

Causes of Terrorism and Political Violence
JLC-470/670
Fall 2016

Instructor: Dr. Thomas Zeitzoff, Assistant Professor

Schedule: T 5:30-8:00PM in Ward 205

Office: Ward 252

Office hours: T 3-4:30 PM, W 2:30-3:45 PM, or by appointment

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Course Description

The focus of this course will be on individuals and groups that seek to challenge the status quo. While government and pro-government violence is important and will be touched upon, we will mainly focus on the “challengers” and these three questions:

- 1) Why do people and groups choose to participate in political violence and terrorism?
- 2) How are these groups and individuals organized?
- 3) And how do 1) and 2) influence the tactics of political violence that are adopted?

We will take an explicit micro/meso approach to theories of terrorism and political violence--examining individual and group behavior. We will also bridge the divide between psychological and rational choice theories of participation. Finally, we will use these theories to understand prominent and important cases of terrorism of political violence. This course will involve intensive reading of advanced scholarly research, as well as primary source documents and articles on groups. Some readings involve formal mathematical models, quantitative data analysis, or both. Although students are not necessarily expected to be able to produce their own quantitative and/or formal research, they must make every effort to understand and discuss it.

NOTE: Some of the materials used in this course are graphic or disturbing in nature. We do not discuss these things lightly, nor are they presented purely for shock value. Rather, we observe the words of Eli Wiesel that are carved into the entrance the US Holocaust Museum, “for the dead and the living, we must bear witness.” Thus, we must both bear witness and try to understand the violence, in order prevent it in the future.

Objectives (things you will know after taking this class)

1. Be able to distinguish between rational choice and psychological explanations for violent participation and tactics.
2. Understand Nash equilibrium, and solve extensive form and normal form games
3. Understand cutting edge theories of political violence and terrorism
4. Differentiate between individual and group-level motivators for participation
5. Apply theories of political violence to prominent political violence events and groups

Readings

There are no required books for this course. All of the readings and materials are available on the course website, or at a given url where indicated. You are required to do all the readings—both theoretical and for the presentation background—for each class.

Laptop and Cellular Phones Policy

Laptops and cellular phones will not be permitted during class. While laptops are wonderful inventions, and improve communication and efficiency, the research on their effect on learning outcomes in the classroom is unambiguous. Laptops are distractions (to both you and others), lead to dictation, rather than synthesis during note taking, and harm attention (see studies below)—all leading to worse learning outcomes.

Turn off your cell phone during class and do not bring it out. It is very distracting to others. Off means it does not ring or vibrate. The first time I see your phone out I will ask you a question related to the material. If I see it out again, I will ask you to leave the class.

- Bowman, Laura L., Laura E. Levine, Bradley M. Waite, and Michael Gendron. "Can students really multitask? An experimental study of instant messaging while reading." *Computers & Education* 54, no. 4 (2010): 927-931.
- Fried, Carrie B. "In-class laptop use and its effects on student learning." *Computers & Education* 50.3 (2008): 906-914.
- Yamamoto, Kevin. "Banning laptops in the classroom: Is it worth the hassles." *Journal of Legal Education* 57 (2007): 477.

Sharing of Course Content

Students are not permitted to make visual or audio recordings, including live streaming, of classroom lectures or any class related content, using any type of recording devices (e.g., smart phone, computer, digital recorder, etc.) unless prior permission from the instructor is obtained, and there are no objections from any of the students in the class. If permission is granted, personal use and sharing of recordings and any electronic copies of course materials (e.g., PowerPoints, formulas, lecture notes and any classroom discussions online or otherwise) is limited to the personal use of students registered in the course and for educational purposes only, even after the end of the course.

Exceptions will be made for students who present a signed Letter of Accommodation from the Academic Support and Access Center. See: How Do I Request Accommodations?

< <http://www.american.edu/ocl/asac/Accommodations.cfm> >

To supplement the classroom experience, lectures may be audio or video recorded by faculty and made available to students registered for this class. Faculty may record classroom lectures or discussions for pedagogical use, future student reference, or to

meet the accommodation needs of students with a documented disability. These recordings are limited to personal use and may not be distributed (fileshare), sold, or posted on social media outlets without the written permission of faculty.

Unauthorized downloading, file sharing, distribution of any part of a recorded lecture or course materials, or using information for purposes other than the student's own learning may be deemed a violation of *American University's Student Conduct Code* and subject to disciplinary action (see Student Conduct Code VI. Prohibited Conduct).

Academic Integrity

I take issues of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. Please familiarize yourself with the AU Academic Integrity Code. I regard violations of this code seriously and will immediately refer the matter to the dean. If you have any questions about the course, or more general requirements about the code, please do not hesitate to talk to me.

Assessment

Note: Each unexcused absence will result in the loss of 0.35 GPA points on your final grade. More than three unexcused absences will result in failure for the course

Participation (10%)

Success in the course depends on regular attendance and discussion. Students must do ALL of the assigned readings before class and be prepared to answer questions and ask them. Attendance alone is insufficient to succeed. Discussion will be evaluated on both quality and quantity of comments, particularly during the presentations. You should also be prepared for the fact that I may call on you randomly--so come prepared.

Response Papers (15%)

You will write four ~500 word (2-pages, double-spaced) response papers. See below for the dates. The goal of these papers is to strengthen your skills in critically evaluating arguments. We will discuss expectations in class.

Violent Event Presentation (10%)

In order to broaden our knowledge about different instances of political violence and connect our theoretical readings to concrete cases, we will have two briefings per class (~30 minutes each). These will be student-led. You will sign up to present once for the semester (most likely with a partner). For the first 10 minutes of your brief you will put the violent event in context and will cover the actors (perpetrators, victims, external actors), motivation, kind of violence, and results of the violent event. For the last 20 minutes of your brief, you will lead the class in a discussion linking the theoretical readings to the topic at hand. Finally, as part of the presentation, you will also fill out a violence catalog sheet that will be used by the whole class (due the Wednesday before your briefing by 11:00pm). The events from the violence presentations will be on the midterm exam, and the violence catalog will serve as a useful study guide.

Midterm (30%)

One in-class midterm will be held on **October 18th**

Project on A Group Involved in Political Violence (35 total %) You will select a group that has, or is currently engaged in political violence. You will then use the theories and literature we have discussed in class to provide a concise policy brief that explains the group's origins and operating environment, recruitment/participation, management tactics, and subsequent evolution/dissolution. As part of this project:

- You will produce a one-page rough draft on your proposed group **due October 25th (5% of total)**
- You will turn in a completed 4-page policy brief on the group you have chosen on the last day of class **due December 6th (15% of total)**
- The following week (**December 13-15**), you meet with the professor for 12 minutes oral defense in a pre-scheduled time slot (we will schedule these on **October 25th**). During the defense, you will prepare a brief, 4-minute presentation on your group/outline. The professor will then ask questions for the remaining 8 minutes. You will be graded both on your presentation and ability to answer the professor's questions. Showing up late will result in a severe markdown. (**15% of total**).

More detailed rubric and expectations of the assignment will be discussed when the project is assigned.

****NOTE: LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED****

Classroom Courtesy

Classroom courtesy is an essential component of creating an effective learning environment. All students have the right to learn without unnecessary distractions. These distractions include: cellphones, talking during lectures (unless recognized by the instructor), reading newspapers, falling asleep, etc. If you need a cell phone for emergency purposes, leave it on vibrate. Laptop use is also restricted. Unless you have a documented learning need, or are instructed by the professor, do not bring a laptop to class.

Entering and leaving are also significant sources of distraction. It is your responsibility to be on time and to stay for the entire period. In circumstances where you need to leave early, tell the professor beforehand. Repeated disruptions of class will lead to a reduction in your final grade.

Most importantly, class discussions of the issues in political science, criminology, and justice, can lead to strong feelings and heated debate. Because this is a college classroom, all discussion must be respectful and scholarly.

Scholarly Comments

- Are respectful of diverse opinions and open to follow up questions and/or disagreement
- Are related to class and/or the course material
- Focus on advancing the discussion about issues related to the course and/or course material rather than personal beliefs, and
- Are delivered in normal tones and a non-aggressive manner.

Unacceptable Comments

- Are personal in nature. This includes attacks on a person's appearance, demeanor, or political beliefs.
- Include interrupting the professor or other students. Raise your hand and wait to be recognized.
- Often use the discussion to argue for political positions and/or beliefs. If political discussions arise, they must be discussed in a scholarly way (see above).
- May include using raised tones, yelling, engaging in arguments with other students and being threatening in any manner.
- Include ignoring the professor's authority to maintain the integrity of the classroom environment.

Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice. These changes may come via e-mail. Make sure to check your university-supplied email regularly. You are accountable for all such communications.

Students Resources

If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please do not hesitate to consult with me. In addition to the resources of the department, a wide range of services is available to support you in your efforts to meet the course requirements.

Academic Support Center (x3360, MGC 243) offers study skills workshops, individual instruction, tutor referrals, and services for students with learning disabilities. Writing support is available in the ASC Writing Lab or in the Writing Center, Battelle 228.

Disability Support Services (x3315, MGC 206) offers technical and practical support and assistance with accommodations for students with physical or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability and might require accommodations in this course, please notify

me with a letter from DSS or ASC early in the semester so that we can make arrangements to address your needs.

Counseling Center (x3500, MGC 214) offers counseling and consultations regarding personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus mental health resources.

Writing Center in 228 Battelle-Tompkins offers free, individual coaching sessions to all AU students. In your 45-minute session, a student writing consultant can help you address assignments, understand the conventions of academic writing, and learn how to revise and edit your own work. The Center offers appointments on the hour from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, and 3 to 6 p.m. on Sundays. Call [202- 885- 2991](tel:202-885-2991) to arrange a session.

Center for Diversity & Inclusion is dedicated to enhancing LGBTQ, Multicultural, First Generation, and Women's experiences on campus and to advance AU's commitment to respecting & valuing diversity by serving as a resource and liaison to students, staff, and faculty on issues of equity through education, outreach, and advocacy. It is located on the 2nd floor of Mary Graydon Center: [202-885-3651](tel:202-885-3651), email is cdi@american.edu.

Dean of Students Office (x3300, 408 Butler Pavilion) offers one-on-one meetings to discuss academic, adjustment, and personal issues that may be interfering with a student's ability to succeed academically. The DOS office also verifies documentation for students who have medical or mental health issues that cause them to be absent from class.

Emergency Preparedness

In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease), American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site (american.edu/emergency) and the AU information line at [\(202\) 885-1100](tel:202-885-1100) for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/college-specific information.

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

Week 1 August 30 Understanding Terrorism and Political Violence **Assign Presentations**

Readings

- Tilly, Charles. "Terror, terrorism, terrorists." *Sociological Theory* 22.1 (2004): 5-13.
- Kalyvas, Stathis. "Is ISIS a Revolutionary Group and if Yes, What Are the Implications?." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9.4 (2015).
- Kalyvas, Stathis N. "The ontology of "political violence": action and identity in civil wars." *Perspectives on Politics* 1.03 (2003): 475-494.

SECTION 2 MOTIVATIONS

Week 2 September 6 "Rational" Theories / Game Theory Part I *Response Paper 1 Due*

Theoretical Readings

- Abrahms, Max (2008). "What Terrorists Really Want." *International Security* 32(4): 78-105.
- Chenoweth, Erica, Nicholas Miller, and Elizabeth McClellan (2009). "What Makes Terrorists Tick" (A Response to Abrahms) *International Security* 33(4): 180-20
- Iannaccone, Laurence R., and Eli Berman. "Religious extremism: The good, the bad, and the deadly." *Public Choice* 128.1-2 (2006): 109-129.
- Humphreys, MacArtan, and Jeremy M. Weinstein. "Who fights? The determinants of participation in civil war." *American Journal of Political Science* 52.2 (2008): 436-455.
- Mueller, John. "The banality of "ethnic war"." *International Security* 25.1 (2000): 42-70.

Presentation and Background Readings

- **1983 Beirut barracks bombing**
 - Mayer, Jane. "Ronald Reagan's Benghazi." (May 2014): *The New Yorker*.
- **Great Terror (1936-1938)**
 - P 1-10. Gregory, Paul R., Philipp JH Schröder, and Konstantin Sonin. "Dictators, Repression and the Median Citizen: An 'Eliminations Model' of Stalin's Terror (Data from the NKVD Archives)." (2006).

Week 3 September 13 Psychological Theories, Game Theory Part II

Theoretical Readings

- Gurr, Ted (1968). "Psychological Factors in Civil Violence." *World Politics* 20(2): 245-278.,
- Post, Jerrold M. "When Hatred is Bred in the Bone: Psycho-cultural Foundations of Contemporary Terrorism." *Political Psychology* 26.4 (2005): 615-636.
- Taylor, Max, and John Horgan. "A conceptual framework for addressing psychological process in the development of the terrorist." *Terrorism and political violence* 18.4 (2006): 585-601.
- Victoroff, Jeff. "The Mind of the Terrorist A Review and Critique of Psychological Approaches." *Journal of conflict resolution* 49.1 (2005): 3-42.
- Atran, Scott. "The moral logic and growth of suicide terrorism." *Washington Quarterly* 29.2 (2006): 127-147.

Presentation and Background Readings

- **March 14, 1891 lynching in New Orleans**
 - Serwer, Adam. "How a 125-year-old mass lynching tried to make America great again." *Buzzfeed* (August 2016).
- **Jos Riots 2010**
 - Nossiter, Adam. "Toll from Religious and Ethnic Violence in Nigeria Rises to 500." *The New York Times* (March 2010).

Week 4 September 20 Incorporating Psychology + Rational Theories **Assign Projects** **Response Paper 2 Due*

Theoretical Readings

- Littman, Rebecca, and Elizabeth Levy Paluck. "The cycle of violence: understanding individual participation in collective violence." *Political Psychology* 36.S1 (2015): 79-99.
- Lake, David A., and Donald Rothchild. "Containing fear: the origins and management of ethnic conflict." *International security* 21.2 (1996): 41-75.
- Ginges, Jeremy, et al. "Psychology out of the laboratory: the challenge of violent extremism." *American Psychologist* 66.6 (2011): 507.
- Goodwin, Jeff. "Review Essay: What Must We Explain to Explain Terrorism? Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill by Jessica Stern." *Social Movement Studies* 3 (2004): 259-261.

Presentation and Background Readings

- **Israeli Settler Price Tag Attacks**
 - Goldberg, Jeffrey. "Among the Settlers." *The New Yorker* (May 2014).
- **Attacks against Secularists Bloggers in Bangladesh**
 - Subramanian, Samanth. "The Islamist War on Secular Bloggers." *The New Yorker* (2015).

SECTION 3 RECRUITMENT AND ORGANIZATION

Week 5 September 27 Recruitment/Ideology/Participation **Schedule Oral Exams***

Theoretical Readings

- Atran, Scott. "Who Becomes a Terrorist Today?." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 2.5 (2010).
- Horgan, John. "From profiles to pathways and roots to routes: Perspectives from psychology on radicalization into terrorism." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 618.1 (2008): 80-94.
- Weinstein, Jeremy M. "Resources and the information problem in rebel recruitment." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49.4 (2005): 598-624.
- Gambetta, Diego, and Steffen Hertog. "Engineers of Jihad." (2007).

Presentation and Background Readings

- **Recruitment to ISIS/ISIL**
 - Taub, Ben. "Journey to Jihad: Why are teenagers joining ISIS?" *The New Yorker* (June 2015).
 - Whiteside, Craig. "Catch and Release in the Land of the Two Rivers." *Warontherocks.com* (December 2014).

Black Liberation Army

- Chapter 9. Burrough, Bryan. *Days of Rage: America's Radical Underground, the FBI, and the Forgotten Age of Revolutionary Violence*. Penguin, 2015.

Week 6 October 4 Management Principal Agent /Networks Response *Response Paper 3 Due*

Theoretical Readings

- Chapter. 2. Shapiro, Jacob N. *The Terrorist's Dilemma: Managing violent covert organizations*. Princeton University Press, 2013.
- Staniland, Paul. "Organizing insurgency: networks, resources, and rebellion in South Asia." *International Security* 37.1 (2012): 142-177.

- Zelinsky, Aaron, and Martin Shubik (2009). "Research Note: Terrorist Groups as Business Firms: A New Typological Framework." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21(2): 327- 336.

Presentation and Background Readings

- **Weatherman Underground operations 1969-1972**
 - Chapter 4. Burrough, Bryan. *Days of Rage: America's Radical Underground, the FBI, and the Forgotten Age of Revolutionary Violence*. Penguin, 2015.
- **2016 Normandy church attack**
 - Nossiter, Adam, Rubin, Alissa J., and Benoit Morenne. "ISIS Says Its 'Soldiers' Attacked Church in France, Killing Priest." *The New York Times* (July 2016).

Week 7 October 11 Leadership/ Exam Review

Theoretical Readings

- de Figueiredo Jr, Rui JP, and Barry R. Weingast. "Rationality of fear: political opportunism and ethnic conflict." *Military intervention in civil wars* (1997).
- Johnston, Patrick B. "Does decapitation work? Assessing the effectiveness of leadership targeting in counterinsurgency campaigns." *International Security* 36.4 (2012): 47-79.
- Jervis, Robert. "Do Leaders Matter and How Would We Know?." *Security Studies* 22.2 (2013): 153-179.
- Hoffman, Bruce. "The myth of grass-roots terrorism: Why Osama bin Laden still matters." *Foreign Affairs* (2008): 133-138.
- Sageman, Marc, and Bruce Hoffman. "Does Osama Still Call the Shots?." *FOREIGN AFFAIRS-NEW YORK*- 87.4 (2008): 163.

Presentation and Background Readings

- **Assassination of Indira Gandhi**
 - Raj, Suhasini and Nida Najar. "Film About Indira Gandhi's Assassination Is Barred From Indian Theaters." *The New York Times* (August 2014).
- **Capture of Abdullah Ocalan**
 - Zaman, Amberin. "Turkey Celebrates Capture of Ocalan." *The Washington Post* (February 1999).

Week 8 October 18 **Midterm**

SECTION 4 TACTICS

Week 9 October 25 Violence versus Non-violence *Rough Draft Due and Schedule Oral Exams****

Theoretical Readings

- Stephan, Maria J., and Erica Chenoweth. "Why civil resistance works: The strategic logic of nonviolent conflict." *International Security* 33.1 (2008): 7-44.
- Abrahms, Max. "The Credibility Paradox: Violence as a Double-Edged Sword in International Politics." *International Studies Quarterly* 57.4 (2013): 660-671.
- Walter, Barbara F. "Designing transitions from civil war: Demobilization, democratization, and commitments to peace." *International Security* 24.1 (1999): 127-155.
- McAdam, Doug. "Tactical innovation and the pace of insurgency." *American Sociological Review* (1983): 735-754

Presentation and Background Readings

- **Freedom Riders**
 - McAdam, Doug. "Recruitment to high-risk activism: The case of freedom summer." *American Journal of Sociology* (1986): 64-90.
- **Sharpeville massacre and Black Consciousness Movement**
 - Smith, David. "Sharpeville 50 years on: 'At some stage all hell will break loose.'" *The Guardian* (March 2010).

Week 10 November 1 One-on-one Meetings

Week 11 November 8 Targeting of Civilians

Theoretical Readings

- Kydd, Andrew and Barbara F. Walter. 2002. Sabotaging Peace: The Politics of Extremist Violence. *International Organization*, 56, 2, 263-296.
- Getmansky, Anna, and Thomas Zeitzoff. "Terrorism and voting: The effect of rocket threat on voting in Israeli elections." *American Political Science Review* 108.03 (2014): 588-604.
- Lyall, Jason. "Does indiscriminate violence incite insurgent attacks? Evidence from Chechnya." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2009).

- Valentino, Benjamin A. "Why We Kill: The Political Science of Political Violence against Civilians." *Annual Review of Political Science* 17 (2014): 89-103.

Presentation and Background Readings

- **Armenian Genocide of 1915**
 - Kifner, John. "Armenian Genocide of 1915: An Overview." *The New York Times*.
- **Sinjar Massacre**
 - UNHCR, " "They came to destroy": ISIS Crimes Against the Yazidis." June 2016.

Week 12 November 15 Criminal Insurgency *Response Paper 4 Due*

Theoretical Readings

- Chapters 8 and 12. Grillo, Ioan. *El Narco: Inside Mexico's criminal insurgency*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2012.
- Wantchekon, Leonard. "The paradox of "warlord" democracy: A theoretical investigation." *American Political Science Review* 98.01 (2004): 17-33.
- Kalyvas, Stathis N. "How Civil Wars Help Explain Organized Crime—and How They Do Not." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59.8 (2015): 1517-1540.

Presentation and Background Readings

- **2014 Iguala Kidnapping**
 - Wilkinson, Tracy. "New report raises chilling possibility that mystery of 43 Mexican students' disappearance will never be solved." *The Los Angeles Times* (April 2016).
- **Assassination of Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino**
 - Israely, Jeff. "A Mafia Boss Breaks Silence on an Assassination." *Time* (August 2009).

Week 13 November 22 NO CLASS THANKSGIVING

Week 14 November 29 Countering Violent Extremism/Demobilization

- Blattman, Christopher, Julian C. Jamison, and Margaret Sheridan. *Reducing crime and violence: Experimental evidence on adult noncognitive investments in Liberia*. No. w21204. National Bureau of Economic Research, 2015.
- Aldrich, Daniel P. "First Steps Towards Hearts and Minds? USAID's Countering Violent Extremism Policies in Africa." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26.3 (2014): 523-546.
- Bar-Tal, Daniel. "From intractable conflict through conflict resolution to reconciliation: Psychological analysis." *Political Psychology* 21.2 (2000): 351-365.

Week 15 December 6 Cyber Conflict **Project Due**

- Chapter 1 Singer, Peter W., and Allan Friedman. *Cybersecurity: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Zetter, Kim. "An Unprecedented Look at Stuxnet, the World's First Digital Weapon." *WIRED* (November 2014).
- Chen, Adrian. "The Agency." *The New York Times* (June 2015).

Dec 13-15 **Oral Defense of Project**