Political Violence in Comparative Perspective

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Course description: This course will examine the subject of political violence from a comparative perspective. The first half of the course will address theories of the incidence of low-scale political violence including everyday resistance, political protests, urban riots, and military coups. In the second half, we will turn to theories of the incidence, duration, and intensity of large-scale violence including state terror, genocide, and civil wars. We will also consider the similarities and differences between political violence and violence in the so-called “private” sphere, for example abuse in upscale marriages. The course will conclude with a discussion of the social as well as psychological consequences of large-scale political violence and the ways and means available to the international community to bring lasting political peace in such situations.

Readings: All reading materials for this class will either be available electronically through Blackboard or will be reserved at the library circulation desk. Materials that are also available in e-book format through Voyager have been denoted with an asterisk * sign. I keep the right to make changes to the syllabus, but you will be notified of any changes well in advance.

Requirements: You are expected to attend lectures every Tuesday and Thursday and keep up with the readings. Lectures will be interspersed with discussions so active and informed class participation is expected. If for some reason you miss a class, please contact me BEFORE the class. More than 2 unexcused absences might affect your class participation grade by half a letter grade. More than 5 accumulated absences will result in 0% for the class participation portion of your overall grade.

Participation in this class does not end in the classroom. At different points of time in the semester, I will be setting up discussion threads in Blackboard. Participation in these discussions will be mandatory. A post could be a question about the particular discussion thread or your reflections on the thread or your response to another post or anything else that is related to the thread. Any post is acceptable as long as it shows that you are
earnestly engaging with the subject of the thread, and equally importantly, that you are willing to give due consideration to viewpoints that are different from your own.

The assignments for the course will include two mid-semester examinations and one end-term examination. You also have the option of writing an original essay of 8-10 pages applying the concepts learned in the course. If you do choose to write the essay, you must submit a draft proposal of 2-3 pages before the Thanksgiving break. The essay will be due the last day of class. LATE ESSAYS WILL BE GIVEN A LOWER GRADE: one/third letter grade per day late. Example: An “A” paper two days late will drop to a “B+”.

**Academic Honesty:** A plagiarized paper will not receive any points. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course and sanctions determined by the University’s Academic Honesty board.

**Grading:**

Class Participation - 10%
Discussion Board – 10%
First Mid-Semester Exam – 20%
Second Mid-Semester Exam – 20%
End-Semester Exam – 40%

For students who take the essay option, the final grade will be calculated as follows:
Class Participation 10%, Discussion Board 10 %, First Mid-Semester Exam 15%, Second Mid-Semester Exam 15%, Essay 15 %, End-Semester Exam 35%.

**Classroom Etiquette:** You deserve a Professor who does not read his newspaper, listen to his I-pod, answer his cell-phone, use his laptop to access Facebook or otherwise demonstrate a lack of respect for you during class discussion and lectures. Your Professor deserves students who demonstrate the same level of respect.

**Course Calendar:**

**September 1:** Introduction

**Typology of Violence**

**September 6:**
Read:
*Stathis Kalyvas, The Logic of Violence in Civil War, Cambridge University Press, 2006, Ch. 1.*
*Kurt Schock, Unarmed Insurrections, 2005, 1-6, 13-16, 30-33.*
Everyday Resistance

September 8:
Read:

September 13:
Read:

Unarmed Insurrections

September 15:
Read:

September 20:
Read:
DingXin Zhao, *The Power of Tiananmen*, 2001, Ch. 6.

Urban Riots

September 22
Read:

Military Coups

September 27:
Read:
*Jimmy Kandeh, Coups from Below*, 2004, Introduction & Ch. 7.

State Terror

September 29:
Read:
October 4:
Read:
Thomas Wright, *State Terrorism in Latin America*, 2007, Ch. 4.

October 6: Review

October 13: First Mid-term Exam

Genocide

October 18:
Read:

October 20:
Read:

Reciprocal Extermination

October 25:
Read:

Civil War

October 27:
Read:

November 1:
Read:
Ethnic Violence

November 3:
Read:

Levels of Violence

November 8:
Read:

November 10:
Read:

Structural Violence

November 15:
Read:
Susan Weitzman, *Not to People Like Us: Hidden Abuse in Upscale Marriages*, 2000, Ch.7.

November 17: Review

November 22: Second Mid-term Exam

End of Violence

November 29:
Read:
December 1:
Read:

December 6:
Watch:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYURvl8WXFU
Read:

December 8:
Read:

December 13: Review