



Rothberg International School
בית הספר לתלמידים מחו"ל ע"ש רוטברג
THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM
האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים



Department of Summer Courses
and Special Programs

המחלקה לקורסי קיץ
ותוכניות מיוחדות

Media, Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism: October 7th, the Israel-Hamas War and the Globalized world (48805)

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July 1-July 23, 2025

Mon, Tue, Wed: 13:00 - 16:00

45 Academic Hours, 3 Academic Credits

Office hours: By appointment

Tentative syllabus

Course Description:

This course aims to provide and discuss key elements in the complex impact of October 7th in Israel and abroad.

The 4 weeks course is divided into 4 units which build on and inform one another; it provides tools for individual and collective processing of the events as well as the terminology for conducting educated debates. Our classes will be interactive and will consist of a combination of academic input and frontal teaching and group activities, video screening, discussions, field trip and guest speakers.

The first unit addresses the basic yet important question of the terrorists themselves: who they are and what their motivations might be. Our investigation will begin with a general introduction of the concepts of 'terrorism' and 'counter-terrorism'. We will start by explaining how the definitions of these two concepts has evolved throughout history and why. We will then focus on the domestic and international political, legal and military frameworks in which counter-terrorism has developed. We will study Bin Laden's interview, Hamas statements and ISIL videos in order to pin down their ideology and think together what could counter it. We will then turn to the use of contemporary digital and social media (Telegram & TikTok) by terrorist groups such as ISIL and Hamas.

The second Unit will focus on Israel's counter-terrorism policies and practices nationally and internationally since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. We will study the various counter-terrorism units in the Israeli Army from their creation to the present. We will discuss case studies of media coverage of events relating to the Intifadas and The Separation wall/Apartheid Wall; Gaza withdrawal and Gaza Blocade; Gaza Flotilla (Marvi Marmara) and target killing as counter-terrorism tool.

The third Unit will consider Israel's policy and ethics regarding prisoners of war (POW) and civilian hostages. We will speak about the Jewish value of redeeming captives (Pidion shvouim) and its ramifications in the various strata of Israeli Society. We will study the cases of the Munich Olympic games in 1972 as well as the Gilad Shalit case. We will discuss the exchange deals that happened in November 2023 and any other deal that will occur in 2024-2025. We will reflect on the international legal ramifications and the rights and duties toward POW and hostage.

The fourth part of the course will focus on October 7th. What happened? We will trace the events of that day as well as anything that led to it according to the forthcoming findings of the official commission of inquiry. We will focus on the national trauma and processing of collective memory and collective commemoration of October 7th 2024. We will discuss national and international tensions such as the BDS, judicial overhaul, normalization of diplomatic relationship with Arab countries, ICC, ICJ, human shield and Gaza civilian casualties.

Course Requirements

1. Preparation of bibliography for class and participation in discussions (10%)
2. Participation in field study trip (10%)
3. Participation at the guest speaker workshop (10%)
4. Attendance to the class (10%)
5. Take home exam (60%)

Earning graduate credits for this course

- o Graduate students are expected to inform the Rothberg International School at rissummer@savion.huji.ac.il of their interest in earning graduate credits for their summer course(s).
- o Graduate students must complete a 25-page, double-spaced, seminar paper with a bibliography, instead of the course's standard final assessment. The students will discuss this paper in class. The topic and bibliography for these papers must be chosen in agreement with each course instructor. Students must approach course instructors by the end of the first week of the course and arrange a time to meet and define their paper topic and bibliography.

- o The seminar paper must make use of at least five scholarly sources (books or academic articles), in addition to Internet resources.
- o The graduate seminar papers must be submitted within 2 months following the course completion.

Unit 1: Who are the terrorists and what do they actually want?

Session #1-01.07.2025: How shall we define 'Terrorism' and 'terror attack'?

Session's goal: Provide a general introduction to the concept of Terrorism and its evolution throughout history. Understand what its definition/labelling implies in international law and in national law in Israel and what acts qualify as *terror* and who is legally qualified to be a victim of terrorism.

Mandatory Reading:

Alex Peter Schmid, "Terrorism: The Definitional Problem," *Case Western Journal of International Law*, vol. 36, no. 2 (2004), pp. 103-147. **E-JOURNAL**

Saul, Ben, "Definition of Terrorism in the UN Security Council: 1985-2004," *Chinese Journal of International Law*, vol.4, no. 1 (2005), pp. 141-166. **E-JOURNAL**

Optional readings:

Richardson, Louise, "What is Terrorism?" in *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the enemy, containing the threat*, New York: Random House, 2006, pp. 3-20. **Overseas Library 322.42 R511; ERESERVE**

O'Donnell, Daniel, "International Treaties Against Terrorism and the Use of Terrorism During Armed Conflict and by Armed Forces," *International Review of the Red Cross*, vol. 88, no. 864 (December 2006), pp. 853-880. **E-JOURNAL**

Session #2- 02.07.2025: Who are the terrorists and what do they want?

Session's goal: What is the categorization of the various types of terrorist organizations? Who decide who is a terrorist and who is an 'assailant'? A 'combatant'? A 'freedom fighter'? Who is exactly Hamas? Hezbollah? The Houthis? We aim to tackle the political framework within which counter-terrorism has developed as well as the various challenges democratic states face in coping with terrorism.

Required reading:

Ganor, Boaz, "Dilemmas in Defining Counter-Terrorism," in *The Counter-Terrorism Puzzle*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2007, ch. 2, pp. 25-27; 29-46. **Overseas Library E322.42 G198; ERESERVE**

Abu-Amr, Z. (1993). Hamas: A Historical and Political Background. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 22(4), 5–19. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2538077>

Optional readings:

Cohen, Samy. *Democracies at War against Terrorism: A Comparative Perspective*. London: Springer, 2016, 147-72. **Overseas Library 322.42(08) C678; ERESERVE**

Session #3- 07.07.2025: Encountering Terrorist minds and Ideology on our screens- Interviewing the enemy?

Session's Goal: Workshop on terrorist's ideology and communication tools. We will study in groups Ben Laden's post 9/11 interview script in class as well as Hamas official status declaration of 1988 and the interview of Hamas leaders after October 7th on CNN and CBS.

Required Reading:

Kampf, Zohar, News-Media and Terrorism: Changing Relationship, Changing Definitions. *Sociology Compass*, 8(1): 1-9. **E-JOURNAL**
<https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12099>

Liebes, T., Kampf, Z, & Blum-Kulka, S., Saddam on CBS and Arafat on IBA: Addressing the enemy on television. *Political Communication*, vol. 25, no. 3 (2008) pp. 311-329. **E-JOURNAL**

Optional readings:

Post, Jerrold, Ehud Sprinzak, and Laurita Denny. "The Terrorists in Their Own Words: Interviews with 35 Incarcerated Middle Eastern terrorists." *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 15, no. 1 (2003), pp.171-84. **E-JOURNAL**

Unit 2: The State of Israel and Counter-Terrorism

Session #4- 08.07.2025: Military Framework of World's and Israel's Counterterrorism strategy

Session's Goal: To tackle the military framework within which global counter-terrorism has developed since Munich Olympic game event in 1972 with special focus on counter terrorism units of the state of Israel and the IDF. Screening parts of Munich Spielberg movie in class.

Required Reading:

Ronit Berger Hobson & Ami Pedahzur (2022) The Munich massacre and the proliferation of counterterrorism special operation forces, *Israel Affairs*, 28:4, 625-637, DOI: [10.1080/13537121.2022.2088134](https://doi.org/10.1080/13537121.2022.2088134)

Sofrin, A. (2021). Decision Making Processes in Counter-Terrorism Operations in Israel. *Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 4(3), 112-124.

Optional Readings:

Ganor, B. (2021). *Israel's Counterterrorism Strategy: Origins to the Present*. New York Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press. <https://doi.org/10.7312/gano19922>

Frisch, Hillel. "Motivation or Capabilities? Israeli Counterterrorism against Palestinian Suicide Bombings and Violence." *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 29, no. 5 (2006), pp. 843-69. **E-JOURNAL**

Session #5- 09.07.2025: The second intifada and the “Apartheid wall/Security fence” as a counter-terrorism measure against suicide bombing and Gaza Blockade after Hamas reached power in Gaza in 2006

The goal of this session is to grasp the Israeli narrative about counter-terrorism and how its portrayed internationally. It prepares us also for the field trip happening on session #6.

Required Reading:

Rogers, R., & Ben-David, A. (2010). Coming to terms: a conflict analysis of the usage, in official and unofficial sources, of ‘security fence’, ‘apartheid wall’, and other terms for the structure between Israel and the Palestinian territories. *Media, War & Conflict*, 3(2), 202–229. **E-JOURNAL** <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750635210363924>

Optional Reading:

Ben-Rafael, E., & Galanti, S. B. R. (2017). Israel-Palestine: concrete Fences and fluid borders. In *The walls between conflict and peace* (pp. 217-237). Brill.

Required Reading:

Fahmy, Shahira and Britain Eakin, “High drama on the high seas: Peace versus war journalism framing of an Israeli/Palestinian related incident,” *The International Communication Gazette*, vol. 76, no. 1 (2014), pp. 86–105. **E-JOURNAL**

Aran, A., & Yishayahu, G. (2022). Updating the study of foreign policy crisis: The case of the Mavi Marmara flotilla. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 18(3), orac007.

Optional readings:

Daniel F Wajner, “Battling” for Legitimacy: Analyzing Performative Contests in the Gaza Flotilla Paradigmatic Case, *International Studies Quarterly*, Volume 63, Issue 4, December 2019, Pages 1035–1050, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqz047>

Session # 6- 14.07.2024- Field Trip: visit of the Gush Katif Museum next to the shuk and debriefing session on Gaza 1949-2025

Required Readings to prepare for the visit:

Tenenboim-Weinblatt, K. (2008). 'We will get through this together': Journalism, Trauma and the Israeli Disengagement from the Gaza Strip. *Media, Culture & Society*, 30(4): 495–513. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443708091179>

Rob Geist Pinfeld (2019) Territorial withdrawal as multilateral bargaining: Revisiting Israel's 'unilateral' withdrawals from Gaza and southern Lebanon, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/01402390.2019.1570146

Rynhold, J., & Waxman, D. (2008). Ideological Change and Israel's Disengagement from Gaza. *Political Science* <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20202970> Optional Readings: *Quarterly*, 123(1), 11-37.

Optional readings

Newman, D. (2005). From Hitnachalut to Hitnatkut: The Impact of Gush Emunim and the Settlement Movement on Israeli Politics and Society. *Israel Studies*, 10(3): 192-224. www.jstor.org/stable/30245772.

Levin, G. (2014) One step forward or two steps back? Unilateralism and Israel's Gaza disengagement in the eyes of the world, *Israel Affairs*, 20(1): 87-103. DOI: 10.1080/13537121.2013.863084

Unit 3: Israel's policy and ethics regarding prisoners of war (POW) and civilian hostages

Session #7-15.07.2025: POW: an Israeli Intelligence Failure? The Ron Arad Case

Session's Goal: Teach about the concept of Pidion Shvouim in Judaism. Speak about the legal status of a prisoner of war and a civilian hostage. Talk about the previous cases of suspended information regarding prisoners of war and how it shaped the Israeli collective memory.

Required Reading:

Kaplan, D. "Commemorating a suspended death: Missing soldiers and national solidarity in Israel". *Journal of the American Ethnological Society*, vol. 35, no. 3 (2008) pp. 413-427. **E-JOURNAL**

Tenenboim-Weinblatt, K. (2008). "Fighting for the Story's Life: Non-closure in Journalistic Narrative". *Journalism*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2008), pp. 31-51. **E-JOURNAL**

Optional Reading:

Hedley, John Hollister, "Learning from Intelligence Failures," *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, vol. 18, no.3 (2005) pp. 435-450. **E-JOURNAL**

Session #8- 16.07.2025: Gilad Shalit case. Israel/Hamas exchanges of 2011

In this session we will tackle the issue of prisoners' exchange as a way to perform the redeeming of captives. We will focus on the Gilad Shalit case.

Required readings:

Grebelsky-Lichtman, T. and Cohen A.A. (2016). Speaking under duress: visual and verbal elements of personal and political messages in captive videos. *Visual Communication* 16(1): 27-56.

Karniel, Y., Lavie-Dinur, A., & Samuel Azran, T. (2017). Professional or personal framing? International media coverage of the Israel– Hamas prisoner exchange deal. *Media, War & Conflict*, 10(1), 105-124.

Optional reading

Foy, K. (2015). Framing hostage negotiations: analyzing the discourse of the US government and the Islamic State. *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 8(3): 516-531.

Session #9- 21.07.2025: ISIL's Propaganda and Visual Communication via hostage videos

Session's goal: Grasp the depth of ISIL's propaganda machine using hostage videos.

Required Reading:

Herfroy-Mischler, A and Barr, A. (2017) "ISIL's Execution Videos: Audience Segmentation and Terrorist Communication in the Digital Age". *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* pp. 1-22. **E-JOURNAL**

Herfroy-Mischler, A and Barr, A (2019). "Jihadist Visual Communication Strategy: ISIL's Hostage Executions Video Production". *Visual Communication*, 18(4): 519-548. **E-JOURNAL**

Optional reading:

Awan, Akil N., "Virtual Jihadist Media: Function, Legitimacy, and Radicalizing Efficacy." *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 10, no. 3 (2007), pp. 389-408. **E-JOURNAL**

Salem, A., Reid, E. and Chen, H., "Multimedia Content Coding and Analysis: Unraveling the Content of *Jihadi* Extremist Groups' Videos". *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, vol. 31, no. 7 (2008) pp. 605-626. **E-JOURNAL**

Unit 4 : Israeli Counterterrorism, October 7th and its aftermaths

Session #10- 22.07.2025: October 7th- what actually happened?

This session will aim to lay out the factual chronology of October 7th massacre to give data and tools to counter denial of the crimes perpetrated on that day. We will give priority and rely on Israeli official commission of inquiry if they publish their findings by July 2025.

We will arrange a meeting with someone involved in the hostage discussions.

Session #11- 23.07.2025: The Hostage deal(s), Target Killing and mediation

Reading preparation for that session on target killing as a counterterrorism measure and political mediation to settle hostage deals. Deal of November 2023 explained. Killing of Haniyeh and Deif and its impact with Iran on the hostage deal of July/August 2024. In this session we will discuss the following as they will unfold until then: Israel right to defend itself vs BDS and antisemitism; ICC/ICJ prosecution explained; National trauma, collective commemoration of October 7th 2024, BDS/Judicial Overhaul/Normalization with Saudi Arabia, national inquiry and state apology.

Required Reading:

Jordan, Jenna, "When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation," *Security Studies*, vol. 18, no. 4 (2009), pp. 719-755. **E-JOURNAL**

Kendall, J. (2002). Israeli counter-terrorism: targeted killings under international law. *North Carolina Law Review*, 80(3), 1069-1088.

Optional Readings:

Carvin, Stephanie, "The Trouble with Targeted Killing," *Security Studies*, vol. 21, no.3 (2012), pp. 529-555. **E-JOURNAL**

Price, Bryan, "Targeting Top Terrorists: How Leadership Decapitation Contributes to Counterterrorism," *International Security*, vol. 36, No. 4 (Spring 2012) pp. 9-46. **E-JOURNAL**

Required reading about political blaming

Herfroy-Mischler, A. & Friedman, E. (2020). The 'Blame Game Frame': Ethical Blame Patterns and Media Framing upon Negotiations Failure in the Middle East. *Journalism*, 21(9), 1192–1211. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884918791219>

Herfroy-Mischler, A. and Friedman, E. (2020): The Media Framing of Blame Agency in Asymmetric Conflict: Who is Blaming Whom for the 2014 Israeli-Palestinian Peace Negotiations Failure? Journalism Studies, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2020.1797526>

NB: The program is subject to change.