

History 50:516:381

Violent Politics: Irregular War and Western Response from Mao to the Islamic State

Fall 2015
Wednesdays, 5:15 – 7:55PM
Location: Madison 205

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Course Description: Throughout history, politics has been a primary method for solving conflict. War has been another. Violent politics – a method that involves a mixture of political and military means and resides somewhere between war and peace – constitutes a third. Over the past century, this third way has been the most prevalent. Despite the massive conflagrations of the First and Second World Wars and other large-scale conventional conflicts, the prevailing form of armed conflict around the globe has been regional irregular wars involving revolution, guerrilla war, terrorism, insurgency and Western responses to these phenomenon. This course examines the most dominant manifestations of violent politics to occur over the past sixty years: communist revolutionary wars of national liberation during the Cold War, transnational jihad and global insurgency in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, and Western reactions to both.

Assignments:

In order to receive a satisfactory grade in this course, students must complete the following assignments:

- 1. Attendance /Course Engagement** - Do the reading and participate in periodic class discussions. Each unit will consist of both lectures and discussions that will be conducted in Madison Hall, Room 205. Participation in these discussions of the reading and lecture material and completion of any homework assignments are essential to helping you understand the themes of the course. They are therefore an important part of your grade. Of course, good attendance is also part of this assignment as well, since you can't participate if you aren't there. Attendance is required in this class, and will be regularly taken. I am well aware that missing a class may happen occasionally, but regular absence will be noted and affect your class participation grade. ***Note on class discussion** – In order to facilitate in-class discussion, I will post a question each Monday at 12PM that directly relates to that week's reading. Make sure you check Sakai each Monday and keep the question in mind when you come to class.
- 2. Weekly Intelligence Briefing** – Working in groups of two, students will provide an intelligence briefing on one of five geographic areas contained within the Unified Combatant Command of United States Department of Defense: SOUTHCOM, AFRICOM, EUCOM, CENTCOM, PACOM. These briefings must discuss issues and events related to the theme of this course – meaning they will focus on small wars,

insurgencies, and other forms of political violence currently ongoing throughout a particular Area of Responsibility (AOR). Briefings are due each week and must include: 1) **a one-page summary** (a copy for each classmate and one for the instructor); 2) **a 5-10 minute oral presentation** delivered to the class. Students will use open source information – i.e. websites, blogs, newspaper, magazines, etc. to complete each week’s briefing. Students are strongly encouraged to use power-point and incorporate various media (videos, pictures, maps, graphs, etc.) into their briefings. **(See below for sources)**

3. Final Project – At the end of the semester, each group will present an overall assessment of the conflict scenario within their area of operation. Final projects must include:

1. A general description of their Area of Responsibility (AOR) and specifics on conflict “hot-spots” that include:
 - Geography
 - People and society
 - Government
 - Economy
 - Military
 - Conflict Issues
2. A conflict assessment for their AOR that identifies and discusses the primary sources of political violence, insurgency, small wars, etc. This assessment must include all the pertinent information – the who, what, when, where, and why of the conflicts under study.
3. Possible courses of action / future development as discussed by civilian and military officials / analysts.

The format for the final project will include: 1) a seven- to ten-page summary (including narrative, maps, graphics, etc.); 2) a 15 minute (strictly enforced) power-point presentation delivered to the class. **Final presentations** will be given on the last day of class, **Wednesday, December 9. Final papers are due** to me no later than **Wednesday, December 15. (See below for sources)**

***Note:** each AOR within the Unified Combatant Command may include multiple sources of conflict. Therefore, students whose AOR contains more than three “hot spots” may choose the two or three most important conflicts to discuss.

Grading – Grades will be based on the following percentages:

- Course Engagement/ Discussion: 25%
- Intelligence Briefings: 25%
- Final Project: 50%

Textbooks:

- Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (New York: Vintage, 2005).
- Robert Taber. *War of the Flea: The Classic Study of Guerrilla Warfare* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, 2002).
- David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).
- Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan, *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror* (New York: Regan Arts, 2015).

All additional readings on your syllabus are also required. The supplemental readings will be available on Sakai.

Course Schedule: The dates listed below are tentative and may change as the semester progress.

Unit 1 – The Evolution of Modern War

Week 1 (9/2): Introduction, Definitions, Theories of War and Peace

Week 2 (9/9): From the Military Revolution to Interstate Industrial War, 1500-1945, Part 1

Readings:

- Smith, pp. 1-65.

Week 3 (9/16): From the Military Revolution to Interstate Industrial War, 1500-1945, Part 2

Readings:

Smith, pp. 66-149.

Unit 2 – Violent Politics in the Twentieth Century: Decolonization, Cold War Confrontation, and Wars of National Liberation

Week 4 (9/23): The Evolution and Underpinnings of Revolutionary Warfare

Readings:

- Smith, pp. 153-182.
- Taber, pp. 1-55; 149-171.

Week 5 (9/30): Cold War

Readings:

- Smith, pp.183-224.
- Lin Piao, “Long Live the Victory of People’s War,” pp. 42-69.
- W.W. Rostow, “Guerrilla Warfare in Underdeveloped Areas,” pp. 46-49.

- Roger Hilsman, "Internal War: The New Communist Tactic," pp. 50-54.

Week 6 (10/7): The French and American Experiences in Indochina

Readings:

- Smith, pp. 225-250.
- Taber, pp. 57-96.

Week 7 (10/14): Ireland / Algeria / The Middle East

Readings:

- Smith, 250-265.
- Taber, 97-115.

Week 8 (10/21): Film: The Battle of Algiers

Unit 3 – Violent Politics in the Twenty-First Century: Transnational Jihad, Global Insurgency, and Islamist State Building

Week 9 (10/28): Post-Cold War Conflict

Readings:

- Smith, pp. 269-334.
- Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs* 72 (Summer 1993): 22-49.

Week 10 (11/4): September 11, Transnational Jihad, and the War on Terror

Readings:

- Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla*, pp. xiii-38.

Week 11 (11/11): Insurgency in Afghanistan

Readings:

- Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla*, pp. 39-115.
- **Film: Restrepo**

Week 12 (11/18): Insurgency in Iraq

Readings:

- Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla*, pp. 115-186.
- **Film: Human Terrain**

No Class Wednesday 11/25 due to Thanksgiving (Friday classes)

Week 13 (12/2): The rise of ISIS

Readings:

- Weiss and Hassan, All.

Week 14 (12/9): The Future of Irregular Conflict

Readings:

- Smith, 374-415.
- Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla*, pp. 263-302.

Sources for Weekly Briefings / Final Project

Newspapers, periodicals, and international affairs / military / intelligence / national defense journals

- Foreign Affairs
- Joint Force Quarterly
- Military Review
- Journal of Strategic Studies
- World Politics Review
- Small Wars and Insurgencies
- New York Times
- The Wall Street Journal
- Newsweek
- Time
- US News & World Report

Other online sources

- Each AOR has their own website:
 - www.southcom.mil
 - www.africom.mil
 - www.useucom.mil
 - www.centcom.mil
 - www.uspacom.mil
- CIA World Factbook
- Small Wars Journal – contains articles and a blog
- The Long War Journal
- Institute for the Study of War
- The Foreign Policy Research Institute
- Foreign Policy Magazine
- War on the Rocks
- Defense One

Databases such as Lexis Nexus and Academic Search Premier
Or ask a reference librarian at the Rutgers library