

CCJS 318F/BSST338B (ESG1): Terrorism and Political Violence

Understanding Terrorism, Insurgency, and Civil Conflict

Version 1: January 19, 2024

Spring 2024

Thursdays 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM (Noon)

USG Building III, Room 4220

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Office Hours: By appointment – Please make your appointment using my [Office Hour Appointment](#) link (If hyperlink does not work, copy/paste this link into your browser: https://calendly.com/steve_sin/30min)

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COVID-19 Contingency Plan. In the event the University of Maryland and/or the Universities at Shady Grove changes its current in-person class guidance, or if the class must be quarantined due to potential exposure/positive COVID-19 test results, we will move the class to a fully **online synchronous** environment as quickly as feasible (and within the limits of everyone's health conditions). The class already has its own Zoom link to transition to the online environment, and the Zoom link will be provided to the class through ELMS and course announcement emails.

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the study of violent political conflict. We will examine the how, why and when of violent political conflict both domestic and international. What are the key empirical and normative questions raised by violent political conflict and what answers do the literature offer?

In this course, in addition to studying the theories that have been developed to explain the politics and history of violent political conflict, students will have an opportunity to participate in simulation exercises designed to sharpen their analytic skills in the subject area. Students will take on the roles of policy makers in several simulations. These simulations and their analysis are critical to the course and your participation will play a large part in how well you do in the course. Because so much time will be devoted to simulations, reading is light some weeks with some weeks having no reading at all and some weeks will have very heavy reading. The reading that is assigned is required (unless otherwise stated) and you need to read it and read it carefully in order to do well in the class.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students will have:

- An understanding of political science theories of violent political conflict;
- An understanding and an ability to apply theories of violent political conflict analytically to various cases that will be discussed in class;
- An in-depth knowledge of several cases of violent political conflict;
- And have conducted an original research, using interdisciplinary social science-based methods, on topics related to the impacts of terrorism and will be able to present their findings effectively through both oral and written communication.

Course Materials

There is no textbook for this course. All required and recommended reading material will be available on the course's ELMS space or a clickable link will be provided on the syllabus located on ELMS.

Classroom Content

Topics related to terrorism and crime can be emotionally difficult subjects to study. As we explore evolution, trends, and consequences of nexus of terrorism and crime, we may read, view, and discuss topics that are violent, divisive, and sometimes graphic in nature. While these topics can cause emotional distress, it is essential that we provide real-world examples to understand the implications of the concepts we will be discussing. Please communicate with me if the content of any course material interferes with your ability to complete any assignment or participate in class fully.

Class Ground Rules

This class is challenging, and it is important that it remains fair for all the students and that everyone plays on an even playing field. In order to ensure that the policies of the class are clear they are spelled out below. If you have any questions, please ask before it becomes personally relevant.

Questions

Education is about learning. This class is about material you have probably not covered before in this context. If you have questions or things are unclear – ask! If there is something unclear to you, chances are, it is unclear to others as well. If you have a question that is personal in nature, and should not be shared with others, please come talk to me after class, during my office hours, set up an appointment, or email me directly at the email address listed above.

Grading and Assignments

Your end of course will be consisted of the following:

- Theory Paper 1 15%
- Theory Paper 2 15%
- Midterm Exam 25%
- Final Exam 35%
- Class Participation 15%

Your grades for all assignments in this course will be numerical values. Numerical scores will translate into letter grades as follows (with scores rounded up from .5):

A+	98-100	B-	80-82	D+	63-67
A	93-97	C+	78-79	D-	60-62
A-	90-92	C	73-77	F	0-59
B+	88-89	C-	70-72		
B	83-87	D+	68-69		

Assignments

Theory Papers (30% Total)

Theory Papers provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the material in a less pressured format and for me to provide you with feedback on your application of theory to reality. Each paper should be minimum of 4 pages in length (approximately 1,000 words in length with 1-inch margins all around and typed using 12-point Times New Roman font. All material should be cited – citations are not included in the total page count). Each theory paper will account for 15% (for a total of 30%) of your final course grade. Details of Theory Papers are below:

Theory Paper 1: Why Men Rebel (15%)

In class, we will learn and discuss several theories that attempt to explain the causes of rebellion. Compare and contrast at least two theories we have discussed in class and explain which theory you think best explains the causes of rebellion. To be successful with this assignment, you must systematically apply the theory to a real-world case of rebellion (e.g. the Moro movement in Philippines, or the FARC insurgency in Colombia, etc.), and then address why other theories do not do as good a job as the one you believe provides the best explanation. Below, I give you an outline for doing this:

Page 1	<p>Introduction paragraph:</p> <p>Which theory is best and why in two sentences – Bottom line up front (boil your argument down to its essence)</p> <hr/> <p>Introduction to theory</p> <p>Brief (1-2 paragraph max) overview of the theory you are arguing that explains the causes best</p>
Pages 2	<p>Application of theory to case</p> <p>For each key assumption of the theory, explain what the theory says and present evidence that your case that fits or violates these assumptions. Make sure to explain why the supportive empirical evidence outweighs the contradictory evidence when there is both.</p>
Page 3	<p>Comparison to one other theory</p> <p>In a page, point out how another theory explains less of the case than your chosen theory.</p>
Page 4	<p>Assessment/Conclusion</p> <p>In a final page, restate your argument about why your chosen theory gives the best analytical leverage for this case, citing the material you have presented in the previous pages.</p>

Grading

Your grade for this assignment will depend on the following:

- Do you explain your chosen theory well?
- Is the paper analytical as opposed to normative?
- Do you apply the theory coherently and provide appropriate evidence?
- Do you explain why this theory fits ‘best’?
- Is your comparison to another theory well done and appropriate?
- Generally, is the paper coherent?
- While this is not an English paper, you are expected to spell check and meet minimal grammatical and writing standards commensurate with a University of Maryland student.
- Please use either Chicago 16 or Harvard in-text style for citations.

NOTE: There is no “right” answer in which theory you choose as the most appropriate theory to explain your case; therefore, your grade will NOT be affected by your choice of theories or the political implications of your analytical choices.

DUE: Thursday, 29 February, 9:30 AM Eastern Time, electronically submitted via ELMS

Theory Paper 2: Causes of Terrorism (15%)

In class, we will learn and discuss several theoretical perspectives of comparative politics that can be used to understand why rebellions, civil wars, insurgencies, etc., can occur. Compare and contrast at least two theoretical perspectives we have discussed in class and explain which perspective you think best explains the causes of terrorism. The requirement and structure of this assignment is identical as Theory Paper 1 as explained above.

DUE: Thursday, 18 April, 9:30 AM Eastern Time, electronically submitted via ELMS MS

Midterm Exam (25%)

The midterm exam will be an open-book/open-note essay exam. The students will have one week (7 days) to respond to the questions and submit the exam.

The exam will become available to the students at 12:00 PM Eastern Time two days after the conclusion of the last class that precedes the Midterm Exam week. The exam is due 7 days after it becomes available on the ELMS course space.

Students will submit the mid-term exam via ELMS upload.

No late exams will be accepted without prior approval from the instructor.

Mid-term Exam accounts for 20% of the final course grade.

Final Exam (35%)

The final exam will be an open-book/open-note essay exam. The students will have one week (7 days) to respond to the questions and submit the exam.

The exam will become available to the students at 12:00 PM Eastern Time two days after the conclusion of the last class that precedes the final exam. The exam is due 7 days after it becomes available on the ELMS course space.

Students will submit the mid-term exam via ELMS upload.

No late exams will be accepted without prior approval from the instructor.

Final Exam accounts for 25% of the final course grade.

Participation (10%)

Due to heavy incorporation of simulations throughout this course, class participation – both at the individual and the group levels – is essential in order for everyone to have a positive experience with the course. As such, participation will consist of 10% of your total grade.

Students will be given a class participation “grade” of *check-plus*, *check*, or *check-minus* for each class day. To earn a *check-plus*, a student must make multiple, thoughtful contributions to class discussion. At the end of the semester, the *check-pluses*, *checks*, and *check-minuses* will be totaled to arrive at the student’s instructor evaluated participation grade.

There are 15 class sessions this semester. If a student has 13 or more *check-pluses*, the student will receive a full 10% for class participation. If one has 9 or more *check-minuses*, the highest that student will receive for class participation is a 7.5% (a 75, or a “C” equivalent). All other students will receive between 7.8% (a “C+” equivalent) and 9.6% (an “A” equivalent) depending on the distribution of *check-pluses*, *checks*, and *check-minuses* received throughout the semester.

Student Conduct and Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the University of Maryland’s Code of Student Conduct and to treat each other with respect. Disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. Students who are unable to demonstrate civility with one another or with the instructor or teaching assistants, will be subject to referral to the Office of Student Conduct or to the Campus Police. The Code of Student Conduct is available online: <http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/v100b.pdf>.

Students are also expected to adhere to the University of Maryland’s Code of Academic Integrity and to refrain from acts of academic dishonesty. All students must write the Student Honor Pledge by hand on all assignments:

I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination.

Any student committing an apparent act of academic dishonesty will be subject to referral to the Student Honor Council. The Code of Academic Integrity is available online: <http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/III-100A.pdf>.

Make-ups and Late Assignments

- Make-up for the Final Exam will be granted on a case-by-case basis. In general, however, the only students who will be granted a make-up for the Final Exam will be those who are ill (with acceptable medical diagnosis) or with extraordinary personal and/or family circumstances (e.g., passing of a family member, hospitalization of a family member, etc.).
- Students are given paper assignment well in advance of their due dates and there is no reason that a student cannot complete writing these papers in time. Late papers will only be accepted if the student has a good reason (“I had too many papers due at the same time,” or “I had too many exams to study for” are not acceptable reasons) and has received prior approval from the instructor. All late papers will be penalized at 1/3 letter grade for every 24 hours after the due date (i.e. an “A+” paper will receive an “A” if submitted 24 hours late and will receive an “A-” if submitted 48 hours later than the prescribed due date/time).

Attendance

Regular attendance and participation in this class is the best way to grasp the concepts and principles being discussed. However, in the event that a class must be missed due to an illness, the policy in this class is as follows:

- For every medically necessary absence from class, a reasonable effort should be made to notify the instructor in advance of the class.
- If a student is absent more than one week, the instructor may require documentation signed by a health care professional.
- If a student is absent on days when in-class simulations/activities are scheduled, he or she is required to notify the instructor in advance, and upon returning to class, bring documentation of the illness, signed by a health care professional.

Any student submitting falsified documentation of illness will be referred to the Student Honor Council.

Religious Observances

The University System of Maryland policy on religious observances provides that students should not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs; students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances. Students must submit a written request to make up a class meeting, assignment, or exam date for the purposes of religious observance by the end of the second week of classes. Please note that accommodations will not be made for travel to and from the site of religious observances. Additional information on religious observance policy is available online: <http://www.engl-pw.umd.edu/PoliciesandProcedures/GeneralPolicies/ReligiousObservances.htm>.

Disability Support Services

Any student requesting special accommodations must be registered with the University of Maryland's Disability Support Service (DSS) Office and must provide a DSS Accommodation Form updated for the current semester by the end of the second week of classes. Students who fail to meet this deadline will not receive special accommodations. Additional information on disability support services is available online: <http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS>.

Course Schedule*

* Course schedule subject to change throughout the semester due to various external causes that may not be within the control of the instructor, the students, or the Department.

** All readings are due the day they are listed on the syllabus

Date	Topics and Readings	Notes
Jan 25	Introduction	Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus Review • Discussion of Expectations
Feb 1	What is Political Violence and when does Conflict Happen I <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anger or Ability 2. The Rebel's Dilemma 3. Why Men Rebel 4. Greed and Grievance in Civil War 5. Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War 	
Feb 8	What is Political Violence and when does Conflict Happen II <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why do Ethnic Groups Rebel? 2. Why Minorities Rebel 3. Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War 4. A Closer Look at Oil, Diamonds, and Civil War 	Class Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity Game
Feb 15	What is Political Violence and when does Conflict Happen III <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The School 2. Varieties of Violence 	
Feb 22	The Causes of Terrorism <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Terror Mandated by God 2. Military Interventions as a Cause of Transnational Terrorism? 3. Does Democracy Promote or Reduce Transnational Terrorist Incidents? 4. Explaining Suicide Terrorism 5. Incubators of Terror 6. Bin Laden's Declaration of War 	
Feb 29	Strategy, Lethality, and Networks in the Use of Terrorism <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dane War Rules (PPT) 2. The Strategies of Terrorism 3. What Terrorists Really Want 4. Social Networks and the Jihad 5. The Nature of the Beast 	<p>Due: Theory Paper 1 due by 9:30 AM Eastern on Thursday, February 29</p> <p>Class Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dane War (Outside) – We are going outside come rain, snow, or shine (and even delayed)

		opening) – unless we are in another one lockdown or online class situation. So come prepared!
Mar 7	CBRN Terrorism and State-sponsored Terrorism 1. Terrorist CBRN: Materials and Effects 2. The Four Faces of Nuclear Terrorism 3. CBRN Attack Perpetrators 4. Connections can be Toxic	
Mar 14	Midterm Exam	
Mar 21	No Class: Spring Break	
Mar 28	Meta Theoretical Perspectives Review 1. Lim Chapter 3 2. Nye Chapter 1	Class Activity: Complete Theory Paper 2
Apr 04	Insurgency 1. Insurgency and Counterinsurgency 2. How the weak win wars 3. Irregular Forces in Counterinsurgency Warfare 4. Explaining the Duration of Counterinsurgency Campaigns 5. Rage against the Machines 6. Can Hearts and Minds be Bought?	
Apr 11	Counter-Insurgency 1. Democracy, Inclusion, and Failure in Counter-Insurgency 2. Rethinking Insurgency, pp. 1-49 3. Does Decapitation Work? 4. Ten Ways to Lose at Counterinsurgency	Class Activity: • Lords of War
Apr 18	Media and Political Violence 1. Merchants of Morality 2. Psychology of Mass-Mediated Terrorism 3. Blood and Ink	Due: Theory Paper 2 due by 9:30 AM Eastern on Thursday, April 18
Apr 25	DACIA 1. DACIA Instructions	Class Activity: DACIA Simulation
May 2	DACIA	Class Activity: DACIA Simulation
May 9	DACIA and Semester in Review	Class Activity: • Complete DACIA Simulation • DACIA Debrief • Course Wrap-up
May 16	Final Exam	