

**Division of Humanities  
Course Syllabus**

**Course Code:** HUMA4000K

**Course Title:** New Perspectives on Suicide Terrorism: Global View with Emphasis on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

**Course Offered in:** Spring 2019

**Course Instructor:** Gideon Aran

**Course Description:**

This course offers a social-scientific study of political violence, terrorism, and suicide terrorism in the world, particularly in the Middle East. Suicide terrorism is enigmatic and extraordinarily lethal phenomenon, historically unique, extending over to more than forty countries (including China, US, India, France, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Iraq). The course presents a comparative-theoretical analysis based on real-time close-range investigation of Palestinian terrorism attacks in Israel during the Intifada, focusing on the arena of explosion where the disguised perpetrator and his/her target meet. Exploration of suicide terrorism uses firsthand materials produced by unconventional research methods and hitherto classified sources, revising the current discussion on the strategic logic of suicide terrorism and suggesting original insights on its moral logic. Suicide terrorism's exceptionally coercive as well as subversive impact is explained in terms of its paradoxical nature; especially the peculiar inherent link between aggressor and victim. The course draws from a recently published book - *The Smile of the Human Bomb*.

**Course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs):**

**Upon completion of this course, students are expected to be able to:**

1	Acquaintance with basic facts on Israeli society, politics and culture, and background materials on the Middle East conflict.
2	Methodic examination of suicide terrorism – a contemporary phenomenon about which we know quite little despite its prominence and critical effect on our life.
3	Learning research methods, analytic models and various hypotheses that deviate from the conventional ones.
4	Adoption of critical perspective.
5	Acquiring an academic perspective related to politically controversial and morally sensitive issues.
6	Application of a disciplined social-scientific method of observation on topic that arouses intense emotions and ideological biases.

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<b>7</b>	Explaining a phenomenon usually studied by political scientists, strategy experts and area specialists, from a sociological-anthropological point of view.
<b>8</b>	Experiencing learning with a teacher representing different scholarship tradition.

**Course Outline:**

Class Meeting and Topic

- 1.** First acquaintance: Academic biography of visiting professor – Collective biography of New Jews.
- 2.** Introducing the course: Outline, requirements, reading.  
Survey of Middle-Eastern Geo-politics.
- 3.** Muslims and Arabs are not the same.  
Trials and tribulations of the Palestinian Identity.
- 4.** Roots of Judaism: Mythology, archeology, history.
- 5.** Jewish religion, and/or Jewish people.
- 6.** Chronology of the Jews.  
Zionism.
- 7.** State of Israel and the Palestinian Entity: Elementary facts.
- 8.** State of Israel and the Palestinian Entity: Main problems.
- 9.** The Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Co-existence and armed confrontations.
- 10.** The Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Occupation, peace initiatives, *intifada*.  
(+In-class short test).
- 11.** Violence, Political Violence, War.
- 12.** Problems of defining terrorism: Guerilla, political assassination, terror.
- 13.** The characteristics of terrorism: ideology, Strategy, Technology, Subculture.
- 14.** Terrorism in historical and global perspective.
- 15.** Killing: it ain't that easy.  
Suicide Terrorism 101.
- 16.** Aggressor and victim – lethal bond.  
(+In-class short test).
- 17.** Suicide terrorism research literature – critical review.
- 18.** An overlooked aspect of suicide terrorism.
- 19.** The Human Bomb – Psychology.
- 20.** The Human Bomb – Sociology.
- 21.** Victim and sacrifice.  
Victimhood as a political asset.
- 22.** Studying terrorism and suicide terrorism: Methodological difficulties.

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**23.** Palestinian suicide terrorism in global context.

Current trends in suicide terrorism.

**24.** Five levels of explaining suicide terrorism.

**25.** Guidelines for final term-paper.

Terrorism and suicide terrorism – Palestinian and Chinese associations.

**Planned Assessment Tasks:**

Course participation: 10%

Two in-class tests: 40% (20%+20%)

Final term paper: 50%

**Readings:**

Gideon Aran, *The Smile of the Human Bomb*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018.

Alan Dowty, *Israel / Palestine*, Malden Mas.: Polity Press, 2012 (Third edition).