Political Science 7941: Terrorism and Insurgency

Fall 2010
Class Meetings: Tuesday 9:10 - 12:00

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Class Location: 210 Stubbs
Office Phone: 578-2134
Office Hours: Monday 9:30-10:30
Wednesday 9:00-10:00

Course Overview:
Often terrorism and insurgency are portrayed as recent phenomena unique to our international system. While the current surge in this type of violence may have distinctive aspects, this form of political violence has a long pedigree. This course attempts to give you a broad understanding of both the historic roots of terrorism and insurgency as well as the challenges it presents to the modern international system. To accomplish this goal we will examine a large swath of the literature both in historic scope and theoretical arguments. The course starts by examining the roots of the discontent that can lead individuals and organization to utilize terrorism and/or insurgency. With this theoretical foundation, the course then looks at the various tactical choices that the discontented groups take and the consequences this has on the targeted states. The course ends with a more detailed looked at the recent academic literature that has arisen to address the causes and consequences of international terrorism.

Course Grades:
Response Papers (40%): You will be required to write a total of 8 response papers during the semester. These are one page long and will address an important issue that you found in the readings. In other words, you must take one part of the readings and offer a critique. It is important to note that every critique that you make must be followed with a solution. These are due at the beginning of class and you can only write one a week.

Attendance and Participation (15%): You need to arrive at class prepared to discuss the readings. For this class it is critical that you have read the assignment and participate in classroom discussions.

Research Design (25%): You will need to write a research design for the class. A research design is essentially a research paper that contains everything but the data analysis. So this includes an exhaustive literature review, a fully developed theory section, and research design section. While you are not required to perform a data analysis, you do need to describe the data that you would use and how it would be analyzed. The paper is due November, 16th at the start of class.

Final Exam (20%): You will have a take-home final exam. You will be required to answer 3 questions. You will be graded not only on your knowledge of the material, but also on how well you are able to integrate and extend the readings. This will be a take home exam and will be due 5:00 PM on December 7th.
**Required Books:** The following is a list of the required books for the semester. I understand that this is a large number of books, so I encourage you to look for used copies. The reading load is about 1 book a week, which is well within your abilities and thus I expect lively discussions during class.


Reading Schedule

Week 1 (8-24): Introduction

The Origins and History of Discontent

Terrorism in History

The Boer War: An Early Insurgency


Vietnam: A Modern Insurgency

Theoretical Roots of Terrorism and Insurgency


The Analysis of Terrorism and Insurgency
Testing Theories about Terrorism

Spillover for Violence


Foster, Dennis, David Sobek, and Alex Braithwaite. 2010. "Ballots, Bargains, and Bombs: Terrorist Targeting of Spoiler Opportunities." *International Interactions*.

Research Design Due (beginning of class)

Democracy and Terrorism


Responding to Terrorism and Insurgency


