

ISS 2242: Political Violence and Power

Quest 2

I. General Information

Class Meetings

- Fall 2025
- Credits: 3
- Required 100% In-Person, no GTAs, 35 residential students
- MWF 1:55 PM – 2:45 PM (Period 7)
- CSE 457 (fourth floor)

Instructor

- Prof. William Whitham
- wwitham@ufl.edu
- CSE 552 (fifth floor)
- Office hours: F 2:45-4:45 (sign up [here](#)) and by appointment
- Office phone: 352-294-3416

Course Description

Though terrorism feels like an urgent threat to western societies today (just look at your news feed), the use of violence to achieve political goals is old and universal in world history. But what is political violence? Why can defining “terrorism” be so difficult and morally charged? What sort of person becomes a terrorist and why? How do terrorists maintain organizations, exploit media attention, and (in some cases) come to power? How can societies and states prevent political violence?

In this course, we’ll survey the history of political violence to better understand our present. We’ll explore fin-de-siècle anarchism, Soviet communism, German Nazism, anti-colonial struggles, jihadism, violent extremist groups on the far left and on the far right, and more. Students will read original historical documents, familiarize themselves with social-scientific analysis, and study people they may find strange, dangerous, or evil. Above all, students will learn about the nature of power in modern times.

Quest and General Education Credit

- Quest 2

- Social & Behavioral Sciences
- Writing Requirement (WR) 2000 words

This course accomplishes the Quest and General Education objectives of the subject areas listed above. A minimum grade of C is required for Quest and General Education credit. Courses intended to satisfy Quest and General Education requirements cannot be taken S-U.

The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.

Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

Required Readings and Works

There are no required textbooks for purchase for our class. All readings will be made available in electronic format and/or as physical library reserves.

For writing guides, students are encouraged to consult:

- George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language," *Horizon*, April 1946, [link](#)
- Orwell, "Why I Write," *Gangrel*, summer 1946, [link](#)

For best practices regarding grammar, punctuation, proper citation of sources, formatting, how to write (and not to write) in the social sciences, and much more, see:

- *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 18th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2024)
- William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*, 4th edition (Upper Saddle River: Pearson, 2000)
- Purdue Online Writing Lab ([OWL](#))
- Michael Billig, *Learn to Write Badly: How to Succeed in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

Students are encouraged to discuss and workshop their written assignments at the [Writing Studio](#).

Course Objectives

- Define and apply key terms and concepts of sociological research, analyze historical case studies, weigh the relative value of different social-scientific methodologies and theories, and reflect on the ethical conundrums posed in political life.

- Form a nuanced, defensible understanding of the terrorism category and of the broader phenomenon of political violence.
- Identify, describe, explain, and offer thoughtful proposed solutions at the level of policy, political action, or human praxis to problems of political violence. Do so by drawing on and assimilating a range of genres (testimonies, journalism, scholarship), social-scientific frameworks, and normative perspectives.
- Communicate concisely, clearly, and cogently in writing and in discussion when dealing with fundamentally contested and controversial topics related to political violence. Advance non-obvious, specific, arguable, and original claims supported by social-scientific analysis, qualitative and quantitative evidence, and sound logic in terms accessible to an educated public.
- Thoughtfully reflect on how students, as community and family members, citizens, and future leaders, can best understand and most effectively confront problems of political violence faced in contemporary societies. Understand key rights, responsibilities, and ethical dilemmas of modern political life, above all in free societies.

II. Graded Work

Description of Graded Work

1. Active Participation and Attendance: 25%

a. Active Participation: 20%

- i. To receive full credit, you must be ready to discuss all of week's assigned texts by the start of the first class of the week, listen actively and respectfully to your classmates, and offer thoughtful points and questions for discussion. You will never be penalized for asking "dumb" questions, venturing unpopular points of view, or disagreeing civilly.
- ii. For grading standards, see Participation Rubric below. (R)

b. Attendance: 5%

- i. On-time class attendance is required for this component of the course grade. Class attendance will be recorded daily from the first full week of class. You may have two unexcused absences without any penalty. Starting with the third unexcused absence, each unexcused absence reduces your attendance grade by a full letter grade: an A- becomes a B-, a B+ a C+, and so on.
- ii. After due warning, an instructor can prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a failing grade for excessive absences. Excessive absences (10 or more), excused or not, are likely to result in failure of the course.
- iii. Per university policy, acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to engage in class include illness; Title IX-related situations; serious accidents or emergencies affecting the student, their roommates, or their family; special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences); military obligation; severe weather conditions that prevent class participation; religious holidays; participation in official university activities (e.g., music performances, athletic competition, debate); and court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena). Other reasons (e.g., a job interview or club activity) may be deemed acceptable if approved by the instructor.
- iv. For all planned absences, a student in a situation that allows an excused absence from a class must inform the instructor as early as possible prior to the class. For all unplanned absences because of accidents or emergency situations, students should contact their instructor as soon as conditions permit.

2. Experiential Learning Component – Interview Report: 20%

- i. Outside of the classroom, you will conduct a 30-minute, in-person interview with a friend (not a member of our class) or family member. You will ask them about their memories and interpretations of an episode of terrorism or political violence that they learned about from one or more forms of media (word of mouth, newspaper, periodical, book, television, radio, film, social media). The episode is up to you/your interviewee.
- ii. Using quotations and paraphrases from your interview, prepare a 500-word report that answers these questions:
 1. What did your interviewee remember about the episode? Do they remember specific details (which ones)? How did they witness the episode or learn about it (word of mouth, newspaper, periodical, book, television, radio, film, social media, or something else)? How did it make them feel? How did they understand why the episode happened? What were its consequences (if any), in their lives or in the lives of people they knew? Looking back, what do they think or know now that they did not think or know then? How, if at all, do they view the event differently in retrospect?
 2. How did your interviewee define political violence or terrorism? Is their definition coherent? Why or why not?
 3. Considering our class discussions and course readings thus far, how do your interviewee's responses illuminate something interesting, counterintuitive, or important about political violence?
- iii. The Interview Report will be due during Week 6. Upload your assignment to Canvas by 11:59 P.M. on Friday, 9/26. Written feedback will be provided.
- iv. The Interview Report should be clearly organized, demonstrate critical thinking, and integrate ideas and themes from our course.
- v. For grading standards, see Writing Rubric below. (R)

3. Reflection Papers: 15%

- a. You will prepare 3 short Reflection Papers of 200 words each. Each Reflection Paper will ask you to meditate, in response to a prompt posed by the instructor, on how class discussions and course readings have changed, refined, or challenged your understanding of politics, violence, power, ethics, the social sciences, and/or the contemporary world.
- b. Reflection Papers will be due during Weeks 4, 9, and 13 to Canvas by Fridays at 11:59 P.M. Written feedback will be provided.
- c. To earn full credit, Reflection Papers must meet the word count, state a specific, interesting, and original (your own) claim in response to the prompt, and refer to

specific discussions and readings (evidence). They should be clearly organized, demonstrate critical thinking, and integrate ideas and themes from our course.

- d. For grading standards, see Writing Rubric below. (R)

4. Midterm Examination: 20%

- a. There will be an in-class Midterm Examination at the start of Week 8, on Monday, 10/6, that will cover all class readings and discussions until that day. The Examination will consist of identification, true/false, multiple-choice, short-answer, and/or free-response questions. Written feedback will be provided on short answers and free responses.
- b. For grading standards, see Examination Rubric: Essays and Short Answers below. (R)

5. Policy Memorandum: 20%

- a. You will prepare a Policy Memorandum of 1,200 words (minimum) that analyzes a problem of political violence in the contemporary world and proposes one or more possible solutions to it. You will write in response to a prompt provided by the instructor.
- b. In Week 14, you will submit a first, ungraded draft of your Memorandum by 11:59 P.M. on Friday, 11/21. I will provide written comments on your organization, clarity, and coherence. You will then revise and submit your Memo for a grade during Week 15 by 11:59 P.M. on Wednesday, 12/3.
- c. To earn full credit, Policy Memoranda must meet the word count, state a specific, interesting, and original (your own) claim in response to the prompt, and refer to specific discussions and readings (evidence). They should be clearly organized, demonstrate critical thinking, and integrate ideas and themes from our course.
- d. For grading standards, see Writing Rubric below. (R)

III. Annotated Weekly Schedule

The course has two parts. In PART I: AN ANALYTICAL TOOLBOX (Weeks 1-7), we'll familiarize ourselves with key concepts, frameworks, and modes of analysis in the social sciences and in the history of social and political thought. These tools will help us to explore terrorism as well as broader issues of politics, violence, power, and more. In PART II: CASE STUDIES (Weeks 8-15), we'll use our tools to investigate specific movements, groups, and regimes that relied or rely on political violence.

There is no reading for Week 1 (Friday 8/22). During Weeks 2-15, approximately 55 pages of reading, on average, are assigned per week. Please be aware that some texts require more time and concentration than others. Be sure to budget your time to ensure that you can complete all readings for the weeks when assignments are also due or when Midterm Examination (Week 8) is scheduled.

PART I – AN ANALYTICAL TOOLBOX

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION

Friday 8/22

We will begin with a general introduction of course goals, themes, and expectations. After going over the syllabus, we will discuss what we understand by “political violence” and “terrorism.”

Readings: none

WEEK 2: THE LIMITS OF SOCIAL INQUIRY AND THE HAZARDS OF POLITICAL LIFE

Monday 8/25, Wednesday 8/27, Friday 8/29

We will study the lectures that Max Weber (1864-1920), the outstanding German sociologist of his era, delivered to his students. In “Science [Wissenschaft]¹ as a Vocation” (1917), Weber discusses the nature of modern academic scholarship, what scientific inquiry can tell us and not tell us about how to live our lives, and the proper role of the teacher. In “Politics as a Vocation” (1919), Weber defines key political categories, meditates on the essentially tragic nature of collective life, and offers advice about how to balance deep ethical conviction with concern for the real-world consequences of human action. In light of Weber’s lectures, how might we reconsider our roles as students and teachers? How should we, in general, approach the social-scientific study of politics and of violence?

Readings (38 pages):

è Read by Monday, 8/25

1. Max Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 1917, in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, eds. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (London: Routledge, 2009 [orig. New York: Oxford University Press, 1946]), pp. 134-156 (start at “This much I deem necessary ...”).

è Read by Wednesday, 8/27

2. Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” 1919, in *From Max Weber*, pp. 77-80 (stop at “The administrative staff, which externally represents ...”), 115-128 (start at “Well, first of all ...”).

¹ The German word *Wissenschaft* is usually translated as “science” but has a broader meaning. It covers the natural and physical sciences, the social sciences, history, and generally all systematic inquiry. A literal, ungainly translation is “knowledge-ship.”

WEEK 3: CONCEPTS AND HISTORY

[No class on Monday 9/1], Wednesday 9/3, Friday 9/5

What is political violence? What are some of the different forms it has taken across modern history? What is “terrorism” and what differentiates it from other forms of political violence? Can we arrive at a defensible definition of it? Why or why not?

Readings (84 pages):

è Read by Wednesday, 9/3

1. Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 3rd edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), pp. 1-44.

è Read by Friday, 9/5

2. Stathis N. Kalyvas, “The Landscape of Political Violence,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Terrorism*, eds. Erica Chenoweth, Richard English, Andreas Gofas, and Stathis N. Kalyvas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 11-33.
3. Ben Saul, “Defining Terrorism: A Conceptual Minefield,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Terrorism*, pp. 34-49.

WEEK 4: STRATEGY AND PSCHOLOGY

Monday 9/8, Wednesday 9/10, Friday 9/12

Under what circumstances could political violence be possibly thinkable or strategic? Is terrorism “rational” or “irrational”? What, if anything, does it have to do with psychopathology? How, in light of these findings, should publics and policymakers understand – or not understand – the risks posed by terrorism?

Readings (60 pages):

è Read by Monday, 9/8

1. Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, pp. 242-268.

è Read by Wednesday, 9/10

2. Max Abrahms, “The Strategic Model of Terrorism Revisited,” in *Oxford Handbook of Terrorism*, pp. 445-460.

è Read by Friday, 9/12

3. John G. Horgan, “Psychological Approaches to the Study of Terrorism,” in *Oxford Handbook of Terrorism*, pp. 207-223.

Assignments:

Reflection Paper #1

Due to Canvas by 11:59 P.M. on Friday, 9/12

WEEK 5: ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY
Monday 9/15, Wednesday 9/17, Friday 9/19

In what ways are terrorist groups “ordinary” organizations with dynamics similar to those of everyday businesses and bureaucracies? What are the specific security tradeoffs that terrorists face? Considering the principal-agent problem, how can governments fight terrorism more effectively?

Readings (62 pages):

è Read by Monday, 9/15

1. Jacob N. Shapiro, *The Terrorist's Dilemma: Managing Violent Covert Organizations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), pp. 1-25.

è Read by Wednesday, 9/17

2. Shapiro, *Dilemma*, pp. 26-62.

WEEK 6: COUNTER-TERRORISM
Monday 9/22, Wednesday 9/24, Friday 9/26

What counterterrorism principles and strategies seem most promising? How do we choose among competing policies given our limited knowledge and available resources? What are the advantages and disadvantages of particular policy responses? How can we cultivate a clear-eyed, dispassionate, and useful understanding of political violence in today's world?

Readings (51 pages):

è Read by Monday, 9/22

1. Daniel Byman, "Counterterrorism Strategies," in *Oxford Handbook of Terrorism*, pp. 623-639.

è Read by Wednesday, 9/24

2. Juliette Bird, "Terrorism and Counterterrorism: A Policy Perspective," in *Oxford Handbook of Terrorism*, pp. 640-658.

è Read by Friday, 10/3

3. Robert Malley and Jon Finer, "The Long Shadow of 9/11: How Counterterrorism Warps U.S. Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2018, [link](#) (about 15 pp.).

Assignments:

Experiential Learning Component – Interview Report

Due to Canvas by 11:59 P.M. on Friday, 9/26

WEEK 7: ETHICS

Monday 9/29, Wednesday 10/1, Friday 10/3

What may make terrorism not merely thinkable but, for practitioners, supporters, or sympathizers, justifiable or even virtuous? Under which circumstances, and according to which criteria, is terrorism “moral” or “immoral”? Who decides? Is it simply the case that “one person’s terrorist is another person’s freedom fighter,” as the cliché goes? How can the tools of political and moral philosophy help us to arrive at a more sophisticated understanding of this fraught issue?

Readings (31 pages):

è Read by Monday, 9/29

1. Virginia Held, “The Moral Dimensions of Terrorism,” in *Oxford Handbook of Terrorism*, pp. 69-86.

è Read by Wednesday, 10/1

1. Quassim Cassam, “Can Terrorism Ever Be Morally Justified?,” *Society* 61 (2024), pp. 176-188.

Some time on Friday, 10/3 will be devoted to review for the Midterm Examination, which will be held in class on Monday, 10/6.

PART II: CASE STUDIES

In Part II, you will encounter a variety of radical political movements that, despite a dizzying variety of principles and organizational types, all aimed at overthrowing existing systems of rule and, in some cases, succeeded in establishing a new form of government. As you read, recall the concepts and frameworks we've learned in Part I and address these questions:

1. *Historical origins and motivation.*
 - a. Under what circumstances did the movement (or group or regime) arise?
 - b. What were its ostensible grievances and rationales?
2. *Aims and structure.* What were the movement's
 - a. Ideology and ultimate aims,
 - b. Strategy and technology,
 - c. Organizational structure,
 - d. Demographics (its membership base), and
 - e. Relationships with similar, allied, or rival movements?
3. *Wider significance.*
 - a. How and why was the movement successful/unsuccessful?
 - b. What were its relative strengths? Its weaknesses? Its paradoxes?
 - c. How does studying it add to or challenge what we have learned so far?
 - d. What, if anything, does it tell us about analogous groups today?

WEEK 8: ANARCHISM

Monday 10/6, Wednesday 10/8, Friday 10/10

Across Europe, Russia, and America, anarchists were the premier terrorists of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, assassinating seven heads of state or government in 1894-1912 and attracting enormous interest from politicians, police, and reading publics despite their small number. How can we understand the rise and fall of this sensational movement? How can we explain the apparent mismatch—if there is one—between the amoral, calculating “Catechism” of Sergei Nechaev (1847-1882), an early inspiration and prototype for many later revolutionaries, and the idealistic “Appeal” of Petr Kropotkin (1842-1921), the most famous anarchist thinker of his era?

Readings (66 pages):

è Read by Wednesday, 10/8

1. Richard Bach Jensen, “Daggers, Rifles, and Dynamite: Anarchist Terrorism in Nineteenth-Century Europe,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16/1 (2004), pp. 116-153.

è Read by Friday, 10/10

2. Sergei Nechaev (with Mikhail Bakunin?), “Catechism of a Revolutionary,” 1869, in Philip Pomper, “Bakunin, Nechaev, and the ‘Catechism of a Revolutionary’: The Case for Joint Authorship,” *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 10/4 (Winter 1976), pp. 546-550.
3. Pëtr Kropotkin, “An Appeal to the Young,” 1880, in *Kropotkin’s Revolutionary Pamphlets*, ed. Roger N. Baldwin (New York: Dover Publications, 1970), pp. 260-282.

Assignments:

The Midterm Examination will be held in class on Monday, 10/6.

WEEK 9: SOVIET COMMUNISM

Monday 10/13, Wednesday 10/15, [no class on Friday 10/17]

The Soviet Union, improbably established by the Bolsheviks in Russia during chaotic years of imperial war, civil conflict, and revolution in 1917-1923, was committed, in some ways like anarchism, to a future without private property, inequality, unhappiness, or social disharmony, to be achieved through a protracted historical process of terror and expropriation of private property (collectivization). Yet Bolshevik rule was, unlike anarchism, an enduring institutional form (a state) committed to realizing this utopia—not a network of terrorists but a terrorist regime, indebted to Marxist principles. How did Bolshevik terror against “class enemies” function during the Russian civil war (c. 1917-1922/23)? In light of the work of Jan Gross, how is “totalitarianism” in the 1930s best understood?

Readings (69 pages):

è Read by Monday, 10/13

1. Lennard D. Gerson, *The Secret Police in Lenin's Russia* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976), pp. 130-88.

è Read by Wednesday, 10/15

2. Jan T. Gross, “A Note on the Nature of Soviet Totalitarianism,” *Soviet Studies* 34/3 (1982), pp. 367-76.

Assignments:

Reflection Paper #2

Due to Canvas by 11:59 P.M. on Friday, 10/17

WEEK 10: FASCISM AND NAZISM
Monday 10/20, Wednesday 10/22, Friday 10/24

Italian Fascism and German Nazism developed in parallel with Soviet communism and to some extent mirrored it, though the movements were mutually hostile and distinct. What aims, practices, and dynamics set Fascism and Nazism apart from communism and from one another? In what sense were they “revolutionary” and “counterrevolutionary,” left-wing and right-wing—if such labels obtain? How was the Hitler regime, an administrative anarchy, able to carry out mass terror and the genocide of European Jewry? How does our study of communist, Fascist, and Nazi state terror enrich or complicate our understanding of non- or sub-state terrorism?

Readings (70 pages):

è Read by Monday, 10/20

1. John Pollard, *The Fascist Experience in Italy* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 18-54.

è Read by Wednesday, 10/22

3. Giovanni Gentile, “Manifesto of the Fascist Intellectuals,” 1925, in Brian Copenhaver and Rebecca Copenhaver (eds.), *From Kant to Croce: Modern Philosophy in Italy 1800-1950* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2012), pp. 706-12.
4. National Socialist propaganda excerpts: Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg (eds.), *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Berkeley and Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 124-26 (German Workers’ Party (DAP), “The Twenty-Five Points,” 1920), 130-33 (Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 1927), 137-38 (Joseph Goebbels, “Why Are We Enemies of the Jews?”, 1930), 142 (“German Farmer You Belong to Hitler! Why?”).

è Read by Friday, 10/22

5. Christopher R. Browning, *The Path to Genocide: Essays on Launching the Final Solution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 169-84.

WEEK 11: THE ZIONIST REVOLT
Monday 10/27, Wednesday 10/29, Friday 10/31

The creation of the State of Israel, which was preceded by armed Jewish paramilitary campaigns against the British authorities in Mandate Palestine, was an early, dramatic episode of “national liberation in the wake of the Second World War. How did the members of the Irgun and Lehi understand the Zionist project? Was their strategy in fighting the British and making use of global public opinion? In what ways was their revolt successful or not?

Readings (75 pages):

è Read by Monday, 10/27

1. Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State* (1896), excerpts (about 4 pp.).
2. Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky, “The Iron Wall” and “The Ethics of the Iron Wall,” November 1923, [link](#) (about 5 pp.).

è Read by Wednesday, 10/29

3. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, pp. 45-55.
4. Menachem Begin, *The Revolt: Story of the Irgun*, trans. Samuel Katz (Tel-Aviv: Hadar Publishing Co., 1964), pp. 26-71, 372-80.

WEEK 12: DECOLONIZATION IN ALGERIA

Monday 11/3, Wednesday 11/5, [no class on Friday 11/7 (instructor at a conference)]

Algeria's war of independence (1954-1962) was violent and protracted, involving urban bombings and rural guerrilla warfare against French civilian colonists and military units, torture and forced confessions by the French, and appeals to world opinion. This week, we will study *The Battle of Algiers* (1966, dir. Gillo Pontecorvo), which devotes particular attention to the torture, bombings, and propaganda campaigns of 1957. What does the film reveal (or not reveal) about the nature of terrorism, (counter)insurgency, and national liberation?

Readings (36 pages):

è Read by Monday, 11/3

1. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, pp. 55-64.

è Read by Wednesday, 11/5

2. Nicholas Harrison, "An Interview with Saadi Yacef," *Interventions* 9/3 (2007), pp. 405-13.
3. Jim Dingeman, "'You Cannot Continually Inflict': An Interview with Saadi Yacef," *Framework* 49/2 (Fall 2008), pp. 48-64.

WEEK 13: RADICAL ISLAMISM
Monday 11/10, Wednesday 11/12, Friday 11/14

Islamic revolutionaries, whether loosely organized in jihadi networks or coming to power in genuine states, have had an outsize impact in late twentieth and early twenty-first century history. Why and how? What is specifically “Islamic” about their beliefs and tactics and what is not? What unites and what divides these varied groups across the Middle East and the world? Particular attention will be placed on the evolution of Palestinian militancy from secular nationalism to religious extremism.

Readings (58 pages):

è Read by Monday, 11/10

1. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, pp. 65-72, 80-82, 90-100, 154-72.

è Read by Wednesday, 11/12

2. Sayyid Qutb, “Signposts along the Road” and “In the Shade of the Qur’an,” in Roxanne L. Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman (eds.), *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to Bin Laden*, pp. 136-52.

è Read by Friday, 11/14

3. “The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas),” 1988, excerpts (about 8 pp.).

Assignments:

Reflection Paper #3

Due to Canvas by 11:59 P.M. on Friday, 11/14

WEEK 14: THE AMERICAN EXTREMIST RIGHT

Monday 11/17, Wednesday 11/19, Friday 11/21

Domestic right-wing extremism has been a recurring feature of American history. How have violent Christian identitarians, white nationalists, and philo-fascists organized, propagandized, and carried out attacks? What risks do they pose to the country's civil fabric? What law enforcement, policy, and political strategies have mitigated these risks?

Readings (57 pages):

è Read by Monday, 11/17

1. David C. Rapoport, "Before the Bombs There Were the Mobs: American Experiences with Terror," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20:2 (2008), pp. 167-194.
2. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, pp. 107-127.

è Read by Wednesday, 11/19

3. Louis Beam, "Leaderless Resistance," 1983, [link](#) (about 7 pp.).

è Read by Friday, 11/21

4. Timothy McVeigh, "An Essay on Hypocrisy," 1998, [link](#) (about 1 p.).

Assignments:

Policy Memorandum – First (Ungraded) Draft

Due to Canvas by 11:59 P.M. on Friday, 11/21

NO CLASS next week (Monday 11/24 – Friday 11/28) – Happy Thanksgiving!

WEEK 15: NON-VIOLENCE?

Monday 12/1, Wednesday 12/3

What are the alternatives to political violence? How, according to King, should we relate to unjust or imperfect domestic institutions? Why is non-violence potentially such a powerful political and moral weapon? Why, in his view, should we be skeptical of social movements that indulge in violence? In what ways might our conventional understandings of King or of non-violence be mistaken?

Readings (19 pages):

è Read by Monday, 12/1

1. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," 1963, [link](#) (about 9 pp.).

è Read by Wednesday, 12/3

1. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," 1960, [link](#) (about 4 pp.).
2. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Where Do We Go From Here," 1967, [link](#) (about 6 pp.).

Assignments:

Policy Memorandum – Final (Graded) Draft

Due to Canvas by 11:59 P.M. on Wednesday, 12/3

IV. Grading Scale and Rubrics

Grading Scale

For information on UF's grading policies for assigning grade points, see [here](#).

A	94 - 100%		C	74 - 76%
A-	90 - 93%		C-	70 - 73%
B+	87 - 89%		D+	67 - 69%
B	84 - 86%		D	64 - 66%
B-	80 - 83%		D-	60 - 63%
C+	77 - 79%		E	<60

Grading Rubrics

Participation Rubric

A (90-100%)	Typically comes to class with pre-prepared questions about the readings. Engages others about ideas, respects the opinions of others and consistently elevates the level of discussion.
B (80-89%)	Does not always come to class with pre-prepared questions about the reading. Waits passively for others to raise interesting issues. Some in this category, while courteous and articulate, do not adequately listen to other participants or relate their comments to the direction of the conversation.
C (70-79%)	Attends regularly but typically is an infrequent or unwilling participant in discussion. Is only adequately prepared for discussion.
D (60-69%)	Fails to attend class regularly and is inadequately prepared for discussion. Is an unwilling participant in discussion.
E (<60%)	Attends class infrequently and is wholly unprepared for discussion. Refuses to participate in discussion.

Examination Rubric: Essays and Short Answers

	Completeness	Analysis	Evidence	Writing
A (90-100%)	Shows a thorough understanding of the question. Addresses all aspects of the question completely.	Analyses, evaluates, compares and/or contrasts issues and events with depth.	Incorporates pertinent and detailed information from both class discussions and assigned readings.	Presents all information clearly and concisely, in an organized manner.
B (80-89%)	Presents a general understanding of the question. Completely addresses most aspects of the question or address all aspects incompletely.	Analyses or evaluates issues and events, but not in any depth.	Includes relevant facts, examples and details but does not support all aspects of the task evenly.	Presents information fairly and evenly and may have minor organization problems.
C (70-79%)	Shows a limited understanding of the question. Does not address most aspects of the question.	Lacks analysis or evaluation of the issues and events beyond stating accurate, relevant facts.	Includes relevant facts, examples and details, but omits concrete examples, includes inaccurate information and/or does not support all aspects of the task.	Lacks focus, somewhat interfering with comprehension.
D (60-69%)	Fails fully to answer the specific central question.	Lacks analysis or evaluation of the issues and events beyond stating vague, irrelevant, and/or inaccurate facts.	Does not incorporate information from pertinent class discussion and/or assigned readings.	Organizational problems prevent comprehension.
E (<60%)	Does not answer the specific central question.	Lacks analysis or evaluation of the issues and events.	Does not adduce any evidence.	Incomprehensible organization and prose.

Writing Rubric

	Thesis and Argumentation	Use of Sources	Organization	Grammar, mechanics and style
A (90-100%)	Thesis is clear, specific, and presents a thoughtful, critical, engaging, and creative interpretation. Argument fully supports the thesis both logically and thoroughly.	Primary (and secondary texts, if required) are well incorporated, utilized, and contextualized throughout.	Clear organization. Introduction provides adequate background information and ends with a thesis. Details are in logical order. Conclusion is strong and states the point of the paper.	No errors.
B (80-89%)	Thesis is clear and specific, but not as critical or original. Shows insight and attention to the text under consideration. May have gaps in argument's logic.	Primary (and secondary texts, if required) are incorporated but not contextualized significantly.	Clear organization. Introduction clearly states thesis, but does not provide as much background information. Details are in logical order, but may be more difficult to follow. Conclusion is recognizable and ties up almost all loose ends.	A few errors.
C (70-79%)	Thesis is present but not clear or specific, demonstrating a lack of critical engagement to the text. Argument is weak, missing important details or making logical leaps with little support.	Primary (and secondary texts, if required) are mostly incorporated but are not properly contextualized.	Significant lapses in organization. Introduction states thesis but does not adequately provide background information. Some details not in logical or expected order that results in a distracting read. Conclusion is recognizable but does not tie up all loose ends.	Some errors.
D (60-69%)	Thesis is vague and/or confused. Demonstrates a failure to understand the text. Argument lacks any logical flow and does not utilize any source material.	Primary and/or secondary texts are almost wholly absent.	Poor, hard-to-follow organization. There is no clear introduction of the main topic or thesis. There is no clear conclusion, and the paper just ends. Little or no employment of logical body paragraphs.	Many errors.
E (<60%)	There is neither a thesis nor any argument.	Primary and/or secondary texts are wholly absent.	The paper is wholly disorganized, lacking an introduction, conclusion or any logical coherence.	Scores of errors.

V. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the Quest the General Education student learning outcomes for Social and Behavioral Sciences (S).

Social and Behavioral Sciences (S) Social and behavioral science courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and underlying theory or methodologies used in the social and behavioral sciences. Students will learn to identify, describe and explain social institutions, structures or processes. These courses emphasize the effective application of accepted problem-solving techniques. Students will apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions, as well as the evaluation of opinions, outcomes or human behavior. Students are expected to assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.

Content: *Demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the subject area. Identify, describe, and explain key themes, principles, and terminology; the history, theory and/or methodologies used; and social institutions, structures and processes.*

- Define and apply key terms and concepts of sociological research, analyze historical case studies, weigh the relative value of different social-scientific methodologies and theories, and reflect on the ethical conundrums posed in political life (Quest 2, S). **Assessments:** Active Class Discussion, Interview Report, Reflection Papers, Midterm Examination, Policy Memorandum
- Form a nuanced, defensible understanding of the terrorism category and of the broader phenomenon of political violence (Quest 2, S). **Assessments:** Active Class Discussion, Interview Report, Reflection Papers, Midterm Examination, Policy Memorandum

Critical Thinking: *Carefully and logically analyze information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within the subject area. Apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis effectively to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions. Assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.*

- Identify, describe, explain, and offer thoughtful proposed solutions at the level of policy, political action, or human praxis to problems of political violence. Do so by drawing on and assimilating a range of genres (testimonies, journalism, scholarship), social-scientific frameworks, and normative perspectives (Quest 2, S). **Assessments:** Active Class Discussion, Interview Report, Midterm Examination, Policy Memorandum

Communication: *Clearly and effectively communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning in written or oral forms appropriate to the subject area.*

- Communicate concisely, clearly, and cogently in writing and in discussion when dealing with fundamentally contested and controversial topics related to political violence. Advance non-obvious, specific, arguable, and original claims supported by social-scientific analysis, qualitative and quantitative evidence, and sound logic in terms accessible to an educated public (Quest 2, S). **Assessments:** Active Class Discussion, Interview Report, Policy Memorandum

Connection: *Students connect course content with meaningful critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.*

- Thoughtfully reflect on how students, as community and family members, citizens, and future leaders, can best understand and most effectively confront problems of political violence faced in contemporary societies. Understand key rights, responsibilities, and ethical dilemmas of modern political life, above all in free societies (Quest 2). **Assessment:** Active Class Discussion, Reflection Papers

VI. Quest Learning Experiences

1. Details of Experiential Learning Component

As discussed under “II. Graded Work” above, the Interview Report asks students to explore the personal testimony and memories of political violence, as gleaned from media consumption, with a friend or family members. Students will practice interview skills and seeing things from the perspectives of other people. They will then analyze the perspectives and narratives they have encountered in a formal written assignment.

2. Details of Self-Reflection Component

Self-reflection is explicit in the Reflection Papers and is built into class discussions, the Experiential Learning Component (Interview Report), and the Policy Memorandum. This is indicated in the description of graded work section of this syllabus with an (R). Students will be continuously asked to reflect on how course activities and readings change their perspective on salient themes (politics, violence, power, ethics, social inquiry) and affect their view of themselves in the contemporary world.

VII. Required Policies

All up-to-date academic policies and resources can be found [here](#). You will find information about requesting accommodations for disabilities and learning barriers, student evaluations (GatorEvals), the University's Honesty Policy and Honor Pledge, Health and Wellness Resources, the Writing Studio, and more.

Electronic Device Policy

Use of phones, tablets, and laptops is discouraged during class. You are encouraged to take notes by hand and to bring copies of the readings to class.