The purpose of this course is to provide students with an overview of the main contexts of contemporary political violence and resistance, such as insurgency, terrorism, rebellion, and revolution. I expect students to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the leading theories on violent and nonviolent resistance, ways to test such theories, and implications of the current literature for policy. Along with participation in class discussions (10% of the overall grade) and quizzes (15% of the overall grade), students will be graded on a 20-25 page research proposal (65% of the overall grade) that addresses a specific issue of contemporary political violence, as well as a presentation of the paper (10% of the overall grade). Throughout the course’s duration, I will work with students on the development of their research proposals, providing them with feedback on up to three submitted drafts.

Due Dates:

Week Three: Topic for Approval (5% of the research proposal grade)
Week Four: Outline (5% of the research proposal grade)
Week Six: Draft I (10% of the research proposal grade)
Anytime before Week Ten: Draft II
Anytime before Week Ten: Draft III

Mandatory Texts:


One: Political Violence and Resistance Organizations

**Discussion Questions:** What is political violence? What is resistance? Are there discernable differences between types of political violence such as terrorism, insurgency, and civil war? What are the aims of resistance organizations?

**Readings:**


Two: The Nature of Armed Conflict

**Discussion Questions:** How is political violence different from conventional war? Do explanations of the causes of war extend to asymmetric conflicts? Who wins interstate wars and do the same insights apply to conflicts involving non-state actors? In what ways are conventional war and asymmetric conflict similar? What elements of armed conflict are timeless?

**Readings:**


Three: Civil War and Ethnic Conflict

**Discussion Questions:** How does civil war differ from interstate war? What roles do identity, ideology, culture and economics play in spawning and sustaining civil wars? What are the most effective ways to end civil wars?

**Readings:**
Kalyvas, Stathis. (2006). *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Ch. 1


**Four: Insurgency, Guerrilla Warfare, and Rebellion**

*Discussion Questions:* How does insurgency differ from civil war? What instigates rebellion? How does collective identity contribute to the expansion of specific insurgencies? Does Weinstein’s theory on insurgents complement or contradict the Clausewitzian model? Are rebels puppets, puppet masters, both, or neither?

*Readings*


**Five: Terrorism**

*Discussion Questions:* How does terrorism differ from insurgency? What is the core logic behind most terrorism strategies? Is terrorism a “legitimate” form of political violence? What is the role of formal organizations in sustaining terror campaigns? Does Abrahms’ theory on terrorist organizations apply to other types of militant organizations?

*Readings*

Hoffman, Bruce. (2006) Inside Terrorism. Ch. 3


**Films:**


**Six: The Life Spans of Resistance Organizations**

**Discussion Questions:** What factors contribute to sustaining resistance campaigns? Do all resistance organizations seek longevity? Is organizational survival a useful measurement of resistance success? What is the global network of militant organizations and how does it affect the life spans of militant organizations?

**Readings:**


**Seven: The Effectiveness of Resistance Organizations**

**Discussion Questions:** Is political violence effective for achieving political goals? How does credibility affect a resistance organization’s ability to gain concessions? Do empirical studies on political violence support political bargaining theories? When violent resistance organizations do succeed, in what ways do they usually win? What factors contribute the most to success?

**Readings:**


**Eight: External Support for Resistance Organizations**

*Discussion Questions:* What are the effects of state sponsorship of resistance organizations? What matters more for achievement: state sponsorship or network ties? How does asymmetry affect the decision processes of resistance organizations? In what ways does external support from states and fellow non-state actors bolster resistance endeavors? Why do states sponsor militant organizations?

*Readings:*


**Nine: Suicide Attacks/Martyrdom Operations**

*Discussion Questions:* In what ways are suicide attacks effective/ineffective? -Lethality? -Organization duration? -Organization success? Why do militant organizations conduct suicide attacks? What motives do individuals have for carrying out suicide attacks and how do they differ from organizational motives?
Readings:


Ten: Non-Violent Resistance

Discussion Questions: Is non-violent resistance more effective than political violence? How do participation levels affect the outcomes of resistance campaigns? What is the relationship between government repression and the effectiveness of non-violent resistance? What are the key differences between active and passive forms of resistance?

Readings:


Eleven: Social Movements, Resistance Organizations, and Revolution

Discussion Questions: What sparks revolutions? When do violent and non-violent streams converge to bring about revolution? Do non-violent movements require a “radical” flank in order to achieve success? What role do revolutionaries play in democratization?

Readings:
Huntington, Samuel P. (1991) The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century. Ch. 1-3
DeFronzo, James. (1996) *Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements*. Ch. 1 and 9


**Twelve: From Revolutionaries to Governors**

*Discussion Questions:* Under what conditions do violent resistance organizations transition to mainstream political parties? When do resistance organizations precipitate a state’s democratization? How does armed conflict shape post-conflict political landscapes?

*Readings:*


**Words to the Wise**

I will dock late assignments one-letter grade per day. IMPORTANT: I will not tolerate plagiarism and academic dishonesty.

Weekly readings are subject to change so pay attention to class announcements.

During class put your cell phones on silent and do not use them.