



PICT2015

Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the 21st Century

Session 2, Online-flexible 2026

School of International Studies

Contents

<u>General Information</u>	2
<u>Learning Outcomes</u>	2
<u>General Assessment Information</u>	3
<u>Assessment Tasks</u>	3
<u>Delivery and Resources</u>	6
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	6

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

50cp at 1000 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit provides a critical introduction to the causes, strategies, and tactics of terrorists and violent extremists in the twenty-first century, and some possible solutions to these problems. It explores the global origins and history of terrorism as a means of political coercion, evaluates the effectiveness of terrorism as a strategy, and examines how terrorism and violent extremism are changing in the twenty-first century. Attention will be given to case studies looking at various religious, political, and far-right and far-left ideological terrorist and violent extremist organisations. By the end of this unit, students will gain an understanding of the dynamics that underpin twenty-first century terrorism and violent extremism, as well as evaluate both hard and soft approaches to countering these. Special attention will be focused on the sources of successful and ethical countering strategies; understanding mechanisms of radicalisation to and from violent extremism; evaluating proportionate state response to terror and violent extremist threats; and assessing the role of new technologies such as social media on how terrorist groups operate.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

ULO1: Identify the relationship between violence, extremism and terrorism in the 21st

century

ULO2: Identify the differences between political, religious, and ideological forms of terrorism and violent extremism, and how they have emerged over the past century.

ULO3: Critically evaluate how the concept of terrorism is used in security discourse in the 21st century.

ULO4: Explain and evaluate the range of hard and soft responses to terrorism and violent extremism available to liberal societies.

ULO5: Demonstrate a critical understanding of processes of radicalisation to violent extremism and how these relate to new media technologies and the internet.

ULO6: Demonstrate critical analysis skills through the completion of assessable research tasks.

General Assessment Information

Rubrics and indicative samples are provided in iLearn as additional guidance on standards of achievement for different assessment types. Submission of most tasks is via iLearn, but there may be use of other submission platforms, such as an e-book. All assessment tasks are compulsory and must be submitted on time. Assignment tasks handed in early will not be marked and returned before the due date. Late Assessment Submission Penalty Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of '0' (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue. This late penalty will apply to non-timed sensitive assessment (incl essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc). Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs etc) will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special Consideration application. Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic. The granting of extensions is subject to the university's Special Consideration Policy. Extensions will not be granted by unit conveners or tutors, but must be lodged through Special Consideration: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/my-study-program/special-consideration> Reassessment of Assignments during the semester Macquarie University operates a Grade Appeal Policy in cases where students feel their work was graded inappropriately: <http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html> In accordance with the Grade Appeal Policy, individual works are not subject to regrading.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Online test	20%	No	Exam Period	Individual	No	Open

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Research Essay	50%	No	20/09/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Critical Review	30%	No	23/08/2026	Individual	Yes	Open

Online test

Assessment Type ¹: Problem-based task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours

Due: **Exam Period**

Weighting: **20%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: No

AI Approach: Open

An online test will be administered in the final week of the unit to assess knowledge and understanding of all the unit materials, including lectures, case studies, and readings.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify the relationship between violence, extremism and terrorism in the 21st century
- Identify the differences between political, religious, and ideological forms of terrorism and violent extremism, and how they have emerged over the past century.
- Critically evaluate how the concept of terrorism is used in security discourse in the 21st century.
- Explain and evaluate the range of hard and soft responses to terrorism and violent extremism available to liberal societies.
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of processes of radicalisation to violent extremism and how these relate to new media technologies and the internet.
- Demonstrate critical analysis skills through the completion of assessable research tasks.

Research Essay

Assessment Type ¹: Written Submission

Indicative Time on Task ²: 40 hours

Due: **20/09/2026**

Weighting: **50%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

The major essay is a demonstration of the student's ability to research, conceptualise, and communicate a sustained scholarly argument based upon a thesis. Students will be given a list of essay questions related to the unit curriculum and asked to research, prepare, and express a

cogent response to one chosen question in a clear, concise, and academically formal manner. The major essay will demonstrate how thoroughly the student has researched the academic literature pertaining to an issue, how well they can use critical thinking and logic to devise an appropriate argument, and how well they can structure and express this argument in a sustained and convincing manner.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- Identify the differences between political, religious, and ideological forms of terrorism and violent extremism, and how they have emerged over the past century.
- Critically evaluate how the concept of terrorism is used in security discourse in the 21st century.
- Explain and evaluate the range of hard and soft responses to terrorism and violent extremism available to liberal societies.
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of processes of radicalisation to violent extremism and how these relate to new media technologies and the internet.
- Demonstrate critical analysis skills through the completion of assessable research tasks.

Critical Review

Assessment Type ¹: Written Submission

Indicative Time on Task ²: 21 hours

Due: **23/08/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

The critical review is a written paper examining a hotly debated and controversial topic related to terrorism and violent extremism in the 21st Century. It requires the informed and scholarly consideration of all sides of the background of the debate, the evaluation and weighing up of evidence, and the application of appropriate theory to unpacking the complexities of the debate in a critical and measured manner. Topics could include subjects such as: why or why isn't a particular group considered to be 'terrorists'; to what extent is the internet responsible for radicalisation of young people to violent extremism; terrorism can best be stopped through the adoption of hard or soft countering measures etc.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify the relationship between violence, extremism and terrorism in the 21st century
- Identify the differences between political, religious, and ideological forms of terrorism and violent extremism, and how they have emerged over the past century.

- Critically evaluate how the concept of terrorism is used in security discourse in the 21st century.
- Explain and evaluate the range of hard and soft responses to terrorism and violent extremism available to liberal societies.
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of processes of radicalisation to violent extremism and how these relate to new media technologies and the internet.
- Demonstrate critical analysis skills through the completion of assessable research tasks.

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- [Academic Success](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation.

³ An automatic short extension is available for some assessments. Apply through the [Service Connect Portal](#).

Delivery and Resources

Lectures will be held on campus each **Monday between 12 pm - 2 pm at 10HA T1**

The Lecture materials will then be uploaded to this iLearn site by Wednesday afternoon. These lecture materials are available in the Echo box on the right side of the screen. There will also be a PowerPoint presentation uploaded each week as a companion to the lecture. This will be found under the weekly tabs below. Lectures and PowerPoint slides will be uploaded every week.

If you are an internal student please attend the lectures. If you are an external or OUA student, please listen to them online.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#) (<https://policies.mq.edu.au>). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)

- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central](https://policies.mq.edu.au) (<https://policies.mq.edu.au>) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit connect.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Academic Success

[Academic Success](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Ask a Study Coach](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)
- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)

- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via the [Service Connect Portal](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/technology/service-desk>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Unit information based on version 2026.03 of the [Handbook](#)