

PS 449
Topics in Comparative Politics:
Revolution and Political Violence
Spring 2001

http://www.orst.edu/Dept/pol_sci/fac/henderson/sarah.htm

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Social Science 315
Office hours: M 3 – 4:30; T 12- 1; W 3 – 4; or by appointment
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Course Description

Understanding why certain governments fall at the hands of their own people is a topic that has fascinated scholars for over 4000 years. The study of revolution and political violence encompasses a dizzying array of actions of rebellion, violence, protest, resistance and repression against a historical backdrop fraught with conflict. The purpose of this course is to cover the range of contentious politics, from protest to revolution, in an attempt to understand the dynamics of protest and revolutionary movements. We will also be looking at specific historical figures and events to illuminate the themes of this class. In doing so, we will try to answer much broader questions. Why have rebellions and revolutions occurred when and where they have (and not in other times and places)? Why would ordinary people support a revolutionary movement? Why do some revolutionary movements succeed in bringing about fundamental social change while others fail?

This class is fundamentally about theories of revolution and political violence; hopefully by the end of the term you will have a greater understanding about the how, when, and why of revolution, rebellion and protest. What you learn about the Russian Revolution, Malaysian peasant revolts, or Bolivian guerillas is more important than memorizing the events themselves. By the end of this class, you should be able to read about a conflict and understand the different ways in which a scholar might interpret the events, and what this tells us about power and the distribution of power among contending groups fighting for influence and control.

Required readings

All reading in this class is mandatory. If you merely come to class, but do not do the reading, you will not pass. You should purchase three books, either at the OSU bookstore, or through the Internet (i.e. amazon.com). One copy of each book is also on reserve at the Valley Library.

Eduard M. Dune, *Notes of a Red Guard*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993.

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.

You will also read a substantial selection of articles and book chapters, available on reserve.

Evaluation

Participation and attendance (20%).

I have two expectations of my students: they should come to class, and they should be prepared to discuss aspects of the reading. If you come to class and also participate, this is an easy A.

However, if you have difficulty with either of these tasks, please read the much more technical discussion below.

There are no “excused” or “unexcused” absences; you are either in class or you are absent.

The class participation grade will be decided along the following criteria:

- A** Regular participation several times a week and no more than 1 absence.
OR
Perfect attendance.

- B** Regular participation at least once a week and no more than 3 absences.
OR
No more than 2 absences.

- C** Sporadic participation several times throughout the quarter and no more than 5 absences.
OR
No more than 4 absences.

- D** 6-7 absences (no matter how much you speak up).

- F** 8 or more absences.

Reading journal (30%). Due by 9 AM (one hour before class), starting on Wednesday, April 4. You may e-mail your essay, but **DO NOT** send it as an attachment.
15 entries.

For each class, you will write a brief, 1- 1.5 page commentary/response to the reading. This will be used to guide class discussion. You may address any of the following topics:

- What is your opinion of the reading? I do not want to read nonacademic commentary such as “I liked it;” “I didn’t like it;” or “it was boring.” Rather, think about what the reading was able to explain or what it overlooked.
- How do the ideas in this work challenge, stretch, or violate your usual ways of thinking?
- Assess the argument. How does the writer support his or her claims? How convincing is the evidence?
- Respond to some major point or quotation from the work, explaining why it is significant to the work as a whole.
- What connection does this work have to you? To your education? To your ideas?
- How does the reading relate to other articles we have read? How do they engage in a dialogue?

All entries MUST end with a point you want to raise/discuss in class (this can be a sentence long).

These entries will be graded as a check plus, a check, or a check minus as follows:

√+ Shows particular insight/engagement/intellectual commitment. Entries are provocative, spirited, lively, and varied. Entries regularly try to stretch or to pose questions which engage the student but for which the student may have no easy answer.

√ Shows normal, expected intellectual involvement. Entries tend to focus on summarizing the reading rather than exploring it, or tend to repeat the themes discussed in class.

√- Shows substandard or obviously hasty comment. Entries are brief, and indicate that not all the reading has been accomplished. Entries seem cursory, and the result of coercion rather than interest.

Short papers (50%).

Learning to write and improving your writing skills are two essential aspects of your academic college experience. Therefore, I have three longer writing assignments strategically placed throughout the term. If you look through your syllabus, you will notice that the class is divided into sections. At the end of each section, you will have a short paper due. I strongly encourage you to turn in rough drafts for your papers. I will accept rough drafts until 4 PM the Wednesday before the due date.

3-4 page essay (10%). Due Friday, 4 PM, April 20.

5-6 page essay (20%). Due Friday, 4 PM, May 11.

5-6 page essay (20%). Due Friday, 4 PM, June 1.

All writing assignments must be:

- **typed**
- **double-spaced**
- **12-inch font**
- **proofread and spell checked**
- **with 1 inch margins**

Journal entries must be handed in on time, otherwise you will receive a zero for that entry.

Late papers (even an hour late) are penalized a grade a day (A/A-/B+). I count Saturdays and Sundays as late days.

I do not give incompletes.

Please notify me within the first week of class if you have any alternative needs as a result of a learning disability. This must be accompanied by medical documentation.

Purchasing or plagiarizing someone else's work for the paper will result in an F for the class and a potential end to your college career. Don't do it!

LECTURE TOPICS AND READINGS

Part I: Theory

April 2

- Introduction – no reading due today

April 4

- Ted Gurr, Chapter 10, "Causes and Processes of Political Violence: A Conclusion," in *Why Men Rebel*. Reading packet.

April 9

- Samuel Huntington, Chapter 5, "Revolution and Political Order," in *Political Order in Changing Societies*. Reading packet.

April 11

- Charles Tilly, Chapters 1 and 7, in *From Mobilization to Revolution*. Reading packet.

April 16

- Theda Skocpol and Ellen Kay Trimberger, “Revolutions and the World-Historical Development of Capitalism,” in *Social Revolutions of the Modern World*. Reading packet.
- Theda Skocpol, “France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions,” in *Social Revolutions of the Modern World*. Reading packet.

April 18

- Jack A. Goldstone, Chapters 1 and 6, in *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*. Reading packet.

Part II: The Russian Revolution**April 23**

- Sheila Fitzpatrick, Introduction and Chapter 1, *The Russian Revolution*.
- Barbara Alpern Engel and Clifford N. Rosenthal, eds., “Vera Figner,” *Five Sisters: Women against the Tsar*. Reading packet.

April 25

- Engel and Rosenthal, eds., “Olga Liubatovich,” *Five Sisters*. Reading packet.

April 30

- Fitzpatrick, Chapter 2, *The Russian Revolution*.
- Eduard M. Dune, Part I, *Notes of a Red Guard*.

May 2

- Fitzpatrick, Chapter 3, *The Russian Revolution*.
- Eduard M. Dune, Part II, *Notes of a Red Guard*.

May 7

- Fitzpatrick, Chapters 4 and 5, *The Russian Revolution*.
- Pasha Angelina, “The Most Important Thing,” in Sheila Fitzpatrick and Yuri Slezkine, eds., *In the Shadow of Revolution: Life Stories of Russian Women from 1917 to the Second World War*. Reading packet.

May 9

- Fitzpatrick, Chapter 6, *The Russian Revolution*.
- Ekaterina Olitskaya, “My Reminiscences,” in Sheila Fitzpatrick and Yuri Slezkine, eds., *In the Shadow of Revolution*. Reading packet.

Part III: Peasant Rebellions**May 14**

- TBA

May 16

- James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, Chapters 1 and 2.

May 21

- James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, Chapters 3 and 4.

May 23

- James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, Chapters 5 and 6.

May 28

- James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, Chapters 7 and 8.

May 30

- Mark I. Lichbach, "What Makes Rational Peasants Revolutionary? Dilemma, Paradox, and Irony in Peasant Collective Action." *World Politics* 46 (April 1994), 383-418. Reading packet. Also available online (with a campus connection) at www.jstor.org.

Guerilla Warfare**June 4**

- "Introduction," from *Che: Selected Works of Ernesto Guevara*. Reading packet.

June 6

- Che Guevara, "Guerilla Warfare: A Method." Reading packet.