Introduction and Description

Politics is about conflict but not all political conflict is the same. Most of what you study in political science courses is conflict occurring within the framework of a legal order; however, there is another order of conflict that we categorize as contentious politics.

Contentious politics involves advancing claims on the state or some non-state actor to recognize rights, cede privileges, or remove some disability or burden, or some combination of the foregoing. Although contentious politics can take place in and through established state institutions, they are more commonly associated with disruptive, confrontational, conflictive actions, usually involving direct contact between whoever makes the claim and the state or, less frequently, the third or nonstate party referred to above. Further, contentious politics are often linked to political protest and movement politics.

Contentious politics thus are identified with politics carried on outside normal channels by political actors who are not part of the established power structure, using unconventional methods, and with objectives that elites may deem illegitimate. Those who use contentious political action to advance their claims may break the law in doing so but they can also carry on their work within legal bounds. Indeed, they can combine legal and illegal action.

Using contentious politics usually implies attempting to offset official or entrenched power. This further implies that entrenched power is used to the detriment of those advancing their claims contentiously. It also suggests that those using these methods insist on making their claims themselves. They may do so because they do not trust others to represent them or because they think it imperative to speak for themselves.

In general, it is reasonable to begin an examination of contentious politics hypothesizing that those making the claims have found the political system impermeable. Permeability refers to the ease with which someone wishing to make a claim on government can get a hearing, build a coalition, and secure the reforms thought necessary. Where a political system is not very permeable, those making claims often have to use forceful, even violent means to get action.

In POSC 4360 we examine two things. One is how political science and the social sciences more generally currently conceive of and study the various facets of political contention. The other is a selection of the forms contentious politics can take.

Texts

Tilly, Charles, and Sidney Tarrow, Contentious Politics
Bøås, Morten, and Kevin C. Dunn, African Guerrillas.
Davis, Mike, Buda’s Wagon.
O’Kane, Rosemary, Terrorism
Students should check Amazon.ca and Chapters to compare prices before buying their texts.

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*If enrolment is too high (usually <12) to permit presentation the 10 marks will be divided equally between the term paper and the final paper.

Tilly and Tarrow provide a complex framework for analyzing contentious politics. How does their approach differ what you see on TV or read in the papers about protests, social movements, or other forms of disruptive politics? How is it different from how we study routine phenomena, such as elections?

Assignment 2, due on date set for final examination:

Car bomb attacks by both revolutionaries and terrorists. Should we be surprised to see a single attack in the West Bank? How does the method used differ? How does the violence used in the West Bank differ from the violence used in the Middle East? How does the violence used by revolutionaries differ from the violence used by terrorists? How does the violence used in the West Bank differ from the violence used in the Middle East?

Details:

- Exam period: 20%
- Last two weeks: 10%
- November 12: 40%
- October 15: 10%
- Final Paper: 20%

Short Papers: These are think-piece papers (TPP). They should be no more than 5 pages, 1,500 words in length. The questions specify only one or two books, you are encouraged to consult more widely and use other sources. How you structure a TPP is up to you. However, you must follow academic conventions and cite sources. The exercises ask you to think. They demand more than the recitation of facts, although you clearly must have your facts right, too. Further, although the method used for different ends does exist, it may appear only to the regime is democratic.

Further, if you are not used to using explanatory footnotes this is a good opportunity to start.
**Term Papers and Proposals**

Proposals for fourth-year political science courses

The Basics
What proposals do not do: actually execute a study
What all proposals do:

(1) explain why a study is being done;

(2) note what prior studies of similar phenomena have said, found, and done;

(3) say what the study will include and exclude, and explain why;

(4) indicate how you will do the study – what data you need, how you will get it, and how you will process it into meaningful results; where appropriate, include research instruments;

(5) suggest what the study will tell us about some broader issue;

(6) include an outline that shows how the work will be structured, remembering that this is subject to change;

(7) provide a good bibliography, not exhaustive, but more than minimally indicative.

This is where a proposal for a term paper will usually stop. Others will go further to do the following, as well:

(8) present a plan of work, a rough schedule of when the various steps in the proposed work will be done;

(9) in a proposal that seeks funding, give good estimates of costs;

(10) address any questions of research ethics.

Setting up a proposal
There are many formats but all go through essentially the same steps. The length guidelines are appropriate for a 5 or 6-page term paper proposal. Honours essay and thesis proposals are necessarily somewhat longer, perhaps 10-15 pages, exclusive of literature reviews and methodological appendices.

- *Presentation of Topic*: This is more than just the title. You should have a paragraph or two describing why the topic is important and interesting. This means putting in somewhat formal language what it is about the topic that makes it worth treating.
· **The State of the Literature:** What have others said about this topic, broadly conceived? What angles have they taken when examining this theme? Has the general approach to the issue changed over time or has it remained the same? You may be asked to do a brief literature review. If so, this will be discussed in class. You do not have to have an exhaustive review in your proposal but you must have examined enough of the scholarly literature, as well as other appropriate literature, to have a sense what has gone before. This will be the longest part of your proposal.

· **Hypotheses/Research Questions:** What do you want to find out? If you can ask a question that can be answered with a yes or a no, you have a hypothesis. If the question is more open-ended, you have a research question. These are equally valid approaches. The important thing is to have a reasonable idea of what you are looking for. Remember that longer studies may well have secondary hypotheses or research questions.

· **Scope:** The scope sets out the precise focus of the study. For example, if you wanted to study insurgency in Peru in the 1990s, you would have to indicate whether you were going make Sendero Luminoso your main theme, or whether you were instead going to examine the state’s response too.

· **Methods:** Here we are really talking about a mix of secondary (articles and books) and primary (newspapers or documents) printed sources. It is unlikely that you will use interviews or surveys here, but in other proposals you might. In theses you would see a wider range of methods used.

· **Outline:** This is not the most important part of the proposal, but it is still necessary. An outline shows the order in which you propose to treat the various themes and sub-themes of your paper.

· **Annotated Bibliography, Preliminary:** This should have ten to fifteen sources, articles and books, plus documents where these are being used. The annotation need not be long, only a sentence or two. This will help you evaluate you sources.

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**Term Paper**

This is a conventional, fourth-year paper. Thus it will about 5000 words in length and use conventional citation and bibliographic forms. The topic is open; however, it must fall within the general confines of the course.

Possible themes

- Movement politics in Canada: farmers, fishers, nationalists, indigenous people, women, environmentalists, gays, etc. This can be a case study or a broader comparison.
- Counter-movement politics
- Framing contentious politics: how protest politics present themselves and how the media presents them
- Transnational movements
- Movements, protest, and policy
• Effects of technology on contentious politics
• Guerrillas: case studies of successful, semi-successful, or failed movements. A comparison of a successful and a failed movement would be welcome.
• Are guerrillas necessarily terrorists? Can they be terrorists?
• Case studies of rebellion and revolution.
• Violence as a political instrument: the challengers
• State responses to contentious politics
• American counterinsurgency from the Philippines to Iraq
• Is terrorism political?
• Terror as an instrument of contemporary political contention

**Presentation**
If numbers permit, students will present a short, 10-minute, summary of their research to the class during the last two weeks of the semester. This should note the research question, the sources used, and the findings and conclusions. If Power Points are used, limit them to four (4) pages, with no more than seven (7) points per page. My object is to teach you how to make a brief presentation that covers key points.

**Outline**

**Topic I: A Framework**
Tilly and Tarrow, entire book
Davis, pp. 1-17

Questions: How and why did T&T develop this framework/? Why do they present it as they do?

**Topic II: Contentious Politics I: Protest, Insurgency, and Revolution**

A. Protest

Lukes, S., *Power*, 11-25, R


Historic Cases:
Canadian agrarian radicalism;

Contemporary Examples: Readings TBA
Iran, 2009 elections
Honduras, 2009 response to coup
Urban unrest France, 2005-2006 youth riots
Questions: Where are today’s movements? Has the nature of protest politics changed?

B. **Insurrection and Revolution**

   Boas and Dunn, chs. 1-4; 7-8; 11-12

   Sanderson, S. *Revolutions*. Chs. 1, 4-5. R

   Davis, 18-96

   Question: How should we define a revolution? Why do insurgencies occur? Are all guerrilla movements the same?

**Topic 3: Contentious Politics 2—Terrorism**

O’Kane, entire Book

Davis, 97-195

**Suicide bombing**


Hagegeman, M., 2008, “The Next Generation of Terrorists,” *Foreign Policy*, 15\65 (Mar-Apr), 36-42; online through Library

**Death squads**
