The catastrophic destruction of the World Trade Center has compelled us to seek a deeper understanding of the causes, processes, and outcomes of political violence, including urban riots, hate crimes, ethnic conflict, terrorism, military coup d’etat and revolutions. We will begin with a general survey of leading theoretical approaches. In particular, we will discuss psychological explanations that attribute violence to instinct, mental disorders and frustration; social structural theories that focus on the effects of social change, stratification and cleavages; resource mobilization approaches that emphasize the process of how conflicting groups arise, press opposing claims, and contend for power; and rational choice explanations that view conflict as resting on cost-benefit analysis of coercion and compliance. Next, we will examine the socio-economic profile of revolutionaries, terrorists and rioters, in an effort to understand which type of people engage in political violence, and why.

In the second part of the course, we will take a closer look at three modes of political violence -- urban riots, crimes, terrorism, and revolutions. We will conclude with a discussion of the outcome of political violence, in particular, structural changes in post-revolutionary society, the policy impact of urban riots, the fate of challenging groups, and determinants for their success and failure.

Texts

There is no required text for the course. A course pack will be ready for purchase from Course Reader Material on 1137 Westwood Blvd. (phone: 443-3303). On average, around 80 pages of required reading will be assigned per week, and students are expected to complete these following the schedule below, as class lectures often assume knowledge of the scheduled readings.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to do the required readings listed below and to attend class meetings. Course grade will depend on a mid-term (40%), and a final (60%) exam, both in-class exams with essay type as well as multiple choice questions. In addition, students who want to get a 4.0 for the course have to engage in an optional research project (due May 26th) collecting and analyzing data on political violence events and their putative factors from data handbooks and other sources to test various propositions. Students will be given the necessary assistance in choosing a research question, looking for sources, designing coding schemes, performing statistical analysis and using the computer. The midterm exam will be held on Wednesday, April 23rd, and the final exam on Monday, June 9th, 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., at a room to be announced.
COURSE ORGANIZATION AND READING SCHEDULE

I. Explaining Violence: Psychological and Structural Approaches
   A. Cohan, "Psychological Approaches to Revolution"
   D. Gupta, “Theories of Collective Rebellious Behavior”
   T. Gurr, "Relative Deprivation and the Impetus to Violence”
   J. Davis, "Towards a Theory of Revolutions"
   Marx & Engels, "The Communist Manifesto".

II. Explaining Violence: Process, Culture, & Rational Choice Approaches
   S. Huntington, “Revolution and Political Order”
   C. Tilly, “Does Modernization breed Revoution?”
   S. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?”
   B. Salert, "The Rational Basis of Revolutionary Action".

III. Perpetrators of Violence: Socio-economic Profile
   N. Caplan, "The New Ghetto Man"
   Sears and McConahay, "Who were the Rioters?"
   M. Rejai, "Revolutionary Elite"
   Russell and Miller, "Profile of a Terrorist"

IV. Urban Riots
   J. Johnson et al., "The L.A. Rebellion: A Retrospective View"
   The Police Foundation, "The City in Crisis"
   P. Lupsha, "On Theories of Urban Violence"
   V. Allen, "Towards Understanding Riots"
   U.S. Riot Commission Report

V. Terrorism and 9/11
   E. Mikolus, "Tracking the Growth...of International Terrorism"
   W. Laqueur, "The Terrorism Reader"
   D. Rapoport, “The Fourth Wave: 9/11 in the History of Terrorism”
   B. Orbach, “Usama bin Laden and Al-Qa’ida”
   The Al Qaeda Manual

VI. Revolutions
   C. Brinton, "The Anatomy of Revolution"
   T. Skocpol, "France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis".

VII. Outcomes of Political Violence
   Kelley and Klein, "Revolution and the Rebirth of Inequality".
   E. Jennings, "Urban Riots and Welfare Policy Change"