

DEMS 4709 Fall 2026

Terrorism: The New Threat

DEMS 4709

Fall 2026

Course Information

Course Instructor: Walter Perchal

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Office Hours & Location: 336 Atkinson

Course Time & Days: M 16.00 – 19.00

Class Location: ACW 002

Course eClass site: [eclass DEMS 4709](#)

Land Acknowledgment

First Nations peoples have lived on this part of Turtle Island for millennia, stewarding the land, the water and all that contributes to life in this region. Today, the culture and presence of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples enrich the lands and people of this territory.

More than two centuries ago, the Mississauga people welcomed settlers to this territory, providing sustenance and engaging in trade and commerce. Between 1781 and 1820, eight treaties were signed between the Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, who opened their territory to settlement. Today, York University's Keele Campus is located on Toronto Purchase Treaty, No. 13 lands and is situated on the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee.

Treaty history is foundational, and it is our collective responsibility to honour the land, as we honour and respect those who have gone before us, those who are here and those who have yet to come. We are grateful for the opportunity to be learning, working and thriving on this land, and we commit to learn the truth and be active in

the process of reconciliation.

Course Overview

In this course you will be joining me on a learning journey. But, in our current circumstances we will no doubt be challenged along the way. The course journey will be delivered through a combination of modalities and requirements. The core delivery will be during our scheduled class time. Should there be a communication failure at any given time on that system you will receive an email, so, make sure that the program has your updated and accurate email address.

For each week, in addition to the lecture, you will be given an appropriate reading and/or AV site for your review. Your task (Part 1) will be to identify the most important idea(s) from each of these modalities as they contribute to your learning. Once identified you will briefly explain why they are important to you. You will record those conclusions in an electronic course learning journal.

Having completed that you will proceed to (Part 2) addressing what you, or, you in the company of others can or should do about these ideas complete with how that can or should be done. Clearly, this is a call to have you ground your education and take ownership of your engagement in this topic.

On the second last class of term you will submit your learning journal to me.

You will also prepare two papers for the course. The first is an introductory study due in October. The second is your major paper that you will submit

two weeks before the end of the second term. Particulars and expectations will be presented and reviewed in class.

Along the way, in addition to expected technical issues, there will be other challenges. A journey is defined by the relationships that give it context. This particular journey is going to be directed by me. It will occur in a safe space designed to respectfully accommodate all.

Speaking for myself, I am an unusual person with an unusual background. I intend to use all of my training both academic and other and my experiences to challenge you, to push you, to encourage you to learn. All of this is to have you learn how to learn about this subject wherein you will be asked to: see not just look, listen not just hear, and, understand not just write.

By way of an additional note please be advised that because of the challenging nature of lecture materials they are solely for the use of course participants. They are not to be recorded for any other use nor are they to be reproduced or distributed.

Finally, with all of that said and more to follow this course is dedicated to those who question, to those who seek, and, to those who look to know. COURAGE.

Course Description

This course focuses on various components of terrorism. It facilitates a closer examination of both conventional and changing nature of terrorism. Security practices that continue to be applied to the present-day threat will be discussed. New and unconventional anti-terror processes will be explored that are expected to curtail the rise of terrorism. Opened to students in Emergency Mgmt program, or 60 credits completed, or permission of the course director. Cross-Listing:AP/ADMS 4709 3.00

Context

There is a broad spectrum of challenges to life in the 21st century. Among these challenges is the growing spectre of an ancient activity – terrorism.

While long practiced, it is fundamentally different in our own time. Not only is it growing in frequency, lethality, and consequences, but also, it is increasingly destabilizing the prospects for our collective future.

The single event of 911 redefined our time. There are many who now think in pre and post 911 terms. For whatever your view on that event, it is certainly true that everything is now different. For some of you in this course those differences are very real.

My purpose is to introduce students to this phenomenon. We will do this by applying a transdisciplinary social science perspective that will invite you not, to believe, but to critically explore, with a view to understanding the concept and its consequences.

Course Learning Objectives

Learning Outcomes

This is a fourth-year course with attendant academic expectations open to students in both Disaster and Emergency Management as well as to students in Administrative Studies.

Course outcomes will vary between the two primary student groups. In the case of DEM students, the course should have direct applicability to their understanding and managing the consequences of this particular threat in both an academic or applied context. In the case of Admin Studies students this course will generally contribute to their awareness of and the potential consequences of this threat in a working environment. For those in both groups specifically engaged in business continuity this will provide important insights into both the threats posed by terrorism and its necessary mitigation and management.

For all students in the course this study will support your ability to:

1. Develop an understanding of both the historical context and evolution of Terrorism through such events as: the Sicari Rebellion, the Reign of Terror, and State Terrorism in the 20th Century.
2. Evaluate the various motivations behind terrorist acts, including political, ideological, and religious factors.
3. Discuss the psychological and social dynamics that contribute to radicalization and recruitment.
4. Examine the impact of terrorism in relation to national security and public safety.
5. Understand the role of intelligence and other agencies in preventing terrorist attacks.
6. Address the need to balance security measures with the protection of civil rights.

Please note: In the Course Outline that follows specific Learning Objectives (LO) during a given week are referred as a 'Ref' and by number.

Finally, as an additional point this course will also serve to support those students who are interested in entry into this field.

Course Format and Organization

The majority of our work will centre on our class time which will be delivered in a seminar format.

Using Zoom

Students shall note the following:

- Zoom is hosted on servers in the United States and Canada. Recordings done since May 1, 2022 are stored in Canada. For more information, please refer to the notes on [Zoom Privacy and Security](#) provided by Information Security at York.
- If you have privacy concerns about your data, provide only your first name or a nickname when you join a session.
- The system is configured in a way that all participants are automatically notified when a session is being recorded. In other words, a session cannot be recorded without you knowing about it.

Here are some useful links for student computing information, resources, and help:

- [Student Guide to eClass](#)
- [Zoom@YorkU Best Practices](#)
- [Zoom@YorkU User Reference Guide](#)
- [University Information Technology \(UIT\) Student Services](#)
- [Student Guide to eLearning at York University](#)

To determine Internet connection and speed, there are online tests, such as [Speedtest](#), that can be run. If you need technical assistance, please consult the [University Information Technology \(UIT\) Student Services](#) web page. For more specific assistance, please write to askit@yorku.ca.

Course Communication Plan and Office Hours

This is an on campus course. You will have opportunity to meet with me during scheduled office hours between 1 and 3.30 on Mondays. If that does not work for you we can find a time by appointment. Additionally, we can meet after class on Monday.

You can contact me at the email listed above. In the event of immediate need you can call me at:

416 818 9332.

The majority of our work will centre on our class time which will be delivered in a seminar format.

Course Evaluation

Assessment	Due Date	Weight %	Course Learning Outcome
Introductory Paper	Week of 17 October	15%	Introduction into Field
Major Paper	Week of 28 November	30%	Comprehensive Study
Learning Journals	Week of 28 November	40%	Weekly Study
Presentation	November	15%	Group Review
		100%	

Assessment Descriptions

Detailed Assessment Descriptions and Expectations will be discussed during the first class and during the term. A detailed rubric for deliverables is outlined below.

Submitting Assignments

Work will be submitted in class as per the due dates outlined.

Late Work Policy

In the event that there are complicating issues regarding due dates students are encouraged to meet with the Course Director to discuss any such issues.

Grading

The grading scheme for this course conforms to the 9-point system used in undergraduate programs at York University. For a full description of the York grading system, visit the York University [Academic Calendar](#).

GRADE	GRADE POINT	PERCENT RANGE	DESCRIPTION
A+	9	90-100	Exceptional
A	8	80-89	Excellent
B+	7	75-79	Very Good
B	6	70-74	Good
C+	5	65-69	Competent
C	4	60-64	Fairly Competent
D+	3	55-59	Passing
D	2	50-54	Marginally Passing
E	1	(marginally below 50%)	Marginally Failing
F	0	(below 50%)	Failing

GRADING RUBRIC

Grades are based on the overall quality of the work submitted, not on the effort or time spent on

the work or on the amount the essay has improved between draft and revision.

This rubric addresses essays written for and in the class sessions.

A grade of A+ means that the essay is excellent in all the criteria of the assignment (which isn't

the same as perfect) and complete (it has a fully realized beginning, middle and end). The

essay

- addresses the questions that it raises
- skillfully expresses an argumentative thesis
- provides a context for its own complex thesis
- grapples with interesting, complex ideas in the source(s)
- insightfully analyzes well-chosen evidence

- develops its argument with a clear and logical structure
- pays attention to alternate interpretations or points of view
- acknowledges and cites sources appropriately
- uses with precision the language and stylistic conventions that have been discussed in class

A grade of A means an essay that accomplishes many of the things that an A level essay

would but possesses one or two minor areas that could be improved. For example, the essay

might contain one or two of the following features: It might

- convey stakes that are little underdeveloped or not fully related to the thesis
- contain a thesis that uses a key term imprecisely
- contain a claim with insufficient evidence or offer a moment of evidence that is not fully analyzed
- contain an occasional moment of repetition, digression, or confusing order
- insufficiently address counterargument (perhaps the objection is not quite strenuous enough, or the response to the objection is not sufficiently elaborated)

If the paper contains several of these features, that paper is no longer an A- paper.

A B range grade means that the essay has succeeded in many significant ways but falters

either in several areas or in one very substantial area.

A grade of 'B+' means the essay might have a weakness in one area or a couple of

weaknesses in less significant areas. For example,

- the thesis is arguable but not complex
- the essay is otherwise very strong but does not engage in counterargument
- the essay presents some uneven work with evidence (some insightful analysis as well as some more obvious explanation)
- some of the evidence it presents is weak
- the essay moves beyond a 5-paragraph structure but sometimes proceeds by example rather than by developing claims

A grade of B means that the essay has more substantial weaknesses in the B+ areas above. For example,

- the thesis is more descriptive than arguable
- the essay frequently uses weak evidence
- much of the analysis is superficial
- The essay has several problems with structure (some paragraphs bury their lead claims or are unfocused, or the sequence of paragraphs is occasionally not logical)

A grade of B means the essay is lacking significant necessary elements of argument.

For example, the essay

- has no thesis
- only summarizes or describes evidence
- does not offer analysis, or offers consistently superficial analysis

- has numerous paragraphs that are burying their lead claims or are unfocused
- advances in a five-paragraph structure or uses no discernible logic for its structure

A C range grade means that the essay fails to address or complete the assignment in numerous ways. For example, the essay

- has no thesis
- engages in no real work with evidence; might not use the sources at all
- discusses the topic but not engage with actual argument
- lacks a sense of completion—it begins exploring an idea or question that never gets resolved
- is significantly under the expected page requirement

A D range grade is for the essay that is severely truncated (just a few paragraphs); the student

may have tried to begin an essay but was unable to complete even a partial argument.

How to Use Citations

It is critically important that students understand the importance of required citation in their research and writing processes. Put simply you must cite any materials that you chose to use. Such citations can be provided in either MLA or APA formats. Particulars and other useful information follows:

- [SPARK Student Papers & Academic Research Kit](#)
- [Chicago Style Overview](#), YorkU Libraries
- [MLA Style Overview](#), YorkU Libraries
- [APA Style Overview](#), YorkU Libraries

- [Drop-in Research Support](#), YorkU Libraries
- [Writing Centre](#)

Course Schedule: Weekly Readings and Activities

Required Course Materials

- **Course Text:**
- **INSIDE TERRORISM, Bruce Hoffman, 3rd edition, Columbia University Press, ISBN 978-0231174770**

Course Schedule With Learning Outcomes and Chapter Readings

Week/Module Dates	Readings and Activities	Assessment Due Dates	Module/Unit Learning Outcomes
Week 1 Date	Introduction Chapter 1 - Defining Terrorism Chapter 2 - The End of Empire and the Origins of Contemporary Terrorism Chapter 3 - The Internationalization of Terrorism PPT slides #19-33 _		Course Introduction and Overview LO Ref 1 Historical Context
Week 2 Date	The Actor, The Actors, and The Audience Chapter 4 - Religion and Terrorism Chapter 5 - Suicide Terrorism		Identifying the Players LO Ref 2 Motivations
Week 3 Date	Terrorism in a Historical Perspective		Understanding what is old is new again LO

			Ref 3
			Historical Context
Week 4 Date	Who are today's Terrorists Chapter 6 - Terrorism and Public Opinion Chapter 7 - The New Media, Terrorism, and the Shaping of Global Opinion		Understanding the range from organizations to Lone Wolves LO Ref 1 Motivations
Week 5 Date	The Psychodynamics of Terrorism Chapter 8 - The Terrorist Mindset		Why people join LO Ref 2 Motivations
Week 6 Date	The Intelligence Cycle		A Method for Understanding LO Ref 5 Role of Intelligence
Week 7 Date	Terrorist Operations		Understanding how Terrorists Operate LO Ref 4 Impact of Terrorism
Week 8 Date	Responses to Terrorism		Mitigation Strategies LO Ref 5 Role of Intelligence

Week 9 Date	Current Trends and Future Prospects Chapter 9 - Today and Tomorrow 1: Force Multipliers	What to expect next LO Ref 6 Security and Protection
Week 10 Date	New Threats Chapter 10 - Today and Tomorrow 2: New and Continuing Challenges	How terrorism will evolve LO Ref 6 Security and Protection
Week 11 Date	The Canadian Challenge: Security vs Rights	Focusing on Public Policy and Expectations LO Ref 6 Security and Protection
Week 12 Date	Course Review and Recapitulation	Putting it all together

Course Policies

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information:

- [Student Rights & Responsibilities](#)
- [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)

Please also review the following course policies:

Academic Integrity

In this course, we strive to maintain academic honesty to the highest extent possible. Please familiarize yourself with the meaning of academic integrity by completing [SPARK's Academic Integrity module](#) at the beginning of the course. Breaches of academic honesty range from cheating to plagiarism (i.e., the improper crediting of another's work, the representation of another's ideas as your own, etc.). All instances of academic dishonesty in this course will be reported to the appropriate University authorities and can be punishable according to the [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#).

Turnitin

[This is only required if Turnitin will be used in your course.]

To promote academic integrity in this course, students will normally be required to submit their written assignments to Turnitin (via the course's eClass site) for a review of textual similarities and the detection of possible plagiarism. In so doing, students will allow their material to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used only for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin service are described on the Turnitin.com website. York students may opt out of using Turnitin. If you wish to opt out, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Accessibility

While all individuals are expected to satisfy the requirements of their program of study and to aspire to achieve excellence, the University recognizes that persons with disabilities may require reasonable accommodation to enable them to perform at their best. The University encourages students with disabilities to register with [Student Accessibility Services](#) to discuss their accommodation needs as early as possible in the term to establish the recommended academic accommodations that will be communicated to Course Directors through their Letter of Accommodation (LOA).

Please let your instructor know as early as possible in the term if you anticipate requiring academic accommodation so that we can discuss how to consider your accommodation needs within the context of this course. Sufficient notice is needed so that reasonable steps for accommodation can be discussed. Accommodations for tests/exams normally require three (3) weeks (or 21 days) before the scheduled test/exam to arrange.

Religious Observance Accommodation

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community, and making reasonable and appropriate [accommodations to adherents for observances of special significance](#). Should any of the dates specified in this syllabus for course examinations, tests, or deadlines conflict with a date of religious

significance, please contact the instructor within the first three (3) weeks of class. If the date falls within the formal examination periods, you must complete and submit a [Religious Accommodation for Examination Form](#) at least three (3) weeks before the start of the exam period.

Intellectual Property

Course materials are designed for use as part of this particular course at York University and are the intellectual property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third-party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian copyright law. Students may not publish, post on an Internet site, sell, or otherwise distribute any course materials or work without the instructor's express permission. Course materials should only be used by students enrolled in this course.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g., uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a charge of misconduct according to York's [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), the [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#), and/or legal consequences for copyright violations.

Student Conduct in the Learning Environment

York University is committed to fostering teaching and learning environments that are free of disruptive and/or harassing behaviour, are physically safe, and conducive to effective teaching and learning. Students and instructors are expected to maintain a professional relationship characterized by courtesy, civility, and mutual respect and to refrain from actions disruptive to such a relationship. Individuals who fail to adhere to such standards and who violate University or public law may be subject to disciplinary action by the University.

For more information, see the policies on [Disruptive and/or Harassing Behaviour in Academic Situations](#), the [Student Conduct and Responsibilities](#), and the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#).

Netiquette for eClass and Online Learning

Students and instructors have a joint responsibility to create and maintain a welcoming and inclusive learning environment. All students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#). Please review and familiarize yourself with behaviours that support "netiquette" in virtual classrooms by consulting the [Guide to Netiquette](#) and [Student Guide to eLearning](#).

Student Notice of Recording for Online Teaching and Learning

Activities for this course involve recording, in partial fulfillment of the course learning outcomes. Images, audio, text/chat messaging that have been recorded may be used and/or made available by the University to students enrolled in the course and those supporting the course for the purpose of materials review, for assessment, etc. Recordings will be managed according to the University's Common Record Schedule and will be securely destroyed when no longer needed by the University. Your personal information is protected in accordance with York University's [Guidelines on Access of Information and Protection of Privacy](#) and the [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#). Access to online materials, including recordings or live meetings, is subject to York University's [Senate Policy on Computing and Information Technology Facilities](#).

The University will use reasonable means to protect the security and confidentiality of the recorded information, but cannot provide a guarantee of such due to factors beyond the University's control, such as recordings being forwarded, copied, intercepted, circulated, disclosed, or stored without the University's knowledge or permission, or the introduction of malware into computer system which could potentially damage or disrupt the computer, networks, and security settings. The University is not responsible for connectivity/technical difficulties or loss of data associated with your hardware, software, or Internet connection.

By engaging in course activities that involve recording, you are consenting to the use of your appearance, image, text/chat messaging, and voice and/or likeness in the manner and under the conditions specified herein. In the case of a live stream recording, if you choose not to have your image or audio recorded, you may disable the audio and video functionality. If you choose to participate using a pseudonym instead of your real name, you must disclose the pseudonym to your instructor in advance to facilitate class participation.

You are not permitted to disclose the link to/URL of an event or an event session recording or copies of recording to anyone, for any reason. Recordings are available only to authorized individuals who have been directly provided the above instructions/link for their use. Recordings for personal use, required to facilitate your learning and preparation of personal course/lecture notes, may not be shared with others without the permission of the instructor or event coordinator, and may not be published, posted, linked to, or otherwise made available online, including on social media feeds, even if those feeds are private.

Health and Safety

All York students and instructors share responsibility for the safety and well-being of the community while on York's campuses. Please continue to check [YUBetter Together](#) for the latest information on health and safety.

Hyflex Course Policy

[This section applies only to HYFLX courses.]

Hyflex sessions are digitally transmitted and may be recorded to support teaching and learning in the classroom. As a result, York University may collect your image, voice, name, personal views and opinions, and coursework under the authority of The York University Act, 1965, and for use in related educational purposes.

Note: Students who participate in a Hyflex session are consenting to have their video or image transmitted and/or recorded. If you have concerns with such transmission or recording, sit in the designated seating area which is outside of the camera range. In addition, students who participate orally are consenting to have their voices, personal views, and opinions transmitted and/or recorded. If you do not consent to the transmission or recording of your voice, please use the text-based chat function to communicate during class.

Students are not permitted to use any third-party software or application to record a transmitted Hyflex session. Additionally, instructors, TA(s), and students may not post, share, or otherwise publish recorded materials outside of the Hyflex course. To do so may result in disclosure of the personal information and intellectual property of students and instructors to others. If you have any questions about the collection or use of your personal information, please contact your instructor or the Privacy Office at info.privacy@yorku.ca.

Recordings of Hyflex course sessions will be retained along with other posted courses materials in accordance with York's Common Record Schedule. Student access will be removed following the end of each term. Recordings that include student images or audio will not be used for a subsequent offering of the course.

Student Support and Resources

To help you succeed academically, York University offers a wide range of resources and services. Everything from writing workshops and peer mentorship to wellness support and career guidance is available to fulfill our LA&PS students' needs. Explore the links below to access these on-campus resources:

- [Academic Advising](#) is available to provide students support and guidance in making academic decisions and goals.
- [Student Accessibility Services](#) are available for support and accessibility accommodation when required.
- [Student Counselling, Health & Wellbeing](#) offers workshops, resources, and counselling to support your academic success.

- [Peer-Assisted Study Sessions \(PASS\) Program](#) provides student study sessions for students to collaborate and enhance their understanding of course content in certain courses.
- [Student Numeracy Assistance Centre at Keele \(SNACK\)](#) supports students in courses involving math, stats, and Excel.
- [The Writing Centre](#) provides multiple avenues of writing-based support including drop-in sessions, one-to-one appointments, a Multilingual Studio, and an Accessibility Specialist.
- [ESL Open Learning Centre \(OLC\)](#) supports students with building proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking English.
- [Learning Skills Services](#) provides tips for time management, effective study and learning habits, keeping up with coursework, and other learning-related supports.
- [Learning Commons](#) provides links to supports for time management, writing, study skills, preparing for exams, and other learning-related resources.
- [Roadmap to Student Success](#) provides students with timely and targeted resources to help them achieve academic, personal, and professional success.
- [Office of Student Community Relations \(OSCR\)](#) is responsible for administering the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) and provides critical incident support.
- [goSAFE](#) is staffed by York students and can accompany York community members to and from any on-campus location, such as the Village Shuttle pick-up hub, parking lots, bus stops, or residences.

For a full list of academic, wellness, and campus resources visit [Student Support & Resources](#).