate cheating or plagiarism. Review the Plagiarism Policy, below.

### **Specific Course Policies**

#### **Attendance:**

Attendance will be taken during every class period. You are expected to be in class, to be on time, and to be well prepared.

You will be allowed 2 absences. Each subsequent absence will result in a 5 point deduction from your final point total.

The exception to this is if you provide official documentation proving a legitimate reason for missing class:

- If you are too ill to come to class to take an exam or participate in your group presentation, you must have a signed (and dated) document from your doctor saying you had to miss the exam/presentation (on that particular day) because of your illness.
- If you miss class because of the death of a loved one, you must provide proof as requested by your instructor.
- If you will miss class because of the observance of a religious holiday, please let me know at least a week in advance.
- If you are active in University-sponsored events (athletic teams, debate, etc.) you must supply the appropriate school-provided documentation.

I reserve the right to determine what qualifies as a legitimate reason for missing class and/or as acceptable documentation.

I will use lecture slides in class, but these will not be posted in Blackboard. DO NOT assume that these slides will encompass all information necessary for each chapter/section/topic. Reading, note taking, and active participation are critical if you wish to attain a good grade in this class.

#### **Blackboard:**

To succeed in this course it is essential that you have regular and reliable online access to Blackboard, that you be familiar with and able to use the Blackboard system, and that you regularly (i.e., daily) check the Announcements in the course Blackboard. (The “course menu” consists of the tabs, or “navigation buttons,” located on the left side of our course Blackboard site. Announcements are in chronological order and appear when you open the course site.)

**Gradebook:** Your class grade will be registered on the Blackboard site. You will utilize the gradebook to verify that you have correctly submitted a paper via SafeAssign.

**Course Contact:** Periodically, I will post announcements and/or send out individual and class emails. All email sent via Blackboard is automatically sent to students’ asu.edu accounts. Therefore, you must regularly check your ASU email. Of course, you can forward your ASU email to another account if you wish.

#### **Writing Requirements:**

The required format for all papers is .doc, or .docx, **NOT .pdf**, etc. If you use the SAVE AS feature to change the file type, be sure to check the document before you submit it. All papers/posts should be typed in black 12-point Times Roman font, double-spaced (except as directed) and have one-inch margins. [NOTE: Your computer default setting may not be 1”. Reset it, as needed. Contact the ASU

Helpdesk if you need assistance.] Any citations must be formatted in APA (American Psychological Association) style.

You are expected to write at a collegiate level using Standard English (consider grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.). If English is not your native language please take your papers to the ASU writing center before the papers are submitted for final grading. You can find information about the writing center by visiting <https://tutoring.asu.edu/writing-centers>. Papers submitted with excessive grammar and spelling errors will receive 0 points. I reserve the right to determine what constitutes “excessive.”

This class, as all others in the School, is taught in English. If English is not your first language and you are having difficulty in speaking, writing, or understanding – please seek assistance at the Writing Center on campus or with the International Student office which provides conversational groups for non-native speakers. Since this class is taught in English, all work in the course will be graded based on a common rubric that assumes an understanding of English.

You can find more resources on Blackboard under the Evaluation Paper Resources section. I strongly suggest that you watch Formatting and Structure Tutorial on the Blackboard here before you write your first paper.

### **Plagiarism Policy:**

Plagiarism is intentionally or unintentionally using another’s work (including wording, phrases, or original ideas) without giving the person proper credit. This includes representing anyone else’s words as your own. Exact words can be used ONLY in direct quotes, clearly presented as such.

Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, or allowing another student to copy your work, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination.

If you have turned the work in for another class, it is considered self-plagiarism and violates University policy. Even within this course, each assignment must be a new paper; you may not duplicate material across assignments.

Instructors who find compelling evidence of academic dishonesty will actively pursue one or more of the following actions: Assigning a grade of XE (“failure through academic dishonesty”) to the student, advocating the suspension or expulsion of the student from the College, and/or referring the student to Student Judicial Affairs. If a student who is charged with academic dishonesty is found to be in violation, then one or more of these disciplinary actions will be taken. For further information, please read the Student Academic Integrity policy and the code of conduct for Arizona State University: <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>.

Remember, any academic dishonesty in this course will result in failure of the course, and could also lead to disciplinary action by the college or university.

### **Submission Policy & Late Work:**

Work needs to be submitted to based on assignment guidelines by the specified due date.

Please DO NOT e-mail your assignments. I will only accept assignments via e-mail if you have a reasonable, documented excuse and/or if cleared with your instructor ahead of time. I am not responsible for attachments that do not open (or that are unreadable when they do open), or for late, lost, misdirected, misguided, or imaginary emails. Lastly, DO NOT turn papers/assignments in to the front office of the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication.

Coursework submitted past the specified due date without prior approval will be penalized one letter grade. For example, an assignment which would have earned an “A” (or functional equivalent in points) if it had been submitted on time, will receive a “B” provided the assignment is submitted *prior to the start of the class the following week*. Assignments two weeks late will receive a failing mark. I will only accept ONE late assignment per student per semester.

**Deadlines:** Deadline for all online assignments can be found via the course schedule on Blackboard. Computer and/or system problems do NOT excuse late work. Penalties will apply to all late work unless advance arrangements have been made with the instructor.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you have computer problems using Blackboard, do NOT contact your instructors for help. If you have computer/internet or Blackboard-related problems, you must immediately contact the Help Desk 24/7 at 1-855-ASU-5080 or the helpdesk tab on your “My ASU” page. Additionally, you can visit the technology studio at the Computer Commons.

### **Student Conduct:**

The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication strives for a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. In a communication class, it is especially important that we...

1. display respect for all members of the classroom – including the instructor and students;
2. pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities;
3. avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, reading the newspaper, surfing the internet, doing work for other classes, making/receiving cell phone calls, text messaging, etc.); and
4. avoid racist, sexist, homophobic or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom.

This is not an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, it represents examples of the types of things that can have a dramatic impact on the class environment. Your final grade may be reduced each time you engage in these sorts of behaviors.

Students are entitled to receive instruction free from interference by other members of the class. An instructor may withdraw a student from a course when the student’s behavior disrupts the educational process under USI 201-10 (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/usi/usi201-10.html>). This includes students who are verbally or physically aggressive towards the instructor or another student before, during, or after class. As noted in this document, “An instructor may withdraw a student from a course with a mark of ‘W’ or ‘E’ when the student’s behavior disrupts the educational process. Disruptive classroom behavior for this purpose is defined by the instructor.” In cases where disruptive behavior does not warrant removal from class, at the instructor’s discretion a student’s final grade will be lowered by 25% instead.

Students are required to adhere to the behavior standards listed in the Arizona Board of Regents Policy Manual Chapter V – Campus and Student Affairs: Code of Conduct (<http://students.asu.edu/srr/code>) as well as the ACD 125: Computer, Internet, and Electronics Communications (<http://asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd125.html>).

### **Disability Service:**

Students needing accommodations in this course due to disabilities must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) before requesting accommodations. Please contact me at the beginning of the semester, as I will be more than willing to make the necessary arrangements. The DRC is located on the first floor of Matthew’s Center. They can be contacted at <http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/>. They can also be contacted at 480-965-1234 (voice)/480-965-9000 (TDD).

### **Technology in the Classroom:**

Laptops are permitted for academic purposes. If you use a laptop during class, please note:

- be prepared for me to monitor your use
- accept moments when you are requested to put away electronic devices
- I reserve the right to override electronic use at any time

Cell phones must be on “silent” or off during class. No iPods or other entertainment devices will be allowed during class (no earphones, no texting, no Facebook, etc.).

**Food and/or Drinks:**

Please keep your work area clean. If you consume any food or liquid during class, please clean up after yourself.

**Class Notes:**

I strongly encourage informal networks in class. It is a good idea to exchange phone numbers or email addresses with one or more students. Do NOT rely on the instructor to provide you with class lecture notes or assignments if you are unable to attend class.

**Important Caveat:**

I reserve the right to update or change portions of this syllabus in order to make the course a better experience for everyone. This may be in response to suggestions from students, from my own observations, or as the result of requirements by the School, College, or University. Changes will be announced in class and posted on the course Blackboard site.

**Course Schedule Changes:**

A tentative course schedule is posted to Blackboard. It indicates all reading assignments, exam dates, presentation dates, and all other assignments that are due. This is a tentative schedule that may change at any time. I will notify the class of any changes, it is the students’ responsibility to find out what changes (if any) were made to the course schedule.

**Contacting the Instructor**

I aim to be easily accessible to you in a variety of contexts, including face-to-face or email (which is the best way to contact me). At the same time, I also ask that you make use of the teaching materials available in the syllabus and on Blackboard. These materials were designed to answer many questions, so please check them before approaching me. Contacting me at the last moment does not shift your responsibility for completing an assignment. And please do not expect a response “A.S.A.P.” simply because you waited until the last moment.

Please allow up to 48 hours for a response to any correspondence. If a response has not been provided to you within 48 hours, please try contacting again.

**When sending an email use professional language and include the following:**

- subject line that includes COM 207 and the class session
- address the party
- sign your name

**Office Hours:**

Office hours provide an opportunity for you to have one-on-one time with me to discuss issues and questions that you might have related to this course. Please use office hours. If your schedule does not work with my office hours, please collaborate with me to find a time that mutually works.

**Course Assignments:**

1. Attendance and Participation – 75 points possible: In addition to physically showing up for class I expect you to participate in discussions and activities in class. Two absences are given; after that, unless documented, each absence is 5 points off the 100. Excessive and inappropriate use of

technology (such as texting or surfing the internet) will result in a loss of participation points. If I see you on your phone, I will not tell you to put the device away. Instead, I will make a note of the date/time and take away 5 participation points for each incident.

2. Tests (2@ 100 points each) – There will be a midterm and a final exam. Each will cover material from class discussions, videos, the text, and the extra readings.
3. Weekly Discussion Postings – 200 points: Your discussion posts serve 2 functions: (1) ensure you have completed the assigned readings and (2) give you the opportunity to discuss relevant ideas/examples in the text.. You will a total of 10 discussion posts, and 10 follow up posts for a total of 200 points.

*Post A (Due by 11:59 p.m. the Sunday BEFORE content will be discussed in class):* This first post will be used to guide and frame our conversation during class that week. These posts should be carefully and clearly situated within the assigned readings and should aim to prompt clarification, comparison, critique, or deeper interrogation of some important aspect of the texts. They should be not be an overly open-ended or general inventory of questions that indicate that you didn't do much more than read the title of the reading. Such as: "What is terrorism?" Rather your inquiry should guide us towards a deeper understanding of the questions/concepts the text raises and give us a sense of the issues you think are in play in it (or them). This post should be approximately 250-300 words.

*Post B (Due by 11:59 p.m. the Friday AFTER content was discussed in class):* At the end of end week, I would like for you to reflect on the class discussion and offer some follow-up thoughts on your discussion. More specifically, I would like for you to really dig into how or whether the class discussion and/or Terrorism Profile Presentation (see below) enabled you to (a) understand better the question or problem you posed in your first post, (b) think differently about how you might approach that issue or problem, or (c) prompted you to reflect on things you had not even considered previously. You can certainly combine elements of these. But I want your response to be rooted in the matter you took up in your first post and the class discussions that ensued. This post should be approximately 450-500 words.

\*\* For both of these posts, feel free to incorporate current events, additional readings, etc. that you feel will be helpful in facilitating our discussion.

**Details:** On the Blackboard site, click on "Weekly Responses" in the side bar. For each week, there will be a Forum. Create an individual thread with your post. Then reply to it on by Friday.

Posts are not required for class weeks during which you are leading the Terrorism Profile Presentation or Current Events spotlight. Otherwise they are due each week.

(Assignment adapted from T. Catlaw, 2015)

4. Terrorism Profile Presentation– 100 points – An oral class presentation will be made on a major terrorist organization. The focus will be on introducing the class to the terrorist organization's principles and practices and will also include news organization's coverage of this group. Primary sources should be included In addition to the oral class presentation each person will create a briefing document (handout) for each class member on the terrorist organization. This should be posted in lieu of your discussion post for the week. A rubric will be distributed describing the expectations of the profile.
5. Terrorist Profile Presentation Written Analysis - 100 points. Each individual will also submit a three to five-page analysis based on their class presentation. Specific directions and rubric will be distributed describing the expectations of analysis.
6. Current Events Spotlight: 25 points One time throughout the semester, you will be asked to lead our current events spotlight. This will include a 10 minute presentation in which you explain and discuss a current event(s) with the class that relate to terrorism and communication. You can show videos, images, etc. and should provide the class with an article that they can review.

## Assignments

Exams (2)

200 points (100 x 2 = 200 points total)

Discussion Board Posts	200 points (20 x 10 = 200 points total)
Terrorism Profile Presentation	100 points
Terrorist Written Analysis	100 points
Attendance/Participation	75 points
Current Events Spotlight	25 points
Total Points	700 points

### **Grading**

98-100= A+

93-97.9= A

90-92.9= A-

87-89.9= B+

83-86.9= B

80-82.9=B-

77-79.9= C+

70-76.9= C

60-69.9= D

0-59.9= E