

PLSC 221: American Extremism in Comparative Perspective

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Draft Syllabus

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Course Description

This course interrogates the rise of violent extremism in the United States from a political science perspective. The course draws from research on terrorism and political violence to explain current trends in extremism. We will compare made-in-America ideologies like white nationalism and the “alt-right” to extremist movements abroad, from the Red Army Faction to the Islamic State. Paper required.

Course Objectives

- Define terrorism and extremism and understand theories of their causes
- Explore the relationship between political extremism and violence
- Apply the comparative method to explain current events
- *To be continued...*

Class Schedule

Week 01. Political Violence in the U.S.

- Janet Reitman, “U.S. Law Enforcement Failed to See the Threat of White Nationalism. Now They Don’t Know How to Stop It.,” *New York Times Magazine*, Nov. 3, 2018

Week 02. Terrorism

- Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, Rev. and expanded ed (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), chap. 8, “The Modern Terrorist Mind-set”
- Martha Crenshaw, *Explaining Terrorism: Causes, Processes, and Consequences* (London; New York: Routledge, 2011), chap. 2, “The Causes of Terrorism”
- Connor Huff and Joshua D. Kertzer, “How the Public Defines Terrorism,” *American Journal of Political Science* 62, no. 1 (2018): 55–71

Week 03. Radicalization

- Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, “Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20, no. 3 (2008): 415–33
- Arie W. Kruglanski et al., “The Psychology of Radicalization and Deradicalization: How Significance Quest Impacts Violent Extremism,” *Political Psychology* 35, no. S1 (2014): 69–93
- Jamie Bartlett and Carl Miller, “The Edge of Violence: Towards Telling the Difference Between Violent and Non-Violent Radicalization,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 24, no. 1 (2012): 1–21

Week 04. Identity Politics

- Nicholas Weller and Jane Junn, "Racial Identity and Voting: Conceptualizing White Identity in Spatial Terms," *Perspectives on Politics* 16, no. 2 (2018): 436–48
- Ashley Jardina, "White Identity Politics Isn't Just about White Supremacy. It's Much Bigger.," *Washington Post*, Aug. 16, 2017
- Donald P. Green, Laurence H. McFalls, and Jennifer K. Smith, "Hate Crime: An Emergent Research Agenda," *Annual Review of Sociology* 27 (2001): 479–504

Week 05. Europe

- Ehud Sprinzak, "Right-wing Terrorism in a Comparative Perspective: The Case of Split Delegitimization," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7, no. 1 (1995): 17–43
- Jan Oskar Engene, "Five Decades of Terrorism in Europe: The TWEED Dataset," *Journal of Peace Research* 44, no. 1 (2007): 109–21
- Rogers Brubaker, "Between Nationalism and Civilizationism: The European Populist Moment in Comparative Perspective," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40, no. 8 (2017): 1191–226

Week 06. Islamism

- Jessica Stern, "Radicalization to Extremism and Mobilization to Violence: What Have We Learned and What Can We Do about It?," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 668, no. 1 (2016): 102–17
- Tamar Mitts, "From Isolation to Radicalization: Anti-Muslim Hostility and Support for ISIS in the West," *American Political Science Review*, forthcoming,
- Risa A. Brooks, "Muslim "Homegrown" Terrorism in the United States: How Serious Is the Threat?," *International Security* 36, no. 2 (2011): 7–47

Week 07. White Supremacy

- Belew, *Bring the War Home*, part I

Week 08. White Nationalism

- Belew, *Bring the War Home*, part III
- *Optional*: Shane Bauer, "I Went Undercover with a Militia on the US-Mexico Border. Here's What I Saw.," *Mother Jones*, 2016

Week 09 (2/25). The Alt-Right

- Patrick S. Forscher and Nour Kteily, "A Psychological Profile of the Alt-Right," *PsyArXiv*, Aug. 9, 2017,
- Amy Kaplan, "The Old "New Anti-Semitism" and Resurgent White Supremacy," *Middle East Report*, no. 283 (2017)
- Gary LaFree, "Is Antifa a Terrorist Group?," *Society*, May 15, 2018,

Week 10 (3/4). Lone Wolves?

- Bron Taylor, "Religion, Violence and Radical Environmentalism: From Earth First! To the Unabomber to the Earth Liberation Front," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 10, no. 4 (1998): 1–42
- Alston Chase, "Harvard and the Making of the Unabomber," *The Atlantic*, June 1, 2000
- Ramón Spaaij and Mark S. Hamm, "Key Issues and Research Agendas in Lone Wolf Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38, no. 3 (2015): 167–78

Week 11 (3/25). Mass Shootings

- Manny Fernandez, Julie Turkewitz, and Jess Bidgood, “For ‘Columbiners,’ School Shootings Have a Deadly Allure,” *The New York Times: U.S.*, May 30, 2018
- Jonathan M. Metzler and Kenneth T. MacLeish, “Mental Illness, Mass Shootings, and the Politics of American Firearms,” *American Journal of Public Health* 105, no. 2 (2015): 240–49
- Congressional Research Service. 2013. “Public Mass Shootings in the United States: Selected Implications for Federal Public Health and Safety Policy.”
- Joel A. Capellan, “Lone Wolf Terrorist or Deranged Shooter? A Study of Ideological Active Shooter Events in the United States, 1970–2014,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38, no. 6 (2015): 395–413

Week 12 (4/1). Countering Extremism

- Tamar Mitts, “Countering Violent Extremism” (Working Paper, 2018)
- Edwin Bakker and Beatrice de Graaf, “Preventing Lone Wolf Terrorism: Some CT Approaches Addressed,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 5, no. 5 (2011): 43–50
- Brian Michael Jenkins and Richard C. Daddario, “Think Mass Shootings Are Terrorism? Careful What You Wish For.,” *POLITICO Magazine*, 2017
- Steven Chermak and Jeffrey A. Gruenewald, “Laying a Foundation for the Criminological Examination of Right-Wing, Left-Wing, and Al Qaeda-Inspired Extremism in the United States,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 27, no. 1 (2015): 133–59

Week 13 (4/8). Mainstream Politics

- Michael Barkun, “President Trump and the “Fringe”,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 29, no. 3 (2017): 437–43
- Marc Hooghe and Ruth Dassonneville, “Explaining the Trump Vote: The Effect of Racist Resentment and Anti-Immigrant Sentiments,” *PS: Political Science & Politics*, Apr. 2018, 1–7