POSC 282: Terrorism and Violence in World Politics

Carleton College - Fall 2016

Instructor: Hicham Bou Nassif
Email: Hnassif@Carleton.edu
Room: Weitz 230
Office: Willis Hall – 408
Office hours: Monday 11:00 am – 1:00 pm. Wednesday: 3:00pm – 5:00pm. And by appointment.

Course Description

This course analyzes theories of terrorism, ethnic conflict and civil wars. Who becomes a terrorist and why? How do terrorist organizations recruit? Does terrorism work? Why or why not? What do we know about some of the most dangerous terrorist organizations active on the world scene today? What is the relationship between terrorism and civil wars and why are intra-state conflicts pervasive in modern times? These are some of the questions we will be tackling in this course. Overall, the course has three main goals: 1) To offer students the opportunity to become more conversant with the debates relating to terrorism and violence. 2) To sharpen students’ analytical and writing skills. 3) To heighten students’ understanding of some of most lethal conflicts, and terrorist organizations currently active in world politics.

Texts


Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan, ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror, New York: Regan Arts, 2015.


Course Requirements

Class attendance and participation (25% of your final grade)

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each session. Each student starts the class with 10 attendance point. You will lose 0.5 points from your attendance grade every time you are absent. For instance if you miss 4 classes you will receive 8 instead of 10 attendance points. Only documented absences will be accepted (e.g. doctor’s note).
Students are expected to participate actively in the class. I will be asking you to contribute to class discussions and will invite you to offer your opinion on required readings or on related events unfolding as the course goes on.

**Mid-term (35% of your final grade)**

The Mid-term will be divided into two parts: 1) A series of questions to which you will be expected to reply with short answers. The questions will cover all the material discussed in class from the first lecture to the last before the exam. 2) An essay you will be asked to write and which will test your ability to think critically on the material we covered. Reading the material and notes is indispensable to do well in the exam, but it takes more than just that. You must demonstrate an ability to reflect analytically on the topic and express your own opinions and ideas.

**Final paper (40% of your final grade)**

(10% for the presentation in class and 30% for the paper itself)

**What is expected of you as you do the readings?**

The readings assigned for the course deal with the most fundamental challenges pertaining to terrorism and violence in world politics. As you read, you will be expected to think critically on the articles by asking yourselves the following questions:

1) What is the author’s main argument?
2) Do I find that argument convincing or not? Why?
3) What alternative explanations can be thought of for the author’s evidence?
4) What are the implications of the argument made by the author?

In addition to the required readings, you are encouraged to keep yourself informed about current issues related to world politics. Consulting newspapers helps a great deal. Also, keep also an eye on journals such as *Terrorism and Political Violence, Civil Wars,* and *International Security.*

**Academic Integrity**

When you submit a paper with your name on it or take an exam in this course, you are signifying that the work contained therein is all yours, unless otherwise cited, referenced, or explained. Any ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral use must be fully acknowledged. If you are unsure about the expectations for completing an assignment or taking a test or exam, be sure to seek clarification beforehand. Sanctions for academic misconduct may include reduction in your final grade, a failing grade in the course, among other possibilities, and must include a report to the Office of the Dean.
The Grading Scale

I will be using the following grading scale for this course:

98 – 100 A+
94-97 A
91- 93 A-
88-90 B+
83-87 B
79 – 82 B-
76 – 78 C+
72 -75 C
68 – 71 C-
67/below D/ F

Reading assignments

Monday, 12: Syllabus

We will discuss the Syllabus in class.

Wednesday, 14: Introduction and Definition

Mingst and Arruguin-Toft, pp 278 – 283.

Friday, 16: The Goals and Strategies of Terrorism (1)


Monday 19: The Goals and Strategies of Terrorism (2)

Pape, pp 27-60.
**Wednesday 21: Becoming a Terrorist (1)**


**Friday 23: Becoming a Terrorist (2)**

Pape, pp 199 - 234

**Monday 26: Does Terrorism Work? (1)**


**Wednesday 28: Does Terrorism Work? (2)**


**Friday 30: ISIS as a case study (1)**


**Monday 3: ISIS as a case study (2)**


**Wednesday 5: ISIS as a case study (3)**

Joby Warrick, *Black Flags*, 223 - 316

**Friday 7: Al-Qaeda as a case study (1)**


**Monday 10: Al-Qaeda as a case study (2)**

Wednesday 12: Al-Qaeda as a case study (3)


Friday 14: In-class Review Session

Monday 17: Mid Term Break

Wednesday 19: Mid-Term

Friday 21: Documentaries on Al-Qaeda and ISIS; class debate

Monday 24: Hezbollah as a case study (1)

Levit, pp 1-69.

Wednesday 26: Hezbollah as a case study (2)

Blanford, pp 1-95.

Friday 28: Hezbollah as a case study (3)

Thanassis Cambanis, pp 3-100

Monday 31: Civil War (1)

Kalyvas in Boix and Stokes (pp416-434)

Wednesday 2: Civil War (2)

Levy and Thompson (pp 186-204)

Friday 4: Ethnic Conflict (1)

Kaufman (pp1-48)

Monday 7: Ethnic Conflict (2)

Petersen (pp 17-84)

Wednesday 9: Documentaries on ethnic conflicts/civil wars; class debate.

Friday 11: Presentations and class debate
Monday 14: Presentations and class debate

Wednesday 16: Presentations and class debate