Is violence an inevitable component of politics? Why do individuals ever take risks to join a protest or take up arms in support of a cause? Conversely, why do we not see even more rebellion and revolution, more radical change, more social movements? In this course we will critically rethink the politics of repression, mass protest, armed insurrection, and revolution. Students will develop crucial analytical skills as we explore the social science theories and the political and historical realities of revolution and political violence. We will read and discuss cutting edge social science research, and examine documentary films, web sites and other sources.

Students will also improve their awareness of, perspective on, and engagement with global issues, with the goal of enhancing preparedness for grappling with shared problems and fulfilling civic responsibilities in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. Political violence and social change provide us with a particularly urgent set of global issues with which to engage.

By the completing this course, students will achieve the following “Global Learning” outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate understanding of the connections between ideas/theories of collective action and examples of social movements and political violence observed in different parts of the world.
2. Students will be able to analyze major episodes of revolution from the perspectives of different local, national, international and global actors/groups involved.
3. Students will demonstrate willingness and ability to work together in teams to actively engage with the policy implications of political violence.

We will accomplish this through a variety of learning methods:

- assigned readings and in-class film screenings
- lectures, along with question & answer sessions
- frequent in-class activities and discussions, in both large and small groups;
- weekly response papers reacting to the materials assigned;
- exams that will require, among other tasks, that you analyze a problem from multiple perspectives using multiple theoretical lenses;
- a group project in which you will work in teams of 5-7 students to produce a 10-15 page policy brief—and a 12-15 minute PowerPoint presentation—analyzing the causes and consequences of an episode of political violence.
Assignments | % of grade | Dates
--- | --- | ---
Response papers | 21% | various
Midterm exam | 25% | 2/18
Policy paper group project | 10% | 4/15, 4/17
Presentation | 5% | 4/15, 4/17
Final Exam | 39% | 4/22

**Guidelines for Participation, Academic Integrity and Classroom Civility (the fine print!)**

1. Class starts at 12:30 precisely. Five minutes later, the doors will be closed and students will NOT be allowed into class (regardless of weather, traffic, or the validity of other individual excuses). Once class has started, please do not leave until we finish.

2. Consistent and timely reading is the key to success in this course. Every student must arrive to our class prepared (with outlines or notes) to discuss the day’s readings.

3. Eight (8) response papers—in which you briefly answer a question about the assigned readings—will be assigned over the course of the semester. They are worth a total of 21% of your final grade. I do not expect you to fully comprehend every nuanced argument of a reading before coming to class (that’s what class is for!). I do, however, expect you to make a sincere effort at digesting the readings, and the papers will reward you for such effort. You may NOT submit a paper after the deadline under any circumstances. I will, however, drop each student’s lowest paper grade of the semester.

4. Similarly, our exam dates are set at the start of the semester, so I am unlikely to allow you to take a make-up exam if you miss one, regardless of the circumstances. In rare cases of severe and verifiable emergency or illness, I may, at my discretion: a) allow you to write a make-up exam on a date of my choosing or b) calculate your course grade without this exam. In the majority of cases, however, if you miss an exam you will simply receive a zero. (Same for your group policy paper assignment.)

5. The FIU Code of Academic Integrity and all related University policies on cheating will be rigorously and strictly enforced at all times. (Please refer to the section on “Academic Misconduct” in the annual Student Handbook for further details.) Students who cheat in this class will face the most severe sanctions allowable: failing grades, disciplinary probation, suspension, even expulsion. What’s more, cheating is demeaning to the student who commits the infraction as well as to classmates and professors. So don’t do it; it’s really not worth it.

6. Students will not talk in class except to ask/respond to questions or participate in organized group discussions. Students must turn off cell phones and mute all other electronic devices during class.

7. I encourage you to visit me during my office hours. If you wish to communicate with me outside of those times, please send an email message via our course’s web site. (Do not leave a voice message at my office, as it may be days before I hear it!) Your email message must a) have a subject line that indicates the content of the message, and b) be professional in tone and composition, with a salutation, proper grammar and punctuation, etc. I will reply to you within 24-48 hours.

8. I expend a great deal of effort to ensure that your grades in this course accurately reflect the quality of your work. Any questions that you may have about grades must be presented in writing, and may not be submitted sooner than one week after receiving the grade in question. (And if in this written statement you insist that your grade should be reexamined, please understand that as a consequence your grade could go up or down.)

9. Kindly show the respect that is due to your classmates (and, of course, your professor). We are all here to learn, and we all have something to contribute!
Readings

All readings are available online at our course’s web site. Login at http://online.fiu.edu/login, find our course and look for file(s) named “Course Readings.”

Tues., Jan. 7       COURSE INTRODUCTION: What is “political violence”?

Thinking About Civil War, Terrorism, and Torture

Thurs., Jan. 9
  • Stathis Kalyvas, “Old and New Civil Wars,” World Politics, 54, 1 (2001), excerpt
  • Fearon and Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War,” American Political Science Review, 97, 1 (2003), excerpt

Tues., Jan. 14
  • Brigitte Nacos, Terrorism and Counterterrorism, Chs. 2 & 3
  • In-class debate on the causes of terrorism

Thurs., Jan. 16
  • Brigitte Nacos, Terrorism and Counterterrorism, Ch. 6
  • Robert Pape, “Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism,” American Political Science Review, 97, 3 (2003), excerpt

Tues., Jan. 21
  • Jones and Libicki, How Terrorist Groups End (Rand: 2008), excerpts

Thurs., Jan. 23
  • Darius Rejali, Torture and Democracy, “Introduction” (Princeton: 2007)

Tues., Jan. 28
  • Small-group discussion on the definition, ethics and utility of torture

Thinking About Social Movements, Rebellion, Resistance, and Revolution

Thurs., Jan. 30
  • McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements, Introduction (Cambridge: 1996)
  • Goodwin and Jasper, Rethinking Social Movements, Ch. 1 (Rowman & Littlefield: 2003)
Tues., Feb. 4
- Introduction to Game Theory and its Critics (in class)
- Acting out principles of game theory (in class)

Thurs., Feb. 6

Tues., Feb. 11
- Jonah Lehrer, “Weak Ties, Twitter, and Revolution”
- Richard A. Lindsey, “What the Arab Spring Tells Us About the Future of Social Media in Revolutionary Movements”

Thurs., Feb. 13

Tues., Feb. 18  **MIDTERM EXAM**

Overview of Major Revolutions: France, Russia, China

Thurs., Feb. 20

Tues., Feb. 25
- FILM excerpts “October” (in class)

Thurs., Feb. 27
- FILM: “China in Revolution (1911-1949)” (in class)

Tues., March 4
- FILM: “China in Revolution (1911-1949)” (in class)
Thurs., March 6
- Farrokh Moshiri, Ch. 2 in Goldstone, Gurr and Moshiri, eds., *Revolutions of the Late Twentieth Century* (Westview: 1991)
- Theda Skocpol, “France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 18, 2 (1976)

**MARCH 10-14 SPRING BREAK**

Democratic Republic of Congo

Tues., March 18
- Prendergast, “A Light at the End of the Tunnel,” *Foreign Policy*, online Feb. 26, 2010
- “Congolese dare to hope for peace,” *The Guardian* online, Nov. 5, 2013
- Mwenda, “Don’t Save Congo,” *NY Times* Nov. 11, 2013

Thurs., March 20
- Dickinson, “How can we explain the rape epidemic in Congo?” *Foreign Policy* online, May 11, 2011
- FILM: “The Greatest Silence: Rape in the Congo” (in class)
- Small-group discussion on uses of film to document political violence

Peru

Tues., March 25
- FILM: “State of Fear” pt. 1 (in class)

Thurs., March 27
- FILM: “State of Fear” pt. 2 (in class)
- In-class debate on counter-insurgency techniques
The Arab Spring

Tues., April 1
  • Haas & Lesch, *The Arab Spring: Change and Resistance in the Middle East* (Westview: 2012), excerpts
  • Recent news items (TBA)

Thurs., April 3
  • The Project on Middle East Political Science, “Arab Uprisings: New Opportunities for Political Science” (POMEPS: 2012), excerpts
  • FILM excerpts: “Uprising” (in class)

Tues., April 8
  • Group work session (in class)

Thurs., April 10
  • Group work session (in class)

Tues., April 15
  • **Presentations of team-based policy briefs**

Thurs., April 17
  • **Presentations of team-based policy briefs**

**FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, April 22, 12:00-2:00 pm**