Course Description

As its title implies, this course addresses terrorism as a political act. We will consider solely terror as an oppositional tactic in this class, leaving aside state terror entirely. This is not in any way a statement of the relative importance of the two; merely an accommodation to the often different dynamics of the two cases. The first couple of weeks will provide a broad overview of the state of research in oppositional terrorism and a common pool of historical terror examples on which to draw later in the class. Subsequent to this we will break down the topic, looking at issues of mobilization and terror networks, methods of terror and counter-terror and their consequences, and the organization of and competition between terror groups. Discussion of problems and opportunities for research in the literature will arise naturally, often multiple times, in response to analyses of each of these issues. The course will culminate in the production of a research proposal designed to be the stub of a future publishable paper (or even dissertation project).

Readings

All readings for the class are listed in the tentative schedule below in the order in which they will be used. Some readings, particularly single book chapters, will be available via Blackboard, and you should check there first for all readings. Articles not there are available via the internet and your responsibility to obtain. Required readings are to be done before class. In some cases, additional recommended readings are listed below each topic on the schedule as well. These are included as a preliminary (and non-exhaustive) guide for further reading on the topic.

Grading

- Participation: 20%. All students are required to have completed the required readings for each week before class begins, and everyone should be prepared to discuss the readings during class. Intelligent participation in departmental talks and at conferences will be highly valued throughout your professional career and you should practice this ability now. I expect you to provide evidence that you have done the readings in a thoughtful and careful manner. After each class meeting I will assign a participation grade that takes into account the frequency and quality of your contributions. The following scale will be used for scoring your participation:
  - A to A-: The student made a very strong contribution to the class. Comments were thoughtful and constructive.
  - B+ to B-: The student contributed meaningfully to the course. Comments went beyond simply repeating the assigned material, but did not demonstrate strong insights.
  - C+ or lower: The student did not contribute meaningfully. Comments were limited to repeating the assigned material rather than making connections or extensions, or were inaccurate.
  - F: The student did not speak in class.
• Discussion leadership: 25%. Each student will be assigned two seminars to lead between weeks 3 and 14; weeks may have multiple leaders. Discussion leaders will be chosen in the first class meeting. Each week’s discussion leader(s) is(are) responsible for delivering to the class, via e-mail, a 2-3 page paper by noon of the Friday the week before the class. The paper should open with a brief summary of the major points of the reading, and then spend most of its time offering additional avenues for discussion that the leader feels would be productive and interesting to address during the seminar. The student(s) in charge that week will then lead discussion during the seminar. The depth of and preparation evidenced in these papers, particularly in the discussion questions, along with the leading of the seminar itself, will determine the student’s grade.

• Presentation of terrorist group: 5%. In the second week of class, each student will be assigned one historical terrorist group on which to give a brief presentation. Readings from which to start are provided under the week 2 header below.

• Final paper: 50%. This is an elective class, so your attendance suggests an interest in the subject area. As you go through the course, you should be thinking first about how you could turn this interest into a concrete research question, and second about how you can address this research question in a publishable paper. This thinking will culminate in a paper due at the end of class. The intent of this paper is to provide the framework for future publishable work. While you need not perform significant data analysis nor solve formal models in the paper, it must do two other things: 1) Set your research question solidly in extant literature, which may entail a selective literature review as well; and 2) Detail your proposed theory, its derived hypotheses, your expectations about these hypotheses, and where you will look for your data. While you are of course welcome to finish the paper by completing the analysis (and I will provide comments on this as well should you do so), it is not required, and the grade will be based solely on the required parts.

Tentative Schedule of Readings (Subject to Change with Prior Notice):

PRELIMINARIES

Week 1: January 9 — Definitions, Progress, and Problems

Required Reading:


RECOMMENDED READING:

Week 2: (Will need to be rescheduled) — An Abbreviated and Partial Tour of History
A Few Starting Readings:
Crenshaw, Martha. 1994. Terrorism in Context. Penn State University Press. [Selections: chapters by Crenshaw (Introduction), della Porta (Red Brigades), Palmer (Shining Path), Shabad and Llera (ETA), Townshend (IRA), Crenshaw (Algeria)]
[Note: The International Crisis Group (http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm is an excellent source of background information on groups, and further puts out weekly updates on conflict situations.]

RECOMMENDED READING:
Biographies: O’Doherty, The Volunteer; Giorgio, Memoirs of an Italian Terrorist; Figner, Memoirs of a Revolutionist; Aukai Collins, My Jihad; Savinkov, Memoirs of a Terrorist; Taruc, He Who Rides the Tiger; McGuire, To Take Arms; Kabiro, Man in the Middle; Nasiri, My Jihad.
**Week 3: January 23 — Economics, Democracy, and Repression I**

**REQUIRED READING:**


**RECOMMENDED READING:**


Week 4: January 30 — Economics, Democracy, and Repression II

required reading:


Recommended reading:


**Week 5: February 6 — Mass Impact of Terrorism**

**REQUIRED READING:**


**RECOMMENDED READING:**


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**Week 6: February 13 — Terror Networks**

**REQUIRED READING:**


RECOMMENDED READING:


**Week 7: February 20 — Religion**

**REQUIRED READING:**


RECOMMENDED READING:

**Week 8: February 27 — Terror Strategies**

**REQUIRED READING:**


**RECOMMENDED READING:**


**Week 9: March 13 — Suicide Terror**

**REQUIRED READING:**


Recommended reading:
Gambetta, Diego (Editor). 2006. Making Sense of Suicide Missions. Oxford University Press, USA.


Week 10: March 20 — Counter-terror: Target Defense and Information

Required reading:


Recommended reading:


**Week 11: March 27 — Negotiations, Credible Commitment and Costly Signaling**

**REQUIRED READING:**


**RECOMMENDED READING:**


**Week 12: April 3 — Finance and Counter-finance**

**REQUIRED READING:**


**Recommended reading:**


### Week 13: April 10 — Organizational Structure

**Required reading:**


Harmony Documents: “Al-Qa’ida Goals and Structure” and “Employment Contract.” Available at [http://ctc.usma.edu/aq/aq_pdf.asp](http://ctc.usma.edu/aq/aq_pdf.asp). [There are many other such documents as well for your perusal.]

Twomey, “Staff Report” (course website).

**Recommended reading:**


**Week 14: April 17 — Competition and Factionalization**

**REQUIRED READING:**


**RECOMMENDED READING:**


**Papers Due by noon April 24th**
Additional Information

**University Attendance Policy:** Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

**Academic Honor Policy:** The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University’s expectations for the integrity of students’ academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to “...be honest and truthful and... [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University.” (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at http://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm.)

**Americans With Disabilities Act:** Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the: Student Disability Resource Center
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu
http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/

**Syllabus Change Policy:** Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.