

IR 403- Political Violence in the Post Cold War Era (Autumn 2017)

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Tuesday 08.40-11.30
Office Hour: Tuesday 11.40-13.40

Overview

For more than a decade, armed conflicts, like civil wars in Syria, Libya and Somalia, insurgencies in Afghanistan and Iraq, armed unrests like the one in Venezuela and a new wave of ISIS (or Daesh)-inspired terror attacks in the globe, have turned into prime determinants of socio-political outcomes of the contemporary world. The emergence of ISIS with new conceptions of terror and violence and the full embrace of unconventional/asymmetrical means/ways, as well as the transformation of existing Violent Non-state Actors (VNSAs) such as Al-Qaida in the globe and the PKK in Turkey, have led both scholars and practitioners to speak of “new wars/new terrorism” in the 21st century. Many in security studies have assumed that the “old wars” waged solely between states, accordingly fought between comparable and “symmetrical” armies, are out; and now, basic characteristic of political violence and armed conflict are in a state of flux.

This course, designed as a typical graduate-level research seminar, will examine recent leading research from political science, security studies, social psychology, history on political violence and armed conflict. We will examine the strategic use of violence in the past and in contemporary world, the logics of the institutions/organization of violence and participation in violence, and explanations for the causes, conduct and consequences of all forms of political armed conflict like inter-state wars in classical sense sitting at the top of the pyramid, civil wars, insurgencies, terrorism, and lastly activist-type violence. The course will require that you grapple with research written in many traditions including philosophical, theoretic, critical, interpretative and policy-oriented contributions. Central questions that we examine throughout the course include: How does political violence differ from other types of political action like elections, participation in party organizations and lobbying? Why do people get radicalized? Is political killing something we socio-culturally learn or is it genetically stamped in our DNA? What are the types of armed violence? What are the impacts of ‘drivers’ like techno-scientification, robotization, globalization, radicalization, cyber-ification and urbanization on the characteristics of armed conflict? How do we examine the actors of armed conflict like ISIS, PKK and spaces of armed conflict like Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan? How has the armed conflict been evolving?

Aim

This course is designed as an introduction to the study of changing characteristics of political violence and armed conflict in the 21st century. It engages the profound social, political, economic, and cultural implications of the changing character of armed conflict and evolution of security in the 21st century with a specific focus on state vs. Violent Non-state Actor (VNSA) armed confrontations. The course first provides a basic overview of classic theoretical approaches and conceptions of political violence, armed conflict and warfare. It then introduces students to old and new thinking about political violence, armed conflict and security in order to provide a basic understanding of the evolution of these concepts as well as address security concerns involving all forms of armed conflict; war, insurgency, terrorism and activist violence.

Objectives

The objectives of this course include developing students’

- basic understanding of contending approaches to the political violence and all forms of armed conflict.
- knowledge and understanding of the key literature in the discipline as well as the literature on methodology (how students articulate what they think in a scholarly context either in oral or written format);
- ability to engage in the basic theoretical and conceptual debates about VNSAs that Turkey is currently fighting against such as PKK and ISIS;

- ability to analyze contemporary security policies and practices regarding armed conflict from a conceptual perspective;
- ability to express and defend their ideas in front of their peers in weekly discussions,
- ability to challenge concepts, approaches, explanations delivered in the readings and openly criticize/problematize opinions/ideas offered during the class in front of their peers.

Teaching

The course is designed to encourage active learning. It will therefore be taught through a mixture of lectures and seminars to be delivered by the students. The instructor will first provide a basic overview of that week's required readings and shoot some questions as mind-stretching/provoking opening to give the floor to the discussants of the week to summarize the required readings first and then to provide their critical feedbacks on the main arguments/approaches in these required readings. The aim is to encourage students to think independently and critically and problematize information whilst remaining firmly grounded in the knowledge provided in the readings.

Please also note that the instructor is inclined to create and actively use a WhatsApp Group to interact in a 24/7 fashion till the end of the course. This opportunity strongly encourages the students to provide news, analysis about the course topics and share their weekly assignments via this WhatsApp group, which inputs more energy, transparency, motivation, and fun into the learning process. You should also remember that one fourth of your 'in-class participation' grade is to be based on your WhatsApp performance.

It is also critical that you do all your readings and come in ready to take active part in class discussions. This is critical not only for your own intellectual development but also because 'in-class participation' counts towards 40% of your overall grade.

Please be reminded that you will only be in a position to do well in your assignments if you have attended the classes and read the literature (all of the required texts plus some of the recommended ones as necessary). Coming to the classes prepared is necessary not only because this constitutes a part of your assessment, but also because this will help you understand the course material much better so that you would be in a very strong position to do well in your exams/assignments.

You are expected to attend all the classes. If you cannot attend please let me know beforehand, or contact me (immediately) afterwards to provide a 'legitimate' excuse for your absence. Since class participation constitutes 40% of your overall grade, attendance will be taken and absences will be noted.

Guidelines for Discussant and Critiquer Presentations

During a typical week, discussants will be responsible for jump-starting the conversation on required readings. Rather than a formal presentation, discussants should think of themselves as a presenter at a conference or workshop. Each discussant has strictly 20 minutes to present what he/she has in his/her intellectual package.

A good discussant will do the following:

- (1) Avoid lengthy summaries of the papers under discussion (time is limited) and immediately cut to the core contributions an author is trying to make.
- (2) Identify the research question as clearly and concisely as possible (for some readings, this will be more challenging than others).
- (3) Identify the main argument or claim advanced in the paper and any key assumptions necessary for the argument to hold.
- (4) Assess the plausibility of the argument and key assumptions "on the face of things"—i.e., before considering the evidence offered. Is it convincing? (Many problems arise as early as this stage.)
- (5) Briefly describe the author's empirical strategy. What is the research design? Is it appropriate?
- (6) Evaluate the core evidence in the paper. What evidence is used to build the author's case? Is it the right evidence? Is it used in the right way?

At the end of the class in each week, we'll have two '**critiquers of the week**' to WRAP UP the session. The critique's prime objective is not to summarize what has been done in the class but to critically assess the performance of the discussants and problematize the points/arguments/approaches raised

during the class in that particular week. Each critiquer has strictly 5 minutes to do his/her task.

A good Critiquer will do the following:

- (1) Be constructive. The most compelling critique is a ruthless yet sympathetic critique.
- (2) Problematize things. Clearly provide your insights about the things/ways you don't like (weaknesses) and why, also emphasize the things/ways discussant did well (strengths).

ASSESSMENT

40% of your assessment will be based on **in-class participation** + your performance as Discussant (min. 2 times throughout the course) and as Critiquer (min. one time throughout the course) + **WhatsApp performance**.

Your weekly 'responses' to be shared via WhatsApp and proving that you have read the required readings and your ability to engage in the scholarly debate in our group determine your WhatsApp performance.

40% of your assessment will be based on your **research paper**.

20% of your assessment will be based on **final exam to be conducted** in last week of the course which I plan to shoot 3 questions and ask you to pen your answers involving your ideas/insights and critiques in a scholarly format in 80 minutes.

Your research paper could be a policy paper, the book review of one of my proposed 6 books (Please see the list at the end of syllabus) or a literature review/discussion of a topic of your choice. When writing your research paper, you are expected to make use of the conceptual tools covered in class. Put differently, presenting a purely descriptive or historical analysis of the subject matter (however insightful that may be) is not acceptable so far as the purposes of this course are concerned. When grading your paper, I will be looking for evidence of grasp of the literature covered in class.

In order to be able to provide maximum guidance and feedback throughout the research process, I have broken down the research paper into four components:

Proposal for research paper (5% of final grade) (due September 31, 2017) (please see the guidelines below)

Draft paper (15% final grade) (due December 5, 2017)

Final version of the research paper (%10 of final grade) (due December 26, 2017)

Workshop presentation and participation (10% of final grade) (Workshop to be held in the last 2 weeks of the course)

HOW TO WRITE YOUR RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSAL

Writing a 'Research Paper Proposal' is the first step you take in the process of writing your research paper.

The point about the paper proposal is to convince the reader (in this case, your professor, in some other cases program chair/s of a conference, editor/s of a journal) that you have a worthwhile research project and that you have the competence to complete it.

Regardless of your field, your subject matter, and your methodology of choice, all research paper proposals should provide answers to the following questions:

What do you plan to accomplish? (your topic and research question) Why you want to do it? (your goal, its significance for you, for the field) How you are going to do it? (your work-plan and approach)

Experience in proposal writing would prove valuable regardless of your future profession. Those of you who go on to do postgraduate work would be expected to submit PhD scholarship/research grant proposals. Those of you, who work in other fields, would submit project proposals to receive funding etc.

Please find below the format for your research paper proposal. Please make sure you follow this format and submit your proposal on time for timely feedback. Also note that you are welcomed to meet me to discuss anything about your research papers in office hours (Tuesday 11.40- 13/40).

FORMAT FOR RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSAL

Title page (your name, course name, date, the name of the assignment, i.e. 'research paper proposal')

Body (please make sure you answer ALL of the following questions)

What is your research TOPIC?

What is your RESEARCH QUESTION? (please remember that a question has a '?' at the end. Make sure you have a question that can be answered in 3000 words including endnotes or footnotes)

WHY are you interested in this topic? (*one paragraph*)

What is the SIGNIFICANCE of answering this question for the field you are researching? What is your PRELIMINARY ANSWER to the research question? (Please keep in mind that this is a preliminary answer based on your review of the existing literature. You have not done the research yet. You do not know the answer yet) (*one paragraph*)

What do you know about THE LITERATURE ON THE SUBJECT? (this is the literature review section. Here you should give credit to those who have laid the groundwork for your research; demonstrate your grasp of the literature on your topic; show your ability to identify and evaluate the relevant sources; indicate your ability to integrate and synthesise the relevant literature).

HOW would you approach this research question? (What kind of evidence would you provide? How would you gather that evidence? Will you include definitions? Will there be a historical background section? Do you have a balanced variety of sources? Will you show opposing viewpoints? Will you be comparing and contrasting? Will you be using primary or secondary sources?) (*at least one paragraph*)

TENTATIVE LIST OF REFERENCES (at this stage you should have at least 15 sources [books, book chapters or peer-reviewed articles] that you have looked at (but have not read yet). Present the list in proper format (Harvard, Chicago...).

Word limit: 800 words. Over-length proposals will be penalized.

What I am looking for **RESEARCH PAPERS**

Structure: Is the argument well structured? Is there a clear introduction and conclusion? Is there a point to each paragraph?

Clarity: Is the style of writing clear? Is it easy to follow the author's argument?

Use of academic language: Does the author make use of proper academic terminology? **Substance:** Does the author present a substantive argument? Or does s/he merely summarize other works without 'saying' anything? Please note that what you 'say' is not expected to be original. You are merely expected to make a point.

Evidence: Does the author present adequate evidence in support of his/her points? Please keep in mind that 'evidence' may take many forms. The evidence provided may take the form of established (academic) authors' arguments, quantitative figures, examples from world politics citing reliable sources.

Writing style: Is the language used proper to the task at hand or is it informal?

Paper format: Is the paper appropriately formatted (title page, 1,5 or 2-space between lines, appropriate margins, title page, word limit, spelling and punctuation, etc)

Sources consulted: Does the author make use of the academic sources you would expect to see consulted in an essay on this topic. In other words, does the author seem aware of the literature in this field?

Footnotes and/or bibliography: Does the author provide adequate information about the sources consulted? Is the information provided appropriately formatted?

Academic ethics: Does the author try to pass off someone else's ideas as his/her own? Are all sources used appropriately acknowledged? Does the author rely too much on someone else's words, phrases and/or ideas with or without acknowledging?

Word limit for the Research Paper: 3000 words. Please indicate word count on the title page. Over-length papers will be penalized.

COURSE PLAN

WEEK 1

Introduction and Overview of the Course

We will discuss the scope and content of the course, course requirements, and student research interests. We will also assign discussants and critiquers for each week.

WEEK 2

Conceptual & Methodological Terrain-1: How we define things? How we present what we know?

1. Vittorio Bufacchi, "Two Concepts of Violence," *Political Studies Review*, 3 (2005), 193-204.
2. Willem de Haan, "Violence as an essentially contested concept," In Sophie Body-Gendrot and Pieter Spierenburg, eds., *Violence in Europe*, (Rotterdam: Erasmus University, 2010), 27-40.
3. Jacob Devaney 'Is violence a curable disease?' *Uplift*, August 24, 2016.

Please see: <http://upliftconnect.com/violence-curable-disease/>

Further Readings:

Hannah Arendt, 1969. *On Violence*. (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company)

Charles Tilly 2003. *The Politics of Collective Violence*, pp. 26-54. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012).

Tarak Barkawi, *Globalisation and War* (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publisher, 2005)

Discussant 1:

Discussant 2:

Critiquer 1 :

Critiquer 2:

WEEK 3

Conceptual & Methodological Terrain-2: How we define things? How we present what we know?

1. Paul D. Williams, "Introduction" in *Security Studies: An Introduction*, ed. Paul D. Williams (London: Routledge, 2013)
2. Paul D. Williams, "War," in *Security Studies: An Introduction*, ed. Paul D. Williams (London: Routledge, 2008), 151-169

Further Readings

Christopher Cooker *Ethics and War in the 21st Century* (Routledge, 2008)

Discussant 1:

Discussant 2:

Critiquer 1 :

Critiquer 2 :

WEEK 4

Radicalization: Why does radicalization happen to 'them' and 'us?'

1. Metin Gurcan & McCauley, Clark. (2010) "Boomerang: Opinion versus action in the radicalization of Abu Mulal al-Balawi" *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*. 3(1).14-31
2. The profile of James Alex Fields Jr., the white supremacist attacker who drove his car into Charlottesville protesters and killed a woman (Please see:

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/profile-emerges-of-man-charged-in-charlottesville-va-rampage-1502670225>

and see:

https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/08/the-worlds-worst-support-group/536850/?utm_source=twb

Further Readings

Clark McCauley, Sophia Moskelanko *Friction: How Radicalization Happens to Them and Us* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

Discussant 1:

Discussant 2:

Critiquer 1 :

Critiquer 2 :

WEEK 5

Historical Terrain: Old Wars ‘States making wars, wars making states’

1. Taylor, Brian D, and Roxana Botea. 2008. ‘Tilly Tally: War-Making and State-Making in the Contemporary Third World’ *International Studies Review* 10(1): 27-56.
2. Metin Gurcan, (2012) "The Evolution of War and Theoretical Approaches" in *Theories of Security, War, Peace and Conflict Resolution*. Bilgesam Publications. (Turkish)

Further Readings

Bruce Porter *War and the Rise of the State* (Free Press, 1994)

Colin S. Gray, *War, Peace and International Relations* (Routledge, 2007).

Discussant 1:

Discussant 2:

Critiquer 1 :

Critiquer 2 :

WEEK 6

Neo-New Wars: Hybrid Warfare and Cyber Space

1. Can Kasapoglu *Russia’s Renewed Military Thinking: Non-linear Warfare and Reflexive Control*, NATO Research Paper, 2015
2. Thomas Zeitsof ‘How social media is changing the conflict?’ *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (Forthcoming)

Discussant 1:

Discussant 2:

Critiquer 1 :

Critiquer 2 :

WEEK 7

Civil Wars: Why do people rebel? Does Syria still exist or already went feral?

1. Fearon, James D, and David D. Laitin. 2000. ‘Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity’ *International Organization* 54(4): 845-877.

2. Movie: *The Act of Killing* (2013) Please watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwvObZi_P_4

Discussant 1:

Discussant 2:

Critiquer 1 :

Critiquer 2 :

WEEK 8

Insurgencies: What went wrong in Afghanistan?

1. Metin Gurcan, *Seeing The Other Side Of The Coin: Problematization Of “Our” Counterinsurgency (Coin) Efforts In Afghanistan*, IPC Policy Brief, 2016
2. Movie: *The War Machine*, Please See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9Jg20Ukf4E>

Further Readings

Metin Gurcan, (July 2016) *What Went Wrong in Afghanistan: Understanding Counter-insurgency in Tribalized Rural Muslim Environments* (London Helion&Company)

Discussant 1:

Discussant 2:

Critiquer 1 :

Critiquer 2 :

WEEK 9

Drivers Changing the Characteristics of Armed Conflict

Technological Terrain

Drone Warfare and tele-killing

1. Metin Gurcan, (Forthcoming) ‘The Drone Warfare and its Virilioan Problematization’ *All Azimuth in A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace*.

Contracting for Armed Violence: Privatization of Armed Conflict

2. Metin Gurcan & Ozpinar, Nihat. “Who let the dogs out?: A critique of security for hire option in weak States” in *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*. Volume 2. 43 – 171.

Arming Civilians: Train&Equip Programs

3. Metin Gurcan ‘Arming civilians as a counterterror strategy: The case of the village guard system in Turkey’ *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, 2014 p.1-20

Further Readings

Paul Virilio, *Desert Screen* (IOS Press, 2008)

Metin Gurcan, (2013) “Drone Warfare and Contemporary Strategy Making: Does the tail wag the dog?” *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*. Volume 6. Issue 1-3.

Discussant 1:

Critiquer 1 :

Discussant 2:

Critiquer 2 :

WEEK 11

PKK:

1. Metin Gurcan ‘Terror is an eco-system and we all are part of it’ (Turkish) Please see: <http://www.radikal.com.tr/yenisoz/teror-bir-eko-sistemdir-ve-hepimiz-onun-bir-parcasiyiz-1422261/>

2. Metin Gurcan & Unal, Mustafa Cosar. (Forthcoming in January 2018) ‘Can Terrorism be deterred? The Case of PKK’ (Routledge Terrorism Studies Series)

3. Metin Gurcan, (2016) “Ankara vs. the PKK: Old War New Strategies”, *Turkish Policy Quarterly* Spring 2016.

4. Metin Gurcan, *TAK*, CTC Sentinel, 2016

Further Readings

Eliza Marcus. 2007. *Blood and Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence*. New York: NYU Press.

Bruce Hoffman *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006)

Discussant 1:

Critiquer 1 :

Discussant 2:

Critiquer 2 :

WEEK 12

ISIS

1. Bruce Hoffman ‘Intro’ Chapter of *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006)

2. Burak Kadercan, “What the ISIS Crisis Means for the Future of the Middle East”, *Insight Turkey*, Vol 18.Nu.2, 2016.

3. Peter Byrne ‘Anatomy of terror: What makes normal people become extremists?’ *NewScientist*, August 17, 2017. Please see: <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg23531390-700-anatomy-of-terror-what-makes-normal-people-become-extremists/#.WZyDbG0aAVI.twitter>

Further Readings

Michael Weis, Hassan Hassan, *ISIS: Inside Army of Terror* (Regan Arts, 2016).

Discussant 1:
Critiquer 1 :

Discussant 2:
Critiquer 2 :

WEEK 13

Future of War and Geopolitics

1. Paul R. Norwood, Benjamin M. Jensen, and Justin Barnes, 'Capturing the Character of Future War' *Parameters*, Summer 2016
2. Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds, National Intelligence Council Report, December 2012.
3. Ian Gr. Shaw 'Robot Wars: US Empire and Geopolitics in the Robotic Age' *Security Dialogue*, August 2017, 1-20.

Discussant 1:
Critiquer 1 :

Discussant 2:
Critiquer 2 :

Books for Book Review:

1. Christopher Cooker, *Ethics and War in 21st Century* (Routledge, 2006).
2. Metin Gurcan, *What Went Wrong in Afghanistan? Understanding Counter-Insurgency Efforts in Tribalized, Rural and Muslim Afghanistan* (Helion Company, 2016).
3. Colins S. Gray, *War, Peace and International Relations: An Introduction to Strategic History* (Routledge, 2007).
4. Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (Columbia University Press, 2007)
5. Christopher Cooker, *The Warrior Ethos: Military Culture and War on Terror* (Routledge, 2007).
6. Metin Gurcan, (2013) "Drone Warfare and Contemporary Strategy Making: Does the tail wag the dog?" *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*. Volume 6. Issue 1-3.

Selected Movies

Full Matel Jacket (1987)

Tangerines (2013) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BAh9m2bkgww>

Lions for Lambs (2007) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0n02lrQ_5Vo

Charlie Wilson's War (2007) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1mnSjjeC2o>

Saving Private Ryan (1998) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5p5j_K0CsY