# Gender, terrorism and political violence

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## Course description and approach

Terror and counter-terror continue to dominate global security agendas. Recent elections in the UK, US and France have all been in part characterised by global fears on the threat of terrorist violence. Yet arguably understandings of and responses to the use of terrorist violence have done little to ameliorate the threat over the preceding 15 years. As such, this unit critically examines terrorism and counter-terror strategies through the lens of gender and feminist IR and security perspectives. It suggests that gender is a fundamental category of analysis in understanding the discourse on terrorism as a security threat and responses to it. The course explores questions such as: how do gendered assumptions imbue who is labelled terrorist and who is not?; how does gender shape the impact of terrorist violence?; what constitutes terrorist violence and why?; what role do women and gender play in violent extremist groups?; and how are counter-terror and countering extremist programs inherently shaped by gendered assumptions? These questions are explored through the lens of feminist security studies theory and the extensive contributions of gender IR perspectives. These frameworks are applied to discourses on and representations of terrorism, extremism and political violence; as well as national and international policy responses.

## Learning outcomes

1. Understand feminist security perspectives and what they bring to the study of terrorism, extremism and political violence.
2. Understand how gender norms and identities shapes and is shaped by security narratives pertaining to terrorist violence.
3. Critically reflect on how feminist and gender perspectives challenge traditional understandings of 'security', and in particular relation to terrorism and political violence.
4. An ability to apply a gender lens to both dominant narratives on terrorism as a global security threat, and to the policy responses that are adopted in response.
5. Ability to apply gender international frameworks to key concepts in studying terrorism – such as gender perspectives on the state, sovereignty and security.

## Course delivery

1 x 100 minute seminar per week; first 30 minutes of which will be delivered lecture style. The remainder will be conducted as a seminar with students leading discussion.

**Reading list:**

**Feminist lenses on security and violence**

S. Whitworth (2014) 'Feminisms', in P. Williams (ed.) *Security studies: an introduction,* London: Routledge.

L. Shepherd (2013) 'Feminist Security Studies', in L. Shepherd (ed.) *Critical approaches to security: an introduction to theory and methods,* London: Routledge.

A. Sisson Runyan & V. Spike Peterson (2013) *Global gender issues in the new millennium,* 4th ed, Westview Press. Chapter 4: Global security – gendered violence.

G. Youngs (2006) 'Feminist international relations in the age of the war on terror: ideologies, religions and conflict.' *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 8(1): 3-18.

**Understanding terrorism and political violence**

H. Dexter (2012) 'Terrorism and violence: another violence is possible?', *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 5(1): 121-137.

C. Gentry & L. Sjoberg (2014) 'Terrorism and political violence', in L. Shepherd (ed.) *Gender matters in global politics,* London: Routledge, pp. 120-130.

**Power, race and gender – intersectional lenses on terror**

M. Nayak (2006) 'Orientalism and 'saving' US state identity after 9/11', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 8(1): 42-61

Anna M. Agathangelou & L.H.M. Ling (2004). 'Power, borders, security wealth: lessons of violence and desire from September 11.' *International Studies Quarterly* 48(3): 517-538.

L. Philipose (2007) 'The politics of pain and the uses of torture', *Signs* 32(4): 1047-1071.

J. Zine (2008) 'Between Orientalism and fundamentalism: Muslim women and feminist engagement' in K. Rygiel et al. (eds.) *(En)gendering the War on Terror,* Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 27-49.

M. Khalid (2011) 'Gender, orientalism and representations of the "other" in the war on terror', *Global Change, Peace & Security* 23(1): 15-29.

**Women as agents of political violence**

S. Parashar (2010) 'Women, militancy and security', in L. Sjoberg (ed.) *Gender and International Security,* London: Routledge: 168-187.

L. Sjoberg & C. Gentry (2007) *Mothers, monsters, whores: women's violence in global politics,* London & New York: Zed Books, pp. 58-88 (Chapter 3: Triple transgressions at Abu Ghraib).

**Violence against women and terrorism**

C. Gentry (2015) 'Epistemological failures: everyday terrorism in the West', *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 8(3): 362-382

C. Mackinnon (2006) 'Women's September 11th: Rethinking the International Law of Conflict', *Harvard International Law Journal* 47(1): 1-31.

**State terrorism and gender violence**

S. Meger (2016) *Rape loot pillage: the political economy of sexual violence in armed conflict.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 4: Sexual Violence as an instrument of terror/torture.

**Gender and representations of terrorist/political violence**

Narozhna, T. (2014) 'Power and gendered rationality in western epistemic constructions of female suicide bombings,' in L. Shepherd and L. Åhäll (eds.) *Gender, agency and political violence,* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

D. Naaman (2007) 'Brides of Palestine/Angels of Death: media, gender and performance in the case of Palestinian female suicide bombers', *Signs* 32(4): 933-955.

L. Åhäll, 2012. "Motherhood, myth and gendered agency in political violence." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 14 (1): 103-120

**Gender and the 'war on terror'**

K. Ayotte & M. Husain (2005) 'Securing Afghan women: neocolonialism, epistemic violence and the rhetoric of the veil', *NWSA Journal* 17(3): 112-133.

K. Lee-Koo (2008) 'War on terror/war on women', in A. Bellamy et al. (eds) *Security and the War on Terror,* New York: Routledge, pp. 42-53.

D. Cornell (2002) 'For RAWA', *Signs* 28(1): 433-435.

L. Sjoberg (2010) 'Gendering the empire's soldiers: gender ideologies, the US military and the "war on terror"', in L. Sjoberg & S. Via (eds.) *Gender, war and militarism: feminist perspectives,* California: Praeger.

L. Shepherd (2006) 'Veiled references: Constructions of gender in the Bush administration discourse on the attacks on Afghanistan post-9/11', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 8(1): 19-41.

Melanie Richter-Monpetite. 2007. "Empire, desire and violence: a queer transnational feminist reading of the prisoner 'abuse' in Abu Ghraib and the question of 'gender equality'." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 9(1): 38:59.

## Counter-terror and policy

K. Brown (2008) 'The promise and perils of women's participation in UK mosques: the impact of securtisation agendas on identity, gender and community', *British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 10(3): 472-491.

J. Gaudry Haynie and C. de Jonge Oudraat (2017) 'Women, gender and terrorism: policies and programming', *Women in International Security Policy Brief*. January 2017. http://wiisglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Women-Gender-and-Terrorism-Policies-and-Programming.pdf

F. Ni Aolain (2016) 'The 'war on terror' and extremism: assessing the relevance of the Women, Peace and Security agenda', *International Affairs* 92(2): 275-291.

J. Gilmore (2011). 'A kinder, gentler counter-terrorism: counterinsurgency, human security and the War on Terror.' *Security Dialogue* 42(1): 21-37.