

JLC 470/670: Causes of Terrorism & Political Violence

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Office Hours: Tues 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
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Class Hours: Tues 5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Class Room: Kerwin 204, Zoom 966.177.2306

Course Description

This course examines the causes and consequences of terrorism and other forms of political violence. We explore both terror by governments as well as by the opposition. We will compare different theories that attempt to explain why, how and when governments and the opposition use political violence generally and terror tactics specifically to pursue their goals. Different research strategies of studying terrorism will be considered throughout as well as linking these theories to policy prescriptions. This course focuses less on substantive examples of terrorism and political violence than on theories that can help explain political violence. We will link these theories to policies that help mitigate the effects of violence on society.

Course Objectives

I have three main objectives for this course. First, my goal is to introduce you to important theories and concepts related to the study of terrorism and political violence. Second, since many students have limited exposure to important cases of terrorism, we investigate several prominent historical and contemporary cases of oppositional and state terrorism. Third, students will develop the skills necessary to produce an original paper on a current threat.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand different theories of why people commit political violence
- Compare strengths and weaknesses of each theory
- Apply theories to current acts and actors to explain their behavior
- Connect theories to policy prescriptions
- Distinguish terrorism from other forms of political violence
- Analyze the reasons for different kinds of political violence
- Evaluate the validity of different arguments related to why terrorism occurs
- Produce an original research paper applying the techniques learned in the course
- Read and critique scholarly and policy research

Course Format

The course is structured to consider various theoretical approaches in the study of terrorism and political violence. I believe strongly that learning occurs in many ways and strive to engage you beyond simply lecturing. Instead, we will take part in a variety of activities including lectures, personal writing exercises, partner and group work, class discussions, video clips, demonstrations, problem-solving activities, simulations, debates, and other critical thinking exercises. I also firmly believe in democracy and will solicit your opinions regarding the course generally, and the success or failure of certain exercises specifically. This course will require a great deal of reading and participation on your part. If you are not prepared each day and do not engage in the discussions, debates, and other activities, you will not be successful.

Required and Recommended Materials

Books

Required Books

- Hoffman, Bruce. *Inside terrorism*. Columbia University Press, 2017.

Recommended Books

1. Bacon, Tricia. *Why terrorist groups form international alliances*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018.
2. Bacon, Tricia, and Elizabeth Grimm. *Terror in Transition: Leadership and Succession in Terrorist Organizations*. Columbia University Press, 2022.
3. Bloom, Mia. *Dying to kill: The allure of suicide terror*. Columbia University Press, 2005.
4. Cronin, Audrey Kurth. *How Terrorism Ends*. Princeton University Press, 2009.
5. Enders, Walter, and Todd Sandler. *The political economy of terrorism*. Cambridge University Press, 2011.
6. Malet, David. *Foreign fighters: Transnational identity in civil conflicts*. Oxford University Press, 2013.
7. Young, Joseph K., and Erin M. Kearns. *Tortured Logic: Why Some Americans Support the Use of Torture in Counterterrorism*. Columbia University Press, 2020.

All of the articles for the course will be on Canvas. You can also find most of the journal articles on JSTOR (www.jstor.org) or Google Scholar.

Evaluation

The grading scale for this class is as follows:

A	= 94+	C	= 74-76
A-	= 90-93	C-	= 70-73
B+	= 87-89	D+	= 67-69
B	= 84-86	D	= 64-66
B-	= 80-83	D-	= 60-63
C+	= 77-79	F	= 59 & below

Participation (20%):

I expect that you will be prepared to discuss all of the readings each week. Attendance and participation in all class activities is required. Reading assigned course material is the critical element in being prepared. You must come to class on time and remain for the entire period. I randomly call on students, so be prepared.

Case Analysis (20%):

Each student will select a case (contemporary or historical) to analyze. For example, you may choose the case of the FARC in Colombia or Timothy McVeigh or Incels. Each week one student will analyze a case for the class. This analysis includes:

1. Providing a 20 minute Powerpoint (or equivalent) lecture to the class.

This lecture will provide: a succinct historical background, an analysis linking the case to our readings for the week and previously, research that provides a prediction for the how the individual, group or movement might resolve or COULD have been managed differently based on course material.

2. Provide at least one discussion question for each of the readings for the week. Engage students in discussion of these questions to link readings to current conflicts, previous research, or new research areas.

Midterm Exam (30%):

On Monday, March 20th, you will receive a take-home mid-term exam covering the theoretical foundations learned in the first half of the semester. This test will be open-note, and you may use any materials on the Internet. All questions will be short answer or essay style that require analysis and synthesis of course material. You may not consult your peers or anyone else. The exam will be due by 5:00 pm to Canvas on March 24th.

Final Paper (30%):

I expect this paper to apply theories and case knowledge from the course to make an original claim about why terrorism occurs, why it goes on, or why it ends. This paper should be around 20 pages and include appropriate academic citation. The quality of the paper, however, is more important than the quantity. I will provide a detailed rubric that explains how you will be assessed. It would make sense to write this paper on the same group/individual/movement that you do your case analysis on, but this is your choice.

I have found that papers are of much higher quality when we break the writing process into pieces. A draft of each piece is due on the following dates. We will discuss each piece in class and you will get a pass/fail grade on each. You may resubmit any piece that was deemed insufficient.

Week 4–Feb. 7: Research Questions due, identify the case/region/topic, why we should care and a paragraph on why this topic is interesting/important

Week 6–Feb. 21: Thesis/Hypotheses due, what is your argument? what are the main testable claims? how will we evaluate the claims?

Week 8–March 7th: Literature Review/Bib due, identify core debate, who the main scholars involved are, put them in a conversation drawing out areas of similarity/difference, what we know/don't

It is due on the date of our course final exam period, May 2nd.

Academic Integrity Code

Students should be aware of the contents of the AU Academic Integrity Code. I regard violations of this code seriously and will immediately refer the matter to the Dean, should such violations occur. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the code either in general or as they apply to particular requirements of this course.

Additional Support Services

If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please do not hesitate to contact me. In addition to the resources of the school, a wide variety of services are available to help you in your efforts to meet the requirements of the course.

- 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.
- Counseling Center (x3500, MGC 214): offers counseling and consultations regarding personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus mental health resources.
- Disability Support Services (x3315, MGC 206): offers technical and practical support and assistance with accommodations for students with physical, medical or psychological disabilities.

If you qualify for accommodations due to a disability, please notify me in a timely manner with a letter from the ASC or DSS so that we can make arrangements to address your needs.

Tentative Class Schedule

Read the following **before** Tuesday's class session. *Important:* class readings are subject to change given changing circumstances. Any adjustments to this schedule will be posted in a revised syllabus on Canvas.

What is Terrorism? What is Political Violence?

Week 01, 01/16 - 01/20: Defining Terrorism, Terrorist, Terror

- Introductions
- Gurr, Ted Robert. *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton University Press, 1970.
- Hoffman, Bruce. Chapter 1.
- Weinberg, Leonard, Ami Pedahzur, and Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler. "The challenges of conceptualizing terrorism." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16.4 (2004): 777-794.
- Young, Joseph K., and Steve Shellman. "Protestors, terrorists or something else? How to think about dissident groups." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 36.6 (2019): 645-660.

Policy

- Joseph Young. [What's in a Name: How to Classify Recent Violent Events](#)
- **Interview** [Will Moore interviews Ted Gurr](#)

Week 02, 01/23 - 01/27: What Terrorism is Not

- Stohl, Michael. 1983. "Demystifying Terrorism: The Myths and Realities of Contemporary Political Terrorism", in M. Stohl (ed.) *The Politics of Terrorism*, Second Edition: Revised and Expanded. Marcel Dekker, pp. 1-19.
- LaFree, Gary, and Laura Dugan. "How does studying terrorism compare to studying crime." *Terrorism and counter-terrorism: Criminological perspectives* 5 (2004): 53-74.
- Findley, Michael G., and Joseph K. Young. "Terrorism and civil war: A spatial and temporal approach to a conceptual problem." *Perspectives on Politics* 10.2 (2012): 285-305.
- Huff, Connor, and Joshua D. Kertzer. "How the public defines terrorism." *American Journal of Political Science* 62.1 (2018): 55-71.
- Charles Tilly. "Terror, Terrorism, Terrorists" *Sociological Theory* 22.1 (2004): 5-13.

Case Analysis: Mozambique (RENAMO/FRELIMO), Nicaragua (Sandinistas, Contras), Italy (Red Brigades), Germany (Red Army Faction)

Policy

- Erin Kearns et al. [Yes, the Media Do Underreport Some Terrorist Attacks, Just not the Ones Most People Think](#)

Suggested Films

- *The Baader Meinhof Complex*
- *Arlington Road*

Week 03, 01/30 - 02/03: History of Terrorism, Tactics of Terrorism

- Bruce Hoffman. Chapter 2–Origins of Contemporary Terrorism. Chapter 5–Suicide Terrorism
- Rapoport, David C. “The four waves of modern terrorism.” in *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy* Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press (2004): 3-11.
- Mia Bloom. 2005. *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror*. Columbia University Press. Chapters 1 and 4.
- Robert A. Pape. 2005. “The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism.” *American Political Science Review* 97(3): 343-361.
- Gilbert, Danielle. “The Logic of Kidnapping in Civil War: Evidence from Colombia.” *American Political Science Review* (2022): 1-16.

Case Analysis: FARC (Colombia), Anarchist Wave, IRA (Ireland/UK)

Policy

- Juan Telles. [Monos and the ambiguity of Political Violence](#).

Suggested Films

- *Paradise Now*
- *Cult of the Suicide Bomber*
- *In the Name of the Father*

Different Approaches to Understanding Terrorism and Political Violence

Week 04, 02/06 - 02/10: The Rationalist Approach

Research Questions Due

- Crenshaw, Martha. 2002. “The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorist Behavior as a Product of Strategic Choice,” in R.D. Howard & R.L. Sawyer (eds.) *Terrorism and Counterterrorism*, New York: McGraw Hill, pp. 54-66.
- De Mesquita, Ethan Bueno. “The quality of terror.” *American Journal of Political Science* 49.3 (2005): 515-530.
- Fearon, James D. “Rationalist explanations for war.” *International Organization* 49.3 (1995): 379-414.
- Kydd, Andrew H., and Barbara F. Walter. “The strategies of terrorism.” *International Security* 31.1 (2006): 49-80.
- Lake, David. 2002. “Rational Extremism: Understanding Terrorism in the Twenty First Century.” *International Organization* 56 (1): 15-29.
- Simulation

Case Analysis: FLN (Algeria), Chechnya, Uighurs

Policy

- Navin Bapat [The Lesson of the Afghanistan Papers](#)

Suggested Films

- *The Princess Bride*
- *One Day in September*

Week 05, 02/13 - 02/17: The Psychological Approach

- Jeff Victorof. 2005. "The Mind of a Terrorist: A Review and Critique of Psychological Approaches." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49(1): 3-42
- Martha Crenshaw. 2000. "The Psychology of Terrorism: An Agenda for the Twenty First Century." *Political Psychology* 20(2): 405-420.
- Borum, Randy. 2006. "Understanding the Terrorist Mind-Set." In Badey pp. 22-25.
- Mitts, Tamar. "From isolation to radicalization: Anti-Muslim hostility and support for ISIS in the West." *American Political Science Review* 113.1 (2019): 173-194.
- Wolfowicz, Michael, et al. "A field-wide systematic review and meta-analysis of putative risk and protective factors for radicalization outcomes." *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 36.3 (2020): 407-447.

Case Analysis: Weather Underground, Proud Boys, Oathkeepers

Policy

- Erika Ricci. [Can the Rise of Far Right Parities Spark Political Violence?](#)
- Jaclyn Fox. [Anti-Government Ideology in the Times of Covid-19](#)

Suggested Films

- *The Weather Underground*
- *Age of Rage*

Week 06, 02/20 - 02/24: The Sociological Approach

Thesis/Hypotheses Due

- Asal, Victor, and R. Karl Rethemeyer. "The nature of the beast: Organizational structures and the lethality of terrorist attacks." *The Journal of Politics* 70.2 (2008): 437-449.
- Bacon, Tricia. "Is the enemy of my enemy my friend? How terrorist groups select partners." *Security Studies* 27.3 (2018): 345-378.
- Deibert, Ronald J., and Janice Gross Stein. "Hacking networks of terror." *Dialogue IO* 1.1 (2002): 1-14.
- Goodwin, Jeff. "A theory of categorical terrorism." *Social Forces* 84.4 (2006): 2027-2046.
- Juergensmeyer, Mark. (2001) *Terror in the Mind of God*. University of California Press. Chapters 1 and 11.

Case Analysis: Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, PLO

Policy

- Evan Perkoski. [What if the Islamic State and Al Qaeda Joined Forces?](#)
- Tricia Bacon and Elizabeth Grimm [The Importance of Terrorist Founders and the Role of Safe Havens](#)

Suggested Films

- *Road to 9/11*
- *Son of Al-Qaeda*

Week 07, 02/27 - 03/03: Effects of Terrorism

- Abrahms, Max. "Why terrorism does not work." *International Security* 31.2 (2006): 42-78.
- Fortna, Virginia Page. "Do terrorists win? Rebels' use of terrorism and civil war outcomes." *International Organization* 69.3 (2015): 519-556.
- Thomas, Jakana. "Rewarding bad behavior: How governments respond to terrorism in civil war." *American Journal of Political Science* 58.4 (2014): 804-818.
- Getmansky, Anna, and Thomas Zeitzoff. "Terrorism and voting: The effect of rocket threat on voting in Israeli elections." *American Political Science Review* 108.3 (2014): 588-604.
- Canetti, Daphna, et al. "Exposure to political violence and political extremism: A stress-based process." *European Psychologist* 18.4 (2013): 263.

Case Analysis: Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Lord's Resistance Army (Uganda)

Policy

- Thomas Zeitzoff. [After the violence: Three things we know about the effects of war trauma and what we can do about it.](#)

Suggested Films

- *To Die in Jerusalem*
- *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*
- *Buenos Aires Vice Versa*

Week 08, 03/06 - 03/10: State Terror and State Violence

Literature Review/Bib Due

- Claridge, David. "State Terrorism? Applying a Definitional Model," *Terrorism and Political Violence* (Autumn 1996), 47-63.
- Mason, T. David, and Dale A. Krane. "The political economy of death squads: Toward a theory of the impact of state-sanctioned terror." *International Studies Quarterly* 33.2 (1989): 175-198.
- **Peruse** Rudy Rummel's [Website on State Murder](#)
- Tilly, Charles. "War making and state making as organized crime." *Collective Violence, Contentious Politics, and Social Change*. Routledge, 2017. 121-139.
- Wilkinson, Paul. "Can A State Be Terrorist?" *International Affairs* (Summer 1981), 467-472.

- Zhukov, Yuri M., and Roya Talibova. "Stalin's terror and the long-term political effects of mass repression." *Journal of Peace Research* 55.2 (2018): 267-283.

Case Analysis: Stalin, Argentina (Dirty War), Salvadoran dictatorship, Chile under Pinochet

Policy

- **Podcast** Christian Davenport and Benjamin Appel [Democracy is the Antidote to State Repression](#).

Suggested Films

- *The Killing Fields*
- *Schindler's List*

State Violence, Insurgency, and International Processes

Week 09, 03/13 - 03/17: No Class, Spring Break

Week 10, 03/20 - 03/24: Insurgency

- Guevara, Che. *Guerrilla Warfare*. Chapters 1 and 2.
- Ingram, Hararo. "The Long Jihad: The Islamic State's Method of Insurgency: Control, Meaning, & the Occupation of Mosul in Context". George Washington University's Program on Extremism working paper.
- Mao, Tse-Tung. *Mao Tse-Tung on Guerrilla Warfare*. US Marine Corps, 1961. Chapters 1 and 2.
- Merari, Ariel. "Terrorism as a Strategy of Insurgency." *Terrorism and political violence* 5.4 (1993): 213-251.
- Revkin, Mara Redlich. "What explains taxation by resource-rich rebels? Evidence from the Islamic State in Syria." *The Journal of Politics* 82.2 (2020): 757-764.

Case Analysis: ISIS, Cuban Revolutionaries, Chinese Revolution

Policy

- Stathis Kalyvas. [The Logic of Violence in the Islamic State's War](#)
- Daniel Silverman. [Andor and the Politics of an Incipient Insurgency](#)

Suggested Films

- *Battle for Algiers*
- *Motorcycle Diaries*
- *Che*

Week 11, 03/27 - 03/31: Transnational/International Terrorism and Political Violence

- Beck, Colin J., and Emily Miner. "Who gets designated a terrorist and why?." *Social Forces* 91.3 (2013): 837-872.
- Byman, Daniel. "Understanding, and misunderstanding, state sponsorship of terrorism." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2020): 1-19.

- Kalyvas, Stathis N., and Laia Balcells. "International system and technologies of rebellion: How the end of the Cold War shaped internal conflict." *American Political Science Review* 104.3 (2010): 415-429.
- Salehyan, Idean. "Transnational rebels: Neighboring states as sanctuary for rebel groups." *World Politics* 59.2 (2007): 217-242.

Policy

- Idean Salehyan and Kristian Gleditsch [The Syrian Refugee Crisis and Conflict Spillover](#)

Suggested Films

- Blood Diamond
- Four Lions

Week 12, 04/03 - 04/07: Criminal Groups and Political Violence

- Barnes, Nicholas. "Criminal politics: An integrated approach to the study of organized crime, politics, and violence." *Perspectives on Politics* 15.4 (2017): 967-987.
- Durán-Martínez, Angélica. "To kill and tell? State power, criminal competition, and drug violence." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59.8 (2015): 1377-1402.
- Lessing, Benjamin. "Logics of violence in criminal war." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59.8 (2015): 1486-1516.
- Lessing, Benjamin, and Graham Denyer Willis. "Legitimacy in criminal governance: Managing a drug empire from behind bars." *American Political Science Review* 113.2 (2019): 584-606.
- Magaloni, Beatriz, Edgar Franco-Vivanco, and Vanessa Melo. "Killing in the slums: Social order, criminal governance, and police violence in Rio de Janeiro." *American Political Science Review* 114.2 (2020): 552-572.

Case Analysis: PCC (Brazil), Los Zetas or Sinaloa Cartel (Mexico), Medellín or Cali Cartels (Colombia)

Policy

- Angelica Duran Martinez. [State Power and the Visibility of Drug Violence](#).
- Benjamin Lessing. [Brazil's prison gangs are launching massive terrorism attacks. This explains why](#)

Suggested Films

- *City of God*
- *Narcos*
- *Bus 174*

Countering Terrorism and Insurgency

Week 13, 04/10 - 04/14: Strategy

- Byman, Daniel. "'Death Solves All Problems': The Authoritarian Model of Counterinsurgency." *Journal of Strategic Studies* 39.1 (2016): 62-93.
- Kenney, Michael. "From Pablo to Osama: Counter-terrorism lessons from the war on drugs." *Survival* 45.3 (2003): 187-206.
- Stephen M. Walt, "Beyond Bin Laden: Reshaping US Foreign Policy," *International Security* 26: 3 (Winter 2001/02), pp. 56-78.
- Cronin, Audrey Kurth. "How al-Qaida ends: The decline and demise of terrorist groups." *International Security* 31.1 (2006): 7-48.

Policy

- Aila M. Matanock and Miguel García-Sánchez. [How to distinguish supporters from opponents in counterinsurgency](#)
- **Podcast** [Getting Counterterrorism Right: A Conversation with Bruce Hoffman](#)

Suggested Films

- *The Dancer Upstairs*
- *The Looming Tower*

Week 14, 04/17 - 04/21: Human rights and Political Violence

- Dreher, Axel, Martin Gassebner, and Lars-H. Siemers. "Does terrorism threaten human rights? Evidence from panel data." *Journal of Law and Economics* 53.1 (2010): 65-93.
- Dugan, Laura, and Erica Chenoweth. "Moving beyond deterrence: The effectiveness of raising the expected utility of abstaining from terrorism in Israel." *American Sociological Review* 77.4 (2012): 597-624.
- Johnston, Patrick B., and Anoop K. Sarbahi. "The impact of US drone strikes on terrorism in Pakistan." *International Studies Quarterly* 60.2 (2016): 203-219.
- Jordan, Jenna. "When heads roll: Assessing the effectiveness of leadership decapitation." *Security Studies* 18.4 (2009): 719-755.
- Walsh, James I., and James A. Piazza. "Why respecting physical integrity rights reduces terrorism." *Comparative Political Studies* 43.5 (2010): 551-577.

Policy

- Hoffman, Paul. "Human rights and terrorism." *Human Rights Quarterly* 26 (2004): 932-955.
- Rebecca Cordell. [The Political Costs of Abusing Human Rights](#)

Suggested Films

- *The Siege*

Week 15, 04/24 - 04/28: Torture

- Kearns, Erin M., and Joseph K. Young. "'If Torture Is Wrong, What About 24?'" Torture and the Hollywood Effect." *Crime & Delinquency* 64.12 (2018): 1568-1589.
- Magaloni, Beatriz, and Luis Rodriguez. "Institutionalized police brutality: Torture, the militarization of security, and the reform of inquisitorial criminal justice in Mexico." *American Political Science Review* 114.4 (2020): 1013-1034.
- Conrad, Courtenay Ryals, and Will H. Moore. "What stops the torture?." *American Journal of Political Science* 54.2 (2010): 459-476.
- Sullivan, Christopher Michael. "The (in) effectiveness of torture for combating insurgency." *Journal of Peace Research* 51.3 (2014): 388-404.

Policy

- John Yoo–Commentary on the so-called [torture memos](#)
- "Is Torture ever justified?" *The Economist*
- Joseph Young. [The Worst Kind of Torture](#)

Suggested Films

- *Taxi to the Dark Side*
- *Ghosts of Abu Ghraib*
- *Zootopia*

Week 16, 05/01 - 05/05: Final Papers Due