BSST 335: INNOVATIONS IN COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

INSTRUCTOR:
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COURSE LOGISTICS:
August 28, 2017 – December 11, 2017
Mondays, 2:00pm-4:45pm, ESJ 1215 (Edward St. John Learning Center)
Office Hours with Dr. Weinberger: Tuesdays, 10:00am-11:00pm, or by appointment, START office -- 8400 Baltimore Avenue (Artemesia Building), room 311. (Please go to Suite 250 beforehand and check in with the receptionist.)
Office hours with Graduate Teaching Assistant: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
In recent years, “Countering Violent Extremism” or CVE has emerged as an important global security concern. CVE is a realm of policy, programs, and interventions designed to prevent individuals from engaging in violence associated with radical political, social, cultural, and/or religious ideologies. CVE aims to address violent extremism in all its forms, regardless of ideology, and by individuals acting alone or in coordination with an extremist group. Unlike traditional counterterrorism programs focused on targeting or disrupting terrorist plots, CVE aims to address threats before violence occurs. CVE work is done in a variety of ways, including:

- Prevention work or engagement processes targeting the “root causes” of violent extremism;
- Targeted interventions to provide psychosocial support to individuals who may be assessed as “at-risk” for mobilization to violence; and
- Rehabilitation programs that help individuals who have been radicalized to disengage from violent action and reintegrate into non-violent communities.

In studying CVE, students will explore theories of community outreach, community intervention, risk communication and offender rehabilitation, drawing on the disciplines of psychology, sociology, criminology,
anthropology, communication, and political science. They will also examine teaching cases of authentic, community-based CVE initiatives.

In policy documents on CVE programs, the US government has recognized the need for innovation in combating the development and operations of extremist groups and related criminal behaviors. To answer that call, this course will draw on the Design Thinking process, an innovation process used to generate new solutions to complex, real-world problems. Design Thinking, as taught by the Hasso Plattner Institute of Design at Stanford University, involves five distinct, but iterative, phases: empathy, in which designers work to understand their audiences; definition, in which designers work to understand problems within their audiences; ideation, in which designers work to generate ideas for solutions to the problems they have identified; prototyping, in which designers create tangible models or experiences based on their ideas; and testing, in which designers expose stakeholders to their prototypes and work to refine their products based on test data. The second half of this course will lead students through all five stages of the Design Thinking process, which they will use to develop proposals for CVE initiatives to be based in an authentic community.

They will prepare these program proposals in conjunction with research centers and non-governmental organizations engaged in innovative ways of fostering community resilience and deconstructing root causes of hatred. These include:

- Center for Health and Homeland Security (CHHS)
- Quilliam International
- START
- One organization that does not wish to be publicly identified, due to sensitivities of being associated with CVE programming.

Students will learn more about these organizations and their missions, as well as meet with their representatives in class. Students will confer with representatives of the organizations to develop proposals for a campaign fostering resilience to violence and hate in an authentic community in which the organization works. Options will include: 1) communities local to the Washington, DC, area; 2) communities in international contexts where there is violent extremism, such as the Middle East or the western Balkans; and 3) the UMD campus community. Student groups will work with representatives of the organizations to liaise with communities of interest to the students. Student groups focusing on the UMD campus community will work with START, as part of a holistic response to the May 20, 2017 murder of Richard Collins III by a UMD student, which is under investigation as a hate crime.

In addition to Design Thinking methodologies, this course will emphasize the development of the cultural competence knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to work at the intersection of diverse groups at risk for engaging in violent extremism. Students will be working on CVE proposals based on the needs of the authentic community with whom they are working, as well as the values and needs of the non-governmental organization; this assignment will therefore give students the opportunity to practice cultural-competence knowledge, skills, and abilities in outreach to those communities.

This course represents a collaboration between the University of Maryland’s National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), the University of Maryland’s Academy for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (AIE), as well as CHHS, and the Quilliam International.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

By the end of the course, students will have developed the ability to:

- Demonstrate an ability to reach innovative/unconventional solutions to the question of combating violent extremism by iteratively proposing ideas/strategies, receiving feedback, incorporating feedback and learning from failed approaches;
• Demonstrate an ability to collaborate with others on developing an innovative CVE program proposal by incorporating different viewpoints and experiences;
• Demonstrate the ability to present or perform their CVE program concept to outside stakeholders (specifically, CVE professionals from the Washington, DC, area);
• Demonstrate an ability to solve real world challenges by critiquing existing applications of scholarship on CVE, learning from past CVE successes and failures, and identifying new or unexplored opportunities in the field of CVE.
• Explain how cultural beliefs influence behaviors and practices at the individual, organizational, and societal levels, with specific attention to how these beliefs play out in driving individuals towards or away from violent extremism;
• Analyze their own cultural beliefs with respect to attitudes or behaviors, and analyze how those beliefs will play out in their interaction with community stakeholders and community CVE programs;
• Compare and contrast differences among two or more cultures, with specific attention to the community(ies) targeted in their CVE program proposal; and
• Effectively use skills to negotiate cross-cultural situations or conflicts during the development of their proposed CVE program and engagement with stakeholder communities.

COURSE MATERIALS:
All readings will be available in the classroom ELMS site.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS:
Your grade will consist of 10 elements:

• Course Content Reflections 20%
  o Reflection #1 5%
  o Reflection #2 5%
  o Reflection #3 5%
  o Reflection #4 5%
• Program Proposal Simulation 10%
  o Empathy Phase Assignments 2.5%
  o Definition Phase Assignments 2.5%
  o Ideation Phase Assignments 2.5%
  o Prototyping and Testing Phase Assignments 2.5%
• Countering Violent Extremism Program Proposal 60%
  o Empathy Phase Assignments 10%
  o Definition Phase Assignments 10%
  o Ideation Phase Assignments 10%
  o Prototyping and Testing Phase Assignments 10%
  o Demonstration of Proposed CVE Program 20%
• Proposal Assessment 10%

You will complete the tasks below for each of the above-referenced assignments. We will discuss each assignment further in class.

A Note on Attendance and Other Class Policies
Much of this course will function as a studio course—that is, you will be completing graded work during class time. As a result, absences will be problematic if not planned for and addressed proactively. Please review the syllabus to find days which are marked as “Major Grading Events”: these dates are October 2, October 30, November 6, November 13, and December 4. On these days, the attendance policy is as follows:

- If you have a non-illness-related reason you will miss class that you believe is appropriate for an excused absence, please notify the teaching assistant at least 1 week before that class. If your reason for missing class is deemed “excusable,” you will be asked to supply documentation, and you will be asked to work with your group to determine how you can contribute to the assignment outside of class time.
- If you have an illness that will cause you to miss class, please notify the teaching assistant by the beginning of class. You will be asked to supply documentation, and you will be asked to work with your group to determine how you can contribute to the assignment outside of class time.

If you do not follow this policy, you will receive a “zero” for the assignment completed during class that day. This will include both the documentation and reflection portions of the CVE program proposal assignments.

We will also do graded classwork on the following dates: October 9, October 16, and October 23. You are highly discouraged from missing class on these days, as well, but make-up assignments will be available if you request one from the teaching assistant within one week (7 days) of missing class. If you do not contact the teaching assistant within one week of missing class, you will receive a “zero” for the assignment completed during class that day.

For all other class policies, please refer to the Office of Undergraduate Studies page: http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html.

**Course Content Reflections**

You will complete 4 2-3 page reflections responding to prompts listed below in the syllabus. These reflections will be due on: October 2, October 16, October 23, and October 30. Your responses should reference class readings and lecture material and include correct citation format (style is your choice).

You will be scored according to the following rubric. Please zoom in to approximately 300% to read the rubric easily. Each reflection grade will make up 5% of your total course grade, or 20% for all 4 reflections.

**Program Proposal Simulation**

During the month of October, you will work in groups to engage in a simulation allowing you to practice the process you will undertake in your final project: using Design Thinking methods to develop a CVE program proposal. We will watch video interviews with members of a fictionalized community for which you will build a CVE concept, utilizing all 5 phases of Design Thinking and engaging in the same exercises we will undertake with your local community-specific data once you begin your research. These exercises include: an empathy map exercise; a point of view exercise; a brainstorming exercise; a prototyping exercise; and a prototype testing exercise. All of these exercises will take place during class time, and you will be asked to document your group’s work and submit it at the end of the corresponding class period. For your documentation of the in-class exercise, you will produce, as a group, a 1-page description and JPEG images of your in-class work.

These materials will be graded on a scale of 1-100, based on the following rubric.
Please zoom in to approximately 250% to review an example of a documentation submission below.

*Please note that this example is documentation of an assignment from a previous iteration of the course, not an assignment that you will complete. Please review it for form only.*
Final Project, Empathy Phase: Due October 30

- JPEG Images of Cultural Probe Saturation Board (Group Assignment), addressing:
  - The culture, history, traditions, values, and family systems of each identified cultural group;
  - The impact of culture on the behaviors, attitudes, values, and health status of each identified cultural group;
  - Help-seeking behaviors of each identified cultural group;
  - The roles of language, speech patterns, and communication styles within each identified cultural group;
  - Ways in which the (class/student) group’s personal and professional values may conflict with or accommodate the needs of each identified cultural group.

- Field Notes from Empathy Interviews with 8 Community Members (1-3 pages on each interview) (Group Assignment)

- 2-Page What/So What/Now What Reflection on Exercise (Individual Assignment)

For your reflection, you will each individually complete a What/So What/Now What What reflection to accompany each assignment leading up to your final project demonstration. In these reflections, you will answer the following questions, sequentially:

1) What did I see in this exercise that reinforced a key course concept? (Name at least one specific concept and refer to at least two specific course readings and other research documents);

2) What did I see in this exercise that contradicted a key course concept? (Name at least one specific concept and refer to at least two specific course readings and other research documents);

3) So what? If elements of this exercise reinforce course concepts, what are the implications? Or if elements of this exercise contradict course concepts, how do I reconcile these contradictions?

4) What new perspective(s) do I now have on CVE programs?

5) What elements of cultural competence knowledge, skills, and abilities are applicable to the work I did in this exercise? Did this exercise help me reflect critically on my own cultural competence knowledge, skills and abilities?

Your reflection will represent 91% of your grade for each assignment and will be scored according to the reflection rubric included above. You will also be asked to document your work during class time. Your documentation should following the documentation guidelines discussed above, will represent 9% of your grade for each assignment, and will be scored according to the documentation rubric included above.

Final Project, Definition Phase: Due November 6

- JPEG Images of Empathy Maps (Group Assignment)
Please use the documentation and reflection parameters discussed above. We will use the documentation (9% of grade) and reflection (91% of grade) rubrics to evaluate these submissions.

**Final Project, Ideation Phase: Due November 13**
- JPEG Images of Extreme User Brainstorming (Group Assignment)
- 2-Page What/So What/Now What Reflection on Exercise (Individual Assignment)

Please use the documentation and reflection parameters discussed above. We will use the documentation (9% of grade) and reflection (91% of grade) rubrics to evaluate these submissions.

**Final Project, Prototyping and Testing Phases: Due November 27**
- JPEG Images of HMW and Constraint Brainstorming Exercises (Group Assignment)
- JPEG Images of Choosing with Intention Exercise (Group Assignment)
- 1-Page Explanation of Selected Idea (Group Assignment)
- 2-Page What/So What/Now What Reflection on Exercise (Individual Assignment)

Please use the documentation and reflection parameters discussed above. We will use the documentation (9% of grade) and reflection (91% of grade) rubrics to evaluate these submissions.

**Final Project Demonstration: Due December 4 (Group Assignment)**
You will deliver your final demonstration in front of CVE practitioners from the Washington, DC, area. At least four people will score your presentation on the provided scoring sheet, and the totals, from each 25-point rubric, will be added together to obtain your grade.

You will be asked to incorporate Design Thinking storytelling principles and principles from the Japanese presentation style PechaKucha, which we will discuss in class. Your demonstration should be approximately 20 minutes and should include speaking parts for all participants.

A sample rubric with comments from a Department of Homeland Security reviewer is available below.
Final Demonstration Scoring Sheet

Reviewer: MEA Vorchus
Team: Life of Ahmed (Lehmer?)

User Story:
Did the presenters show evidence of deep empathy for a user? Is the user and need compelling? Are the presenters being specific or targeted enough as they define who their user is? Did they pare down the information to something that you would be able to re-tell tomorrow?

(needs a lot of work) (amazing! I'd like to take credit...)

1 2 3 4 5

Process Story (Synthesis):
Did the presenters demonstrate insight approaches to sorting through their data? Did the presenters clearly demonstrate a thoughtful and intentional process to synthesizing their research to reframe their problem?

1 2 3 4 5

Process Story (Prototyping & testing):
Did the presenters show that they used their prototypes as a way to learn more about their users and the problem? Did the presenters indicate that they had incorporated feedback from their prototype and testing phases into the development of their presentation?

1 2 3 4 5

Solution Direction:
Is this a novel and exciting idea? Do their next steps sound plausible?

1 2 3 4 5

A huge program across an entire country is ambitious. Start small and build out

Storytelling:
Would you be able to explain their project to someone tomorrow? Was the presenters' story clear, concise and compelling?

1 2 3 4 5

Questions/other comments:
Program Proposal Assessment: Due December 11
- 5-Page Paper Identifying Top Demonstration Candidate for Implementation (Individual Assignment)

Please note: you may not select your own program proposal to write about!

You will select a program proposal presented by one of your classmates’ groups which you have identified as the program you would most like to see implemented. Your paper should have the following sections, clearly labeled: 1) Identified program name; 2) Identified program team; 3) Three-sentence explanation of why you are selecting this program for implementation; 4) Program strengths; 5) Program weaknesses; 6) Possible suggestions for refinement/improvement. In a conclusion, please also discuss the degree to which the demonstration you chose reflected important cultural competence KSAs. Please be specific in your reference to cultural competence KSAs we have discussed in class.

You will be graded according to the following rubric.

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<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Ratings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking and</td>
<td>Excellent: Paper is rich in content, demonstrate thought, insight and</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depth of Thought</td>
<td>analysis. Paper offers new ideas and make unique contributions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Adequate: Paper offers substantial normation: thought, insight, analysis</td>
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<td>have taken place. Paper offers some new ideas but mostly build off the</td>
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<td>ideas of others.</td>
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<td>Unacceptable: Paper is relevant to class, but the information may be</td>
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<td>thin.</td>
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<td>50 pts</td>
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<td>Writing and Organization</td>
<td>Excellent: Follows assigned format perfectly. Does not contain any</td>
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<td>noticeable errors in standard writing conventions.</td>
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<td>Good: Follows assigned format well but may miss an element. May contain</td>
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<td>errors in standard writing conventions but they do not significantly</td>
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<td>interfere with understanding.</td>
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<td>Adequate: Mostly follows assigned format. Contains a variety of errors</td>
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<td>in standard writing conventions which may occasionally make reading</td>
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<td>slow and may somewhat interfere with understanding.</td>
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<td>Unacceptable: Does not follow assigned format. Contains persistent</td>
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<td>errors in standard writing conventions which consistently interfere</td>
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<td>with understanding.</td>
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<td>50 pts</td>
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Total Points: 100
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 – Monday, August 28

Introduction to the Course

In-Class Activity:
- Review of Course Concepts
- Review of Syllabus
- History and Evolution of Counterterrorism and the Emergence of CVE
- Simulation Exercise and Debrief
Week 2 – Monday, September 4: NO CLASS (Labor Day)
Week 3 – Monday, September 11

An Introduction to Countering Violent Extremism

Readings Due:


In-Class Activities:

- Class Lead: Dr. Susan Szmania, Department of Homeland Security
- Simulation Exercise and Debrief
Week 4 – Monday, September 18
Community-Based Approaches to Prevention, Intervention and Resilience

Readings Due:
- Be sure to thoroughly look at the websites of the partner organizations:
  http://www.mdchhs.com/
  https://www.quilliaminternational.com/
  http://www.start.umd.edu/

In-Class Activities:
- Class Lead: Organization Representatives will talk about their approach
Week 5 – Monday, September 25

Models of Cultural Competence and their Relevance for Countering Violent Extremism

Readings Due:

In-Class Activity:
- Class Lead: Dr. Weinberger
- Project Implicit Bias Tests

Reflection #1 Prompt:
- Summarize what you learned about taking at least three Project Implicit bias tests. Discuss what skills or abilities you will need to work on to effectively communicate across racial, religious, cultural, and/or ideological boundaries with a local community with whom your group is considering working this semester. Make reference to readings assigned this week.
Week 6 – Monday, October 2 – MAJOR GRADING EVENT

Design Thinking Workshop: Empathy

Assignments Due Before Class Begins:
- 1-Page Document on Your Issue and Community
- Reflection #1

In-Class Exercise:
- Class Lead: Dr. Weinberger
- Conducting Cultural Probe Research Online and Creating Saturation Map
- Empathy Field Guide Planning for 3 Interviews with Community Members (to be completed by October 31)
Week 7 – Monday, October 9

Engagement and Prevention Programming

Readings Due:


In-Class Exercise:

- Part 1: Class Lead: Bill Braniff, Executive Director, START
- Part 2: Simulation and Debrief

Reflection #2 Prompt:

- Feddes, Mann, and Doosje write on the importance of building self-esteem and empathy among individuals in whom we hope to prevent violent radicalization, while Williams writes on the importance of creating strong friend networks in the same process. Discuss these concepts and consider how you might incorporate them into a project with a local community with whom your group is considering working. Make reference to the Feddes et al and Williams readings, as well as others.
Week 8 – Monday, October 16

Intervention Programming

Assignment Due Before Class Begins:
- Reflection #2
- JPEG Images of Simulation Empathy Maps
- JPEG Images of Simulation Point of View Statement

Readings Due:

In-Class Exercise:
- Part 1 Class Lead: Dr. Weinberger
- Watch: *Burqa Avenger, Episode 1*

Reflection #3 Prompt:
- Braddock and Horgan suggest that for a CVE counter-narrative to be effective, it must circumvent psychological reactance. Discuss this concept and how you might apply it in a project with a local community with whom your group is considering working. Make reference to the Braddock and Horgan reading, as well as others assigned this week.
Week 9 – Monday, October 23

Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programming

Assignment Due Before Class Begins:
- Reflection #3
- JPEG Images of Simulation HMW and Constraint Brainstorming Exercises
- JPEG Images of Simulation Choosing with Intention Exercise
- 1-Page Explanation of Selected Simulation Idea

Readings Due:

In-Class Exercise:
- Part 1 Class Lead: Dr. Weinberger
- Simulation and Debrief

Reflection #4 Prompt:
- Bertelsen explains that the Aarhus Model is based on the theory of Life Psychology. Discuss this concept and how you might might apply it in a project with a local community with whom your group is considering working. Make reference to the Bertelsen reading, as well as others assigned this week.
Week 10 – Monday, October 30 – MAJOR GRADING EVENT

Final Project Design Thinking Workshop: Definition Phase

Assignment Due Before Class Begins:
- Reflection #4
- 1-Page Explanation of Simulation Prototype with Necessary JPEG Images
- 1-2-Page Explanation of Simulation Testing Results
- JPEG Images of Cultural Probe Saturation Board from October 3
- Field Notes from 3 Empathy Interviews
- Empathy Phase Reflection

In-Class Exercise:
- Class Lead: Dr. Kate Iszak, Education Director, START
- Empathy Map Exercise
- Point of View Statement Exercise
Week 11 – Monday, November 6 – MAJOR GRADING EVENT

Final Project Design Thinking Workshop: Ideation

**Assignment Due Before Class Begins:**
- JPEG Images of Empathy Maps
- JPEG Images of Point of View Statement
- Definition Phase Reflection

**In-Class Exercise:**
- Class Leads: Dr. Weinberger, Dr. Kate Iszak, Education Director, START
- Development of 3 HMW Questions
- HMW/Constraints Brainstorming
- Thinking about Budget and Monitoring and Evaluation
Week 12 – Monday, November 13 – **MAJOR GRADING EVENT**

Final Project Design Thinking Workshop: Prototyping and Testing

**Assignment Due Before Class Begins:**
- JPEG Images of HMW and Constraint Brainstorming Exercises
- JPEG Images of Choosing with Intention Exercise
- 1-Page Explanation of Selected Idea
- Ideation Phase Reflection

**In-Class Exercise:**
- Class Lead: Dr. Weinberger
- Prototyping for Empathy Exercise
- Prototyping for Testing Exercise
- Testing Prototypes within Class
Week 13 – Monday, November 20: NO CLASS (Testing)
Week 14 – Monday, November 27

Final Project Design Thinking Workshop: Storytelling

Assignment Due Before Class Begins:

- 1-Page Explanation of Prototype with Necessary JPEG Images
- 1-2-Page Explanation of Testing Results for In-Class Testing
- 1-2-Page Explanation of Testing Results for Out-of-Class Testing
- Prototyping and Testing Phase Reflection

In-Class Exercise:

- Class Lead: Dr. Weinberger
- Storytelling Exercise
- Development of Demonstration
Week 15 – Monday, December 4 – **MAJOR GRADING EVENT**

**Demonstrations of Proposed Programs**

*Assignment Due:*
- Demonstrations of Proposed Programs (as assigned)
Week 16 – NO CLASS

Assignments Due, 8:00am, via ELMS on December 11:
- 5-Page Program Proposal Assessment