Students’ interests in courses on terrorism were undoubtedly piqued because of the events of September 11, 2001. Moreover, terrorist strikes and the “war on terror” that followed have defined U.S. foreign policy since 2001 in the same sense that the Cold War defined U.S. foreign policy prior to 1989. Thus, any reasonably designed course on terrorism and U.S. foreign policy has to make 9/11 a pivot around which the class agenda revolves. Furthermore, from the pedagogical point of view, 9/11 is precisely the “story” (or “concrete observation”) that one needs in a normal cognitive cycle of learning, as it stems from concrete experience and moves to critical analysis, abstract conceptualization, and practical application.

These considerations leave us with a monograph-type of books or readers focused on the events of 9/11. Among documentary readers we find Anti-American Terrorism and the Middle East edited by Barry and Judith Colp Rubin (Rubin and Rubin 2002), while mostly a journalistic collection of readings is represented by a New York Review of Books collection Striking Terror (Silvers and Epstein 2002). Both readers pose a similar problem: they do not present a coherent narrative, but rather a series of voices, which leaves the task of creating a context of the voices to the teacher or other texts. The documentary reader, however, has the virtue of representing the “players’” own voices, while Striking Terror offers a mix of factual accounts and typically uniformly left-center (if sophisticated) opinions that discredits the latter as a tool for developing students’ critical thinking—when presented with a sophisticated prepackaged perspective most students tend to adopt it uncritically, while others are simply solidified in their preconceived views.

I eventually adopted two books that represent single-author coherent “journalistic” (in the positive sense of the word) narratives of the case,1 Peter Bergen’s Holy War Inc. (Bergen 2002) or Simon Reeve’s The New Jackals (Reeve 2002) in two different sections of the course. Both texts have a virtue of being written before 9/11 (and updated later) and therefore do not bear marks of hastily assembled “ambulance chasing” texts. Both represent journalism at its best; they strive to objectively tell the story and allow the protagonists themselves to speak in their own name—most importantly, both books include the text of 1998 Bin Laden’s “fatwa” that marked the effective beginning of al-Qaeda terrorist campaign against the United States. Bergen’s text focuses on Osama Bin Laden, while Reeve’s book, besides Bin Ladens story, gives us a detailed account of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and includes a detailed biography of Ramzi Yousef—the elusive terrorist mastermind of the bombing. Reeve’s book, thus, gives us a more comparative and historically deeper context of 9/11, but Bergen’s book, by its exclusive and
thorough focus on Bin Ladens organization is a more compact and better account of our main story. I used both texts with good pedagogical success and uniformly positive reviews from the students.

If one is looking for an even more sophisticated narrative with a high degree of historical depth, Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon’s *The Age of Sacred Terror* (2002) is the best, but students might find it challenging (Benjamin & Simon 2002). This book has a virtue of taking the narrative and extending it past 9/11 to the campaign in Afghanistan and the “war on terror.” The book is also written by former National Security Council (NSC) officials and therefore discusses important policy issues and perspectives in a sophisticated form. Since both *The New Jackals* and *Holy War Inc.* lack coverage of the “war on terror,” I had to supplement the books with additional texts.

The additional texts that I used to cover the “war on terror” are a selection of articles from Russell Howard’s and Reid Sawyer’s reader *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism* (Howard and Sawyer 2002) that includes a good collection of articles representing different perspectives on the “war on terror.” I decided against Kegley’s *The New Global Terrorism* (2002) reader because of its price and lack of depth. The Howard and Sawyer’s reader costs approximately $20, as contrary to Kegley’s $40 price tag. The Howard and Sawyer reader also has more contributors and heftier chapters and therefore is more comprehensive by the sheer fact of having a greater selection of articles.

Most importantly, I supplemented the written texts with films, especially a series of PBS “Frontline” documentaries, starting with excellent 1999 “The superpower and the terrorist” (re-issued under the title “Searching for Bin Laden”) (the story of Bin Laden and his network from 1979 to 1998), “Inside the terror network” (the story of 9/11 plot), “Campaign against terror” (on the 2001 campaign in Afghanistan), “Gunning for Saddam” and “War behind closed doors” (political debates in Washington prior to the 2003 war in Iraq). Another film, which I used exclusively in the section of the course where I adopted *The New Jackals* as a text, was HBO’s 1997 dramatization of the 1993 WTC bombing entitled “Path to paradise.”

When using films it is important to treat them as texts in their own right, as contrary to mere supplements to written texts. Besides, “Frontline” documentaries have an extra virtue of having comprehensive Web sites attached to the programs—those, indeed, are excellent learning tools that I used as supplementary texts but one can even use as the main text.

When addressing the phenomenon of terrorism in a broader perspective, which I do in the second section of my “global terrorism” course, one has a choice between several texts of two types: 1) coherent “monographic” texts by a single author or multiple authors, 2) thematically organized readers. The virtue of the former is their coherence and comprehensiveness, while the latter give the teacher more freedom with defining the precise agenda to cover—especially when the selection of readings is rich and of good quality. Besides, readers, through their multiplicity of voices destroy the textual monotony that “monographic” texts, no matter how well-written, inevitably bring about with their “single voice.”

Among good monographic texts one can list Cindy Combs’ *Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*, Pamala Griset’s and Sue Mahan’s *Terrorism in Perspective*, and Clifford Simonsen’s and Jeremy Spindlove’s *Terrorism Today. The Past, the Players, the Future* (Combs 2002; Griset and Mahan 2003; Simonsen and Spindlove 2004 (2000)). The first two texts are more to the “left,” while the latter is more to the
“right.” All organize their material differently. Combs takes a thematic issue-by-issue approach, ranging from history of terrorism to its future. At the end of each chapter she provides cases and questions for study and discussion. Griset and Mahan take a similar approach, albeit in a less comprehensive and more idiosyncratic fashion. Their book, however, includes selected reading by other authors, thus breaking the monotony of the text. Simonsen and Spindlove, finally, give the bulk of their text to a geographic overview of terrorism country-by-country—an approach that makes the book amendable to imaginative counter-terrorism simulation and group-work exercises but also that would make the book an absolute disaster when used in an unimaginative way chapter-by-chapter.

In my practice, after using Cindy Combs’ text once and getting student comment on the text as “satisfactory but boring” I moved to reader-type of texts, adopting Howard and Sawyer’s voluminous and cheap Terrorism and Counterterrorism. Its most important virtue is the quality of included selections by the world’s top and long-established experts on the topic: Bruce Hoffman, Martha Crenshaw, Mark Juergensmeyer, Jessica Stern, Richard Betts, etc. The reader includes the absolutely crucial texts, such as Louise Richardson’s discussion of state-sponsored terrorism and John Arquilla’s, David Rosnfeldt’s, and Michele Zannini’s discussion of “netwar.” It also includes “dissident voices” such as Eqbal Ahmad’s exposition of U.S. hypocrisy in his 2000 lecture “Terrorism: Theirs and Ours.” Overall, the text is outstanding.

Jacek Lubecki

Notes

1. There are some “journalistic” accounts so badly done with regard to both form and content that they are to be absolutely avoided. On the top of list is Yossef Bodansky’s Bin Laden (2001), a very poorly written narrative that mixes fact, speculations, and fiction and gives no sources whatsoever (Bodansky 2001). John Cooley’s and Edward Said’s Unholy Wars (1999) is factually much better but poorly written and edited [Cooley and Said 2002 (1999)]. Laurie Mylroie The War Against America (2002) focuses very narrowly on the 1993 bombing and strains the bounds of credibility by trying to prove that Ramzi Yousef was an Iraqi intelligence agent (Mylroie 2002). Richard Labevière’s Dollars for Terror is a crude and poorly written piece of anti-American agitprop (Labevière 2002). Among good books I highly recommend Ahmed’s Rashid’s Taliban (2001), but it focuses narrowly on Afghanistan (Rashid 2001).

References

Benjamin, Daniel, and Steven Simon. 2002. The Age of Sacred Terror. New York: Random House
Bergen, Peter. 2002. Holy War Inc. Inside the Secret World of Osama Bin-Laden. New York: Free Press.
Bodansky, Yossef. 2001. Bin Laden. The Man Who Declared War on America. New York: Forum.
Combs, Cindy. 2002. Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century. 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
Cooley, John, and Edward Said. 2002 (1999). Unholy Wars. Afghanistan, American and International Terrorism. London: Pluto Press.
Griset, Pamala, and Sue Mahan. 2003. Terrorism in Perspective. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
Those professors teaching research methods as well as public opinion classes may benefit from reading and considering for adoption a book that has been around for a long time: *Polling and the Public: What Every Citizen Should Know*. Not only is the language in the book accessible for undergraduate students, but it also provides excellent examples for lectures and discussion, even when one does not adopt the textbook. The book can be used in both contexts, as I do, using it for its examples in my research methods class and adopting it as a text in my "Public Opinion and Voting Behavior" class. This book is especially valuable during election years.

The discussion on sampling and the reasons for sampling are intuitive and useful for undergraduates to understand. Asher makes it possible for students to understand the logic behind sampling and sampling error without understanding the math. Following the example of George Gallup, Asher describes the example of the blood test. These are examples that lead naturally into an intuitive discussion of what factors affect the sampling error. One takes a sample of blood, and not the entire "population" of blood to test for disease or cholesterol. Asher also mentions the example of a chef tasting a spoonful of soup; one does not taste the entire pot of soup in order to find out if more spices should be added. These examples are terrific for an undergraduate class discussion on sampling. A professor can take a volunteer from the audience to discuss the soup this individual makes; a heterogeneous soup (like a vegetable soup) may have a larger "error"; a larger spoonful may thus be necessary in order to reduce the error, though it will not help too much.

Address correspondence to Dr. Martha Kropf, University of Missouri-Kansas City, Kansas City, MO, Political Science Dept., 5120 Rockhill Road, 213 Haag Hall, Kansas City, MO, 64110-2499. E-mail: kropfm@umkc.edu
Another analogy to sampling methods is also inherent in the example; how does the chef stir the soup (that is, what sampling method does the chef employ)? Does the chef intentionally take a bite with a hunk of garlic to get an idea of the taste? This helps distinguish between probability and non-probability sampling in the minds of students.

My lectures on survey research as a methodology (in my research methods class) would also not be the same without the examples that Asher cites in his chapter on the “Wording and Context of Questions.” Asher cites common examples of problems that resonate with students. Imagine the look of understanding (of double-barreled questions) on a student’s face when you ask them, “Do you still beat your spouse?” Concerning the problems of non-attitudes, they are always surprised when we discuss the non-existent “Public Affairs Act” and how Democrats and Republicans show greater levels of support for the “Act” when a political party is associated with it (which shows how the context of the question within the survey instrument matters). All in all, Asher cites many different research studies that support the contentions that he mentions, especially those more surprising to students that the gender or race of an interviewer matters to how a respondent answers a question.

However, while the citation of the multiple research studies is one strength of the book, it can also be a weakness for a certain subset of students. Some students have related to me that they have a hard time following the larger points because of the large number of statistics and numbers that are cited in the book. These students sometimes need special guidance in seeing the larger points of the book and in evaluating the evidence that Asher presents.

In the context of my “Public Opinion and Voting Behavior” class (a junior/senior level class), I adopt this book every time because I believe it is such an accessible text on polling, and I do require students to read the entire book. However, I struggle with the best way to teach the book as a whole. There are many different ideas presented in the book ranging from the science of sampling and questionnaire design to the normative questions of what are the effects of public opinion polls on democracy? Sometimes I have students review one specific chapter upon which they become “experts” and present the information to the rest of the class. I also assign the students to find a poll in the media and evaluate it based on the suggestions that Asher gives, especially in Chapter 6, “The Media and the Polls.” We spend approximately three weeks on the science of polling in this class. Using Asher, much more time could be spent, but there are many other concepts that students need to learn in such a class. I argue that the Asher text is not a primary text for a class, but rather a quality supplementary text.

Asher provides “exercises” at the end of every chapter in the 6th edition of the book (released in 2004), but had not in the previous two editions of the book that I have used. There are some good ideas for helping the class understand the book, but on the whole, I have not used the exercises. This may be because I used the book as a supplement and did not spend more than three weeks discussing the text.

All in all Polling and the Public: What Every Citizen Should Know is a useful text for student learning. Not only that, but since Asher keeps up on some of the newest research on survey methodology (problems with cell phones and internet polling are two examples), it is a useful text for professors to use for up-to-date and interesting examples.

Martha Kropf
This brief text aimed at undergraduate urban politics and policy classes portrays U.S. urban policy as an often chaotic and sometimes bruising chase for resources, allies, legitimacy, and state- and national-level support. Jones depicts power as fragmented amongst dozens of different interests and jurisdictions in American urban areas. Coordination of these interests requires tremendous effort to achieve and sustain, and is often unsuccessful. Although The Metropolitan Chase succeeds in presenting this picture in a clear, concise, and coherent fashion accessible to most undergraduates, in many ways it reads much more like an extended essay than a textbook. This approach provides both strengths and shortcomings when considering the book for classroom use.

Jones begins by identifying and describing key participants. Part I discusses government officials, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and metropolitan and regional organizations. After laying this groundwork, the text proceeds to examine a wide range of important urban issues in Parts II and III: economic development, transportation, education, entertainment and tourism, public safety, health and environment, housing, and parks and recreation. Somewhat oddly, the penultimate chapter focuses on revenue and taxation, which seems to be putting the horse well behind the cart. However, the chapters stand quite well on their own, and there is nothing to prevent them from being used in the classroom in any order.

Each chapter is written as an extended essay organized under major and minor subheadings. There are no sidebars, no marginal notes or definitions, and hardly any tables or charts. The end of each chapter offers four or five suggestions for further reading and a small “Doing It” section suggesting short (1–4 hour?) student research projects designed to explore some of the trends Jones describes. An excellent appendix provides a list of relevant organization and agency websites with thumbnail descriptions of each. A second appendix lists a variety of public sector websites in the forty eight largest metropolitan areas in the United States.

The book has much to recommend it. Introductory textbooks face the difficult challenge of extracting the most crucial ideas developed from complex theoretical and empirical research and presenting them concisely and accessibly. Jones has met this challenge admirably with lucidly written prose and well-organized chapters; some of his best choices are omissions rather than additions. Further, the material is presented in a manner that facilitates comparisons across sections and chapters. Jones manages all of this in a scant 370 pages (including all appendices and indexes), allowing the book to serve as a core text that can be generously supplemented by other readings.

Unfortunately, such supplemental readings are essential because the book makes quite poor use of examples in its explanations of political and social phenomena. As I noted above, the book reads much like an extended essay on the general characteristics of politics and policy in American cities. However, in order to move

Address correspondence to David Kirchner, Hamline University, Political Science Dept., 1536 Hewitt Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55104. E-mail: dkirchner01@gw.hamline.edu
expeditiously through the book’s many subjects, Jones piles generalization on top of generalization, rarely pausing to connect his readers with actual people, places, and events. It is not that examples are lacking—there are hundreds of them—but they are usually much too brief, presupposing a knowledge of American cities that many undergraduates simply do not possess.

For example, Jones writes that “Central cities have redesigned parts of their downtown — the 16th Street Mall in Denver, for example—to make it more shopper friendly.” (p. 66) The vast majority of students confronting this sentence will be completely unfamiliar with the 16th Street Mall, and for them the example is unhelpful. Jones repeatedly gives examples in this abbreviated fashion, and only occasionally are the examples so well-known that the point will be appreciated by most undergraduate readers. Conversely, there is a disappointing scarcity of long, detailed examples; profiles of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Council and Portland Metro (pp. 103–105) are the exception, not the rule. Admittedly, the book aims to be short — but fewer, more detailed examples would have served the purpose better.

A related complaint—in all fairness a criticism of the editors and designers rather than the author—is that the book’s illustrations are frequently dull and the captions are consistently uninformative. This is not a backbreaking flaw, but it represents a tremendous lost opportunity, particularly since the examples within the text are weak. On the page facing the text quoted above, there is a picture of the 16th Street Mall with the minimalist caption, “Shoppers at Denver’s Sixteenth Street Mall.” Instead of this bare identification, a 2–3 sentence caption could have supplemented the textual discussion by pointing out why the promenade in the picture is “shopper friendly” and how it differs from the previously existing urban environment. Nearly all of the illustrations are minimally captioned, generic photographs (essentially postcard shots); there are hardly any charts, graphs, or maps providing information to support the discussion in the text.

Finally, Jones explicitly limits his scope by focusing most closely on cities with a metropolitan population greater than 1 million (p. 5). Thus, students more familiar with Spokane than Seattle or Tallahassee than Tampa may find that their experiences differ from some of his generalizations.

These deficiencies, however, should not wholly detract from the book’s achievements. If it did provide lots of extensive examples, The Metropolitan Chase would have to be quite a bit longer than it is—and brevity is certainly one of the book’s assets. Its conciseness allows considerable freedom to add other readings to a syllabus and thus provide the needed case studies in another way. For those who choose to teach urban politics and policy within an issue-by-issue framework—particularly to students familiar with large urban areas—Jones’ text merits consideration for classroom adoption.

David Kirchner