Political Extremism

3700 392-005

Prof. Karl Kaltenthaler
Office: Olin 214
Tel: 972-8060
E-mail: kck@uakron.edu
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 1-3pm

Course Description

This course examines the causes and consequences of political extremism in democracies and failed democracies. The main questions addressed in the class are: Why do some individuals or organizations turn against democracy and want to replace it with a non-democratic system? What types of societies breed extremism? Why do they choose the methods that they do to achieve their goals? Under what conditions will they succeed and under what conditions will they fail?

Course Requirements

It is expected that each student will do the weekly readings. Although lectures will cover the readings, they may also cover material that is not in the readings; the student is responsible for the material in both the readings and the lectures. As participation is an important part of this class, be prepared to add to class discussion. This means coming to each class having read the material and being able to offer your input. Your grade in participation will be measured by your attendance, the frequency of your participation, the degree to which your participation shows you have read the class material, and have constructive insights for class discussion.

Participation in class can help your final grade. A student can get an 3 points added to their final class percentage for outstanding participation, 2 percentage point for good participation, and 1 point for very little participation, and 0 points for no active participation. Students can miss up to two days of class, unexcused, and not be penalized in their participation grade. Any days missed beyond the two allowed absences will be assessed a 1%/day penalty to your final class grade.

The course also requires three exams, including the final. The final will be comprehensive. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor, beforehand, if they are unable to fulfill any of the class responsibilities at the assigned time.
Class Debates

Toward the end of the semester, we will have series of class debates. In these debates, I will present a series of positions on the issue at hand. Then the class will debate the various positions presented. This is a great opportunity to get participation points! Students will be graded on the frequency of their participation during the debates was well as the cogency and clarity of their arguments.

The Topics:

1. Why do people turn against democracy?
2. What do people turn to terrorism?
3. Why do people become xenophobic?
4. What should governments do to combat anti-system groups?

Reading

All readings will be on Springboard.

Breakdown of grading:

Three exams: 25% each
Debate Participation: 25%

Daily Schedule

Part One: Political Extremism: Why do Political Parties Turn Against Democracy?

Jan 9: No Class

Jan 11: Introduction: What is Political Extremism?
I. Extremism and the Collapse of Democracy in Historical Perspective

Communism


Jan 16: No Class (MLK Day)

Jan. 18: Communism in the USSR (Barghoorn and Remington, chp 1)

Jan 20: The Fall of Communism in the USSR (McFaul “The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship)

Fascism

Jan 23: Theories of Fascism (Paxton “The Five Stages of Fascism”)  

Jan. 25: Italian Fascism (Keserich “The Fiftieth Year if the March on Rome”)  

Jan. 27: The Rise of German Nazism (Brown “The Nazi Vote”)  

Jan. 30: The Nazi State (Sauer “National Socialism: Totalitarianism or Fascism?”)  

Feb 1: The Holocaust (Goldhagen “Re-casting the View of Anti-Semitism”)  

Feb 3: Undoing Nazism (Napoli “Denazification from an American’s Viewpoint”)  

Feb 6: Japanese Fascism/Militarism (Kasza “Fascism from Below?”)  

Feb 8: Undoing Fascism in Japan (Sunoo “The Occupation”)  

Feb 10: Exam 1

II. The Modern Radical Right

Feb. 13: Theories of the Rise of the Radical Right (Norris “Understanding the Radical Right”)  

Feb. 15: Who is the Extreme Right in Europe? (Kitschelt “The Authoritarian Right Against the Libertarian Left”)

Feb. 17: The Extreme Right in India (Andersen “Bharatiya Janata Party”)
Feb. 20: **The Extreme Right in Britain and the U.S.** (Matas “The Extreme Right in the United Kingdom and France;” Scheinberg “Right-wing Extremism in the United States”)

Feb 22: **Research Day**

**III. The Modern Radical Left**

Feb. 24: **The Rise of Communism in Advanced Industrialized Societies** (Greene “The Communist Parties of Italy and France”)

Feb. 27: **The Demise of Communism in Advanced Industrial Democracies?** (Brzezinski “Part IV: Discredited Praxis”)

**Part Two: Terrorism; Extremism in Violent Form**

**I. Theories of Terrorism**

Feb. 27: **Types of Terrorism** (No reading)

Feb. 29: **Societal Sources of Terrorism** (Crenshaw “The Causes of Terrorism;” Ross “Structural Causes of Oppositional Political Terrorism”)

March 2: **Who is a terrorist?** (tba)

Mar 5: **Exam 2**

**II. Terrorism in the Post-War Era**

March 7: **Italian Terrorism** (Pisano ”The Red Brigades”)

March 9: **German Terrorism** (Horchen “Germany’s Red Army Anarchists”)

March 12-16: **Spring Break**

March 19: **the IRA** (Addis, Chps. 3 and 4)

March 21: **the ETA** (Janke “Spanish Separatism”)

March 23: **American Terrorism** (Scheinberg “Right-wing Extremism in the United States (re-read));

March 26: **Japanese Terrorism** (Kuriyama “Terrorism at Tel Aviv Airport and a New Left Group in Japan”)
March 30: **The Tamil Tigers** (Pfaffenger “The Cultural Dimensions of Tamil Separatism in Sri Lanka”)

April 2: **the Turkish PKK** (Brown “The Turkish Imbroglio”)

April 4: **Israeli terrorists** (Sprinzak “Extremism and Violence in Israel”)

April 6: **Why does terrorism seem to be dying in Western democracies?** (Ross and Gurr “Why Terrorism Subsides”)

April 9: **Hamas** (Mishal and Sela, Introduction and Chp.1)

April 11: **No class (conference)**

April 13: **No Class (conference)**

April 16: **Al Qaeda** (Wiktorowicz “The New Global Threat: Transnational Salafis and Jihad.”)

April 18: **Pakistani Jihadis** (Abbas, Chp. 9)

April 20: **Hezbollah** (Jaber Chp. 2)

April 23: **the FARC** (tba)

April 25: **Class Discussion: Why do people turn against democracy?**

April 27: **Class Discussion: Why do people turn to terrorism?**