

**Colloquium on
Political Violence and Terrorism**
Political Science BC 3055
Spring 2018
Tuesdays 2:10-4:00pm, location TBA
Prof. Kimberly Marten
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Course Description and Objectives

Why do non-state actors commit acts of political violence and terrorism? Is all political violence caused by the same factors, or is terrorism different? What are the roles (if any) of poverty, inequality, or religion in explaining political violence and terrorism? How do the motives and incentives of leaders and followers differ from each other? Can governments take effective action to prevent or counter the threats of terrorism and insurgency, or are we all doomed to live in insecurity?

This course examines these problems through the lenses of social science theories and in-depth historical case studies. The course's primary goals are to use the problems of non-state political violence and terrorism to develop students' ability to analyze and critique competing cause-and-effect arguments, and to pose their own causal arguments based on independent research of the existing secondary-source literature.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students who complete this course successfully will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of social science and policy debates about political violence, terrorism, and counterterrorism.
- Demonstrate factual knowledge of selected historical and current cases where these debates are reflected in real-world events.
- Read critically to assess the explanatory value of competing perspectives and theories.
- Apply contending theories from the social science literature to analyze, compare, and evaluate selected historical and current events, in class discussions and written assignments.
- Synthesize facts and arguments across cases in order to reason critically and argue creatively in class discussions and written assignments.
- Independently design, research, and write a substantial paper of 25-30 pages that explores and takes a stance on a significant debate in the social science literature on non-state political violence, terrorism, or counterterrorism policy.

Assignments and Expectations

Students are **required to attend all course meetings**, to participate regularly in class discussions, and to demonstrate through this participation that they have completed the assigned

readings before class is held. If a student is not able to attend a particular course meeting, Prof. Marten must be notified in advance if at all possible, and an alternate assignment (for example, a one-page written summary and discussion of assigned course readings) must be completed in lieu of discussion participation for that day.

All written assignments will be submitted on the “assignments” page on Courseworks/Canvas, which notes time and date of submission. All uploaded files must be in either Word or PDF format. Late assignments will not be accepted, except in the case of a documented family or health emergency.

Twice during the semester, each student will write a **short (3- to 5-page) argumentative essay** on some aspect of the assigned weekly readings, due before the start of class that week so that the paper is not influenced by our class discussion. These papers should summarize the relevant points from the selected reading (with page citations) to demonstrate that you have read and understood it thoroughly; and should then make a cohesive and well-supported argument, based on things that the reading provoked you to think about. Your argument might involve critiquing aspects of the reading itself (remembering that a good critique points out strengths as well as weaknesses); comparing an argument in one reading to another, which might also include something discussed earlier in the semester or even in another class; explaining what the reading suggests about solutions to some current policy problem; etc. As long as the paper both makes a strong argument and demonstrates that the assigned reading has been done in depth, you have creative license to approach this assignment however you like. A major purpose of these assignments is to allow Prof. Marten to assess the quality of your writing and analysis before the major paper is due, to suggest ways to improve. A schedule will be circulated after our first class meeting, so that students may choose the subjects and dates of their papers. **(Late argumentative essays will not be accepted at all**, because they are not to be influenced by class discussion. Therefore if you must miss a deadline for a critique paper, you will have to sign up to do a different, later critique paper instead.)

Each student must also choose **one day to lead or co-lead the opening 15 minutes** of our class discussion, after Prof. Marten’s introductory remarks. This discussion leadership role will be factored into the course participation grade. Prof. Marten will hand out discussion questions to everyone several days before each class meeting; class leaders can choose to ask those questions, or invent questions of their own.

Students will also write a **longer research paper** of at least 25 double-spaced pages on a topic chosen in consultation with Prof. Marten, due by **noon on Tuesday, April 24**, our last class session. Most research papers will use qualitative methods (i.e., not statistics) to examine one or several cases in depth. (Students are welcome to write statistical papers if they already have a solid background in statistical methods.) The goal of most papers will be three-fold: (1) to provide a thorough review of a well-chosen literature, where there is a debate about some causal question related to political violence or terrorism; (2) to collect in-depth research about one or more cases that allows the student to pose a test, about which of the competing theories explains outcomes best; and (3) to reach an independent conclusion about the causal debate, based on the case(s), and to discuss the significance of that conclusion. Given the constraints of timing and

skill-levels, there is no expectation that students do primary-source research, unless they wish to do so.

The process of writing this research paper—not merely the final result—is the heart of the course, and students should plan to spend significant time throughout the semester conceptualizing and rethinking the topic and research strategy as the semester progresses. The frustrations of rigorous research are part of the learning experience of the course. Students will turn in a carefully written and preliminarily research **topic statement** (2-3 paragraphs) for this longer paper by **9am on Monday, Feb. 5** (we will discuss them in class on Feb. 6) and a **research proposal** (of at least 3 pages, including a revised topic statement if necessary) with an **annotated draft bibliography** of at least 15 high-quality sources by **5pm on Friday, March 9**, before the official start of spring break. (Early submissions are most welcome.) Separate handouts will describe the expectations of each of these assignments.

Senior Capstone Requirement

In addition to the above requirements, all seniors who have designated this colloquium to fulfill their Senior Capstone requirement will be assigned peer partners, with whom they are expected to consult throughout the semester about their major paper assignment. Capstone seniors will hold additional meetings in the instructor's office (mutually convenient times TBA) where peer partners will discuss and provide constructive mentoring and feedback on the topic statement and research proposal and methods, as well as discuss the mechanics of the **final poster** required by the department. A portion of seniors' class participation grade will reflect the quality of their work as peer partners.

Capstone seniors will present their final research papers in class on the last day of class (note: if there are more than 6 capstone seniors in the class, presentations will be spread across the last two weeks of class). A portion of capstone seniors' final research paper grade will reflect the quality of their presentations. The poster will be displayed at the Barnard major's senior end-of-year party (date TBA). The poster itself will not be graded, but the completion of a poster is required to receive a "Pass" for the senior requirement, and will factor into Departmental considerations for Senior Project Distinction.

Evaluation

Participation: 20%

Two short papers: 10% each (20% total)

Initial topic statement for longer paper: 5%

Research proposal (and revised topic statement, if necessary): 10%

Annotated bibliography: 5%

Finished 25- to 30-page paper: 40%

Barnard Honor Code

All assignments in this class are to be completed in accordance with the Barnard Honor Code, with expectations outlined in the following paragraph. Any student who violates the Honor Code will face dean's discipline at her or his home college, and will earn a failing grade in the course.

Students affirm that all work turned in is their own, and that they have fully and accurately cited every written source, including web-based sources and unpublished sources (such as prior student papers), used in their writing. Students are encouraged to consult with each other to get feedback as they are writing their major research papers and the intermediary assignments associated with the research papers, but no collaboration is allowed when writing the short papers on the assigned readings. All students may use the Barnard Writing Center with no restrictions.

All students receive in-depth briefings on plagiarism and proper citation techniques as part of their introductory days at Barnard and Columbia; any student who has any remaining questions about proper citation technique or about how to avoid plagiarism should discuss these questions and concerns with Prof. Marten before turning in the assignment in question.

Required Readings

Each of the books has been ordered at Book Culture, 536 West 112th Street. Each has also been put on reserve at the Barnard College Library. In addition to the required readings from books, there are a large number of online sources that are required reading.

Berman, Eli. *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism.* Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009).

Krueger, Alan B. *What Makes a Terrorist: Economics and the Roots of Terrorism.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.

Pape, Robert A. *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005).

Course Schedule

January 16. Introduction: defining terms and thinking about causes.

The purpose of today's class is to introduce the notion that definitions are important when approaching research topics. We will focus on one definition: "terrorism." What do we mean by the term, and why does the definition matter?

Articles available on open web:

Erica Chenoweth, "Why Defining Terrorism Matters," *Monkey Cage* blog, May 28, 2013, <http://themonkeycage.org/2013/05/why-defining-terrorism-matters/>

Daniel Byman, "Should We Use the 'T-Word' for Right-Wing Violence?" *Lawfare* blog, Oct. 16, 2017, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/should-we-use-t-word-right-wing-violence>

Article available on Columbia Library Web:

Charles Tilly, "Terror, Terrorism, Terrorists," *Sociological Theory* 22, no. 1 (Mar. 2004): 5-13.

January 23: Economics, inequality, and terrorism.

The purpose of today's class is to demonstrate that what we *think* we might know about particular phenomena can be completely undercut when we see the evidence. How does evidence-based research change our understanding about what good public policy entails?

Krueger: entire. Krueger is a professor at Princeton and served as President Obama's Chairman of the U.S. Council of Economic Advisors. He has completed the most rigorous (and, basically, definitive) large-N statistical study of the relationship between economics, education, and terrorist acts, and his work is supported by the findings of many other scholars.

Suggested additional reading for anyone interested (not required), available through Columbia Library Web:

Alexander Lee, "Who Becomes a Terrorist? Poverty, Education, and the Origins of Political Violence," *World Politics* 63, no. 2 (April 2011): 203-45. This article focuses on terrorism in the province of Bengal in the Indian empire in the early 20th century. Its results confirm Krueger's findings, indicating that Krueger's relationships hold true before our current era.

January 30: Why group leaders choose terrorism as a tool.

The purpose of today's class is to look at a debate in the literature about why terrorism might be useful as a means for group leaders to achieve political goals. Under what conditions will terrorism be chosen? What does this mean about how to prevent or stop terrorism?

Articles available from the Columbia Library Web:

Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, "The Strategies of Terrorism," *International Security* 31, no. 1 (Summer 2006): 49-80.

Wendy Pearlman, "Spoiling Inside and Out: International Political Contestation and the Middle East Peace Process," *International Security* 33, no. 2 (Winter 2008/9): 79-109.

Max Abrams, "What Terrorists Really Want: Terrorist Motives and Counterterrorism Strategy," *International Security* 32, no. 4 (Spring 2008): 78-105.

Monday, Feb. 5: Initial topic statements due on Courseworks by 9am.

Feb. 6: Research discussion day. At the start of class, Prof. Marten will give an introduction to resources available through Columbia Library Web, based on the topics students turn in the day before. Then each student will give a very brief summary of their proposed research topic, followed by a supportive critique by Prof. Marten. The goal is to push each student to define terms clearly and think about causal, as opposed to descriptive or prescriptive, research questions—with the knowledge that everyone in the class is facing the same challenges, and hearing critiques of each other’s ideas will make everyone’s own ideas more solid.

Feb. 13. Crossing the threshold to violence: the role of opportunity and material incentives. The purpose of today’s class is to start thinking about violence as a puzzle. The vast majority of people who feel aggrieved by something don’t take violent action. What explains why some seemingly ordinary people choose violence? How do “violence entrepreneurs” overcome the “collective action problem”? Today’s readings focus on material incentives. These articles are hard reads, but try to get the key argumentative content out of them (feel free to skip over the statistics and equations—those will not be discussed in class).

Background article available on the open web:

Keith Dowding, “Collective Action Problem,” Encyclopedia Britannica,
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/collective-action-problem-1917157>

Articles available from the Columbia Library Web:

Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, “Greed and Grievance in Civil War,” *Oxford Economic Papers* 56 (2004), pp. 563-95.

Stathis N. Kalyvas and Matthew Adam Kocher, “How ‘Free’ Is Free Riding in Civil Wars? Violence, Insurgency, and the Collective Action Problem,” *World Politics* 59 (Jan. 2007): 177-216.

Feb. 20. Crossing the threshold to violence: the role of social encouragement.

The purpose of today’s class is to suggest a different mechanism for overcoming the “collective action problem”—not direct material incentives, but instead social encouragement by communities.

Berman: chapters 1-5 (pp. 1-155).

Book chapters available on the open web:

Alexandra Scacco, *Anatomy of a Riot: Participation in Ethnic Violence in Nigeria* (unpublished book manuscript taken from her Columbia Political Science Department Ph.D. dissertation), Sept. 2016, abstract and chapters 1 (pp. 1-24) and 5 (pp. 140-169).

http://www.nyu.edu/projects/scacco/files/Scacco_Anatomy_of_a_Riot.pdf

Feb. 27. More on the thorny issue of religion and terrorism.

While keeping in mind the arguments made by Berman from last week, the purpose of this week’s class is to consider alternative reasons why religion may be a motivator for political violence.

Articles available from the Columbia Library Web:

Adam Nossiter, “‘That Ignoramus’: 2 French Scholars of Radical Islam Turn Bitter Rivals,” *New York Times*, July 12, 2016.

Matthew D. M. Francis, “Why the ‘Sacred’ Is a Better Resource than ‘Religion’ for Understanding Terrorism,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 28, no. 5 (2016): 912-27.

Jean-François Ratelle and Email Aslan Souleimanov, "Retaliation in Rebellion: The Missing Link to Explaining Insurgent Violence in Dagestan," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 29, no. 4 (2017): 573-92.

March 6: Understanding the "lone wolf" phenomenon.

The purpose of today's class is to understand why individuals become radicalized. Why do individuals act alone? The major collection of articles is drawn from studies of the phenomenon over time in the European Union; the first article reminds us of why this matters in New York City, too.

Articles available on the open web:

Robin Wright, "What the New York Attack Says about ISIS Now," *The New Yorker* News Desk, Nov. 2, 2017, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/what-the-new-york-attack-says-about-isis-now>

Raffaello Pantucci, Clare Ellis and Lorien Chaplais, "Lone Actor Terrorism: Literature Review," *Countering Lone-Actor Terrorism Series 1* (London: Chatham House/Royal United Services Institute, 2015), <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/publications/research/20160105LoneActorTerrorismLiteratureReviewRUSI.pdf>

Clare Ellis, Raffaello Pantucci, Jeanine de Roy van Zuijdewijn, Edwin Bakker, Benoît Gomis, Simon Palombi and Melanie Smith, "Lone-Actor Terrorism: Analysis Paper," *Countering Lone-Actor Terrorism Series 4* (London: Chatham House/Royal United Services Institute, 2016), https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/201602_clat_analysis_paper.pdf

Jeanine de Roy van Zuijdewijn and Edwin Bakker, "Lone-Actor Terrorism Policy Paper 1: Personal Characteristics of Lone-Actor Terrorists," *Countering Lone-Actor Terrorism Series 5* (London: Chatham House/Royal United Services Institute, 2016), https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/201602_CLAT_Policy-Paper-1_v2.pdf

Lisa Kaati and Fredrik Johansson, "Countering Lone Actor Terrorism: Weak Signals and Online Activities," in Michael Fredholm, ed., *Understanding Lone Actor Terrorism: Past Experience, Future Outlook, and Response Strategies* (New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 266-79, <https://www.foi.se/download/18.3bca00611589ae7987820a/1480076541929/FOI-S--5372--SE.pdf>

Recommended reading: if you are interested in how the Google spinoff company Jigsaw is trying to use social media advertising targeting tools to "redirect" individual's internet searches that may lead to recruitment by the Islamic State, see <https://redirectmethod.org/>

Friday, March 9: Research proposal (3 pages) and annotated bibliography (15 sources) due by 5pm on Courseworks.

March 13: Spring break, no class meeting.

March 20: The special case of suicide bombers.

Pape: entire. Prof. Marten will start class today by summarizing a range of scholarly critiques that have been leveled against Pape, and we will spend the rest of the session debating Pape's methods and results. The purpose of today's class is to discuss a book that may have had enormous impact on U.S. policy in the Middle East, despite being controversial among scholars.

Some significant counters to Pape (which are not assigned, but you are very welcome to read) are:

--Sara Jackson Wade and Dan Reiter, "Does Democracy Matter? Regime Type and Suicide Terrorism," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51, no. 2 (2007): 329-48.

--Martha Crenshaw, "Explaining Suicide Terrorism," *Security Studies* 16, no. 1 (Jan.-Mar. 2007): 133-62.

--Scott Ashworth, Joshua D. Clinton, Adam Meirowitz, and Kristopher W. Ramsay, "Design, Inference, and the Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review* 102, no. 2 (April 2008): 1-5.

-- Simon Collard-Wexler, Costantino Pischedda, and Michael G. Smith, "Do Foreign Occupations Cause Suicide Attacks?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58, no. 4 (June 2014): 625-57.

March 27. Women who engage in political violence and terrorism: does gender matter?

The purpose of today's class is to ask whether gender has an impact on the commitment of acts of terrorism. What roles do women play, why do they choose terrorism, and does gender matter?

Article, available on the open web:

Jakana L. Thomas and Reed Wood, "The Social Origins of Female Combatants," *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, article published online first May 18, 2017, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0738894217695524>

Article, available from Columbia library web:

Lindsey A. O'Rourke, "What's Special about Female Suicide Terrorism?" *Security Studies* 18, no. 4 (2009): 681-718. (Also see her op-ed, "Behind the Woman Behind the Bomb," New York Times, Aug. 2, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/02/opinion/02orourke.html>)

Articles available on the open web:

Anna Speckhard and Khapta Akhmedova, "Black Widows: The Chechen Female Suicide Terrorists," and Arjuna Gunawardena, "Female Black Tigers: A Different Breed of Cat? [Sri Lanka]" both in *Female Suicide Bombers: Dying for Equality?* ed. Yoram Schweitzer, Memorandum 84 of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University, August 2006, pp. 63-90; <http://www.inss.org.il/publication/female-suicide-bombers-dying-for-equality/>

April 3. Counterterrorist and counterinsurgency methods: does leadership decapitation work?

Articles, available from Columbia library web:

Bryan C. Price, "Targeting Top Terrorists: How Leadership Decapitation Contributes to Counterterrorism," *and*

Patrick B. Johnston, "Does Decapitation Work? Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Targeting in Counterinsurgency Campaigns," *both in International Security* 36, no. 4 (Spring 2012): 9-79.

Article available on the open web:

Jenna Jordan, H-Diplo ISSF Article Review 15, Oct. 24, 2012, <https://issforum.org/articlereviews/15-does-decapitation-work>

April 10. Counterterrorist and counterinsurgency methods: does repression work?

Articles, available from the Columbia Library Web:

Ursula E. Daxecker and Michael L. Hess, "Repression Hurts: Coercive Government Responses and the Demise of Terrorist Campaigns," *British Journal of Political Science* 43 (2012): 559-77.

Rod Thornton, "Getting it Wrong: The Crucial Mistakes Made in the Early Stages of the British Army's Deployment to Northern Ireland (August 1969 to March 1972)," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 30, no. 1 (2007): 73-107.

Jacqueline Hazelton, "The Hearts and Minds Fallacy: Violence, Coercion, and Success in Counterinsurgency Warfare," *International Security* 42, no. 1 (Summer 2017): 80-113.

April 17, April 24. Senior Capstone presentations