Course Description

This course is a Masters-level seminar that addresses terrorism from a political economic perspective. At times this will mean explicitly examining the political and the economic determinants and consequences of terrorism. In general, it implies a quantitative approach to the study of terrorism, using the tools of game theory and statistical inference. The former helps structure the strategic interactions in which terrorists and governments engage; the latter helps us draw general conclusions from multiple, disparate cases. Though no prior knowledge of either tool is required, readings will contain both. The first week will be a crash course in everything you need to know to get a handle on the readings; additional detail will be provided in class during discussion.

In the remaining thirteen weeks, we will tackle different aspects of terrorism. Terrorism has become a broad subject, and our focus on a political economic approach means we will not be able to cover all of it in this course. Two notable aspects of terrorism that will not be covered are state terror and psychological approaches to terrorism. This is not in any way a statement of the relative importance of these two; merely an accommodation to time constraints and methodological approach. (And, in the case of state terrorism, the often different dynamics between it and oppositional terrorism, which we will study.) What we will explore are 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 10 page policy analysis memo that will take a real-world problem relating to terrorism, set it in the literature we have read, and apply the approach of this class to propose ways to study the problem further and come to a reasoned policy conclusion.

Readings

All readings for the class are listed in the tentative schedule below in the order in which they will be used. Book chapters will be available via Blackboard, and you should check there first for all readings. Articles not there are available via the internet, either at a site listed with the reading (copy and paste these links, do not click directly on them), or via www.jstor.org or the like. It is your responsibility to obtain these readings (we will discuss how to do this in the first class). Required readings are to be done before class in all cases. Because many of these readings are dense, you should leave yourself time to do them. 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 for those who are interested.
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. All students should also have read the discussion papers circulated by discussion leaders the day before (see below). This is a seminar class, and will be treated accordingly. That is to say, we will be discussing the readings; I will not be lecturing except to clarify readings and explain their more technical aspects. 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: 40%**. Each student will be assigned two papers to lead between weeks 4 and 15. Discussion leaders will be chosen in the second class meeting. A discussion leader has two responsibilities for the week that s/he leads. First, each leader is responsible for delivering to the class, via e-mail (one can do this via Blackboard), a 2-3 page paper by noon Monday the week of class. The paper should open with a brief summary of the major points of the paper s/he was to have read, and then offer additional avenues for discussion that the leader feels would be productive and interesting to address during the seminar. Second, the student in charge of that paper will then lead discussion on the paper during the seminar. The depth of 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 third 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 3 header below.

- **Final paper: 35%**. The final paper will be due by noon on Friday the last week of class (April 20th). Each late day will result in a loss of one letter grade. Papers should be both e-mailed to me and placed in the digital dropbox on Blackboard. Acceptable formats include pdf and doc/docx (i.e. Acrobat and Word); it is your responsibility to ensure that the document can be opened. Papers should be double-spaced, with one inch margins and 11 or 12 point font, and be no more (or much less than) 10 pages. I will provide more instruction as to the content of the papers as the semester goes on, but in general each paper needs to do a few things: 1) identify a real-world problem relating to terrorism that is of substantive interest; 2) set the problem in the literature we have read, explaining who has looked at it or similar problems before and what they have found; 3) propose a theory about the problem (either how to solve it or why it occurs, or both); and 4) apply the approach of this class to propose ways to study (quantitatively and/or formally) the problem further in order to come to a reasoned policy conclusion.
Tentative Schedule of Readings (Subject to Change with Advance Notice):

PRELIMINARIES

**Week 1: January 4** — A Crash Course in Quantitative and Formal Analysis

REQUICKED READING:

**Week 2: January 11** — Definitions, Progress, and Problems

REQUICKED READING:

RECOMMENDED READING:

**Week 3: January 18** — An Abbreviated and Partial Tour of History

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)]
International Crisis Group. 2004, Sections II and II of “Dealing with Hamas,” pp. 4-19. [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.]


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.

Who Joins?: Mobilization, Recruitment, and Networks

Week 4: January 25 — Economics, Democracy, and Repression I

Required reading:


Recommended reading:


**Week 5: February 1 — Economics, Democracy, and Repression II**

**RECOMMENDED READING:**


Week 6: February 8 — Mass Impact of Terrorism

Required reading:


Recommended reading:


Week 7: February 15 — Terror Networks

REQUIRED READING:


RECOMMENDED READING:


Week 8: February 22 — Religion

REQUIRED READING:


RECOMMENDED READING:


**Week 9: February 29 — Terror Strategies**

**REQUIRED READING:**


**RECOMMENDED READING:**


**Week 10: March 15 — Suicide Terror**

**REQUIRED READING:**


**Responses to Pape:**


**RECOMMENDED READING:**

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


**Week 11: March 22 — Counter-terror: Target Defense and Information**

**REQUIRED READING:**


**RECOMMENDED READING:**


**Week 12: March 29 — Negotiations, Credible Commitment and Costly Signaling**

**REQUIRED READING:**


**Recommended reading:**


### Organization, Finance, and Competition

**Week 13: April 5 — Finance and Counter-finance**

**Required reading:**


**Recommended reading:**


**Week 14: April 12 — Organizational Structure**

**REQUIRED READING:***


**Primary Sources:**


Harmony Documents: “Al-Qa’ida Goals and Structure” and “Employment Contract.” Available at 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 15: April 19 — Competition and Factionalization**

**REQUIRED READING:***


**RECOMMENDED READING:**


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.