1 Instructor Information

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Office Hours: M/W/Th 10–11 & by appt

2 Course Overview, Format, and Objectives

This course introduces the topic of terrorism and addresses the core ideas in studies of terrorism. We examine in detail the primary causes of terrorist acts committed both by opposition and government forces as well as counterterrorist measures taken by states and international organizations. We also focus on common misunderstandings of terrorism, such as the idea that terrorism is a group ideology or group characteristic rather than a political act. Further, we move beyond a narrow focus on Islamic terrorism, which dominates the public discourse, and consider many varieties of terrorism over time and throughout the world.

The course will enable students to develop an understanding of what terrorism is, what its causes are, and how it can be addressed. In addition to considering various theoretical approaches, we will discuss a number of instances of terrorist acts and campaigns. A research paper on a terrorist campaign of your choice will allow you to gain an even deeper perspective on terrorist behavior. These activities and assignments address the learning outcomes of the political science major by, among other things, encouraging you to (1) gain a knowledge of countries and wars, theoretically and factually, (2) write professional research papers, (3) communicate effectively in a high quality oral presentation, and (4) think critically, analytically, and synthetically. I encourage you to take time to look at the full set of political science learning outcomes, which can be accessed at: [https://learningoutcomes.byu.edu/](https://learningoutcomes.byu.edu/).

I hope that our sessions will be engaging, informative, and participatory. I eschew a strict lecture format. Instead, we will engage in a variety of activities including lectures, personal writing exercises, partner and group work, class discussions, video clips, demonstrations, problem-solving activities, and other critical thinking exercises. I value and will solicit your input on class activities both at the beginning of the semester as well as around midterm. I will make every reasonable effort to incorporate these ideas in the classroom.

3 Requirements

3.1 Required Readings

Three books are required for purchase, but other articles will be placed on blackboard and you will also be responsible for them. Please note that I will alter the readings from time to time including adding, dropping, and reorganizing. I will give you advance notice when this is to take place.


You should also plan to follow world news on a regular basis by reading, for examples, the *BBC* or *New York Times*.

### 3.2 Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation are worth 10% of your grade. I expect all students to attend class regularly. On many days, we will spend a few minutes writing about various topics from the text or lecture. Frequently, you will hand in these writings for credit. These writing activities will enable us to think critically and they will also guide some of our discussion. I also encourage you to ask questions and make germane comments *at any time* during class. Furthermore, please finish the assigned readings *by the date* they appear in the syllabus. If you can’t find a reading, or if a link from the syllabus becomes broken, you are responsible to contact me in advance so that you can be prepared.

Read critically and be prepared to comment on the readings *each session* as I will be grading on this each time. If anyone is uncomfortable sharing ideas in class, that is fine, but instead you need to send me short emails summarizing the key argument(s) and offering critical comments/questions. Also, if your participation is/becomes infrequent or uninformed, I will invite you to submit similar emails prior to each class session. I will likely use other activities to be sure that everyone stays current on the readings.

### 3.3 Assignments

Students are required to complete two writing assignments. A brief summary of the assignments appears here, but please see the details for all three in the Appendix. I strongly encourage you to submit a rough draft of your paper(s) at least one week prior to the due date(s). I am happy to provide initial feedback on the direction of the paper if you get it to me far enough in advance. If you turn in any rough draft less than a week in advance, I will most likely not look at it.

**1st Writing Assignment:** The first writing assignment requires you to examine some data on terrorism to understand trends over time as well as some important, but under appreciated, facts about terrorism. This paper can be no more than 5 pages in length. The assignment is worth 10% of your grade.

**2nd Writing Assignment:** For this assignment, you will write a paper that researches a specific question about terrorism. The final paper will be no more than 15 pages (of text) and your grade will be based on a proposal, a rough draft, a final draft, and an oral presentation. The assignment is worth 30% of your final grade.

### 3.4 Exams

The midterm and final exams account for 50% of your final grade (20% for the midterm and 30% for the final). Both exams will consist of multiple choice, identifications, and essays. Closer to the exam dates, I will hand out more detailed information about preparing for, and taking, the exams.
3.5 Schedule of Important Dates

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed, Sep 7</td>
<td>Email about syllabus</td>
<td>Req.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed, Sep 21</td>
<td>Choose Research Question</td>
<td>Req.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon, Sep 26</td>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed, Oct 19</td>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>In Class</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed, Oct 26</td>
<td>2–3 page proposal</td>
<td>Req.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed, Nov 16</td>
<td>Draft of Assignment 2</td>
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<td>Wed, Dec 7</td>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon, Dec 12</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>2:30–5:30</td>
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<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>Class/Email</td>
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4 Course Policies

4.1 Make-up Exams and Assignments

No make-up exams or quizzes will be given unless either prior consent is obtained from the instructor or a valid excuse is obtained from the Dean of Students. I will consent to give makeup exams only in the case of a documented emergency or some other commensurate event.

Papers arriving late (i.e., later than 5 minutes into the class period) will be subject to a 1/3 grade reduction. For each successive late day, your grade will be reduced by 1/3 each day (i.e., an A will be lowered to an A− on the first day late, an A− to a B+ on the second day late, and so on). DO NOT turn in your papers (whether late or on time) by email OR by slipping them under my office door. If you turn in a paper late, you must take it to the Political Science Office (745 SWKT) and have one of the secretaries put a date/time stamp on it.

4.2 Assignment of Grades

Grades are assigned on the following scale: A = 94–100; A− = 90–93; B+ = 87–89; B = 84–86; B− = 80–83; ... F = 63 or lower. If you have a complaint about how your exam (or paper) was graded, I am happy to take a second look. You must type a formal appeal addressing the problem and explain clearly what you originally wrote, why you wrote it, and how you think your original response correctly answered the original question. Additionally, you must turn in the original exam (or paper) along with your typed appeal.

4.3 Prerequisite: PLSC 200

Political Science 200 is a prerequisite for all students in the class. The research paper assumes a knowledge of basic principles of scientific inquiry and students without that experience will be at a significant disadvantage.

4.4 Online Resources

The syllabus, all grades, paper topics, lecture outlines, and more will be posted on blackboard, which is accessible through the BYU homepage. Although the lecture outlines will be posted
here, do not assume that this exempts you from taking notes in class. The outlines will facilitate your note taking, but will not provide sufficient detail from which to study for exams.

4.5 Academic Integrity

**Plagiarism:** While all students sign the honor code, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite sources, especially in this new age of the internet; as well as deal with the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. Please know that as your professor I will notice instances of cheating on exams or plagiarizing on papers. See [http://www.byu.edu/honorcode](http://www.byu.edu/honorcode) for specific examples of intentional, inadvertent plagiarism, and fabrication, falsification.

Writing submitted for credit at BYU must consist of the student’s own ideas presented in sentences and paragraphs of his or her own construction. The work of other writers or speakers may be included when appropriate (as in a research paper or book review), but such material must support the student’s own work (not substitute for it) and must be clearly identified by appropriate introduction and punctuation and by footnoting or other standard referencing.

The substitution of another person’s work for the student’s own or the inclusion of another person’s work without adequate acknowledgment (whether done intentionally or not) is known as plagiarism. It is a violation of academic, ethical, and legal standards and can result in a failing grade not only for the paper but also for the course in which the paper is written. In extreme cases, it can justify expulsion from the University. Because of the seriousness of the possible consequences, students who wonder if their papers are within these guidelines should visit the Writing Lab or consult a faculty member who specializes in the teaching of writing or who specializes in the subject discussed in the paper. Useful books to consult on the topic include the current Harbrace College Handbook, the MLA Handbook, and James D. Lester’s Writing Research Papers.

4.6 Classroom Civility

Regrettably, a handful of students occasionally demonstrate insensitivity to other students and to instructors by disrupting classes unnecessarily. Arriving late for class, reading newspapers in class, packing up bags prior to the end of class, and cell phone use are all disruptive activities. Browsing the internet, checking email, and playing games on laptops are also inappropriate in class because you should be listening and participating. Certainly, taking notes on a laptop is appropriate, but do not waste your time or mine by getting distracted by other activities on the web. Moreover, I will not tolerate incivility of one opinion to another. It is exciting and healthy to exchange a diversity of opinions, but in no case should anyone demean another because of his or her viewpoint. If you have any questions about what classroom civility entails, please contact me.

4.7 Syllabus

Each of you needs to email me by Wed, Sep 7 to let me know that you have read through the syllabus and that you understand all that is required of you. Also, readings and assignments for this course may be changed on an ad hoc basis. For the most part this will not happen, but if so, I will give as much notice as possible.
4.8 Other Policies

**Discrimination:** Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU’s policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 422–5895 or 367–5689 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 422–2847.

**Access:** Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere which reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (2170 WSC, 422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the SSD office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Office at 422–5895, D–282 ASB.

5 Tentative Course and Reading Schedule

5.1 Aug 29: Syllabus

5.2 Aug 31, Sept 7: Defining / Conceptualizing Terrorism

- Martin: Chps 1 & 2
- Hoffman: 1–3; 20–41
- Schmid & Jongman 2008: 1–38
- Gottlieb: Chp 1; 1–33
- Definition simulation

5.3 Sept 12 & 14: History of Terrorism

- Martin: Pg 5–10
- Hoffman: 3–20; 43–80
- Rapaport 2004: 46–73
- Gottlieb: Chp 3; 67–99

5.4 Sept 19 & 21: Rational, Psychological, Sociological, Biological Theories

- Martin: Pg 89–102
- Crenshaw 1998: 7–24
• Lake 2002: 15–29
• Kydd and Walter, 2006: 49–79
• Thayer and Hudson, 2010: 37–62
• Victoroff 2005: 3–42
• Varian 2002: all
• Nisbett 2002: all
• Loehle 1990: all

5.5 Sept 26 & 28: Specific Causes of Terrorism (Democracy, Poverty, Security)
• Martin: Pg 75–86
• Crenshaw 1981: 379–399
• Findley and Young, 2011a: 357–378
• Findley and Young, Forthcoming: Rivalries (blackboard)
• Gottlieb: Chp 2: 34–66
• Piazza, 2008: 469–488
• Krueger & Maleckova 2003: 119–144
• Eubank and Weinberg 2001: 155–164
• Writing Workshop on the 28th

5.6 Oct 3 & 5: Rightist/Reactionary & Leftist/Revolutionary Terrorism
• Martin: Chp 7
• Schontech, 2004: 757–776
• Durham, 2003: 96–111
• Crenshaw, 1972: 383–396
• McClintock, 1984: 48–84
5.7 Oct 10, 12, & 17: Religious & Nationalist Terrorism

- Martin: Chp 6
- Hoffman, Chp 4: 81–130
- Byman, 1998: 149–169
- King 1998: 59–63
- Gottlieb: Chp 4: 100–130
- Piazza, 2009: 62–88
- Writing Workshop on the 17th

5.8 Wed, Oct 19: Midterm Exam

5.9 Oct 24: State (-Sponsored) Terrorism

- Martin: Chp 4
- Claridge, 1996: 47–63
- Wilkinson, 1981: 467–472
- Piazza and Walsh, 2010: 551–577

5.10 Oct 26 & 31: Terrorism and Civil War

- Martin: Chp 5
- Sambanis, 2008: 1–49
- Merari, 1993: 213–251
- Findley and Young, 2011b: terror/civil war (working paper on blackboard)
- Begin hostage crisis simulation

5.11 Nov 2 & 7: Organization, Tactics, and Targets

- Martin: Chp 10
- Martin: Chp 11
- Hoffman, Chp 5: 131–171
- Hoffman, Chp 8: 229–256
- Horowitz, 2010: 33–64
- Bloom, 2005: 76–100
- Sanderson, 2004: 49–61
• Gottlieb: Chp 5; 131–165
• Gottlieb: Chp 6; 166–200
• Hostage crisis simulation
• Writing Workshop on the 7th

5.12 Nov 9, 14, 16: Counterterrorism
• Martin: Chps 13
• Abrahms, 2006: 42–78
• Gottlieb: Chp 8; 235–271
• Davenport, Moore, & Armstrong, 2007: Puzzle of Abu Ghraib
• Gottlieb: Chp 11; 336–369
• Counterterrorism simulation

5.13 Nov 21, 28: Future of Terrorism
• Martin: Chps 14
• Hoffman, Chp 9: 257–295
• USIP report, 1999: 1–11
• Betts, 1998: 1–8
• Gottlieb: Chp 12; 370–395
• Hoffman, 2010: 17–27
• Edwards 2004: all
• Counterterrorism simulation finish

5.14 Nov 30, Dec 5 & 7: Research Paper Presentations
5.15 Dec 7: Final Papers (Assignment 2) Due
5.16 Final Exam — Monday, Dec 12, 2:30–5:30
References


A Tentative Paper Assignments

In what follows, I describe the assignments that you will need to complete for this course. Note that these may change somewhat, but I will give you advance notice. Before you work on each assignment, I will hand out any updates to clarify things that might be unclear in this version. The purpose of providing this now is so that you get a good sense of where we are going. I will also give other handouts throughout the semester on guidelines for writing and giving oral presentations. All papers need to be turned in by the beginning of class on the date they are due. I do not care what citation style you use, just be consistent and accurate. You need to upload each paper and assignment to blackboard rather than submitting a hard copy.

B Assignment 1: Trends in Terrorism

For this assignment, you need to conduct some research on current trends in terrorism. To do this, you need to obtain two data sets, one from the library and the other from the Inter-University Consortium of Political and Social Research (ICPSR), and do some very basic data analysis on global terrorism.

On the library’s website, search for a database with the following search term: “ITERATE”. It will bring up one option to download. Look through the contents of the dataset and find the Excel file that has terrorist events from the 1960s to 2002 together. For the second data set, go to ICPSR’s website and search for the “Global Terrorism Database, V. 1 (GTD 1) 1970–1997. You might have to create a username and login, but it is a free service for BYU students. You can download the data in one of several formats, so just choose the one that you’re most comfortable with. Please talk with me if you have any problems obtaining the data. I don’t want you to get hung up on getting the data — the purpose of the assignment is to learn about terrorist events, not how to download data. Once you have both data sets, please familiarize yourself with what they contain.

For the assignment, you need to obtain the following information from the data:

1. How is terrorism defined and measured in these data sets?

2. How many terrorist events are there (total) in each data set?
3. What is the average number of terrorist events per country in the time period given?

4. What is the average number of deaths per terrorist event?

5. What is the most common terrorist target?

Once you obtain these specific pieces of information, then I would like you to learn three other trends about terrorism in the world. You can choose other trends yourself, so long as they are not isolated facts.

Please write a 5 to 6 page paper that reports the results of your data searches both in brief tables as well as in the text. You should talk about each result and discuss what you thought about the trend prior to seeing the data, what your impressions are now that you have examined the trends, and why you think the trend exists. Further, please compare the results from both data sets and discuss any similarities and differences. Finally, please identify three possible research questions that you could address with these datasets.

The assignment is worth 10% of your final grade and is due on Monday, September 26.

C Assignment 2: Research Paper on Terrorism

C.1 Objective

As students of Political Science, there is often a strong emphasis on “consuming” knowledge that already exists. This is important. Equally important, however, we should learn to “produce” knowledge. For this assignment, you will write a paper addressing a specific research question on terrorism that will help you understand terrorism better and produce knowledge for the terrorism research and policy communities. I expect that papers completed for this class will be strong initial work for potential conference papers, honors theses, student journal publications, or writing samples for graduate school.

Because of time constraints, your research papers will be shorter than standard article-length research that appears in journals. I will help you choose manageable research questions that will allow you to focus on researching specific empirical material. One of the easiest approaches that I will encourage you to adopt is to carry out new empirical analysis on an existing research question. In other words, you might choose a research question for which strong theory already exists, but then test the question using a new data set or case studies. For example, a paper could address whether increasing education makes terrorism less likely. Existing research finds no support for this hypothesis. But existing research relies on a very limited spatial and temporal domain. Thus, a research paper could expand the set of cases or extend the time-period under consideration to understand whether past research is correct.

To provide some initial direction on possible projects, here are some topics/questions that have not been examined much in the literature on terrorism:

- Are “democratizing” countries more prone to terrorism?
- Does terrorism often induce genocidal violence?
- Does terrorism precede and encourage civil war onset?
- Are political leaders more likely to be voted out of office as terrorism increases?
• How do terrorist acts diffuse within countries?
• As the number of displaced people increases in a country, does terrorism also increase?
• Is transnational terrorism more brutal/lethal than domestic terrorism? Why?
• Does paramilitary violence increase as oppositional terror increases?
• Does inequality (as opposed to poverty alone) make terrorism more likely?
• Does torture increase or decrease future terrorism?

C.2 Faculty Consultation

Each of you should meet with me before September 21 to finalize your research question and to discuss writing strategies. We will also have writing workshops in class to help you with the research and writing process.

C.3 Proposal, Rough, and Final Drafts

A 2–3 page proposal is due on Oct 26 that summarizes the proposed paper as well as your initial progress. A rough draft of the full paper will be due on Nov 16. Because we need to have presentations on Nov 30th, Dec 5th and 7th, the strict penalty (outlined above) will be enforced. All assignments should be turned in through Blackboard. The final paper is due on Dec 7th at the beginning of class. It should be no more than 15 pages in length (text; longer with title/references), formatted consistently, written and proofread well, easy to read, should have a polished appearance, and contain extensive citations.

C.4 Oral Presentation

The last three days of class will be devoted to oral presentations of your research findings. You will have six minutes to present. If you go over the six minutes, I will penalize you. After the presentation, I expect the class to engage the research with questions, comments, critiques, etc. The presentation days should be some of the most lively and interesting of the semester. Use good presentation skills: be clear, be focused, be simple, and use overheads or visuals (carefully).

C.5 Grade Assignment and Schedule

The components of the research paper will be weighted as follows: final draft = 50%, rough draft = 25%, presentation = 15%, proposal=10%. To summarize, you need to complete the following:

1. You should meet with me by September 21
2. A 2–3 page proposal is due on Wednesday, Oct 26
3. A rough draft of the full paper is due on Nov 16
4. Presentations will occur on Nov 30th, Dec 5th and 7th
5. The final paper is due on Dec 7th
C.6 Paper Format

The paper should be no more than 15 pages of double-spaced text plus a title page and references. Please note that the final research paper should be structured as follows. (See both the bullet points and some general guidelines that I hand out to my capstone course that follow.)

1. Title Page (with Abstract)
2. Introduction (2 pages)
3. Literature Review (2 pages)
4. Theory (3 pages)
5. Research Design (2 pages)
6. Empirical Analysis (5 pages)
7. Conclusion (1 page)
8. References

C.6.1 Introduction and Literature Review

Introduction: The introduction and literature review sections are two of the most important parts of a research paper; they are also the sections on which writers spend the least time. If the author does not “hook” the reader by the first couple of pages, there is little chance the reader will endure to the end of the paper. This applies to academic, policy, and professional papers. Take any policy report and it typically has an “executive summary” at the beginning. But “hooking” the reader goes beyond an executive summary; it attempts to generate interest, and even enthusiasm, for reading the paper.

Coming up with a good puzzle makes a paper easier to sell. In your introduction, then, either begin explicitly with a question or try to frame the question as a puzzle, such as with the refugee question (see explanation of the Theory Section). Once the puzzle has been raised, the introduction could then briefly review what others have written about the topic with the goal of establishing that others have provided a less-than-satisfactory answer. For the refugee example, most literature focuses on individual decisions to migrate to a place with better conditions. Existing literature has a difficult time explaining why people frequently end up in less-optimal locations.

Having explained why other explanations are not satisfactory, the logical next step is to let the reader know that you have a novel solution. This is where you briefly summarize the theory you are offering. You need to emphasize how your theory and empirical analysis offer a solution to the puzzle in a way that others cannot. (Note: in order to talk about what your findings are, you need to edit the introduction after you do the research.) You should also highlight the theoretical and policy importance of your approach. Finally, you should end your introduction section with a concise “road map” of what is in the paper.

Literature Review: The literature review can also be structured a number of ways, but the most important objective for the literature review is to address how the scholarly literature provides insight into your question or puzzle. Although this sounds obvious, a literature review intended to address the puzzle on refugees would not want to cover everything that has ever
been written on refugees. Such a literature review would require several books, at the very least. Instead, the review might want to identify those works that are about refugee crises during civil war, individual decision-making in times of uncertainty, and individual decision-making in the context of social networks. This is still a lot. So only the most important and germane works within these categories should be addressed. Our tendency is always to over cite or to reach an acceptable number of citations without worrying about whether they fit. Once the domain is narrowed, other steps need to be taken to organize the section appropriately. The review could be organized by theoretical approaches (e.g., rational choice, constructivist), empirical findings (e.g., for or against the puzzle), levels of analysis (e.g., individual vs. collective), or phases in time (e.g., beginning of a war or refugee crisis vs. the end).

To reiterate, the most important objective is to incorporate an evaluative component. If you are making a contribution, there needs to be a hole in the current literature that you are addressing. And you need to point out that hole and show that your puzzle fills it. Examples of holes that you could address include: They did it wrong and I plan to do it better; They got it right, but I am going to extend their analysis to another domain (e.g., spatial or temporal); Nobody has addressed this question, but I am going to now; Others have offered a theory, but no one has tested it. Further, you will likely encounter all sorts of problems with other research, but you only want to critique those aspects that you plan to address and correct. The literature review should always end with a summary that transitions into the theoretical section.

Abstract: You should also turn in an abstract with this draft of your paper. An abstract is a short (100–200 word) summary of your research paper’s argument and evidence. It will develop as you conduct your research, but begin the abstract now based on your introduction, literature review, and theory. State your expectations about the findings until you have completed the empirical analysis.

C.6.2 Theory

Theoretical Models: A strong theoretical model is based on a causal question — not an abstract topic — about a relationship between two variables. The research question must also be accompanied by a good “story”. In other words, you should pose a good question, but go beyond that to offer a compelling argument that provides a rationale and answer to the question theoretically. The argument should be accompanied by your rationale and should offer expectations that can be tested using empirical data. Importantly, you need to identify, define, and articulate your key concepts. In writing about terrorism, for example, which of the several hundred definitions are you going with and why.

To come up with a question, I do not recommend that you read the academic literature too much. It is frustrating and usually not very helpful to consult the academic literature. Instead, read and follow Varian’s advice (http://people.ischool.berkeley.edu/hal/Papers/how.pdf) and read magazines and newspapers. Read about topics that interest you and think critically about what is being described. In an article on post-election violence in Kenya, for example, you might wonder whether a lack of democracy is motivating people to kill others. Or are ethnic leaders seeking to drum up support through violence? Let’s assume that it is a lack of democracy leading to violence; does this pattern occur in other countries? Is this a new phenomenon, or has this phenomenon occurred in previous decades? These are all examples of research questions that you might come up with from reading a single newspaper article. Ultimately, you will need to settle on one question and refine it so that it can be tested.
Puzzles: The most interesting research questions often come from “puzzles.” A puzzle is basically a research question, but one for which the answer is not immediately self-evident. A puzzle could also be an empirical phenomenon that deviates from what conventional theory would predict. The puzzle should bring to mind some possible explanations, but ones that would require further investigation and novel theoretical insights. One example of an interesting puzzle might be the following:

Civil wars frequently produce displacement crises as people flee from the instability and violence in their area. Yet, often people flee to countries and regions that are plagued with even more violence than what they experienced previously. Why wouldn’t these people flee to a location with more optimal conditions?

The key to the theoretical section is to have an answer to this question with a well-developed rationale and testable expectations. For this refugee example, a possible solution to the puzzle is that people cannot foresee the consequences of their decisions about where to flee, especially when violence is severe. People might only think about the immediate future and make decisions jointly within small social networks. As such, individual decisions might be optimal in the local context (e.g., if you’re going to flee, you should flee with family and friends), but the decisions might be suboptimal in the global context (e.g., your family and friends might be more concerned about getting away from violence than with figuring out their optimal destination).

Once you have a story along with a rationale, it is important to state expectations or hypotheses that can be tested. In the refugee example, at least a couple of hypotheses are possible:

**Hypothesis 1** The faster that violence diffuses geographically, the more likely it is that people will flee to suboptimal locations.

**Hypothesis 2** People are more likely to arrive in suboptimal locations, when they travel together with members of a social network.

Note that these hypotheses are falsifiable; that is, they might be right or wrong, and it is possible to determine which. You should try to identify as many expectations as possible that flow from your story. And be sure that these expectations are not contradictory — if so, you need to refine your theory. For example, could we reformulate Hypothesis 2 with a different expectation? Probably. This points to the need to refine the story and make it more precise. The importance of developing the logic and rationale for your argument cannot be understated. Think of possible counterarguments and preempt them. Think of the assumptions you are making and flesh them out. Think of as many implications as possible and attempt to address them. Note that you do not need to spend time reviewing the scholarly literature for this assignment — just come up with a compelling and interesting story.

C.6.3 Research Design

The research design section is where you detail how you plan to test your theory. It is usually the least interesting part of the paper, but also it is typically the easiest to criticize. In writing the research design, you’re primary goals should be to (1) match the empirical measures to the concepts in the theory and (2) make the empirical analysis replicable. 

**Testing the Theory:** Think about the theoretical model you have developed. What do you need to do to test the theory appropriately? You should not use certain data or study particular
cases just because the data are easy to obtain. Think about the nuts and bolts of the theory and about how they match to empirical referents. For example, what is the spatial-temporal domain? If your theory is about political violence following independence from colonialism, then you probably do not want to choose cases of violence that occurred only in the 2000s, even though data for those cases is more readily available than for cases in the 1950s and 1960s. Think about the key explanatory factors in your theory as well as what you’re trying to explain. Can you find appropriate measures to capture these factors. If you want to explain the onset of civil war worldwide, for example, is there a measure that applies universally across wars? OR if you are arguing that “blood diamonds” are instrumental in fueling civil wars, can you find data that distinguish “blood diamonds” from other types of diamonds. It is important that you convince the reader that your measures capture the theoretical concepts validly. The best way of convincing others is to cite appropriate research and materials that provide a justification for the approach you are choosing. Many other scholars have thought through similar issues and have come up with numerous solutions. Knowing the set of available solutions will help you choose the best approach, whether it be one of these solutions or a new one.

**Replication:** After finishing the research design section, the reader should be able to completely reproduce your results to verify your findings. This does not mean that you give the entire history of a dataset, but you should say where you obtain your data. You should describe the sources for the key variables. If you use statistical methods in your analysis, you should describe and justify the choice of statistical estimator. If you use case study methods, you need to justify your choice of cases and provide adequate source material so that someone could trace your steps and replicate the results.

**C.6.4 Findings**

In the findings section, you need to deliver on everything that you’ve promised in other parts of the paper. You should test every hypothesis you offer and evaluate the argument that you made as best as possible. Importantly, if the evidence you find does not support your theory, then this is okay. You should try very hard to come up with evidence supporting your theory, but if the evidence does not, you need to demonstrate that you understand what is contradictory and some possible reasons why.

**Statistical Analysis:** If you conduct statistical analysis, you should not report every model that you estimate. Report only the analyses that most directly test your theory. It is important to conduct robustness checks so that you know that your results are not overly sensitive to small changes in the model specification. You should conduct diagnostic tests as well, but do not report them aside from a possible footnote. Tables and figures are important to include, but be cautious. All tables and figures should be easy to understand and self-contained. In other words, if someone picks up the paper and only looks at the tables or figures, s/he should be able to understand them. It is also important to talk about only the key information in the tables. If you try to describe everything, then it will require too much space. With statistical analysis, it is vital that someone with no training in statistics be able to understand the results. This means that great care needs to be taken to explain everything clearly. It is also helpful to use case illustrations strategically to flesh out the statistical results.

**(Comparative) Case Studies:** One of the temptations with case studies is simply to describe the case in very thick detail. While this is occasionally appropriate, most of the time it is not. You should provide some narrative to give the reader background about the cases, but the bulk
of your time should be devoted to a careful evaluation of the hypotheses. It is frequently better to organize the discussion based on hypothesis, even if you jump back and forth between cases. The purpose behind discussing the cases is to provide support for the theory and so the theory should remain central. In order to be focused, state your conclusions up front and then flesh them out throughout the section.

C.6.5 The Final Product

The final paper is not simply a collection of the previous sections. It is important to go back to the beginning and be sure your introduction, literature, and theory fit with the findings you have. It is important that you evaluate all sections of the paper and edit them appropriately. In most cases, you will need to rewrite considerable portions of your paper. You should also update the abstract to reflect the final composition of the paper. As noted in the findings section, you might find contradictory evidence, which is fine, but you need to update the introduction to state this and justify it. You must have continuity across the sections so that the entire paper flows well and is consistent. Making the final product polished is crucial, furthermore, because many of you will use this paper as you apply to graduate school, seek employment, or publish in student journals.