Course description:
The course aims at students with an interest in political theory and at students primarily interested in Security or Peace and Conflict Studies. First, it explores discourses on different forms of violence: Warfare, terror(ism), torture, structural, ethnic, and religious violence. Is there a particular link between religion and violence as it has been as often claimed as disputed? Is there a difference between what is usually phrased as “religious” and “political” violence? How do they relate to structural or ethnic violence? Does the use of violence depend on particular regime types? What difference does it make whether the actor is a state or a non-state actor (individual citizens or movements)? How are these concepts related to the (violent) actions’ legitimacy? And under what circumstances may violent actions be legitimate?

Second, after exploring the theoretical foundations on violence, the course applies the theoretical discourses as an analytical tool to a variety of case studies. The cases studies to be explored depend on the students’ interests and backgrounds. Thus the course seeks for the interaction of discourses in political theory with related subfields in political science such as peace and conflict studies or security studies.

Student Responsibilities and Course Requirements:

Course Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Responses</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</tbody>
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Essay
Each student is expected to complete one (approximately 7-10 pages). The short essay is designed to allow for an early exploration of the research paper’s topic. Particular attention should be given to formal criteria of essay writing such as a well-defined research question, the argument’s consistency, introduction, and conclusion. The essay is meant as a tool to internalize requirements of a research essay and eventually to help you getting started on the research paper. The essay should build on the readings we have discussed during the first six weeks of class.

Research Paper
Students who are enrolled in the seminar will write a 20-25 page research paper (40%). Students are free to write on any topic related to the course but the paper must relate directly to the themes of the seminar and address. The final essay needs to have a clearly defines research question; documentation must be consistent and in accordance with academic standards. The research paper can build on the previous essay.

Weekly Responses
Students are expected to write critical responses of one page maximum (double-spaced, typed) on the assigned readings. The critical responses are meant to foster discussion of the texts. Do not summarize. Rather, problematize an aspect of the reading you like to explore further, you find of particular interest (explain why), or you object to (explain why). The weekly responses are due in class as hardcopy. Summaries without any critical reflection are at best B work.
Presentation
Students are expected to make one presentation during the course of the semester (10%). This presentation should be a critical engagement (NOT simply a summary although some summary of the main arguments will be required) with one of the core readings. The presentation should last about 10 minutes. The presenter is advised to distribute a handout that could also be a collection of controversial quotations taken from the reading. The presenter will be responsible for initiating and moderating a class discussion for a further 20 minutes.

Participation
Students are expected to be current with the reading assignments (readings not in the required textbooks are available on Scholar under Resources). The course is designed as a seminar. There will be no formal lectures, but rather the primary classroom work will be discussion of the assigned reading for the week. The professor will facilitate and direct discussion, and sometimes offer relevant background or conceptual information. Each student will be expected to contribute on a weekly basis to the debate and interchange within the class. Participation will be graded on the level, quality, and frequency of participation.

Further student responsibilities
Many of the ideas that we will discuss can be politically volatile. Please keep an open mind and maintain a tolerant attitude toward the philosophical materials being read as well as those individuals who might express ideas in class that differ from your own. This is part of the educational process.

All students are required to attend classes regularly, to be prepared for class discussion, and to participate actively in our class discussions. Every kind of entertainment, which is not related to the class, is not accepted – please refrain from using iPods/Pads, MP3 players, laptop computers, etc. Mobile phones must be switched off during class.

The Virginia Tech Honor Code will be strictly enforced in this course. All assignments submitted shall be considered graded work, unless otherwise noted. All aspects of your coursework are covered by the Honor System. Any suspected violations of the Honor Code will be promptly reported to the Honor System. Honesty in your academic work will develop into professional integrity. The faculty and students of Virginia Tech will not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty.

A note on email communication: During the week, one can expect to receive a response to an email inquiry within 24 hours; however, it might take longer over the weekend. A number of issues, particular those involving confidential or sensitive information, might be better discussed during office hours or by appointment than by email. For legal reasons, I cannot discuss any grades related issues via email. For excused absences, provide the necessary documentation (documented medical excuse or a note from the Dean of Students Office).

If you need adaptation or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in the case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible.

Grade Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-93:</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92.99-90:</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89.99-86:</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85.99-83:</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82.99-80:</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79.99-76:</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>75.99-73:</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>72.99-70:</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69.99-66:</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>65.99-63:</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62.99-60:</td>
<td>D-</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Bring your texts to class!
Required books:

All further required readings as listed in the syllabus will be made available through the library’s reserve system.

**Week 1: Introduction to the course**

**Week 2: Cold War Violence**

**Week 3: Just & Unjust Wars**

**Week 4: Varieties of Warfare**

**Week 5: Terror(ism) and Just War Theory**

**Week 6: Acts and Actors of Terrorism**

**Week 7: Terror & Torture**

**Week 8: Violence, Counter-Violence, & Liberation**

**Week 9: Structural Violence**
Week 10: Ethnic Violence

Week 11: Religion & Violence

Week 12: Case Study I—Ethnic Structural Violence

Week 13: Case Study II
Reading: To be assigned.

Week 15: Case Study III
Reading: To be assigned.

Week 15: Summary of the course
Students will have the opportunity to discuss the topics of their research papers with their fellow students and the instructor.
Selected Bibliography: