

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

Professor Lacina
University of Rochester
Fall 2012
Tuesdays, 2:40pm
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

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 a writing research paper and an in class presentation. The standards for all assignments are described in grading rubrics below.

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 nonstate 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 nonstate armed groups in terms of their organization, tactics, recruitment, relationship with civilians, or their political or social careers. Examples of successful topics from previous years:

- x Why did one rebel group in Darfur sign a 2006 peace agreement while another did not?
- x 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?
- x Why was the Shining Path of Peru more resilient against government insurgency than the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement of Peru?

- x 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:

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

Keep two points in mind when choosing groups that you intend to compare. First, be sure the comparison is not 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 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. 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

- x 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.

- x 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.

x 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 judge 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.

x 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 ~~exte~~ tardiness will result in nocredit 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 to the instructor by the end of the class session.

Grading rubric for weekly participation grades

	A (Above Standards) 100%	B (Meets Standards) 90%	C (Approaching Standards) 80%	D (Below Standards) 70%	E (No credit) 0%
Reading (50 points)	Student has carefully read and understood the readings as evidenced by familiarity with main ideas, supporting evidence and secondary points. Comes to class prepared with questions and critiques of the readings	Student has read and understood the readings as evidenced by grasp of the main ideas and evidence. Comes to class prepared with questions and critiques of the readings.	Student has read the material, comments often indicate that he/she misunderstood or forgot many points or has not thought about questions or critiques of the readings.	Student comes to class unprepared, as indicated by unwillingness or inability to answer basic questions or contribute to discussion.	Non-attendance
Listening (50 points)	Always attends to what others say as evidenced by regularly building on, clarifying, or responding to their comments	Generally attends to what others say as evidenced by periodically building on, clarifying, or responding to their comments	Does not regularly listen well as indicated by the repetition of comments or questions presented earlier, or frequent non sequiturs	Behavior frequently reflects a failure to listen or attend to the discussion as indicated by repetition of comments and	

Grading rubric for paper proposal due 10/15

	A (Above Standards) 100%	B (Meets Standards) 90%	C (Approaching Standards) 80%	D (Below Standards) 70%
Completeness (25 points)	Proposal clearly defines an answer to all parts of the assignment.	A minor part of the assignment is unaddressed or it is unclear how the author will address it.	A major part of the assignment is unaddressed or it is unclear how the author will address it.	Two or more major parts of the assignment are unaddressed or it is unclear how the author will address them.
Evidence of difference (45 points)	Sufficient evidence is provided that the group(s) to be compared differ in the manner the author posits.	Evidence is provided that the group(s) differ in the manner the author posits, however the evidence is limited or the author's interpretation of the evidence is questionable.	Evidence is provided that the group(s) differ in the manner the author posits, however the evidence is not fully credible or the author's interpretation of the evidence is invalid.	No credible evidence is provided that the group(s) differ in the manner the author posits.
Non-trivial (10 points)	There is no obvious but trivial explanation for the difference between the groups.			There is an obvious, trivial explanation for the difference between the groups.
Comparable (10 points)	The groups are sufficiently similar to warrant comparing them.			The groups differ in so many respects that there is no way to meaningfully compare them.
Source documentation (10 points)	Correct attributions are provided for all quotations, non-trivial facts, and original research.			Correct attributions are not provided for all quotations, non-trivial facts, and original research.

Grading rubric for final presentation

Grading rubric for final paper due 12/11

	A (Above Standards) 100%	B (Meets Standards) 90%	C (Approaching Standards) 80%	D (Below Standards) 70%
Completeness (10 points)	All parts of the assignment are addressed.	A minor part of the assignment is unaddressed or it is unclear how the author is addressing it.	A major part of the assignment is unaddressed or it is unclear how the author is addressing it.	Two or more major parts of the assignment are unaddressed or it is unclear how the author is addressing them.
Clarity (10 points)	Ideas are provided in a logical order that makes it easy to follow the author's train of thought.	Ideas are provided in a fairly logical order that makes it reasonably easy to follow the author's train of thought.	A few ideas are not in an expected or logical order, making the essay a little confusing.	Many ideas are not in an expected or logical order, making the essay confusing.
Support (30 points)	Every point in the argument is supported with valid inferences from evidence or logic.	Minor points are unsupported or supported with invalid inferences from evidence or logic.	A major point is unsupported or supported with invalid inferences from evidence or logic.	More than one major point is unsupported or supported with invalid inferences from evidence or logic.
Research (40 points)	More than 5 sources, of which at least 3 are peer-reviewed journal articles or scholarly books. Sources include both general background sources and specialized sources. Politicized or popular sources are acknowledged as such when they are used.	5 sources, of which at least 3 are peer-reviewed journal articles or scholarly books. Politicized or popular sources are acknowledged as such when they are used.	5 sources, of which at least 2 are peer-reviewed journal articles or scholarly books. Politicized or popular sources are used with adequate comment.	Fewer than 5 sources, or fewer than 2 of 5 are peer-reviewed journal articles or scholarly books.
Source documentation (10 points)	Correct attributions are provided for all quotations, non-trivial facts, and original research.			Correct attributions are not provided for all quotations, non-trivial facts, and original research.

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 17, 4 (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. (4 pages)

Crenshaw, M. (2010) Explaining Terrorism. Routledge. Chp. 4. (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 (26 pages)

Berman, E. Radical, Religious, and Violent. Pp. 129- (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)

Leone." *African Affairs* (25 pages)

Humphreys M. and J. Weinstein. (2004) *What the fighters say: A survey of combatants in Sierra Leone* June-August 2003. Columbia University and UNAMSIL. Pp. 2-4 2676f(m)--6(g)s

