

Central European University
MA Course, Fall Semester 2017

POLS 5179

Terrorism: A Comparative Politics Perspective

Instructor

Prof. Dr. Matthijs Bogaards
Visiting Professor, Department of Political Science
Central European University
E-mail: Visbogaards@ceu.edu
Office: Political Science building, room 403b.

Classes

Mondays 15.30-17.10 (N15 202) and Thursdays 15.30-17.10 (N15 203)

Office hours

Mondays 13.30-15.30, Thursdays 11.00-13.00.

Credits

4 CEU credits, 8 ECTS credits.

Course description

While transnational terrorism dominates the headlines, the most common type of terrorist attack is domestic. This course introduces students to the Comparative Politics of terrorism. It conceptualizes terrorists and terrorist groups as actors whose actions should be understood within the context of a country's political system. This provides the key to our understanding of a range of fundamental questions that will be addressed throughout the semester: What is terrorism? How has terrorism changed? Who are these terrorists? What are the causes and origins of terrorism? Are democracies more vulnerable to terrorist attacks than dictatorships? How can democracies prevent or stop terrorism?

Course requirements

No prior knowledge is assumed. Students are expected to be present at all seminars and to come prepared. If you are unable to attend class, you should notify the instructor via e-mail prior to the session.

Assessment

- One position paper (25%)
- One individual presentation (25%)
- Active seminar participation (10%)
- Research paper (40%)

For week 2, marked as “debate” in the syllabus, you are asked to write a position paper of 1000 words (everything included). In this paper, you summarize and critically engage with the arguments and evidence in the reading for that week, concluding with your own evaluation. In addition to the core reading, the position paper for week 2 should also cover at least one of the additional readings listed in the syllabus. The position paper is due the day before class that week, at midnight.

The presentation is an individual presentation that should last not more than 15 minutes. It is assessed using the criteria found at the end of this syllabus. Presentations are normally scheduled for the Thursday session. The choice of topic should be done in consultation with the instructor.

The final paper is an individual, original, research paper on a particular aspect of terrorism. The paper may build on the presentation. The word limit is 2,000, everything included. The due date will be determined in consultation with the class.

Active class participation is expected and graded. Some tips: participate regularly, make informed contributions, focus on the main points, formulate clearly, respond to others in the discussion, and demonstrate critical engagement.

Please note that for all assessments, late submission and violation of the word or time limit will result in a lower grade. All written work should be uploaded on Turnitin and will be checked for plagiarism.

Reading material

All the course material is available in electronic form. The syllabus only contains the required reading. Each week, suggestions for further reading will be discussed in class.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the course the student should be able to:

- Understand the specific challenges posed by terrorism to open societies and democratic states;
- Reflect critically on the concept of terrorism;
- Understand the causes, conditions, and consequences of terrorism;
- Make an informed choice of political institutions that help to prevent, mitigate, or end terrorism;
- Summarize arguments, assess evidence, and formulate an opinion;
- Communicate effectively their informed opinion on the topics covered in class.

Course schedule

Week 1. Introduction: What is Terrorism?

The introductory sessions aim to clarify the concept of terrorism by surveying the political science literature on this topic.

Reading:

Richards, Anthony (2014) Conceptualizing Terrorism, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 37(3): 213-236.

Silke, Andrew and Jennifer Schmidt-Petersen (2017) The Golden Age? What the 100 Most Cited Articles in Terrorism Studies Tell Us, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 29(4): 692-712.

Week 2. Global Terrorism Database

This week introduces you to the largest publicly available data set on terrorism, allowing us to get familiar with the main trends and patterns.

Reading:

LaFree, Gary, Laura Dugan and Erin Miller (2015) *Putting Terrorism in Context: Lessons From the Global Terrorism Database*. Abingdon: Routledge. Chapter 2 (The Creation of the Global Terrorism Database, pp.12-26), chapter 3 (Tracking Worldwide Terrorist Trends, pp.27-48) and chapter 4 (The Spatial Distribution of Terrorism Around the World and in the United States, pp.49-69).

Week 3. Debate: Waves and Strains of Terrorism

Reading the news, it might seem that religiously motivated terrorism is a recent phenomenon. Has terrorism evolved over time, with different types of terrorism being typical for different historical periods, or have there always been different types of terrorism that co-existed and even cross-fertilized? This question has become the topic of a recent debate that we will examine in class.

Reading:

Rapoport, David (2004) The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism, in Audrey Kurth Cronin and James Ludes (eds.) *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, pp.46-73.

Parker, Tom and Nick Sitter (2016) The Four Horsemen of Terrorism: It's Not Waves, It's Strains, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 28(2): 197-216.

Additional readings:

Rapoport, David (2016) It is Waves, Not Strains, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 28(2): 217-224.

Kaplan, Jeffrey (2016) A Strained Criticism of Wave Theory, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 28(2): 228-235.

Townshend, Chares (2016) Wave and Strain, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 28(2): 225-227.

Week 4. Domestic Terrorism

Although transnational terrorism gets most of the attention, domestic terrorism is much more common. What do we know about these two types and how can we distinguish them empirically?

Sandler, Todd (2014) The Analytical Study of Terrorism: Taking Stock, *Journal of Peace Research* 51(2): 257-271.

Berkebile, Richard (2017) What is Domestic Terrorism? A Method for Classifying Events from the Global Terrorism Database, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 29(1): 1-26.

Week 5. Terrorists and Terrorist Groups

Not all terrorists are part of terrorist groups. This week we take a look at lone wolves and terrorist organizations.

Reading:

Spaaij, Ramón (2010) The Enigma of Lone Wolf Terrorism: An Assessment, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33(): 854-870.

Phillips, Brian (2015) What is a Terrorist Group? Conceptual Issues and Empirical Implications, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 27(2): 225-242.

Week 6. The Causes of Terrorism

Why terrorism? And why in some places and not others? For anybody interested in the subject, these are probably the most urgent and disturbing questions. This week summarizes our knowledge about the causes of terrorism.

Reading:

Crenshaw, Martha (1981) The Causes of Terrorism, *Comparative Politics* 13(4), 379-399.

Krieger, Tim and Daniel Meierrieks (2011) What Causes Terrorism? *Public Choice* 147: 3-27.

Week 7. Democracy and Terrorism

In the next two weeks we explore the relationship between regime type and terrorism, starting with democracy.

Reading:

Leonard Weinberg (2013) *Democracy and Terrorism: Friend or Foe?* Abingdon: Routledge. Chapter 1 (Introduction, pp.1-16), chapter 3 (The Third Wave, pp.34-54), and chapter 4 (The Three Waves in Numbers, pp.55-62).

Week 8. Dictatorship, Regime Change, and Terrorism

This week we continue our exploration of the causal connection between regime type and terrorism, focusing on non-democratic regimes and new democracies.

Reading:

Feldman, Andreas and Maiju Perälä (2004) Reassessing the Causes of Nongovernmental Terrorism in Latin America, *Latin American Politics and Society* 46(2): 101-132.

Aksoy, Deniz, David Carter and Joseph Wright (2012) Terrorism in Dictatorships, *Journal of Politics* 74(3): 810-826.

Week 9. Type of Democracy and Terrorism

There is a lot of evidence that consensus democracies are “kinder and gentler”. Are they also less prone to terrorism? The evidence is contested.

Reading:

Qvortrup, Matt and Arend Lijphart (2013) Domestic Terrorism and Democratic Regime Type, *Civil Wars* 15(4): 471-485.

Bogaards, Matthijs (2017) *Kinder, Gentler, Safer? A New Test of the Relationship Between Consensus Democracy and Domestic Terrorism*, unpublished manuscript.

Week 10. Terrorism and Political Exclusion

Are excluded groups more likely to resort to political violence? Are terrorist attacks more common in societies that discriminate against minorities? This week we review selected empirical studies.

Reading:

Dalacoura, Katerina (2006) Islamist Terrorism and the Middle East Democratic Deficit: Political Exclusion, Repression and the Causes of Extremism, *Democratization* 13(3): 508-525.

Choi, Seung-Whan and James Piazza (2016) Ethnic Groups, Political Exclusion and Domestic Terrorism, *Defense and Peace Economics* 27(1): 37-63.

Week 11. Terrorists and Elections

At first blush, there would appear to be no relation between terrorists and elections. After all, terrorists are terrorists precisely because they use violent, non-democratic, means to get what they want. On closer scrutiny, however, things are more complicated and intricate relationships are uncovered.

Reading:

Neumann, Peter (2005) The Bullet and the Ballot Box: The Case of the IRA, *Journal of Strategic Studies* 28(6): 941-975.

Brathwaite, Robert (2013) The Electoral Terrorist: Terror Groups and Democratic Participation, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 25(1): 53-74.

Week 12. Type of Democracy and Counterterrorism

The final week consists of two parts: a wrap-up session and a presentation of my research-in-progress on the relationship between consensus democracy and counterterrorism.

Reading:

Bogaards, Matthijs (2017) *Kinder and Gentler, Also to Terrorists? Consensus Democracy and Counterterrorism*, unpublished manuscript.

Presentation Assessment Sheet

Student name:

Session:

Date:

Academic content

1	Connection to main reading	
2	Structure of presentation	
3	Original contribution	
4	Critical engagement	
5	Evidence of broader research	
6	Subject knowledge	

Presentation skills

1	Visualization	
2	Contribution to discussion	
3	Time management	
4	Referencing	
5	Contact with audience	
6	Handout (maximum one page)	

Comments:

Grade: