

POLI 444 - Seminar on Terrorism Spring 2008

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Time and Location: TR, 8:00-9:15, 0112 Murphey Building.

Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00-12:00.

Introduction: Welcome to the study of terrorism. In this course, we will explore questions such as:

1. Why do individuals grow to hate each other to the point of using political violence?
2. Why do groups decide to use terror to achieve their political ends?
3. How do states prevent challenges to their authority from terrorist groups?
4. When do terrorist groups succeed in dissolving state authority?
5. What are the international implications of terrorism?

The attack on 9/11 in the U.S. represents the defining terrorist attack to Americans, but in most parts of the world, terrorism has long been part of politics. The structure of the course is as follows. We will begin by examining what motivates individuals to hate each other. We will then discuss how individuals organize to protect their political interests and eventually move to violent tactics, such as terrorism. We will discuss the types of tactics used by violent groups as well as the response of the state. We will then move to the study of collapsed states, where problems of terrorism have grown to very large proportions. Finally, we will discuss the international implications of political violence as well as possibilities for conflict resolution.

Though the theories of violence introduced in this course are very general and abstract, the purpose of the course is to use these theories to explain cases of terrorism and the problems terrorism causes in the real world. For us to do so, you must be familiar with current crises affecting the world and the key actors in each of these crises. **I therefore expect you to be keeping up with current events. This is required as part of the course.** Quick news sources can be found on the web, such as:

<http://www.nytimes.com>
<http://www.cnn.com>
<http://www.foxnews.com>
<http://www.pbs.org>
<http://english.aljazeera.net/HomePage>

Finally, I would like to stress that this is a challenging course and the material presented will be difficult. My goal is for us to explore the theoretical explanations of violence and apply these to real world cases. Many of the theoretical arguments utilize formal mathematical modeling and/or advanced statistics. However, I do not expect any of you to have any background in either formal modeling or statistics. My main concern is not in the technical details, but that you develop an intuitive understanding of the central arguments and can explain them verbally. I therefore expect you to struggle with the material, but in the end, you should be able to use the arguments to understand real world cases and concepts.

Grading: Your final grade in the course will be determined as follows:

Position Papers	2 @ 20% each
First Exam	30%
Second Exam	30%

1. **Position Paper #1:** You will also be asked to write two position papers based on what has been covered in class. These papers should be about 6-8 pages in length, double-spaced. These essays are designed to draw from what we know from our analyses of terrorism in order to inform policy. For this particular paper, you will pick a terrorist group from the MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base at : <http://www.tkb.org/>. Once you make your choice, go to the incident analysis wizard. Using this tool, create a graph of that captures the number of incidents your group engages in over time. This will give you a way of identifying the trend in your group of interest. Be sure you save the graph and include it in your final paper. Be sure that the time period you are examining is actually relevant. For example, suppose you choose Hamas as your group. In this case, it makes little sense to examine Hamas activity prior to their formation in 1987. You would therefore restrict your analysis to the period between 1987 and the present day. Similarly, if you are interested in the Red Army Faction, you would restrict your graph from 1978 to 1998. Once you identify the trend, your paper should first briefly introduce the group, discuss the trend, and explain the trend using the theoretical concepts discussed in the first part of the class, such as collective action, adverse selection, and moral hazard. In the final part of your essay, discuss whether or not you believe these theories accurately account for what is happening with your group. The MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base contains information about the groups, but you will probably need to obtain outside sources, such as books or journal articles, to adequately discuss the dynamics of your group. **This paper will be due in class on February 19 in class.**
2. **Position Paper #2:** The format of this position paper will be identical to the first one - 6-8 pages in length, double spaced. However, in this position paper, you will be asked to pick a conflict from the list on the course website. Once you choose your conflict, you will proceed as follows. In the first part of your essay, briefly introduce the conflict and describe why it is occurring. Second, use course concepts, such as incentives to misrepresent, credible commitment, and international intervention, to make an argument as to whether or not your conflict can be resolved through negotiation versus violence. Be sure and discuss the international implications of the conflict as well, including the possibility that it might escalate to an international war. In the final part of your essay, discuss whether or not a peaceful settlement is worth pursuing, given the evidence you have presented. **Your second paper will be due in class on April 24, which is the final day of class.** Failure to turn in either paper on time will result in a one letter grade penalty for each day that it is late, including weekends and holidays. The only exception to this is in the case of documented emergencies, in which case, I will need to see written documentation.
3. **First Exam and Second Exam:** You will be given two exams during the semester. There will be three essay questions on both exams. You will be required to answer two out of the three questions. The questions on the exam will typically ask about a current problem related to terrorism (which is why you should be keeping up with current events). You will then be asked to apply course concepts to the problem to explain what is occurring. You will next be asked if you believe the explanation, and to justify your answer. The tests will be given in class, and you will need to bring a bluebook to the exams. For the first exam, you will be responsible for all material from the start of the class to the midterm. The second exam will mostly focus on the second half of the course, though you will more than likely be required to reference material from the first part as well. **The first exam will be on February 28, the second exam will be on May 1 at 8:00 am in the class location.**

In the event that you are dissatisfied with your grade on either an exam or a position paper, you will have one week from the time in which the assignment is handed back to submit your work for a re-grade. You must submit your original copy for the re-grade. Your grade may remain the same, increase, or decrease as a result of the re-grade. Once you have received a re-grade, all grades are final and non-negotiable.

Required Reading: The readings consist of articles drawn from scholarly journals and books. I have posted the readings on the course website. The powerpoint presentation will also be posted here for the day's lecture. I encourage you to check the website often for updates.

Course Schedule and Reading List

January 10: Introduction.

January 15: Studying Terrorism - Methodology and Patterns. Martha Crenshaw. 2000. The Psychology of Terrorism: An Agenda for the Twenty First Century. *Political Psychology* 20(2); David Lake. 2002. Rational Extremism: Understanding Terrorism in the Twenty First Century. *International Organization* 56(1): 15-29.

January 17: Motivations for Violence. James Fearon & David Laitin. 2000. Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity. *International Organization* 54(4): 845-877.

January 22: Problems in Forming Groups. Scott Atran. 2003. The Genesis of Suicide Terrorism. *Science* 299(5612): 1534-1539; Mancur Olson. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Read article at: http://economics.about.com/cs/macroeconomics/a/logic_of_action.htm.

January 24: The Internal Dynamics of Terrorist Organizations. Jacob Shapiro. 2005. The Greedy Terrorist: A Rational-Choice Perspective on Terrorist Organizations' Inefficiencies and Vulnerabilities. *Strategic Insights* 4(1).

January 29: Terrorist Tactics and Audiences. Ethan Bueno de Mesquita & Erik S. Dickson. The Propaganda of the Deed. *American Journal of Political Science* 51(2): 364-381. Andrew Kydd & Barbara Walter. 2006. The Strategies of Terrorism. *International Security* 31(1): 49-80.

January 31: Film. Inside the Mind of a Suicide Bomber. Robert A. Pape. 2003. The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism. *American Political Science Review* 97(3): 343-361

February 5: The State's Response. Walter Enders and Todd Sandler. 2004. What do we know about the Substitution Effect in Transnational Terrorism? in Andrew Silke and G. Iardi (eds.) *Researching Terrorism Trends, Achievements, Failures*. 2004 Frank Cass; Barbara F. Walter. 2006. Building Reputation: Why Governments Fight Some Separatists but not Others. *American Journal of Political Science* 50(2): 313-330.

February 7: Conflict as Strategic Bargaining. James Fearon. 1995. Rationalist Explanations for War. *International Organization* 49(3): 379-414.

February 12: Negotiation with Terrorists. Navin Bapat. 2005. Insurgency and the Opening of Peace Processes. *Journal of Peace Research* 42(6): 699-717.

February 14: The Commitment Problem. Barbara F. Walter. 1997. The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement. *International Organization* 51(3): 335-364.

February 19: The Spoiler Problem. Andrew Kydd and Barbara F. Walter. 2002. Sabotaging the Peace: The Politics of Extremist Violence. *International Organization* 56(2): 263-296; Ethan Bueno de Mesquita. 2005. Conciliation, Counterterrorism, and Patterns of Terrorist Violence. *International Organization* 49(1): 145-176. **Note: First Paper Due Today!!!**

February 21: Internal Solutions to the Commitment Problem. Ethan Bueno de Mesquita. 2005. Conciliation, Counterterrorism, and Patterns of Terrorist Violence. *International Organization* 49(1): 145-176.

February 26: Summary and Review. John Mueller. 2007. Reacting to Terrorism: Probabilities, Consequences, and the Persistence of Fear. Paper Presented at the International Studies Convention, February 26-March 4, 2007.

February 28: First Exam.

March 4: Civil Wars, and their International Consequences. James Fearon & David Laitin. 2003. Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War. *American Political Science Review* 97(1): 75-90; Idean Salehyan. 2008. No Shelter Here: Rebel Sanctuaries and International Conflict. *Journal of Politics* 70(1)..

March 6: Film. *Gangs of Iraq.*

March 11-13: Spring Break!!!

March 18: Spreading Abroad - Terrorists and their Hosts. Navin Bapat. 2006. State Bargaining with Transnational Terrorist Groups. *International Studies Quarterly* 50(2): 215-232.

March 20: State Sponsorship of Terrorism. Navin Bapat, Daniel Ertley, Chansonette Hall, & Mark Lancaster. Perfect Allies? The Case of Iraq and al Qaeda. *International Studies Perspectives* 83(3): 272-286.

March 25-27: No Class. International Studies Convention.

April 1: Terrorism and International Conflict. Navin Bapat. Explaining the Initiation of 'Wars on Terrorism.' *Working Paper.*

April 3: Film. *Return of the Taliban.*

April 8: Post-Conflict Conditions. Hazem Ghobarah, Paul Huth, & Bruce Russett. 2004. The Post-War Public Health Effects of Civil Conflict. *Social Science and Medicine* 59(4): 869.

April 10: Intervention and Rebuilding Stable Institutions. Stephen E. Gent. 2007. Strange Bedfellows: The Strategic Dynamics of Major Power Military Interventions. *Journal of Politics* 69(4): 1089-1102. Barbara F. Walter. 1999. Designing Institutions from Civil War: Demobilization, Democratization, and Commitments to Peace. *International Security* 24(1): 127-155.

April 15: Failing States. Douglas Lemke. 2003. African Lessons for International Relations Research. *World Politics* 56(1): 114-138; James Fearon & David Laitin. 2004. Neo-Trusteeship and the Problem of Weak States. *International Security* 28(4): 5-43

April 17: The United States in the New Normal. Michael Mandelbaum. 2006. David's Friend Goliath. *Foreign Policy* 152(1): 50-56; Jacob G. Hornberger. 2006. Why They Hate Us. Future of Freedom Foundation.

April 22: Prevention. Andrew Reynolds. 2005. Constitutional Medicine. *Journal of Democracy* 16(1): 54-68.

April 24: Wrap Up and Review. No Reading Assignment.

May 1: Second Exam.