

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
NON-STATE VIOLENT ACTORS IN WORLD POLITICS
PS 481
Fall 2022
M W 1:30-2:50pm
206 David Kinley Hall
Credit: 3 hours

INSTRUCTOR

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Office Hours: M/W 3:00-4:00pm, or by appointment

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

What do ISIS, the Free Syrian Army, Sudan's Janjaweed, the Mexican Los Zetas Cartel, and Al-Qaeda have in common? All are non-state actors that employ violent methods to achieve their goals. This course will examine the emergence, organization, and life-cycles of violent non-state actors. The academic study of non-state violent actors (NSVAs) has blossomed in recent years, driven largely by the increasing prominence of these groups in world politics: some of the most pressing security concerns facing the world's governments today stem not from other states in the international system, but from non-state actors. This course explores the emerging bodies of literature that examine the development of these organizations, their political and military structures, their violent and non-violent activities, the alliances and rivalries they form with other non-state actors, and the processes by which they sometimes evolve into legitimate, non-violent political actors.

Prerequisites: Not intended for students with freshman class standing. Course intended for undergraduates only.

2. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the semester, students should:

1. Develop a working knowledge of NSVAs, including how they emerge and recruit, their organizational structures, their tactics and behavior, and their relationships with other global actors
2. Be able to apply theories discussed in class to specific cases/situations, identifying how well different theories perform in predicting actual NSVA behavior/etc.
3. Develop the ability to critique empirical scholarly writing at both a theoretical and empirical level, identifying strengths and weaknesses

3. COURSE MATERIALS

No required text books for this course. Electronic links to journal articles and all other course readings will be provided on the course Canvas website (<https://canvas.illinois.edu/>).

4. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Your course grade will be based on class participation, two writing assignments, and two exams.

1. Class Participation (15%): Class participation grades will be based upon regular attendance AND participation in class discussion. Your attendance at all scheduled classes is mandatory and essential for success in the course (see below for more on the attendance policy). Students are expected to make positive contributions to the class through comments and questions that build on, react to, challenge, or request specific clarifications on the readings and lectures. Active contribution to class discussion is essential to receive an A in participation.

2. Writing Assignment 1 - Reaction Paper (15%): During the first part of the semester, you will need to choose one assigned article from the reading list below and write a **1 page single-spaced** reaction paper discussing that reading. A reaction paper involves a critical analysis or critique of the chosen reading, focusing on the reading's theory, empirical analysis, or both. A reaction paper is NOT a summary of the reading's argument and findings. You can choose any reading assigned from WEEK 2 through WEEK 5, but your paper must be turned in BEFORE we discuss that reading in class. Therefore, whichever reading you choose, your response paper is due by 1:30pm on the day of class that your reading is assigned. More details on this assignment are provided on Canvas.

3. Exam 1 (25%): This exam is scheduled for **Wednesday, September 28th** during class. Make-up exams will be given only to students with medical or personal emergencies. If an emergency arises, you will need to contact me **before** the exam or you will receive zero credit. This exam will include a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions (approximately 1/3 multiple choice, 2/3 short answer). Short answers should be approximately 2-3 paragraphs in length, and students will be able to choose which questions they answer (for example, choose 4 out of 5 questions to answer). All test questions will be based on materials covered in readings or class discussions.

4. Writing Assignment 2 – Policy Briefing/Memo (20%): During the second half of the semester, you will write a **2-3 page single-spaced** policy briefing that applies research we have covered in class to a real-world NSVA (either past or present). A policy briefing paper involves building an argument for a policy-maker audience. You will use theories and evidence from course readings, as well as your own research on your chosen NSVA, to explain the behavior, structure, or level of success of your NSVA and provide a recommendation to policy-makers on how best to deal with the group. You will apply what you have learned from **at least two course readings** in this policy memo. You can choose any articles covered in class EXCEPT the one you already covered in Writing Assignment 1. This assignment will be due at 11:59pm on **Friday, December 2nd**. Further instructions will be provided on Canvas.

5. Exam 2 (25%): This exam is scheduled for **Wednesday, December 7th** during class. It is non-comprehensive. Make-up exams will be given only to students with medical or personal emergencies. If an emergency arises, you will need to contact me **before** the exam or you will receive zero credit. This exam will include a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions (approximately 1/3 multiple choice, 2/3 short answer). Short answers should be approximately 2-3 paragraphs in length, and students will be able to choose which questions they answer (for example, choose 4 out of 5 questions to answer). All test questions will be based on materials covered in readings or class discussions.

Workload: It is expected that students will spend, on average, 7-8 hours per week to complete the instructional activities of this course (including course meetings, readings, and assignments).

5. COURSE POLICIES & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

GRADES

The grading scale (in percentages) for the course is as follows:

| | |
|-------------|----|
| 99-100 | A+ |
| 93-98 | A |
| 90-92 | A- |
| 87-89 | B+ |
| 83-86 | B |
| 80-82 | B- |
| 77-79 | C+ |
| 73-76 | C |
| 70-72 | C- |
| 67-69 | D+ |
| 63-66 | D |
| 60-62 | D- |
| 59 or below | F |

Challenging a Grade: If you are dissatisfied with a grade you receive on an exam or writing assignment and would like to challenge that grade, you must submit a written memo to the instructor explaining why you think the grade is unfair within 48 hours of receiving the grade. Grade challenges will not be accepted after 48 hours, nor will they be accepted in person (i.e., they must be challenged in writing with a written justification for why the grade should be raised). The instructor will read the memo, re-read the assignment, and then assign a new grade. The instructor reserves the right to assign a lower grade. Please Note: appealing for a higher grade because of the level of effort you put into an assignment will not result in a higher grade. Your challenge memo should specifically explain why you think you fulfilled the requirements of the assignment better than is reflected in your current grade, using specific evidence from your original assignment. Challenges are allowed on exams and writing assignments only.

LATE POLICY

Students are expected to complete all assignments by the dates and times specified on the syllabus. If a student anticipates being unable to complete an assignment on time, the student must contact the instructor **before** the due date, but please note that an extension is not

guaranteed. Assignments handed in late and without an extension will be penalized one half-grade for each day (24 hours) they are late.

If a personal emergency prevents students from attending class regularly or handing in an assignment on time, they are encouraged to consult with the Student Assistance Center about obtaining a letter explaining their situation. Part 5 of Article 1 of the Student Code of Conduct explains the circumstances under which a letter of absence is appropriate.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance will be taken at class meetings, and students are required to attend class regularly. If you are unable to attend class because you are sick, have been asked to quarantine, are busy with a university-sponsored event, or due to a religious holiday, you must contact the instructor **before** class in order to receive an excused absence. If you are unable to attend a class meeting, please note that lecture notes will **not** be made available to you. It is recommended that you obtain notes from a classmate. (**Hint:** Make sure you have the contact information for at least one of your colleagues!) If there is material that you are struggling with, please ask clarifying questions in class. Also, feel free to meet with the instructor during office hours to talk through any issues. For students with childcare responsibilities who may need to bring a child with them to class: please contact the professor beforehand and we will come up with a plan to accommodate this as needed. All students are asked to help us create a welcoming environment, respectful of diversity, including diversity in parenting status.

CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY POLICY

You are welcome to use your laptops to take notes during class, although research shows that students tend to retain and comprehend information better when they take hand-written notes (<http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/news/releases/take-notes-by-hand-for-better-long-term-comprehension.html>). Cell phones should be silenced or turned off during class time.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The campus policy on emergency responses can be found here:

<https://police.illinois.edu/emergency-preparedness/run-hide-fight/>. A brief summary of the university recommendation is: follow your own instincts, and, as safe, run, hide and, as a last resort, fight (where applicable—depending on the nature of the emergency). A useful one-page summary can be found here: <https://police.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/syllabus-attachment.pdf>.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES & OTHER RESOURCES

To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the course instructor and the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES, you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call 333-4603, e-mail disability@illinois.edu or go to the [DRES website](#). If you are concerned you have a disability-related condition that is impacting your academic progress, there are academic screening appointments available on campus that can help diagnosis a previously undiagnosed disability by visiting the DRES website and selecting “Sign-Up for an Academic Screening” at the bottom of the page.

If you are interested in obtaining information to improve writing, study skills, time management or organization, the following campus resources are available to all students:

Writer's Workshop
Undergrad Library
217-333-8796

<http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop>

<http://disability.illinois.edu/strategies>

<http://www.counselingcenter.illinois.edu/self-help-brochures/>

Also, most college offices and academic deans provide academic skills support and assistance for academically related and personal problems. Links to the appropriate college contact can be found by going to this website and selecting your college or school: <http://illinois.edu/colleges/colleges.html>

If you are experiencing symptoms of anxiety or depression or are feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or in crisis, you can seek help through the following campus resources:

Counseling Center
206 Fred H. Turner Student Services Building
7:50 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday
Phone: 333-3704

McKinley Mental Health
313 McKinley Health Center
8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday
Phone: 333-2705

McKinley Health Education offers individual consultations for students interested in learning relaxation and other stress/time management skills, call 333-2714.

** above content on Accommodations taken from <http://disability.illinois.edu/academic-support/instructor-information/examples-disability-statements-syllabus>

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY AND REPORTING

The University of Illinois is committed to combating sexual misconduct. As such, you should know that faculty and staff members are required to report any instances of sexual misconduct—which also includes dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking—to the University's Title IX and Disability Office. What this means is that as your instructor, I am required to report any incidents of sexual misconduct that are directly reported to me, or of which I am somehow made aware. When a report is received, an individual with the Title IX and Disability Office reaches out to provide information about rights and options, including accommodations, support services, the campus disciplinary process, and law enforcement options.

There is an exception to this reporting requirement about which you should be aware. A list of the designated University employees who, as counselors, confidential advisors, and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality, can be found here: wecare.illinois.edu/resources/students/#confidential.

Other information about resources and reporting is available here: wecare.illinois.edu.

** Text from: <http://wecare.illinois.edu/faq/employees/>

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Unless noted otherwise, all assignments in this class are individual, and the work you turn in must be yours alone. When making use of external sources, it is required that students cite them completely. As described in the University of Illinois Student Code, the consequences of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty can include a zero (0) on the assignment, failure in the course, or dismissal from the university.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

It is the responsibility of each student to help make the classroom conducive to learning. Students should treat each other with respect during classroom discussion. If you disagree with a claim made by someone else during class discussion, you must find a way to express that disagreement in a constructive and impersonal fashion.

PREFERRED PRONOUNS

Please call me Prof. Prorok, Dr. Prorok, or, for short, Prof./Dr. P. My preferred pronouns are she/her/hers. In class, I will call you by the name that you use when introducing yourself to me. If you would like to share your preferred pronouns with me, please feel free to do so.

COVID POLICIES

For the most up-to-date policies, see: <https://covid19.illinois.edu/on-campus/on-campus-students/>. Following University policy, all students are required to engage in appropriate behavior to protect the health and safety of the community. Students are also required to follow the campus COVID-19 protocols. If you feel ill or are unable to come to class or complete class assignments due to issues related to COVID-19, including but not limited to testing positive yourself, feeling ill, caring for a family member with COVID-19, or having unexpected child-care obligations, you should contact your instructor immediately, and you are encouraged to copy your academic advisor.

COURSE SCHEDULE

| Topic/Date | Readings (Mon. listed first, Wed. after space) | Activities/Assignments |
|--|---|---|
| Week 1 (August 22-24) Introduction to Non-State Violent Actors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PS 481 Course Syllabus (read in full) - Jo, Hyeran et al. "Who is a Rebel? Typology and Rebel Groups in the Contemporary Middle East". Pg. 76 - first paragraph on pg. 79 ONLY. - Phillips, Brian. 2014. "What is a Terrorist Group? Conceptual Issues and Empirical Implications." <i>Terrorism and Political Violence</i>. - Carey, Sabine et al. 2012. "States, the Security Sector, and the Monopoly of Violence: A new database on pro-government militias" <i>Journal of Peace Research</i>. (focus on pg. 249-254) | |
| Week 2 (Aug 29-31) Participation and Recruitment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gurr, Ted Robert. 1970. <i>Why Men Rebel</i>, Selected chapter - Lichbach, MI. 1995. <i>The Rebel's Dilemma</i>. Selected Sections | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Due BEFORE class on any class meeting day from Week 2 - Week 5: Writing assignment 1 |
| Week 3 (Sept. 5-7) NO CLASS Sept 5 Due to Labor Day Participation and Recruitment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kalyvas, Stathis and Matthew Kocher. 2007. "How Free is Free Riding in Civil Wars? Violence, Insurgency, and the collective Action Problem." <i>World Politics</i>. - Humphreys, Macartan, and Jeremy M. Weinstein. 2008. "Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 52(2). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Due BEFORE class on any class meeting day from Week 2 - Week 5: Writing assignment 1 |
| Week 4 (Sept. 12-14) Participation and Recruitment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weinstein, Jeremy. 2005. "Resources and the Information Problem in Rebel Recruitment." <i>Journal of Conflict Resolution</i> - Oppenheim, Ben et al. 2015. "True Believers, Deserters, and Traitors: Who leaves insurgent groups and why." <i>Journal of Conflict Resolution</i>. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Due BEFORE class on any class meeting day from Week 2 - Week 5: Writing assignment 1 |

**Week 5 (Sept. 19-21)
Participation and
Recruitment**

- Ness, Cindy. 2007. *Female Terrorism and Militancy: Agency, Utility and Organization*. **SELECTED CHAPTER
- Krueger, Alan and Jitka Maleckova. “Does Poverty cause Terrorism? The economics and the education of suicide bombers.” *The New Republic*, June 2002.

- Thomas, Jakana and Kanisha Bond. 2015. “Women’s Participation in Violent Political Organizations.” *American Political Science Review*.

- **Due BEFORE class on any class meeting day from Week 2**
- **Week 5:** Writing assignment 1

**Week 6 (Sept. 26-28)
Exam Review/Exam**

- NO READINGS, Catch up and exam review

- **IN CLASS:** Exam review session Monday. Come with questions!
- **IN CLASS:** Midterm exam Wednesday, Sept. 28th

**Week 7 (Oct. 3-5)
Organization and
Governance of NSVAs**

- Weinstein, Jeremy. 2007. *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*. Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 5: Governance)

- Mampilly, Zachariah Cherian and Megan Stewart. 2021. “A Typology of Rebel Political Institutional Arrangements.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 65(1): 15-45.

**Week 8 (Oct. 10-12)
Organization and
Governance of NSVAs**

- Johnston, Patrick. 2008. “The Geography of Insurgent Organization and Its Consequences for Civil Wars: Evidence from Liberia and Sierra Leone.” *Security Studies* 17(1): 107–37.

- Staniland, Paul. 2014. *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse*. Chapter 2.

**Week 9 (Oct. 17-19)
Tactics of NSVAs**

- Kalyvas, S. N. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge University Press. (SELECTED CHAPTERS)

- **Due BY FRIDAY:** Provide the name of the NSVA you plan to

focus on for Writing Assignment
2 to Prof Prorok on Canvas.

- Fortna, Virginia Page et al. 2018. "Don't Bite the Hand that Feeds: Rebel Funding Sources and the Use of Terrorism in Civil Wars." *International Studies Quarterly*. 62: 782-794.

Week 10 (Oct. 24-26)

Tactics of NSVAs

- Jordan, Jenna. 2009. "When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation." *Security Studies*.

- Phillips, Brian. 2015. "How Does Leadership Decapitation Affect Violence? The Case of Drug Trafficking Organizations in Mexico" *Journal of Politics*.

Week 11 (Oct. 31-Nov. 2)

Tactics of NSVAs

- Heger, Lindsay. 2014. "Votes and Violence: Pursuing terrorism while navigating politics." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52(1).

- Matanock, Aila and Paul Staniland. 2018. "How and Why Armed Groups Participate in Elections." *Perspectives on Politics* 16(3).

Week 12 (Nov. 7-9)

**NSVAs' Relationships with
other Actors**

- Fjelde, Hanne, and Desirée Nilsson. 2012. "Rebels Against Rebels Explaining Violence Between Rebel Groups." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56(4): 604-28.

- Tokdemir, Efe, et al. 2021. "Rebel Rivalry and the Strategic Nature of Rebel Group Ideology and Demands." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 65(4): 729-758.

Week 13 (Nov. 14-16)

**NSVAs' Relationships with
Other Actors**

- Carter, David B. 2012. "A Blessing or a Curse? State Support for Terrorist Groups." *International Organization* 66(1):129-51.

- Montanaro, Domenico. 8/16/2021. "Biden's Choices In Afghanistan Were Complicated. So Is The Fallout He Faces." NPR.
<https://www.npr.org/2021/08/16/1027973837/bidens-choices-in-afghanistan-were-complicated-so-is-the-fallout-he-faces>

- Prorok, Alyssa. 2017. "The (In)compatibility of Peace and Justice? The International Criminal Court and Civil War Termination." *International Organization* 71(2): 213-243.

Week 14 (Nov. 21-23)
Fall Break, NO CLASS

- No Readings, Fall Break

Week 15 (Nov. 28-30)
Fragmentation of NSVAs

- Bakke, Kristin M., Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, and Lee JM Seymour. 2012. "A Plague of Initials: Fragmentation, Cohesion, and Infighting in Civil Wars." *Perspectives on Politics* 10(2): 265–83.

- Woldemariam, Michael H. 2014. "Battlefield Outcomes and Rebel Cohesion: Lessons from the Eritrean Independence War." *Terrorism and Political Violence*.

- Duursma, Allard and Feike Fliervoet. 2001. "Fueling Factionalism? The Impact of Peace Processes on Rebel Group Fragmentation in Civil Wars." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 65(4): 788-812.

- **Due Friday Dec. 2nd @ 11:59pm:** Writing Assignment 2

Week 16 (Dec. 5-7)
Exam Review/Exam

- NO READINGS, Catch up and exam review

- **IN CLASS:** Exam review session Monday, Dec. 5th. Come with questions!
- **IN CLASS:** Exam 2 Wednesday Dec. 7th.

