

<b>Course</b>	Understanding Violent Extremism: Prevention in Sociopolitical Contexts
<b>Program, semester, year</b>	International Studies Program, Spring, 2026
<b>Credits ECTS</b>	3 USA
<b>Instructor's full name and email</b>	Sigrid Vázquez Tirado, PhD <a href="mailto:svazquez123@uaqm.edu">svazquez123@uaqm.edu</a>
<b>Block dates (days and time)</b>	Monday-Thursday, 9am-12pm
<b>Classroom</b>	TBA
<b>Class hours</b>	45
<b>Office Hours</b>	TBA
<b>Requirements</b>	TBA
<b>Language of instruction</b>	English
<b>Type of teaching</b>	In person

## INTRODUCTION

In simple terms, violent extremism is a term used to describe extreme behavior due to an ideological position; a position that the individual or group uses to justify violence to achieve a specific result. This kind of behavior usually evolves from conventional to radical due to a variety of protective and risk factors. The impact and consequences of extreme violence are evident in different countries. This course explores the complexities of extreme violence in society, specifically when used to advocate for a social, religious or political goal. The focus of this course is on the rise of violent extremism in diverse contexts and how we can advocate for prevention.

## COMPETENCES

### General Competences (GC):

GC1: Students will be guided and encouraged to strengthen their analytical and critical thinking skills.

GC2: Students will demonstrate capacity for scientific reasoning and comprehension of the value of social science research.

GC3: Students will practice their communication skills and exhibit professional conduct in oral and written interactions.

GC4: Students will apply and expand their knowledge of ethics, while respecting diversity in a transatlantic perspective.

### Specific Competences (CE):

*Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:*

SC1: Identify the major areas of concern and study of violent extremism.

SC2: Describe the different theories, models, and recent research on violent extremism to understand why it happens and how to prevent it.

SC3: Apply cultural competency skills and ethical knowledge to compare the manifestations of violent extremism in different countries.

SC4: Understand the complexity of the issues discussed to identify opportunities for prevention and positive social change.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this course will be an eclectic integration of lectures, assigned readings (or audiovisual resources), class discussions and in-class exercises. The goal is to effectively combine theory and practice.

## PREPARATION FOR CLASS

- Students should review the material assigned before the class and be prepared for active participation in class discussions and exercises.
- Students are encouraged to take notes and ask questions as needed.
- Plagiarism or the improper use of artificial intelligence (AI) to complete assignments will not be tolerated.

## EVALUATION

The total percentage of this section is 100%. The evaluation of this course is as follows:

- **In class activities and field trips.**  
These activities will be announced and discussed in class.  
Total: 5%
- **Quiz and Exam.**  
Mid-term quiz and a final exam.  
Total: 30%
- **Written work.**  
Essay and short critical thinking exercises. A rubric will be provided.  
Total: 40%
- **Oral presentation (individual or group presentation).**  
A rubric will be provided.  
Total: 20%
- **Participation in discussions and attendance.**  
Total 5%

<b>PARTICIPATION</b>	5%
<b>ACTIVITIES AND FIELD TRIPS</b>	5%
<b>WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS</b>	40%
<b>MIDTERM QUIZ</b>	15%
<b>ORAL PRESENTATION</b>	20%
<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	100%

## **Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is a violation of academic norms and as such, it can result in a failed course. In extreme cases it can include the expulsion from the program. Remember to cite appropriately and rephrase the works of authors when writing papers. Plagiarism or the improper use of artificial intelligence (AI) to complete assignments will not be tolerated.

## **ATTENDANCE (Instituto Franklin-UAH Policy)**

Attendance is mandatory. Students are not permitted to miss any classes of the program without proper justification (i.e. emergencies, health problems, in this case students must show a medical note). The following types of excuses are not justified: family visits, illnesses without a medical note, personal trips, etc. Each unjustified absence will result in a grade deduction of 10 points in the final grade of the class (example: from A to B). Students will not be allowed, in the classroom or fieldtrips, to arrive 10 minutes late or more. If a student has continual delays, he/she will be penalized with an absence and the instructor may not allow them into class or the visit.

## **STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (Instituto Franklin-UAH Policy)**

Students with special needs should contact Antonio Fernández:

[antonio.fernandezm@uah.es](mailto:antonio.fernandezm@uah.es) Instituto Franklin-UAH can accommodate these students who show through a medical note or a note from their academic advisor that require help in order to fulfill the program.

## **USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN CLASS**

The use of technology is essential today in education, but if it is used inappropriately, it can be harmful for students. It is necessary that students ask for permission from the teacher to use any technological devices. Students are not permitted to record class sessions without written consent from the course instructor. Contact your instructor to request permission.

## **USE OF BLACKBOARD**

All courses offered by Instituto Franklin-UAH can be taught through the Blackboard virtual classroom. Teachers can have materials, forums, etc. in the virtual classroom even if they don't teach the class virtually. For more information, contact Antonio Fernández: [antonio.fernandezm@uah.es](mailto:antonio.fernandezm@uah.es)

## CLASS SCHEDULE

January 14, 2026-February 5, 2026 (Block 1)

Date and time	Topics	Activities & Assignments
1/14/26-1/15/26 9am-12m	<b>UNIT I. INTRODUCTION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defining relevant terms</li> <li>Brief history</li> <li>Discussion of timeline</li> <li>Examples in different countries</li> <li>Focus on America and Spain</li> </ul>	- "Do now" in-class exercise -Assigned readings
1/16/26 9am-12m	<b>UNIT II. UNDERSTANDING EXTREME VIOLENCE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approaches in Criminology and Psychology</li> <li>Research on terrorism</li> <li>Psychological warfare?</li> <li>A worldwide problem</li> <li>Theories and models</li> <li>How to measure and study violent extremism</li> </ul>	- "Identify terrorism" In-class exercise -Assigned Readings
1/19/26-1/22/26 9am-12m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social deviance and Antisocial traits</li> <li>Radicalization and fanaticism</li> <li>Terrorism: Domestic and International</li> <li>Terrorist cells</li> <li>Comparison: Examples of terrorism in America and Europe</li> </ul>	<b>-Midterm quiz</b>  <b>*Written assignment due on 1/26</b>
1/28/26 <b>No class</b>	<i>St. Tomas de Aquino's Day. Patron Saint of the University.</i>	
1/26/26- 1/29/26 9am-12m	<b>UNIT III. ROOT OF THE PROBLEM</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hostility and hatred</li> <li>Rise of incivility in the US and other countries</li> <li>Politics and power</li> <li>Lack of cognitive flexibility</li> <li>Online risks and media</li> <li>Addressing the divides</li> </ul>	- "Think and react" In-class exercise  <b>-Written assignment due</b>
2/2/26-2/4/26 9am-12m	<b>UNIT IV. PREVENTION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Science of prevention</li> <li>How to reduce and manage the risk of violent extremism</li> <li>Establishing connections</li> <li>Intergroup interventions</li> <li>Empathy and cognitive flexibility</li> <li>Role of cultural competence</li> <li>More alike than different</li> </ul>	-Oral presentation -Written exercise (in-class)  -Assigned readings

2/5/26 9am-12m	<b>UNIT V. CONCLUSION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What can you do?</li> <li>• Common ground</li> <li>• Focus on prevention</li> <li>• A case for transatlantic cooperation</li> <li>• Future focus and social change</li> </ul>	<p>- "Personalizing global issues: What can you do?" In class exercise</p> <p><b>-Final exam</b></p> <p><i>*List of recommended further readings (for students interested in learning more)</i></p>
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Note:

*This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Other readings, assignments, site visits, guest speakers and cases may be added, modified or substituted at the instructor's discretion. Additional policies or procedures may be posted at any time during the semester at the discretion of the instructor.*

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Peer reviewed articles

- Billings, A. C., Towery, N. A., Sadri, S. R., & Zengaro, E. (2023). How Sports Identification Compares to Political and Religious Identification: Relationships to Violent Extremism and Radicalization. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 40(1), 11–20.  
<https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.2021-0167>
- Borum, R. (2012). Radicalization into Violent Extremism I: A Review of Social Science Theories. *Journal of Strategic Security*, 4(4), 7-36.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.4.4.1>
- Borum, R. (2012). Radicalization into Violent Extremism II: A Review of Conceptual Models and Empirical Research. *Journal of Strategic Security*, 4(4), 37-62.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.4.4.2>
- Christodoulou, E. (2024). The Development of UNESCO's Programmes for Preventing Violent Extremism: Educational Norms, Institutional Politics and Declining Legitimacy. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 54(5), 750–769. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2023.2252319>

- Clesle, A., Knäble, J., & Rettenberger, M. (2025). Risk and threat assessment instruments for violent extremism: A systematic review. *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management*, 12(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tam0000223>
- Crawford, N. (2023). The Energy Transition, Protectionism and Transatlantic Relations. *Survival* (0039-6338), 65(2), 75–102. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2023.2193101>
- Da Silva, C., Amadio, N., Sarg, R., Domingo, B., & Benbouriche, M. (2024). Risk and Protective Factors Associated with Violent Extremism: A Multilevel and Interdisciplinary Evidence-Based Approach. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 18(3), 69–89. <https://doi.org/10.19165/2024.9365>
- Deni, J. R. (2020). The United States and the transatlantic relationship. *Parameters* (Carlisle, Pa.), 50(2), 19-26. <https://doi.org/10.55540/0031-1723.1015>
- Duckworth, C. L. (2024). The Role of Schools in Preventing Violent Extremism: From Policing to Pedagogy. *Journal of Peace Education*, 21(3), 382–401. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17400201.2024.2314307>
- Jugl, I., Lösel, F., Bender, D., & King, S. (2021). Psychosocial prevention programs against radicalization and extremism: A meta-analysis of outcome evaluations. *The European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context*, 13(1), 37-46. <https://doi.org/10.5093/ejpalc2021a6>
- Kolbrun Kristinsdottir, Julia Ebner, & Harvey Whitehouse. (2025). Extreme overvalued beliefs and identities: revisiting the drivers of violent extremism. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 16. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1556919>
- Mayer, M. J., Horgan, J., Herrenkohl, T. I., & Osher, D. (2024). Violent extremism in the U.S.: Causes and consequences for youth, families, schools, and communities. *Journal of School Psychology*, 106. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2024.101345>
- Mitts, T. (2022). Countering violent extremism and radical rhetoric. *International Organization*, 76(1), 251-272. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818321000242>

- Muibu, D., Vasaturo, A., Spurrell, W. & Savoia, E. (2025). The use of psychological interventions in tertiary prevention programs for individuals engaged in violent extremism: a scoping review and interviews. *Health & Justice*, 13(1), 1–12.  
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40352-025-00324-w>
- Rodiles, A. (2022). Making sense of violent extremism. *AJIL Unbound*, 116, 230–235. <https://doi.org/10.1017/aju.2022.41>
- Rousseau, C., Johnson-Lafleur, J., Ngov, C., Savard, C., & Veissière, S. (2024). Hybrid Ideologies in Clinical Settings: Implications for Intervention of the Changing Landscape in Violent Extremism. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 18(3), 51–68.  
<https://doi.org/10.19165/2024.4965>
- Sas, M., Ponnet, K., Reniers, G., & Hardyns, W. (2020). The role of education in the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism in developing countries. *Sustainability*, 12(6), 2320. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12062320>
- Schrader, T., Jolley, R. P., Krahenbuhl, S., & Jolley, D. (2025). Upholding social hierarchies: Social dominance orientation moderates the link between (intergroup) conspiracy exposure and violent extremism. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, 28(2), 277–299–299.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/13684302241247985>
- Schulten, N. (2024). Practitioners' perspectives on the challenges of dealing with the interaction between mental illness and violent extremism in Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism & Political Aggression*, 16(4), 530–555. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19434472.2022.2142268>
- Stevens, D. (2025). A little less conversation, a little more action: Schools and the prevention of violent extremism through reasoned engagement. *Theory and Research in Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14778785241309278>

## Books

- Beaujouan, J., Dudouet, V., Halilovic-Pastuovic, M., Hülzer, J.M., Kortam, M. & Rasheed, A. (Eds.). (2024). *Vulnerability and Resilience to Violent Extremism*. Taylor & Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003424901>



- Bokova, I. (2021). *UNESCO'S Response to the Rise of Violent Extremism*. Getty Publications.
- Braddock, K. (2019). *Communicatively countering violent extremism online*. Taylor and Francis Inc.
- Corrado, R., Wössner, G., & Merari, A. (Eds.). (2021). *Terrorism risk assessment instruments: Contemporary policy and law enforcement challenges*. IOS Press, Incorporated.
- Gill, P., Marchment, Z., Zolghadriha, S., Salman, N., Rottweiler, B., Clemmow, C., & Vegt, I. V. D. (2020). *Advances in Violent Extremist Risk Analysis* (Vol. 25). Emerald Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1521-613620200000025004>
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- Magazzini, T., Eleftheriadou, M., Triandafyllidou, A. (2025). Navigating Shifting Narratives of Terrorism and Resilience: The Spanish Case. In: *The Non-radicalisation of Muslims in Southern Europe. Rethinking Political Violence*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-71996-7\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-71996-7_4)
- Romaniuk, S. N., Grice, F., Irrera, D., & Webb, S. (Eds.). (2017). *The palgrave handbook of global counterterrorism policy*. Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Saltman, E., & Karhili, N. E. (2024). *LEVEL UP: Policies, Practices, and Positive Interventions to Counter Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Gaming Spaces*. Taylor and Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003388371-10>
- Scrivens, R., & Conway, M. (2019). Chapter 13: *The Roles of 'Old' and 'New' Media Tools and Technologies in the Facilitation of Violent Extremism and Terrorism*. In Leukfeldt, R., & Holt, T. J. (Eds.). *The human factor of cybercrime*. Taylor & Francis Group. Taylor & Francis.
- Zeiger, S., Alonso, R., & Herrera, J. (2019). *Enhancing women's roles in preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE)* (1st ed.). IOS Press, Incorporated.

## Online resources

U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation  
*Beyond Belief: Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in America (2025)*  
<https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/beyond-belief-preventing-and-countering-violent-extremism-in-america.pdf/view>

U.S. Department of State-Country Reports on Terrorism 2023 (Spain)  
<https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2023/spain/>

Barcelona Centre for International affairs: *Preventing violent extremism to counter home-grown jihadism: Learning by doing*  
<https://www.cidob.org/en/publications/preventing-violent-extremism-counter-home-grown-jihadism-learning-doing>

European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend report 2024 (EU TE-SAT):  
<https://www.europol.europa.eu/publication-events/main-reports/european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-2024-eu-te-sat>

United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism:  
<https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/>

UNESCO:  
<https://www.unesco.org/en/preventing-violent-extremism>  
United Nations- International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism  
<https://www.un.org/en/observances/prevention-extremism-when-conducive-terrorism-day>

Homeland Security- Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States:  
<https://www.dhs.gov/publication/empowering-local-partners-prevent-violent-extremism-united-states>

National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Domestic Radicalization and Violent Extremism:  
<https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/domestic-radicalization-and-violent-extremism>

United Nations UNDP Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE):  
<https://www.undp.org/prevent-violent-extremism/preventing-violent-extremism-report-series>

## INSTRUCTOR



Educator, public speaker and published social science researcher. Fully bilingual in Spanish and English. Interested in teaching, consulting, writing, conducting research, and other opportunities in the fields of Psychology and Criminal Justice. I am currently an assistant professor at Universidad Ana G. Méndez in Carolina, Puerto Rico.

Areas of expertise and special interest include topics in the forensic field of psychological research, such as sexual offenders, risk analysis, public policy changes, child sexual abuse, social disparity issues, jury psychology, psychological autopsies, cultural influences, forensic journalism, perception studies, prevention science, psychology of terrorism, gender disparity in the courts, and criminal psychology.

Trying to change the narrative about violence and crime, including more attention towards prevention than reaction, and the value of interdisciplinary collaboration to address it. Enjoys traveling, learning about other cultures, challenging the routine, spending time with family, and advocating for diversity acceptance.

### Education

Psychology, Forensic Psychology (Ph.D)	2021
<i>Non-Clinical (Research)</i>	
Master of Arts in Forensic Psychology (MA)	2011
Bachelor of Arts, Communications and Marketing (BA)	2006

### Publications

- Vázquez-Tirado, S. (2022). Gender and victim stereotypes in perceptions of child sexual abuse in Puerto Rico. *Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling*, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jip.1590>
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- Vázquez-Tirado, S.E. (2019). Estereotipos de la mujer criminal y su influencia en los tribunales. *Cruce. Edición especial: La paradoja de la violencia, parte 2*, pp. 28-37. [https://issuu.com/revistacruce/docs/la\\_paradoja\\_de\\_la\\_violencia\\_parte\\_2/28](https://issuu.com/revistacruce/docs/la_paradoja_de_la_violencia_parte_2/28)

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