



HISTORY 2133 (570)
Cults, Terror and Extremism in 20th Century America
Fall/Winter 2026 - 2027

Instructor: Dr. Alison Meek

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Course Information

Mode of Instruction: in-person

Calendar Description:

The purpose of this course is to explore a variety of cults, terrorists and extremist groups that have emerged in modern American history, including Neo-Nazis, Scientology, and Al Qaeda.

Prerequisite(s):

Antirequisite(s):

Extra Information: 2 lecture hours

Course Weight: 1.00

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: History

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

HIS2133: *Cults, Terrorism and Extremism in 20th Century America*
Dr. Alison Meek, King's University College, 2026-2027

The purpose of this course is to explore various terrorist and extremist groups that have emerged in modern American history such as Neo-Nazis, Scientology, and al Qaeda.

Course Information

- Lectures: Wednesdays 12:30-2:20pm
- OWL Brightspace
 - ° Course outline, lecture outlines, and additional information have been posted and will be updated regularly as needed.
- Antirequisites: *None*
- Prerequisites: *None*

Recommended Texts

- There are no textbooks for this course.
- Links are provided in the Lecture Outline document posted to Brightspace if you are interested in more information.

Course Requirements

- (1) Unless something beyond my control arises, all assignments handed in on the due date will be graded and returned to you the following week of class.
- (2) King's is committed to fostering a culture of professionalism, honesty, and academic integrity, and all members of our community—faculty, staff, and students—have a role to play in promoting an ethical learning environment. Furthermore, through the work they submit for academic evaluation, students develop important habits of critical thinking, independent inquiry, and creativity. Thus, it is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Within this course, use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools [such as Chat GPT] is not permitted for written work submitted for evaluation. The discovery of any work using external assistance (including AI) will result in a grade of 0 for that assignment.
- (3) It is your responsibility to ensure that you have all handouts for this course.
- (4) it is your responsibility to read the UWO calendar for rules and regulations governing academic behavior.

Assignments

(1) Term Tests and Exams ... 90%

- Term Test 1:
 - Date: Wednesday November 18th, 2026. Please note that formal, verified documentation will be required for academic accommodation.
 - Format: Identify and give the significance of ...
- Term Test 2
 - Date: Wednesday February 3rd, 2027. Please note that formal, verified documentation will be required for academic accommodation.
 - Format: Identify and give the significance of ...
- Final Exam
 - Date: during the April exam period.
- Grading
 - § Highest test or exam grade ... 35%
 - § Second highest test or exam grade ... 30%
 - § Lowest test or exam grade ... 25%

Please note, Friday Make-Up Exams may only be written with the instructor's consent. As noted above, formal, verified documentation is required to write a make-up test.

Test 1: Make-up date Friday December 2nd, 2026.

Test 2: Make-up date Friday February 26th, 2027.

(2) In-class Participation ... 10% (or 2% each)

Randomly, at the beginning of class throughout the course, you'll be given a question connected to the themes we are exploring or readings indicated, and you will submit a few observations and thoughts regarding those themes/readings.

Term Test/Exam Study Guide Outline Template

Details

Aids: No aids are allowed. You cannot keep a cell phone, Apple watch, or any electronic device in your pocket or on your desk. I will keep track of the time on the chalkboard at the front of the class.

General Notes

- All answers must in essay form. Point form essays will not be graded.
- Instead of thinking about how long each answer should be space-wise, think more in terms of time. Roughly speaking, each identifier should take about **20 minutes**. If you are finished in less than ~90 minutes, ask yourself: what I am failing to include?
- I'm not picky about spelling or grammar, but I do have to be able to read your test/exam.
- Your answers must have a logic to them. You cannot simply write: This happened ... And then this happened... And then this happened... You must always think about the context. Why did these events happen at this time? Who were the men and women behind the ideas?

Identify and give the significance of ...

- On the test/exam itself, you will be given 7 identifiers from the list of 30 below and will answer 5 of them. Each identifier is worth a potential 20% of the final test/exam grade [5 x 20% = 100%].
- When grading identifiers, I will be looking for **four** specific components:
 - (1) who/what is the **ID** – factual stuff;
 - (2) context – what is the lecture/lectures the **ID** appears in (and they may appear in more than one lecture)?;

- (3) short and long term significance; and
 - (4) For term tests: how these individuals/groups are very much a product of the United States in terms of context
 - (social, racial ...) and rights that protect their ability to exist.
 - For final exam: how these individuals/groups are very much a product of the United States in terms of US
 - foreign policy (where applicable).
 - Remember that some of these IDs appear in more than one lecture.
- (1) (30)

Term Test and Exam Grading

Defining and Assigning Grades for Term Tests and Exams: Below is a list of university-wide grade descriptors. Below each descriptor, you will find descriptive remarks about what each grade means. These remarks are meant as a sort of "road map" to help assess the degree to which a student's test and exam fulfills the requirements and expectations of the assignment. These guidelines should give students a clearer sense of what is behind the grades they are assigned. [Credit: thanks to Dr. Ventresca for compiling this information]

- A+ (90-100%): One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level. An A+ term test/exam is exceptional. It is sound in every respect - analysis and presentation. It is much more than competent - it is insightful. In addition, it is well written, eloquent, clear and concise. In short, as the university descriptor indicates, I simply could not ask for better from a student at this level.
- A (80-89%): Superior work, which is clearly above average. An A term test/exam is outstanding. The term test/exam demonstrates a mastery of the course information. It expresses information clearly and concisely. It is written in a fluent style that stands out for its clarity and even eloquence. The arguments are sound, penetrating, organized.
- B (70-79%): Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory. A B term test/exam is a solid piece of work. Like an A test/exam, it is often above average. The student demonstrates a good grasp of the course material. The term test/exam is above average in analysis. The conclusions are sound, but not original. In short, the term test/exam is competent, but not exceptional.
- C (60-69%): Competent work, meeting requirements. A C term test/exam is considered competent work. The author demonstrates an acceptable grasp of the course material. The term test/exam is best described as "descriptive" rather than "analytical" because it tends to avoid in-depth analysis, preferring to narrate facts. The reader comes away with the impression that the author does not fully understand the course material. In general, the ideas, while they be interesting, tend to be somewhat superficial, and the analysis tends to be "thin" and often wanders.
- D (50-59%): Fair work, minimally acceptable. A D term test/exam is "ok" work, and is therefore "acceptable" but cuts it close to being unacceptable at this level. The author shows some familiarity with the course material, but no real understanding of it. The author lacks the writing or communication skills to relate in a clear, intelligible way the knowledge acquired from his/her analysis. The term test/exam is disorganized; lacks structure and the ideas are not fully developed. There is no evidence of serious thought about the course material.
- F (below 50%): FAIL. An F term test/exam, obviously enough, is unacceptable work for the university-level. The author has serious problems writing and communicating ideas. The analysis is thin; the ideas are vague and show no understanding, or a total misunderstanding, of the course material. Grammar problems abound, and there is no meaningful organization.

**KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES
2026-27**

1. Academic Accommodations (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found at [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

2. Academic Consideration for Student Absences

Students must be approved to write a makeup exam or for an extension of the assignment deadline. If you need to miss an exam or the deadline for the assignment, please follow these instructions.

There are two ways to seek academic consideration:

(i) Academic consideration based on medical or compassionate grounds

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate grounds), they should contact the Academic Advising Office. As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration.

For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is the appropriate documentation. The SMC is available at <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical-certificate.pdf>

- King's students: The Academic Advising Office website is located in DLH 104. The Academic Advising website is <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>.
- If your home faculty is Huron or at Western, please submit your documentation to your faculty's academic counselling office.
- Requests must be made as soon as possible, and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

You may submit requests for academic consideration through the **Student Absence Portal**, linked on this website: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>.

(ii) Academic consideration through an undocumented absence

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per half-course (0.5) weight.

- Note that instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline to confirm this which assessment has been designated as requiring documentation for consideration (that is, exempt from undocumented absences).
- Undocumented absences can not be used as the basis for academic consideration for December or April exams.

If an instructor has built flexibility into their assessments (e.g., “complete 8 of 10 quizzes”), this flexibility will already address consideration needs and thus academic consideration may be denied.

For further information on the academic consideration policy, please see

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

c) Absences from Final Exams

If you miss the Final Exam, **contact your Academic Advising Office** as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the “Special Examination” (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a multiple exam situation (i.e., you are scheduled to write more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

d) Religious Accommodations

Students should consult the University’s list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and their Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

3. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King’s University College:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/accessibility-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King’s University College:

<https://kings.uwo.ca/campus-life/student-supports/>

Good2talk is an online and phone resource for students, available 24/7, with services in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options on how to obtain help:
<https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental-health/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/academics/academic-supports/>

4. Statement on Gender-Based Sexual Violence

King's and Western are committed to reducing incidents of gender-based sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: [Mental Health and Wellness at King's](#).

You can reach supports at King's by emailing care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a Social Worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by email (health@uwo.ca) or by calling 519-661-3568. Additional support services can be found <https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/support/index.html>

5. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see https://kings.uwo.ca/sites/2025/assets/files/campus/Kings_Code_of_Student_Conduct.pdf

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

6. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. **Check with you instructor to**

check which tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in each course. Note that although some courses may permit the use of such tools, it does not mean use of such tools is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see [https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/OriginalityReports - TurnItIn.html](https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/OriginalityReports-TurnItIn.html).

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

7. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

8. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

9. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.