

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
Sol Price School of Public Policy
Spring 2021

Syllabus – PPDE-670
AMERICAN CONTEMPORARY
HOMEGROWN VIOLENT EXTREMISM

4 units

“What is objectionable, what is dangerous, about extremists is not that they are extreme, but that they are intolerant. The evil is not what they say about their cause, but what they say about their opponents.” - John F. Kennedy

Dr. Erroll G. Southers
Professor of the Practice in National & Homeland Security
3335 S. Figueroa Street
Los Angeles, CA 90089-7273
Office: (213) 740-9961 / Cell: (323) 816-8045 / Fax: (213) 821-3926
Email: southers@price.usc.edu
Zoom Office hours: Monday, 3:30 – 5 pm (by appt.)

Course Purpose and Objectives

This course, examining the past half-century in America, is designed to provide students with an understanding of how public organizations and supporting legislation may deal with the threat of various forms of homegrown violent extremism. A student who successfully embraces the teachings offered by this course will be able to:

1. Develop a working definition of the terms “extremism,” “homegrown violent extremism” and “terrorism,” and apply those classifications to public policy decisions.
2. Understand the legislative challenges and public safety responsibilities facing the American intelligence community, local, state, federal law enforcement and investigative agencies.
3. Examine the critical balance of effective national security, public safety and basic civil liberties, understanding that America remains at risk of a new and evolving homegrown threat.
4. Understand how the scientific method and critical theory, when applied to the study of extremist group relationships, provide the capacity to identify appropriate research questions critical to developing strategies for countering extremist ideologies.

5. Understand the “Mosaic of Engagement” strategy, which facilitates a more transparent, community-based process for implementing, measuring and sustaining consensus-building capacity to oppose violent extremism.

Course Overview

The homegrown violent extremist (HVE) threat in the United States is multifaceted, inspired by many violent ideologies. It is not a homogenous threat from Muslim extremism. There is no single group on which we can focus our counterterrorism and public safety efforts. Neo-Nazis, militias, Antifa and so-called sovereign citizens, represent but a few extremist ideologies, which have violently rejected the authority of the state. These and other extremists present a growing threat to the United States, which must be addressed with purposeful academic study and civic engagement. Given the plethora of threats to a safe society, as well as the blurred, often-unseen radicalization process that can occur anywhere, anytime, those with the greatest capacity to identify and help disrupt the path to violent extremism are the very communities from which potential terrorists arise. The underlying concept is that by engaging community stakeholders in dialogue and sharing information about the risk of extremism and radicalization, we can develop strategies that prevent people from embracing ideologies that advocate violence.

Required Texts

You may purchase the following publications at the USC Bookstore:

Peter Bergen, *United States of Jihad, Investigating America’s Homegrown Terrorists*, (Crown Publishers, 2016)

Bryan Burrough, *Days of Rage: America’s Radical Underground, the FBI and the Forgotten Age of Revolutionary Violence*, (Penguin Press, 2015)

Pete Simi and Robert Futrell, *American Swastika, Inside the White Power Movement’s Hidden Spaces of Hate*, (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2010)

Erroll Southers, *Homegrown Violent Extremism*, (Anderson Publications, 2013)

Recommended Texts

Ian Haney López, *Dog Whistle Politics, How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism & Wrecked the Middle Class*, (Oxford University Press, 2014)

Course Requirements

This course will be taught as a seminar, with lectures, readings, papers; and presentations by students and guest speakers drawn from the various agencies and specialties involved in HVE reduction efforts. Inasmuch as one of the goals of the course is to prepare the student for the rigors of addressing increasing HVE policy issues, class participation in the weekly discussions and most notably in the “Mosaic of Engagement” Class Exercise is critical.

In-class midterm examination: The midterm is designed to illicit critical thinking and analyses of the terms, concepts, methodologies and issues presented in the course to date. You will be expected to address the exam questions in a manner demonstrating your knowledge of the issue presented in the exam questions, accompanied by comparative analyses of the various concepts that support your response. You may utilize any reference (including electronic medium) materials you choose, provided the proper citation of sources accompanies your answer(s).

Policy Paper Outline: a 1 – 3 page description, framing the intended content of the policy paper. This outline should clearly define the HVE homeland security challenge and articulate the recommended response, considering such issues as possible synergies with existing national security initiatives, organizational/departmental balance, costs, planning and the opportunities to leverage public engagement.

Homegrown Violent Extremism (HVE) Task Force Exercise: This will be one of the culminating events at this point in the course, challenging your ability for information analysis and consensus building. Students will represent several law enforcement, civil liberties and governmental agencies on the HVE Task Force, e.g. the ACLU, National Governors Association, United States Conference of Mayors, FBI, International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), etc., and each provided the appropriate operational information needed to function in their designated capacities. The issue will be the HVE Task Force review and recommendation regarding the decision for the declaration of martial law. “First Amendment” rallies are planned on April 19 (the anniversary of the American Revolutionary War) intentionally, in twenty of the forty-five states that allow open carry of firearms. Opposition movements, intend to be present, exercising the same rights regarding the possession of weapons. Due to the potential for violence, including loss of life and the fluidity of the intelligence, the Congress is being pressed to consider the declaration of martial law, for the purpose of containing the assembled masses and/or to disallow the events from taking place. Students will be assigned to the representative agencies weeks ahead of the exercise for the purpose of obtaining the necessary data to inform their recommendation to the Congressional Homeland Security Committee.

Policy Paper: a 15 - 20 page, in-depth study of a homegrown violent extremism policy challenge of your choosing that will require the application of the materials studied and presented in this course. Students will choose their topic for in-depth policy paper no later than week 5. The policy paper must include citations to at least 10 books or journal articles, including the course books and/or lectures, as appropriate. “Wikipedia” should not be amongst cited sources.

Classroom briefs of your policy papers will be delivered during Weeks 14 and 15: The operational world of homeland security consists of countless briefs and testimony to legislators, public and private entities, to inform them of the status of our work, up to and including the presentation of classified information to “cleared” individuals, regarding the potential of a specific terrorist threat. Using the policy paper as the foundation, the policy brief will consist of an in-class presentation limited to 15 minutes, describing the policy challenge research.

Each student will be required to assess the quality of the classroom briefs by completing a **Peer Evaluation** of each presentation. The purpose of these evaluations is meant to serve as constructive critiques. Presenters are expected to review their respective Peer Evaluations noting opportunities to improve in similar forums in their respective professional disciplines.

Please note: **All assigned papers must be submitted electronically via email by 6:00 pm on the due date.** They are to be in 12-point font and double-spaced. Papers will be returned electronically. I will not accept papers in hard copy or pdf formatting. **Labeling protocol: please label all files by your last name and name of assignment (e.g., southers_policy_outline.doc.)**

Evaluation of Performance

The expectation is that this course will provide knowledge that will enhance your ability to perform as a professional. Facilitation of success is a principal function of an organization and of managers. The instructor places no higher priority on this issue in presenting this course and would expect you to do the same. Your performance will be evaluated as follows:

1. Midterm Examination	25%
2. Policy Paper Outline	10%
3. HVE Task Force Class Exercise	10%
4. Policy Paper	35%
5. Policy Paper Brief	10%
6. Class Participation	10%

This course uses an applied approach that integrates lecture material with hands-on in-class analysis and discussion. Students are expected to attend all class meetings and participate fully in class activities. Because **attending all class meetings and completing all in-class work is the minimum expected of all students**, class ***participation** is not included directly in the grading breakdown above; instead, a student’s overall score in the course may be increased or decreased by up to 3 percentage points to reflect particularly outstanding contributions to class discussions or failure to meet these expectations. *In extreme cases, repeated unexcused absences (including missing classes in their entirety and/or in large parts by arriving late and/or leaving early) will result in a non-passing grade for the course regardless of performance on other assignments.*

***Participation:** Students are expected to be in class or visible online, to be prepared for learning and familiar with readings, to complete assignments in a timely manner and

participate in class discussions. Participation translates to mean ‘quality of presence’ noted through behaviors such as active listening, thoughtful contributions to discussions, respect and attentiveness to create a dynamic and interactive learning community. Technology is used for learning and not texting, surfing the web, and catching up on emails.

Course Schedule and Readings

(Due to the contemporary nature of this course, the scheduled weekly content is subject to change without notice.)

Week	Subject & Readings
1 (January 18)	Martin Luther King’s Birthday – No classes
2 (January 25)	Class Introduction: Course overview and the need to understand HVE <u>Description:</u> We will discuss class expectations from the course and begin to consider some of the major policy and strategic challenges associated with American homegrown violent extremism related to the lack of a comprehensive definition and growing inaccurate perceptions regarding the threat.
3 (February 1)	Defining Homegrown Violent Extremism <u>Description:</u> Homegrown violent extremism has evolved as the most important counterterrorism challenge. We will examine the nature of extremism, violent extremism, homegrown, and terrorism, and the definitional debates regarding the elements of these behaviors. <u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bergen: Chap. 1 “Americans for ISIS” (pp. 1-19)• Bergen: Chap. 2 “All-American Al-Qaeda” (pp. 20-43)• Bergen: Chap. 5 “Pre-Crime” (pp. 85-104)• Bergen: Chap. 9 “Tracking the Terrorists” (pp. 199-220)• Southers: Chap. 1 “Defining Homegrown Violent Extremism” (pp. 1-20)
4 (February 8)	Violent Extremist Ideological Motivations - Race <u>Description:</u> We will investigate race, religion and issue-oriented extremist ideologies and the numerous groups that embrace them. This week will focus on the 800 pound gorilla – race. We will examine the misconceptions and challenges of talking about racism, the global growth of white supremacy and responses to those activities. <u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simi: Chap. 1 “Hidden Spaces of Aryan Hate” (pp. 1-8)

- Simi: Chap. 2 “Contemporary Aryan Hate” (pp. 9-17)

Case Study:

- Bergen: Chap. 4 “Lone Wolves” (pp. 56-84)

5 (February 15)

President’s Day – No classes

6 (February 22)

Violent Extremist Ideological Motivations – Religion & Issue-Oriented Groups Radicalization

Description: Close examination of the HVE ideological motivations of religion and issue oriented groups, whose missions and long-term objectives help reveal the central factors that become associated with acts of terrorism.

Readings:

- Southers: Chap. 2 “Ideological Motivation” (pp. 21-52)

Case Studies:

- Bergen: Chap. 6 “Leader-Led Jihad” (pp. 105-130)
- Bergen: Chap. 10 “The Boston Bombers” (pp. 221-243)

7 (March 1)

“Unchecking” the Boxes

Policy paper topic selection due this class session

HVE Task Force Groups will be assigned this class session.

Description: Radicalization is one of the most overused and misunderstood concepts in the terrorism lexicon. This session will provide the foundation for a comprehensive definition, and investigate various proposed routes an individual might shift from harboring extreme opinions and beliefs, to taking violent action in furtherance of aspirations or goals.

Readings:

- Simi: Chap. 3 “Aryan Hate in the Home” (pp. 19-36)
- Simi: Chap. 4 “Hate Parties” (pp. 37-57)
- Simi: Chap. 6 “Virtual Hate” (pp. 83-98)
- Southers: Chap. 3 “The Radicalization Pathway” (pp. 53- 78)

8 (March 8)

America’s Battle with Homegrown Violent Extremists

Midterm Examination will be held this class session.

Description: We will begin to examine the battles between the FBI and violent homegrown violent revolutionary movements by reviewing the Academy Award nominated documentary, *The Weather Underground*.

9 (March 15)

Leveraging Disciplines to Understand Violent Extremism

Description: Evidence-based research, the scientific method and critical theory are critical to leveraging academic disciplines in support of

effective policies that will encourage communities to engage in a culture of cooperation. This session will consider the role of the humanities, sciences and social sciences in facilitating a better understanding of HVE by employing a multidisciplinary approach.

Readings:

- Southers: Chap. 4 “Leveraging Disciplines Toward a Counterterrorism Profession” (pp. 79-97)
- Southers: Chap. 5 “A Mosaic of Engagement” (pp. 100- 119)
- Bergen: Chap. 11 “Future Jihad” (pp. 244-280)

10 (March 22)

“Dog Whistle Politics” and the Underpinning of Extremism

Policy outline due this session

Description: For decades politicians and policies have furthered what Ian Haney López describes as “dog whistle politics”: coded racial appeals that carefully manipulate hostility toward nonwhites. The result has been broad swaths white Americans to identify and embrace anti-government ideologies and racial hatred. This session will examine “strategic racism” in terms of hate, structural racism and implicit bias.

Readings:

- López: “Beyond Hate: Strategic Racism” (pp.35-53)
- López: “The False Allure of Color Blindness” (pp.77-103)
- López: “Getting Away with Racism” (pp. 127-145) Case Study:
- Bergen: Chap. 8 “Exporting Jihad: Americans Abroad” (pp. 160-198)

11 (March 29)

The Sixties and Seventies

Description: This session begins with an understanding of the FBI COINTELPRO (counterintelligence program) attack on left-wing factions of America. This session will review two decades when most of America grew fascinated with the hippie counterculture youth movement. Groups such as the Weathermen, Symbionese Liberation Army and Black Liberation Army were at war with the American government generally and the FBI specifically. We will examine how history described the FBI’s response and subsequent policies to this leftist revolutionary counterculture, where both sides crossed the threshold into the realm of criminal tactics and behavior.

Readings:

- Burrough: Chap. 3 “You Say You Want a Revolution” (pp. 55-86)
- Burrough: Chap. 4 “As To Killing People, We Were Prepared to Do That” (pp. 87-105)
- Burrough: Chap. 5 “The Townhouse” (pp. 106-131)
- Burrough: Chap. 6 “Responsible Terrorism:” (pp. 132-151)
- Burrough: Chap. 7 “The Wrong Side of History” (pp. 152- 169)
- Burrough: Chap. 8 “An Army of Angry Niggas” (pp.173- 198)

- Burrough: Chap. 17 “Welcome To Fear City” (pp.380-406)
- Simi: Chap. 7 “Private Aryan Communities” (pp. 99-117)

12 (April 5)

Homegrown Violent Extremism Task Force Class Exercise

- See scenario on page 3

13 (April 12)

The Eighties and Nineties

Policy paper due this session

Description: These two decades were complete with a diverse collection of attacks by international and homegrown groups. Little known incidents including the bombing of the U.S. Senate building, to the use of salmonella in a bioterror attack in Oregon, are punctuated by a series of anti-government standoffs at fortified compounds in various locations in the country. The tragic ending of the siege in Waco, Texas, the 1996 Atlanta Olympics bombing and the targeting of abortion clinics and the gay community, demonstrate the diverse environments and ideologies engaged at the time. The bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City resulted in several significant legislative measures and proposals, such as the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act. This class examines the intelligence at the time, which may have seen this coming and the government’s response to the incidents. We will seek to understand how these various ideologies working at cross-purposes, seemed to coalesce and target a common enemy – America.

Readings:

- Burrough: Chap. 22 “The Scales of Justice” (pp. 492-512)
- Burrough: Chap. 23 “The Last Revolutionaries” (pp. 513- 536)

14 (April 19)

Civil Liberties and Extremism

Description: We will examine traditional and contemporary extremist organizations and their dangerously close nexus to a call for violence and the issues associated with the government policies and programs, intended to prevent people from joining or supporting terrorist groups or engaging in ideologically driven violence.

Readings:

- Schlanger: “A civil rights vision for countering violent extremism” (July 14, 2015)
- Shamsi: “Will White House Violent Extremism Summit Address Pressing Civil Rights Concerns?” (February 17, 2015)
- Singh Chima: “Beware: countering ‘violent extremism’ online risks human rights” (November 2, 2016)
- Southers: “Countering Violent Extremism Needs an Overhaul” (May 28, 2017)

Case Study:

- Bergen: JIHADINAMERICA.COM (pp. 131-159)

15 (April 26) Policy Briefs, Presentations and Peer Evaluations

April 30 – May 4) Study Days

16 (May 10) Policy Briefs, Presentations and Peer Evaluations

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710

campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

ombuds.usc.edu

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Instructor's Bio

Dr. Erroll G. Southers is a Professor of the Practice in National and Homeland Security, Director of the Safe Communities Institute and Homegrown Violent Extremism Studies at the University of Southern (USC) California Sol Price School of Public Policy. He was President Barack Obama's first nominee for Transportation Security Administration Assistant Secretary, and he was also California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's Deputy Director for Critical Infrastructure of the California Office of Homeland Security.

Professor Southers' career has spanned all levels of law enforcement, formerly serving as Assistant Chief of Homeland Security and Intelligence at the Los Angeles World Airports Police Department. He also previously enjoyed the distinction of FBI Special Agent and SWAT team

member, as well as Santa Monica Police Officer. He served on the faculty and tactical staff of the Rio Hondo Police Academy.

Currently, Professor Southers holds roles throughout the international counterterrorism and national security arena, including: Visiting Fellow and member of the Professional Advisory Board of the International Institute of Counter-Terrorism in Herzliya, Israel; and Visiting Professor at the Université Paris 2 Panthéon-Assas in France. He is also the Managing Director of the Counter-Terrorism and Infrastructure Protection Division for TAL Global Corporation, an international security-consulting firm.

Professor Southers has testified before the full Congressional Committee on Homeland Security as a subject matter expert and counterterrorism analyst. At USC, he developed the Executive Program in Counterterrorism and serves as an adjunct professor of Homeland Security and Public Policy in the Sol Price School of Public Policy, where he received the 2014 Outstanding Doctoral Project Award and was named the 2013 and 2014 Outstanding Adjunct Professor of the Year. He is a regular contributor to national and international media networks on matters of terrorism and national security, the author of *Homegrown Violent Extremism*, serves on the USA Today Opinion Board of Contributors and testified at several Congressional Hearings, including the first Congressional Hearing on the Boston Marathon bombings.

Professor Southers was the recipient of the Earl Warren Outstanding Public Service Award, was recognized in *Security Magazine's* Top 25 Most Influential Industry Thought Leaders in the United States, and was a member of the Los Angeles Mayor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Airport Security at LAX. He earned his undergraduate degree from Brown University, and he holds masters and doctoral degrees in public policy from USC.