UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Violent Extremism and Criminal Policies

2425-5-A5810258

Learning objectives

• Mastering the socio-criminological approaches to the phenomenon of violent extremism and to its associated conflicts

• Interpretation of the phenomenon of violent extremism in its multiple forms through case studies

• Ability to apply qualitative methodologies

• Ability to develop interdisciplinary dialogues

• Critical analysis of criminal policies in the field

Contents

The course will deal with the complex phenomenon of violent extremism using a comparative and interdisciplinary approach to help students explore both its pragmatic and its theoretical challenges.

Drawing on emergent literature in the field of interactionist, narrative, cultural and critical criminology, the course will analyze different models of radicalization into violent extremism and will examine the possible ways of responding to violent extremism in terms of criminal policies.

Detailed program

The course will deal with the complex phenomenon of violent extremism using a comparative and interdisciplinary

approach to help students explore both its pragmatic and its theoretical challenges.

The introduction to the course will be dedicated to the controversial definition of violent extremism. Drawing on emergent literature in the field of interactionist, narrative, cultural and critical criminology and after having analyzed different models of radicalization into violent extremism, the course will highlight: how the processes of violent radicalization can have multiple and complex factors and therefore we need to counter linear explanations of cause and effect; that it is necessary to go beyond a simplistic and reductive vision of the relationship between religion and violence, on the one hand, and of the rigid distinction between violent and non-violent extremists, on the other; that violent radicalization is a dynamic, complex and multidimensional psycho-social process.

The final part of the course will examine the possible ways of responding to violent extremism in terms of criminal policies: from anti-terrorism (counter-terrorism, CT) to preventive approaches that make use of non-coercive methods (CVE, Countering Violent Extremism) – including prevention, intervention and rehabilitation programmes with a link to the field of restorative justice.

Prerequisites

Good skills in learning, writing and oral communication in English.

Teaching methods

The course will be delivered in English. Throughout the course, the active role of the students will be enhanced and they will be able to put into practice the proposed theoretical and methodological approaches through opportunities for discussion and also through the use of videos and simulations.

- 20 two-hour lessons held in presence, with a first part in frontal mode (DE) and a second part aimed at involving students in an interactive way (DI).
- 1 two-hour lesson delivered remotely.

Assessment methods

Oral exam: it will be a discussion based on the course texts and on the topics covered in class. During the oral exam, it is also possible to discuss a written work previously agreed upon with the professor and developed starting from the theoretical contents indicated in the bibliography.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Borum, R. (2012), "Radicalization into Violent Extremism I: A Review of Social Science Theories." Journal of Strategic Security 4, 4: 7-36.

Borum, R. (2012), "Radicalization into Violent Extremism II: A Review of Conceptual Models and Empirical Research." Journal of Strategic Security 4, 4: 37-62.

Ceretti, A., Natali, L. (2020) Exploring Violent Cosmologies From a “Radical Interactionist” Approach. Critical Criminology. (open access: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10612-020-09536-y)

Ilan J, Sandberg S. (2019) How ‘gangsters’ become jihadists: Bourdieu, criminology and the crime–terrorism nexus. European Journal of Criminology, 16(3): 278-294. doi:10.1177/1477370819828936

McCulloch, J., Walklate, S., Maher, J. et al. (2019) Lone Wolf Terrorism Through a Gendered Lens: Men Turning Violent or Violent Men Behaving Violently? Critical Criminology 27, 437–450

Presser, L., Sandberg, S. (2019) Narrative Criminology as Critical Criminology. Critical Criminology 27, 131–143. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-019-09437-9

Ravagnani. L. (2021) Rehabilitation work with convicted offenders outside of prison: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/default/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/ran_ad-hoc_rehab_outside_of_prison_20201120_en.pdf

Ruiz Yamuza, FG., Ravagnani, L. (2018) Countering Islamic radicalisation in prison through restorative justice based programmes. ERA Forum 18, 611–626. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12027-018-0515-6

Sandberg, S, and Colvin, S. (2020) ‘ISIS is not Islam’: Epistemic Injustice, Everyday Religion, and Young Muslims’ Narrative Resistance, The British Journal of Criminology, 60 (6): 1585–1605, https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azaa035

Sandberg, S. and Andersen, J.C. (2019), Opposing violent extremism through counter-narratives: Four forms of narrative resistance, in Fleetwood, J., Presser, L., Sandberg, S., Ugelvik, T. (Eds.) The Emerald Handbook of Narrative Criminology. Emerald Publishing.

Silke, A., & Veldhuis, T. (2017). Countering Violent Extremism in Prisons: A Review of Key Recent Research and Critical Research Gaps. Perspectives on Terrorism, 11(5), 2-11.

Sunde, H.M., Ilan, J., Sandberg, S. (2020). A cultural criminology of “new” jihad: Insights from propaganda magazines. Crime, Media, Culture. doi:10.1177/1741659020915509

Wibisono, S., Louis, W. R., & Jetten, J. (2019). A Multidimensional Analysis of Religious Extremism. Frontiers in psychology, 10, 2560. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02560

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