POLS 2640 – International Terrorism

Tuesday / Thursday 12:45-2:00 pm
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Office Hours: Tues 11-12, Wed 10-11, McGannon Hall 123

Course Description and Goals:

According to the Global Terrorism Database, more than 26,000 people were killed by terrorist attacks worldwide in 2017, a typical year for the last several decades. Yet, while terrorist violence often grabs headlines and elicits strong emotional responses, these 26,000 deaths accounted for just 0.05% (5 in 10,000) of deaths. Among everyone alive at the start of 2017, the probability of dying in a terrorist attack that year was about 0.0000035%. Americans were *substantially* more likely to die from slipping in their bathtub than from a terrorist attack. Setting aside active war zones like Iraq and Syria, or failed states like Somalia, in no country in the world did terrorism account for even 1% of deaths.

The motivation for this class, then, is not that terrorism is so common or so dangerous, but rather that it receives so much attention despite being largely irrelevant to the security of virtually everyone on earth. An incredibly diverse range of organizations devote millions of dollars and countless hours to trying to kill civilians who appear to have no strategic value. In turn, governments devote billions of dollars to try to stop them. What's the point? Why do political actors employ terrorism? What do they hope to achieve? Why does terrorism elicit such a substantial response?

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Define terrorism in your own words, and identify examples of cases of violence that do and do not fit within your definition.
- Differentiate between terrorism and insurgency.
- Explain why *suicide* terrorism can be logical in certain situations.
- Identify several ways in which terrorists recruit support from non-combatants and international actors.
- Develop and explain a strategy for defeating a terrorist threat.
- Develop and explain a strategy for defeating an insurgent threat.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance and active participation are expected at every class session. I will evaluate you on the quality of your participation. I will excuse absences that are both unforeseeable and unavoidable. Please contact me by email as soon as it is feasible so I can determine whether the absence is excused. Otherwise, you are permitted two unexcused absences. Unexcused absence after the first two will result in a zero for participation that day, as well as a zero on any quizzes or in-class activities that you miss (see below).

Grading and Assignments:

The assignments evaluate you based on the course goals listed above, with an emphasis on a) your understanding of concepts related to nationalism and identity, b) your ability to explain, analyze, and solve violent conflict organized around group lines, and c) your ability to communicate these items clearly and effectively.

1. READING QUIZZES – 15%. These in-class quizzes are designed to ensure that you have completed the assigned readings and are prepared to discuss them. They will not be hard, and you should do well if you complete the readings. We will not have one in every class, but they will occur fairly regularly. Missed reading quizzes cannot be made up at a later date. If you miss a quiz due to an *excused* absence, I will drop that quiz from your grade. In addition, I will drop your two lowest quiz grades.

2. CLASS PARTICIPATION – 15%. All students are expected to contribute to in-class discussions in a thoughtful manner. This grading category includes your participation in any in-class activities.
3. RESPONSE PAPERS (take home) – 40%. Two papers worth 20% each. Synthesize a set of assigned readings, identify the strengths of the existing research on this topic, and propose a "next step" for research on the topic that will contribute to the field. 2-3 pages each. Additional details TBA.
4. FINAL PAPER (take home) – 30%. ~8 pages (double-spaced). Topic TBA.

There is no final exam. For response papers or final papers turned in late, I will deduct 1 full letter grade (i.e. an A becomes a B) immediately following the deadline, plus an additional letter grade for each 24 hour period that passes beyond the deadline.

I will convert your numeric grades to a letter course grade using this scale:

A	93-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D	60-70
A-	90-92	B	83-86	C	73-76	F	below 60
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72		

Making the Most of Lectures:

Lectures help you in several ways:

a. Provide exposure to a breadth of attitudes, perspectives, and experiences from your classmates.
b. Highlight the most important parts of the assigned readings
c. Use the assigned readings as a starting point for an expanded discussion of each topic

This class deals with topics that may be sensitive, emotionally-charged, and of course "political." I expect that you will find yourself outside of your comfort zone at least once, either due to something in the readings, something I say, or something a classmate says. This is a normal part of the learning experience. So long as we remain open-minded and respectful of these differences, they are a source for learning. You should feel free to challenge statements that you disagree with, regardless of whether they come from me or from a classmate. Just be sure that you do so in a respectful manner. Be open to the possibility that you are both right (or both wrong). Always make sure to challenge the statement, not the person who said it.

Readings and Resources:

There are no books to purchase. All assigned readings are either linked directly from this syllabus or will be available under the "content" folder on Blackboard.

Most of the readings assigned for this class are academic research articles. The intended audience articles tends to be professors, professional researchers, and graduate students with substantial technical training. Consequently, portions of the articles may present evidence using techniques with which you are not familiar. <u>You are not responsible for the "methods" sections of the articles or for any statistical evidence they present.</u> Focus your time on the introduction and conclusion sections. As you read each article, try to answer the following questions:

1. What is the research question the authors seek to answer?
2. What do researchers already know about the topic, and what does this article claim to contribute?
3. In what context (country, conflict, terrorist group, etc.) did they conduct their research?
4. After conducting the research, what is their answer to the question?
5. What shortcomings does the article have, and what unanswered questions does it present for future research?

If you can answer these five questions, you have read the article in sufficient detail and will be prepared for our in-class discussions.

Academic Integrity:

I take academic integrity very seriously. I intend to make the guidelines for each assignment clear regarding outside sources. If you are not sure what is allowed on an assignment, you should contact me for clarification. Unless I specify otherwise, assignments should be completed on your own with no input from anyone else. Unless otherwise specified, all assignments are closed-book and you may not use any resources to help complete them. Any violation of academic integrity will result in an automatic F in the class AND a referral to the Associate Dean's office.

You should familiarize yourself with the university's general guidelines on academic integrity found here: http://www.slu.edu/arts-and-sciences/student-resources/academic-honesty.php

Students with Disabilities
Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Please visit the Office of Disability Services website (http://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/disability-services) for details. Please also contact me as soon as possible if you wish to discuss any of these options.

Title IX
SLU requires me to report certain types of information you discuss with me to the university's Title IX coordinator. You can find details about SLU's policy here: https://www.slu.edu/provost/faculty-affairs/teaching-resources-for-faculty/course-syllabus-information/syllabus-statements/syllabus-stmt_title-ix.docx

Student Success Center
"In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. The Student Success Center assists students with academic-related services and is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite, 331). Students can visit the Student Success Center to learn more about tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, and academic coaching."

University Writing Services
"Students are encouraged to take advantage of University Writing Services in the Student Success Center; getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels. Trained writing consultants can help with writing projects, multimedia projects, and oral presentations. University Writing Services offers one-on-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, visit the Student Success Center or call the Student Success Center at 314-977-3484."

Basic Needs Security
"Students in personal or academic distress and/or who may be specifically experiencing challenges such as securing food or difficulty navigating campus resources, and who believe this may affect their performance in the course, are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office (deanofstudents@slu.edu or 314-977-9378) for support. Furthermore, please notify the instructor if you are comfortable in doing so, as this will enable them to assist you with finding the resources you may need."

Note: The items listed below each date indicate what we will be covering in class on that date. Unless otherwise indicated, you should read the assigned article or chapter before that class, and homework is due at the beginning of class on the indicated date.

What is Terrorism?

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:
- Define terrorism and apply their definition to several well-known incidences of violence
- Identify definitions of terrorism from several sources, and the differences between them
- Explain the significance of defining terrorism

1/14 – Class Introduction and Motivation
- How to read for this class

1/16 – How do you define terrorism?
- Ward, Antonia (2018), "How do you define terrorism?"

1/21 – The Importance of Definitions
- Tilly, Charles (2004), "Terror, Terrorism, Terrorists"

1/23 – Definitions (continued)
- Held, Virginia (2019). "The Moral Dimensions of Terrorism." In *The Oxford Handbook of Terrorism.* 69-82

The Political Logic of Terrorism

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:
- Explain why people and groups use terrorist violence to pursue their goals
- Identify conditions under which terrorism is and is not likely to be effective at achieving goals
- Discuss the role of democracy, and especially elections, in terrorist behavior
- Map theoretical concepts of terrorism onto the behavior of Palestinian Nationalist groups like the PLO, Hezbollah, and Hamas, and onto the Islamic State.

1/28 – Why use terrorism?
- Crenshaw (1981), "The Causes of Terrorism." *Comparative Politics.*

1/30 – Choosing targets
- Enders and Sandler (2006), *Political Economy of Terrorism*, Chapter 1

2/4 – Why use terrorism?
- Kydd and Walter (2006), "Strategies of Terrorism"
- [In class] Outbidding activity

2/6 – Case Study: Palestinian Nationalist Terrorism

2/11 – Democracy, Elections, and Terrorism
- Berrebi and Klor (2008), "Are Voters Sensitive to Terrorism? Direct Evidence from the Israeli Electorate"

2/13 – Democracy, Elections, and Terrorism (continued)
- Getmansky and Zeitzoff 2014 - Terrorism and Voting, Effect of Rocket Threat on Voting in Israel

2/18 – Negotiating with Hostages
- [In class] Hostage negotiation activity

2/20 – Rationality of Suicide Terrorism
- Hoffman (2003), "The Logic of Suicide Terrorism"

2/25 – Case Study: The Islamic State

Who Fights?

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:
- Identify risk factors that increase the likelihood an individual will participate in or support terrorism
- Explain and differentiate several theories for why people participate in political violence
- Map theories of terrorism onto the IRA and its actions

2/27 – Backlash
- Mitts (2016), "Anti-Muslim Hostility and Support for ISIS in the West"

3/3 – Rationalist Motives
- Kalyvas and Kocher (2007), "Free Riding in Civil Wars"

3/5 – Mid-Class Review

3/10 – SPRING BREAK
3/12 – SPRING BREAK

3/17 – Employment, economic well-being, and participation in conflict

3/19 – Greed, Grievance, and Feasibility
- Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner (2009), "Beyond Greed and Grievance: Feasibility and Civil War." Oxford Economic Papers 61, Pages 1-27.

3/24 – Writing for Political Science

3/26 – NO CLASS

3/31 – Case Study: The IRA
- BBC, History of The Troubles: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/troubles
- Browse the CAIN website: http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/index.html
- McCann, Eamonn (2015), "The Troubles Are Back." *New York Times* https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/05/opinion/the-troubles-are-back.html
- Additional Reading TBA

Terrorist HR

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:
- Identify several challenges that terrorist leaders face in directing subordinate members of their organization
- Explain how terrorist leaders manage those challenges
- Explain how governments can exploit those weaknesses to defeat terrorists

4/2 – Management Problems
- Shapiro (2013), *Terrorist's Dilemma* (Chapter 1)

4/7 – Case Study: White Supremacist Terror
- Reading TBA

4/9 – HOLY THURSDAY / NO CLASS

4/14 – Management Problems
- Meronova (2019), *From Freedom Fighters to Jihadists*. Chapter TBA

Political Solutions to Terrorism

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:
- Identify common counterterrorism strategies
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of those strategies
- Propose appropriate counterterrorism strategies given a particular set of conditions

4/16 – Political Solutions to Terrorism

4/21 – The Security-Freedom Tradeoff
- Davis and Silver (2003), "Civil Liberties versus Security"
- [In class] Media Activity

4/23 – Democracy and Counterterrorism
- Nanes (2017), "Political Violence Cycles"

4/28 – Winning Hearts and Minds
- Berman, Shapiro, and Felter (2018), *Small Wars, Big Data*. Chapter 3.

4/30 – Wrap Up and Review