

The Politics of Revolution: State Violence  
and Insurgency in the Third World

This course is an introduction to twentieth century revolutions in the third, or agrarian world. The purpose of the course is to acquaint you with several instances of revolution, and to encourage you to use theory to investigate and explain at least one of those instances or a specific theme in one or several instances.

The course has two broad goals. The first is to understand the origins, growth, and victory of peasant-based revolutions. In pursuing this goal, we will address the question of why rural people have been willing to die in revolution, and you will be expected to answer from the experiences of peasant cultures as well as your own. We also are interested in why the insurgent champions of basic human rights have sometimes turned into violent abusers of such rights in the course of revolutionary struggles and victories.

The second goal is to weigh the utility of several contending theoretical approaches to peasantry and revolution. Here we will pay special attention to those theories which best illustrate revolutionary causes, processes, and outcomes. The course also deals with cases where active rebellion has not produced a revolutionary victory (the Philippines, Colombia, Peru) as well as the cases of revolutionary success (China, Cuba, and Vietnam).

This course focuses almost entirely on the emergence of resistance and revolution in the world beyond the West, and includes the political experiences of country dwellers in Mexico, Columbia, Peru, China, Algeria, Cuba, Vietnam, the Philippines, Nepal, Afghanistan, etc. We will, however, discuss one case of "peasant revolt" in the West with an eye toward exploring the utility of non-Western traditional vs. Western modern dichotomies.

**There will be a two part out of class take home mid-term exam (50% of your grade), and one ten page term paper (50% of your grade).**

**The dates for the two part out of class take home mid-term exam will be announced in class, and you will have ample time to prepare each.**

**I will guide your choice of the term paper topic. You are urged to attend class on a regular basis to make the most of my guidance. A 2-5 page outline of your term paper topic is**

**Required.** The outline should state the topic, articulate the thesis or hypothesis you are exploring, and list the sources you have read or you intend to read. I will review your term paper outline and return it to you with comments and suggestions. The final ten page version of your term paper is due in class on Tuesday June 30. Late papers will incur a grade penalty, so be sure that you turn your paper in on time.

In addition to the key readings listed below, we also will view and discuss several films on dissent, resistance, and rebellion from below. Please do not purchase your books until after the first class meeting.

There are four required (Req) books, and two recommended readings:

1. Frederic Engels, The Peasant War in Germany (Req.)
2. E.J. Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels (Recommended.)
3. B. Traven, Government (Req.)
3. James C. Scott, The Moral Economy of the Peasant (Req.)
4. Eric Wolf, Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century (Req.) (Read the introduction, 2 case studies of your choice, and the conclusion.)
5. Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (Recommended)

Recommended Readings:

John Walton, Reluctant Rebels

John Womack, Zapata and the Mexican Revolution

Ben Kerkvliet, The Huk Rebellion

Ranajit Guha, Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India

Steven J. Stern, ed., Shining and Other Paths

Order of Readings

I. Defining and Conceptualizing Revolution: Key Issues In the Course

Engels, The Peasant War in Germany (All).

II. Introduction to Peasantry and Everyday Forms of Resistance in the Third World

Rene Dumont, "Agriculture as Man's Transformation of the Rural Environment." pp. 141-149 and Basile Kerblay, "Chayanov and the Theory of Peasantry as a Specific Type of Economy," pp. 150-160 in Theodore Shanin, ed., Peasants and Peasant Societies.

James C. Scott and Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet (eds.) "Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance in Southeast Asia," Journal of Peasant Studies, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1986, pp. 1-34.

R. Guha, Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India (Rec., All)

B. Traven, Government (All)

III. Peasant Rebellions: Uprisings of the Powerless (LOSERS)

Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels (All).

IV. Half-Way Houses: Banditry

E. J. Hobsbawm, Bandits (Rec.)

V. Rebellion, Subsistence, and Remedialist Politics

Scott, The Moral Economy of the Peasant (All)

VI. Accommodations with the State: Repression and Reforms  
(NEITHER LOSERS NOR WINNERS)

Wolf, Peasant Wars (Mexico). (Recommended)

Or

John Walton, Reluctant Rebels, Chapter 2 on the Huk Rebellion in the Philippines;

Or Chapter 3 on La Violencia in Colombia; or Chapter 4 on the Mau Mau Revolt in Kenya. (Recommended)

VII. Violence and Revolutionary Warfare in the Third World

Wolf, Peasant Wars (China, Algeria, Cuba).

Fanon, Wretched of the Earth (Rec.)

Guevara, Episodes in the Revolutionary War, (Rec.)

Linda L. Reif, "Women in Latin American Guerrilla Movements," in Comparative Politics, January, 1986, vol. 18. no. 2, pp. 147-165. (Rec.)

VIII. Some "Free World" Perspectives on Counterinsurgency in the Rural Third World

E. Rice, Wars of the Third Kind: Conflict in Underdeveloped Countries, pp. 1-156. (Rec.)

Col. David H. Hackworth and Julie Sherman, About Face, pp. 717-738, 775. (Rec.)

R. Reagan, Speech on Contras, New York Times, March 17, 1984. (Rec.)

IX. Revolutionary Victories: Have the "Peasants" Really Made Them? (WINNERS)

Wolf, Peasant Wars (China, Vietnam, Cuba and Russia.)

Walton, Reluctant Rebels, Chapter 1

X. Revolutionary Causes and Consequences

Wolf, Peasant Wars (Conclusion).

Walton, Reluctant Rebels, Chapters 5 and 6. (Recommended)

XI. Theory and the State

Theda Skocpol, "What Makes Peasant Revolutionary," Comparative Politics, April, 1982.

Joseph Tharamangalam, "Indian Peasant Uprisings: Myth and Reality," in The Journal of Peasant Studies, vol. 13, No. 3, 1986.

Ralph A. Thaxton, Jr., Salt of the Earth: The Political Origins of Peasant Protest and Communist Revolution In China, University of California Press, 1997, Chapters 1-2, and Conclusion.

XII. Rebellion and Insurgency In the Age of Globalization and Terror

Some Concluding Remarks and Reflections

Additional Basic Books/Recommended for Assistance with your Term Paper Research:

1. John Walton, Reluctant Rebels: Comparative Studies of Revolution and Underdevelopment
2. Jack Goldstone, ed., (3rd edition) Revolution: Theoretical, Comparative and Historical Studies
3. E. J. Hobsbawm, Bandits
4. Emmanuel LeRoy Ladurie, Carnival in Romans
5. Walter Lafeber, Inevitable Revolutions
6. Edgar E. Rice, Wars of the Third Kind
7. Samuel Popkin, The Rational Peasant
8. Doug Macadam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, eds., Dynamics of Contention
9. Ronald R. Aminzade, et al, Silence and Voice In the Study of Contentious Politics

10. Barrington Moore, Jr., Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant In the Making of the Modern World

Suggested Academic Journals

1. Journal of Peasant Studies
2. Peasant Studies
3. Comparative Studies in Society and History
4. Theory and Society
5. Comparative Politics

Films We Will View:

1. Braveheart, Mel Gibson (On Scotland)
2. The Heroin Wars, Parts I, II, & III (On Burma)
3. Obstinate Memory (On Chile)
4. A Man Called Juan Carlos (On Guatemala)
5. A Film on China~TBA