

IR/PSC 276/276W: The Politics of Insurgency and Terrorism

Professor Lacina
University of Rochester
Fall 2012
Tuesdays, 2-4:40pm
Hylan 203

This syllabus describes course requirements, evaluation policies, and the course schedule for IR/PSC 276/276W: The Politics of Insurgency and Terrorism. This seminar deals with the logic of asymmetric conflicts between states and non-state actors. We will examine theories of how non-state actors can win conflicts against governments and what these theories imply about the decision to rebel. The class then turns to problems of recruitment, civilian control, and tactics faced by rebel groups.

Instructor's contact information

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Course Materials

The following books have been ordered through the campus bookstore. Other necessary materials will be available through Blackboard.

- Berman, Eli (2009) *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism*. MIT Press.
- Metelit, C. (2009) *Inside Insurgency*. NYU Press.
- Van Inwegen, Patrick (2011) *Understanding Revolution*. Lynne Rienner.

Legal disclaimer

The schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better student learning.

Course requirements

60% of the grade in this class is based on attendance and participation in class. The remaining 40% of the grade will be based on a final project requiring an original research paper and an in-class presentation. The standards for all assignments are described in grading rubrics distributed in class.

Please note that the course requirements are identical for all four sections of this course (i.e., for IR/PSC 276/276W). You are not required to elect a writing section of this course. However, the requirements for the course are the same regardless of whether you are taking it for writing credit.

Final project

The capstone of the course will be a paper in which you explain the differences between two or three non-state armed groups in terms of their organization, tactics, recruitment, relationship with civilians, or their political or social careers. You will propose an explanation for these differences such as divergence in background conditions, government decisions, leadership decisions, or the international environment. The final paper must document the differences between the groups that the paper purports to explain; propose an explanation for the differences between the groups; present evidence in favor of that explanation; and address competing explanations for the differences between the groups.

As the semester progresses, you will turn in a paper proposal and rough draft of the paper. You will also present the findings from your paper to the class.

All assignments must properly credit all sources and be original work. See <http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/> for details on avoiding plagiarism.

Finding a topic for your final project

Your project will explain the differences between two or three non-state armed groups in terms of their organization, tactics, recruitment, relationship with civilians, or their political or social careers. Examples of successful paper topics from previous years are:

- Why did one rebel group in Darfur sign a 2006 peace agreement while another did not?
- Why did the African National Congress in South Africa rely more heavily on attacks on economic targets than the Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland?
- Why was the Shining Path of Peru more resilient against government counter-insurgency than the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement of Peru?

- Why were the rebels who overthrew the Shah of Iran in 1979 able to maintain their rule of the country while the rebels who overthrew the government of Nicaragua in 1979 were not able to do so?

Resources for finding non-state armed groups to compare in the final paper:

- Van Inwegen, *Understanding Revolution*. Appendix.
- Uppsala Conflict Data Project (<http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/>)
- Global Terrorism Database (<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>)

Keep two points in mind when choosing the groups that you intend to compare. First, be sure the comparison is non-trivial. That is, ensure there is no obvious but trivial explanation for the differences between the groups. An example of a trivial comparison would be the following: Why was the Taliban successful in capturing Kabul in 1996 but unable to retake the capital between 2001 and 2011? Were you to begin researching this question it would quickly become apparent that NATO was providing extensive military support to anti-Taliban forces between 2001 and 2011 but not in 1996. As a result, Kabul's defenses against outright capture in 2001-2011 were orders of magnitude larger than in 1996.

Second, be sure the proposed juxtaposition is of reasonably comparable groups. That is, the groups are sufficiently similar to warrant comparing them. An example of non-comparability would be to ask why the Taliban has been more politically successful since 2001 than Al Qaeda has been. The two groups have radically different goals which make comparing their political success to date difficult. The Taliban's stated aim is to rule Afghanistan. Al Qaeda's stated aim is the establishment of a unified, theocratic political system controlling all majority Muslim areas.

Components of your final project

- **Final paper proposal (5% of course grade)**

A proposal for your final paper is due by 5pm on Monday, October 15; it should be submitted to me by email. The proposal should include at least a paragraph explaining your chosen topic and evidence that your topic is sensible (see the grading rubric), followed by an outline of the paper that you propose to write. The proposal can be of any length provided it fulfills the requirements in the grading rubric. There should be a bibliography of any sources cited.

- **Final paper draft (5% of course grade)**

A draft of your final paper is due by 5pm on Monday, November 26; it should be submitted to me by email. The draft can be of any length provided it fulfills the requirements laid out in the grading rubric. There should be a bibliography of sources cited.

- **Final paper presentation (10% of course grade)**

During the last two weeks of class, students will present the findings from their final papers. Students will be asked to indicate whether they prefer to present on December 4 or December 11, although it may not be possible to give everyone their preferred date.

The presentation should be an overview of what you set out to explain in your paper and your explanation, the evidence for your argument, and some discussion of competing explanations and why you judged those explanations less compelling. Throughout the presentation, you should provide enough background to ensure that all parts of the presentation will be clear to other students despite having not read your paper. You should be prepared to answer clarifying questions and address critiques of your argument or evidence.

Presentations should be about 12 minutes long and no longer than 15 minutes. Keep in mind that your presentation will be assessed on creativity and on how engaging it is. You may use visual aids but you are not required to do so.

- **Final paper (20% of course grade)**

The final paper for the course is due at the start of class on December 11. It may be submitted by email or in hardcopy at the final class meeting. This paper should be 20-25 pages in length using 12 point font, 1 inch margins, double-spacing, and in-text citations, not including the bibliography.

Evaluation policies

Attendance

This is a seminar course. Student preparation and participation is vital to the success of the source. Unexcused absences or extreme tardiness will result in **no** credit for that session's attendance and participation grade.

If you need to miss a class because of a religious holiday, school function, funeral, or other extraordinary circumstances please email me in advance of class. If you are too ill to attend class, please provide me with a note from the Student Health Center stating that your illness prevented you from attending class; this note must be provided within 72 hours of the missed class.

Students who follow the above procedure to obtain an excused absence may make-up any in-class assignments as take home assignments, which will be due by 5 pm on the Monday immediately following the class that the student has missed.

A student with two excused absences who needs to miss another class should contact me directly to discuss their situation.

Late work

Barring extraordinary circumstances, late work will be marked down a third of a grade (e.g., A to A-) for each 24 hour period after it is due. Thus, if an assignment is turned in any time during the first 24 hours after it is due, it is penalized a third of a grade. Any assignment not turned in within a week of the due date will automatically receive a zero.

When submitting work by email, include the assignment as an attachment AND paste the text of your work into the body of the email. If you do not include the text of the assignment in the body of your email and your attachment is missing, corrupted, or unreadable, your work will be considered late.

Re-grading

If there is an arithmetical error in the grading of an assignment, please alert me and I will correct the error. If a student wishes to challenge the grade assigned to all or part of an assignment, the following steps must be taken:

1. Students must email me to a request for a re-grade within 72 hours of the assignment being returned to the class.

Grading scale

A ($93.0\% < x$)

A- ($90.0\% < x \leq 93.0\%$)

B+ ($87.0\% < x \leq 90.0\%$)

B ($84.0\% < x \leq 87.0\%$)

B- ($80.0\% < x \leq 84.0\%$)

C+ ($77.0\% < x \leq 80.0\%$)

C ($74.0\% < x \leq 77.0\%$)

C- ($70.0\% < x \leq 74.0\%$)

Non-passing grades ($x \leq 70.0\%$)

2. A request for a re-grade must explain which aspect(s) of the grading rubric the student believes should have been assigned a higher score. For each disputed aspect, students must justify why they should be given a higher grade given the standards in the grading rubric and cite specific materials in the readings or lectures if applicable.
3. I will re-grade all aspects of the assignment. The student's final score may go up or down or be unchanged.

Course evaluations and extra credit

I will award everyone in the class extra credit (an additional 3% added to the final score) if there is 100% participation in the on-line course evaluations.

Academic honesty

Work done for this class is governed by the University's policies on academic honesty. See <http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/> for details.

Course schedule

Week 1 (9/4): Introduction to the course

Week 2 (9/11): How can governments be challenged?

Attendance and participation: 5% of final grade
132 pages of reading

Van Inwegen, *Understanding Revolution*. Chapters 1, 4-7. (119 pages)

Ibrahim, A. (2004) "Conceptualisation of guerrilla warfare." *Small Wars and Insurgencies*. (13 pages)

Week 3 (9/18): Tactics and targeting

Attendance and participation: 5% of final grade
139 pages of reading

Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*. Chapters 1, 6 and 7. (84 pages)

Crenshaw, M. (2010) *Explaining Terrorism*. Routledge. Chp. 4-6. (55 pages)

Week 4 (9/25): Recruitment

Attendance and participation: 5% of final grade
147 pages of reading

Weinstein, J. (2006) *Inside Rebellion*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 2-3. (66 pages)

Berman, E. *Radical, Religious, and Violent*. Pp. 29-110 (81 pages)

Week 5 (10/2): Case study of Sierra Leone

Attendance and participation: 5% of final grade
61 pages of reading

Richards, P. and J. Vincent. (2008) "Sierra Leone: Marginalization of the RUF." In *From soldiers to politicians*, ed. J. de Zeeuw. Lynne Rienner. (20 pages)

Hoffman, D. (2007) "The meaning of a militia: Understanding the Civil Defence Forces of Sierra Leone." *African Affairs*. (25 pages)

Humphreys, M. and J. Weinstein. (2004) *What the fighters say: A survey of ex-combatants in Sierra Leone, June-August 2003*. Columbia University and UNAMSIL. Pp. 2-17. (16 pages)

Week 6 (10/16): Workshop on final paper topics

Completion of draft of paper topic (due by 5 pm on 10/15):5% of final grade
Attendance and participation: 5% of final grade

After draft paper topics are handed in, each student will be assigned to read a few other student's work in preparation for class.

Week 7 (10/23): Maintaining civilian support

Attendance and participation: 5% of final grade
125 pages of reading

Wood, E. (2001) "The emotional benefits of insurgency in El Salvador," in Jeff Goodwin et al., eds., *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*. University of Chicago Press. (15 pages)

Popkin, S. (1979) *The Rational Peasant*. University of California Press. Chapter 6. (25 pages)

Kalyvas, S. (2006) *The logic of violence in civil war*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 4-6. (85 pages)

Week 8 (10/30): Case study on maintaining civilian support

Attendance and participation: 5% of final grade

Metelit, C. (2009) *Inside Insurgency*. NYU Press. Chapters 2-5. (146 pages)

Week 9 (11/6): Internal control

Attendance and participation: 5% of final grade
104 pages of reading

Weinstein, J. (2006) *Inside Rebellion*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 4. (33 pages)

Staniland, Paul. 2012. "Organizing Insurgency: Networks, Resources, and Rebellion in South Asia." *International Security*. (36 pages)

Berman, E. *Radical, Religious, and Violent*. Pp. 121-155. (35 pages)

Week 10 (11/13): Internecine competition

Attendance and participation: 5% of final grade
159 pages of reading

McLauchlin, T. and W. Pearlman (2012) "Out-group conflict, in-group unity?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (26 pages)

Staniland, P. (2012) "Between a rock and a hard place: Insurgent fratricide, ethnic defection, and the rise of pro-state paramilitaries." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. (25 pages)

Johnston, P. (2007) "Negotiated settlements and government strategy in civil war: Evidence from Darfur." *Civil Wars*. (20 pages)

No class on 11/20

Week 11 (11/27): Paper writing workshop

Completion of draft of paper (due by 5 pm on 11/26): 5% of final grade
Attendance and participation: 5% of final grade

After paper drafts are handed in, each student will be assigned to read one other student's paper in preparation for class.

Week 12 (12/4): Presentations I

Attendance and participation: 5% of final grade
Presentation: 10% of final grade

Week 13 (12/11): Presentations II & final paper due at the start of class

Attendance and participation: 5% of final grade
Final paper (due by start of class period): 20% of final grade