The Problem of Torture in Counterterrorism

1   INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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2   COURSE DESCRIPTION

Throughout history, torture has been used for multiple purposes: as a mechanism within formal legal systems, as a tool to control the lower classes, and as a covert tactic that has survived even when its practice has been contested or outlawed. Today, most democratic countries have outlawed torture and outwardly condemn it. However, even civilized states that denounce torture widely practice it. In the past decade, torture has become part of the public discourse. Scholars are also increasingly studying the phenomena, particularly in the context of counterterrorism.

This course will discuss the history of torture and physical punishment, changes in the practice over time, and the problem of torture today. The course will focus on a range of issues relating to torture including: what constitutes torture, attitudes about torture, the efficacy of using torture, concerns about torture especially in the context of counterterrorism, and why torture persists despite arguments against it.

3   COURSE GOALS

The course will:
- Improve understanding of torture and its relationship to other social phenomena
- Examine the historical foundations of torture and physical punishment
- Analyze changes in the use of torture over time
- Discuss the evidence surrounding the efficacy of torture
- Encourage students to think critically about the use of torture around the world

4   LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course students will:
- Explain what constitutes torture
- Critique the problem of torture today
- Identify and examine concerns about the ongoing use of torture
- Describe why torture persists
- Apply empirical findings to analyze the controversial topic of torture

5   TEACHING METHOD

The course is structured to examine various approaches to the problem of torture. We will draw from research articles in criminology, psychology, political science, human rights, and related fields.

We will also read narrative accounts of torture, op-eds, and news articles about torture.

Research has shown that students learn best when they actively participate in class discussion and projects. I believe that the role of an instructor is to facilitate an active learning environment through a combination of brief lectures, productive dialogue, teamwork, and creative thinking. As such, the course will engage in a variety of activities in addition to lectures, including writing exercises, group work, and online class discussions. I value student opinions about the course, and will solicit feedback periodically.

To be successful in the course, students are required to read all assignments, translate their thoughts on the readings into effective written communications, and engage fully in online discussions and course activities.

6 COURSE EXPECTATIONS, REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

6.1 COURSE STRUCTURE

The course will be structured as weekly units comprised of the following components:
- Reading Assignments
- Short Reaction Papers
- Video Lectures
- Discussion Boards

6.2 ONLINE REQUIREMENTS AND TIME COMMITMENTS

This class is taught entirely online so you will have the opportunity to express your ideas to a much greater extent than in the traditional classroom setting, where numerous students are vying to speak in a limited time. The class never meets in the traditional sense of regularly scheduled weekly meetings. However, the class meets regularly in cyberspace on our class Blackboard site and the discussion board will run through Piazza. For those who are unfamiliar with Piazza, it is a free platform where students can post questions and collaborate to edit responses to these questions. Instructors can also answer questions, endorse student answers, and edit or delete any posted content. Piazza is designed to simulate real class discussion. It aims to get high quality answers to difficult questions, fast! You will find that at almost any time of day or night fellow students or I will be logged on or will have just posted something new or will respond to your postings or questions.

You will quickly become an active and involved participant in the class if you log on regularly. You will find that although you may not know what your fellow classmates look like, you will know them all far better than you know most classmates in face-to-face classes. In fact, you will quickly learn to recognize their voices as they speak to you on the Discussion Board. Therefore, to accomplish this, you must be prepared to:
- Ensure technical access to the online classroom via an appropriate Browser. Technical requirements are posted immediately below, under the heading, System Requirements and Online Help Availability.
- Invest a minimum of 15 hours each week in the course (for the 7-weeks of class meetings).

Note: The rule-of-thumb for full participation in a 3-hour course is 37.5 hours in class and a minimum of 3 additional hours outside of class for every hour in class, totaling at least 112.5 hours. By spending 16 hours each week in the course, you are meeting this rule of thumb.You spend this much time in a regular semester course; its just spread out over 15 weeks.

6.3   SYSTEM REQUIRMENTS AND ONLINE AND BLACKBOARD HELP AVAILABILITY

This class will use Blackboard (including Piazza). Please be sure that you have access to the Blackboard site for this course and reliable internet access.

Weekly Timeline

<u>Monday</u> - short reaction papers are due at 11:59 p.m. on Monday for the coming weeks material.

<u>Tuesday</u> - the weeks short lecture will be posted on Tuesday morning. This, along with the readings for that week, will serve as the basis for the student led discussion.

<u>Friday</u> - student led discussion questions and responses are due at 11:59 p.m. on Friday for that weeks material.
- **Time due is based on Eastern Standard Time and date, regardless of where you may be located.**

6.4   ASSESSMENT

Short Reaction Papers (30%): Student will write a total of 6 short reaction papers, one for each week starting in the first week of the course. The first reaction paper should focus on your knowledge, perceptions, and interest in torture at the start of the course, and does not require that you do the readings for that week first. The next 5 papers should be written after reading the assigned material but before participating in the discussion board. These papers should relate directly to the material assigned for that week, provide a commentary or critique (not a summary) of the readings and should be supported by references to the readings.

    Undergraduate papers should be 1 to 2 pages in length.
    Masters papers should be 2 to 3 pages in length.

All papers should be double-spaced and in 12 pt Times New Roman with 1 inch margins (these are strict guidelines). Papers should be uploaded to the appropriate link in the Assignments section of Blackboard. The grading rubrics are on Blackboard.

    You get one (1) late pass for a Reaction Paper, meaning that you can turn it in with the next weeks Reaction Paper (or Final Project if used in Week 6). Use it if you want. Theres no penalty or reward either way.

Student Led Discussions (40%): Given the distance learning nature of this course, online discussions will be a large portion of the assessment. Each week after completing the reading and

watching the short lecture, students will post 1 discussion question, respond to 2 questions posted by other students, and address 1 response to their original post (if there are no responses to your original post, then respond to a 3rd question posed by another student). Posts and responses should be thoughtful, detailed, and connected with the readings, lecture, and other materials for that week. Posts and responses should be 100-150 words each. These must be written in a way that would be acceptable in a formal paper. The grading rubric is on Blackboard.

Additionally, you are expected to post at least one news article relating to the topics covered in this class each week and add your thoughts on it in Tweet format (under 140 characters).

Be sure that you post to the correct folder, always post as a Note, and utilize tags throughout your discussion posts and responses. For your required posts, DO NOT POST ANONYMOUSLY, I can see who posts and will deduct points for this. If you have a question that you would like to ask anonymously, please do so but it wont count toward your weekly posts. Also, you may want to change your settings to Daily Digest for post notifications so you do not get numerous email alerts each day.

Final Project (20%): Each student will choose an issue within the course material to examine, make an argument, and present a 10 to 15-minute portfolio-style project in a multimedia format (i.e. PowerPoint, podcast, video, interpretive dancereally, I'm open to what you want to do as long as it conveys the necessary material) for the rest of the class to watch online. You must have your topic approved by the fourth week of class. The grading rubric is on Blackboard.

Commentary on Final Project (10%): Each student will submit a 1-page max commentary on 5 of the other final projects. The commentaries should speak to the presentation and incorporate materials we covered in the course. Commentaries should be uploaded to the appropriate link in the Assignments section of Blackboard. The grading rubric is on Blackboard.

Grading

A = 95-100	A- = 90-94	
B+ = 87-89	B = 83-86	B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79	C = 73-76	C- = 70-72
D+ = 67-69	D = 63-66	D- = 60-62
F = 59 or below		

If you have questions or concerns about a grade(s) and believe I should review them, you should submit a written request over email to me describing your concern in detail. You must take 24 hours to reflect on the grade before contacting me, but you must submit the request within one week of the date that grades for that assignment are disseminated. The exception is an addition error, which should be pointed out immediately.

Unless otherwise stated in class, there are no extra credit assignments for this class. Assignments will be graded on accuracy, depth of expression, grammar, neatness, punctuation, quality, spelling, and thoroughness. Rubrics are available on BlackBoard for all graded assignments. Please note that Blackboard shows unweighted grades.

As per the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA), grades will not be posted, given out over the phone or email, or released to anyone other than the student.

6.5 COMMUNICATION

Email
I will send emails on a regular basis to remind students about upcoming events, due dates, important news, et cetera. These messages will come to your official university email. Students are responsible for the contents of these messages. I will respond to email within 24 hours during the week and within 48 hours on the weekend unless otherwise specified in advance.

Skype
I will hold office hours once a week online at a mutually agreed upon time. If you cannot make this time, I can also be on Skype by appointment. If multiple students would like to speak with me simultaneously, we can use Google Hangout. If students have questions about class, they will be encouraged to ask them via the class discussion board on Piazza, as other students may have the same question and would benefit from the answers.

Professionalism
Recently, my colleagues and I have noticed that some (by no means all) students email us using language and format more appropriate for friendly emails, not professional ones. I will only respond to emails that include: a subject, a salutation (Dear, Hello, etc.), a closing (at least your name), and proper grammar (no text speak). Additionally, if your question is about a due date, what the reading is for next week, or something else that is found in the syllabus or grading rubrics, I will not respond to your email. This is not to be harsh, but I want to make sure that all students are in the habit of corresponding professionally, which is what will be required of you in your future careers or in graduate school.

6.6 COURSE POLICIES

Student Copyright Authorization
For the benefit of future students, work in this course may be used for educational critique, demonstration, samples, presentations, and verification. Outside of these uses, work shall not be sold, copied, broadcast, or distributed for profit without student consent. Items submitted for this course also may be submitted to TurnItIn.com for analysis.

The Miscellaneous Calamity Clause
As you may know, each class is required to meet for a specified number of hours in a semester. When class is cancelled due to snow/ice/hurricane/plague/zombies, these hours need to be made up. Instead making up hours at the end of the semester when you are very busy, we will simply hold class online for any week in which class is cancelled. If this happens, I record the lecture on Panopto and post the video on Friday for that week. Since we would not know of a cancellation in advance, the timeframe will shift slightly. You will have until Sunday at 11:59 p.m. to post your discussion question and until Tuesday at 11:59 p.m. to respond to the questions posed by your classmates. Everything else will remain the same as it would in a typical online week. Additionally, I am occasionally required to be out of town for professional conferences. I will give you as much advanced notice as possible and we will simply move the class online for that week.

Make-up Exams, Assignments, and Notes
Copies of the PowerPoints will be available on Blackboard AFTER class. Handouts and returned

assignments will be brought to class and distributed only once. Students who miss such items must schedule a time to pick them up. If you are absent, you will need to get the notes from a classmate, so find a reliable source now.

Online Classroom Courtesy
I expect all members of the online classroom community to be active participants who learn from others and contribute, in turn, to the learning of others. Therefore, all members of the community agree to work together in every academic activity to create an educational environment of responsibility, cooperation, respect and civility.

Classroom courtesy is essential for learning. The classroom - even the virtual one- is a professional setting where appropriate behavior is expected. Every participant should focus on the educational activity and contribute to it. Electronic communication among participants should be conducted professionally. Most importantly, please remember that class discussion must be respectful and scholarly at all times.

Most importantly, as the topics addressed in this class can lead to strong feelings and heated discussion, please remember that class discussion must be respectful and scholarly at all times.

Scholarly Comments: are respectful of diverse opinions and open to follow up questions and/or disagreement; are related to class and/or the course material; are focused on advancing the discussion about issues related to the course and/or course; material rather than personal beliefs; and are delivered in normal tones and a non-aggressive manner.

Unacceptable Comments: are personal in nature (this includes attacks on a persons appearance, demeanor, or political beliefs); include interrupting the instructor or other students; often use the discussion to argue for political positions and/or beliefs. If political discussions; arise in the context of the research discussed, they must be discussed in a scholarly way; may include using raised tones, yelling, engaging in arguments with other students and being threatening in any manner; and include ignoring the instructor's authority to maintain the integrity of the classroom.

7 REQUIRED TEXTS

READINGS
Readings will be posted to Blackboard. Students are required to do all of this reading. As an important note: I am more interested that you understand the main points of each assigned piece of reading than that you know the minutia. Keep this in mind, and the reading will not be cumbersome. Recommended readings may be posted as well. The weekly assignments are at the end of this syllabus.

HELPFUL RESOURCES
You are not required to buy the APA Publication Manual. Purdue University has an excellent online guide that should be consulted for all written materials that are submitted for this course.
    https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

8 COURSE SCHEDULE

This syllabus is a guide for the course. It is subject to change with advanced notice. Changes may come in class or may come via e-mail. You are responsible for all such communications.

Week	Topic	Date	Assignments Due
1	The History of Torture	Monday	Reaction Paper on Your Thoughts about Torture at the Start of the Course Due
		Tuesday	Lecture materials & discussion posted
		Friday	Discussion Questions and Responses Due
2	Why Torture?	Monday	Reaction Paper on Reading Packet 2 Due
		Tuesday	Lecture materials & discussion posted
		Friday	Discussion Questions and Responses Due
3	Torture, Democracy, and Counterterrorism	Monday	Reaction Paper on Reading Packet 3 Due
		Tuesday	Lecture materials & discussion posted
		Friday	Discussion Questions and Responses Due
4	The Ethics, Efficacy, and Legality of Torture	Monday	Reaction Paper on Reading Packet 4 Due
		Tuesday	Lecture materials & discussion posted
		Friday	Discussion Questions and Responses Due
5	Attitudes toward Torture and the Role of the Media	Monday	Reaction Paper on Reading Packet 5 Due
		Tuesday	Lecture materials & discussion posted
		Friday	Discussion Questions and Responses Due
6	The Impact of Torture: Locally and Globallyt	Monday	Reaction Paper on Reading Packet 6 Due
		Tuesday	Lecture materials & discussion posted
		Friday	Discussion Questions and Responses Due
7	Wrapping up the Course	Monday	Final Projects Due
		Thursday	Commentary on Final Projects Due