

GVPT 388A (WEB)

Summer Session 1: 2020

The Politics of Terror: In the Individual, the Community and the State

Dr. Glass

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Course Description:

GVPT 388A (online) studies the different psychological and political aspects of terror. We engage in this study in an intensive three-week workshop that combines films dealing with various approaches to terror and readings that demonstrate the role of terror both within the self, the community and the state. It is the argument of this course that terror and the terrorized self are political forms of experience that exercise a significant hold on how we approach the political and public space. What however may be a more subtle argument is that terror occurs on multiple levels; selves can be terrorized as absolutely and completely as can states and political targets. The self internalizes terror as a shattering experience; terror transforms identity and makes us afraid, tentative, and uncertain both about the boundaries of our internal world and the safety of the external world. How we deal with that terror is central to traumatic experiences that individuals may experience at some moment in their lives.

To be terrorized, whether by fear, death, or trauma, possesses lasting impacts that can change the course of the lives of individuals. Similarly terror in the community poses questions of collective impact; how the terror directed from outside or inside to a given community affects social, cultural and political relationships within that community. Certainly a terrorized community affects the individuals in that community and presents additional issues of how identity is affected and how collective trauma affects the internal psychodynamic structures of individual life. Finally we look at state imposed terror; terror as a matter of public policy, terror as an instrument of the state. Terror at all levels raises serious ethical and moral questions about the kinds of 'action' that are defined as terror; whether they can be considered legitimate; whether they are warranted, and what the long and short term costs of terror are on the community, individuals within that community and on political actors authorizing or engaging in state sponsored terrorism.

Trauma is central to terror; since terror traumatizes: it traumatizes individuals, communities, groups and cultures. Much of our online discussion in this course will be to understand how that trauma operates; what it means and how to understand it. We undertake this exploration of terror and trauma through a combination of films and readings.

Required Readings:

Iris Chang, *Rape of Nanking* (first week)

Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God* (second week)

Michael Herr, *Dispatches* (third week)

Schedule of Films: See Separate Attachment.

Requirements for GVPT 388A, online

You will be required to see all the films listed in the schedule of films as well as do all the readings listed in the 'required readings'. Every two weeks, you will submit a paper (the questions will be e-mailed to you) of 5 pages on the first four films in the schedule, working into the paper the reading assignment; the second two weeks, you will submit a paper on the second four films, working in the reading; and for your final essay you will submit a paper on the last four films in the schedule of films, working in the reading. Your grade will be determined by an average of the grades of the three essays. All papers must be double-spaced and sent preferably in Word. Participation will not be graded but it can help your grade if you are in between two grades. There will be a discussion board on elms; and you are certainly free to email me with any questions about the papers. You are welcome to complete the course as soon as you wish; but you must adhere to the requirements listed above, no matter at what pace, you must see all the films and complete all the readings. Because of copy right laws, we are unable to provide the films online; however, Netflix, Amazon, some online sites should have all of them.

Grading: The grades of your papers will be averaged, although some consideration will be given for improvement over the course of the three essays. Participation in discussions can help your grade if you are in-between grades.

GVPT 388A: FOR ONLINE COURSE (3 credits)

Schedule of Films

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Theme: The Politics of Terror: In the Self, the Community and State

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Film Schedule

I: Terror in and on the Self

Ordinary People

Black Swan

Shutter Island

Incendies

II: Terror in the Community

Hotel Rwanda

The Beider Meinhoff Gang

City of God

Paradise Now

III: Terror in and by the State

Munich

District 9

Rendition

The Grey Zone

Students have six weeks to complete this online course, although it is recommended that you take two weeks for each section. You may complete the course earlier, but you do have the full six weeks. You will be required to make your own arrangements for viewing the films. They are available, although not all in streaming, at both Netflix and Amazon. Some may be on You Tube.