Syllabus: RPOS 787 & RPOS 787R: Researching Repression, Contention And Inclusion

Instructor: Victor Asal
Office Hours  Milne 300b  Friday 10am -11 am or by appointment  vasal@albany.edu or 518 591 8729
Class time: 11am - 2:30   (but class will not meet every week)
Classroom: Milne 215

This class will focus on “Researching Repression, Contention and Inclusion” as a collaborative effort to deepen our knowledge of these areas but also to advancing research agendas in a productive way. The class will not meet every week and if it is successful there may be a possible extension in the spring. The goal of the class will be a collaborative effort for each student to either produce a publishable paper (which can be co-authored) or a finished or a chapter of your dissertation. Students will commit to reading material this summer and so that almost all of the effort in the class will focus on moving each student’s research efforts forward.

Topics

- Research interest introduction and literature review with focus on contention- specifically terrorism
- The challenges of being an academic rather than a scholar (i.e. how to actually finish and get published). Focus will be on inclusion
- Getting from Idea to Article - where do ideas come from and how do they get to be articles with a focus on government repression
- Research brainstorming and data collection- reading to be determined collectively
- Getting from Idea to Article - where do ideas come from and how do they get to be articles with a focus on government repression

Objectives of the Course: By the end of the course students should have:

1. An understanding of some of the key literature in the area
2. Knowledge of the process by which research worthy – and research do-able ideas can be identified and worked with
3. Knowledge of the research production process and the review process
4. Increased understanding of social science research through participation in a terrorism research project.
5. The opportunity to contribute through original work to research in this area.

Course Requirements

Assignments

- 50% Participation
  - The course will be taught in a seminar fashion built around the class working as a team to facilitate individual productivity. This means that we will all be dependent on the efforts of others and participation will determine the success of the learning experience. Participation is more than attendance; it includes active and thoughtful participation in all elements of the class.
participation is dependent on a thorough reading of the material and comments on peer’s work.

- 50%- Final project (can be more than one person)
  - The final project can be publishable paper (which can be co-authored) or a finished or a chapter of your dissertation

**Questions.** Education is about learning. This class is about material you have probably not covered before in this context. If you have questions or things are unclear – ask questions. Ask them in lecture and feel free to call (if I am in my office at 10pm I will answer the phone) or email the instructor whenever to ask for further clarification. This includes any problems you might have about e-reserve or any other technical aspect of the course.

**Accommodations:** “Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please notify the Director of Disabled Student Services (Campus Center 137, 442-5490). That office will provide the course instructor with verification of your disability, and will recommend appropriate accommodations ([http://www.albany.edu/studentlife/dss/Accommodation.html](http://www.albany.edu/studentlife/dss/Accommodation.html)).” If you wish to discuss academic accommodations for this course please also inform the instructor as soon as possible. In addition, the instructor will make every effort to accommodate difficulties arising from religious observance. You are asked to bring any possible conflicts to the instructor's attention as soon as possible. Students should not expect that, if they do poorly on an exam or other assignment, to claim, at that time, the need of an accommodation. This statement is to preclude that problem, and allow people with a need for accommodations to be treated fairly and appropriately.

**Plagiarism** Please familiarize yourself with the description in the undergraduate bulletin [http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/2003-2004/regulations.html](http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/2003-2004/regulations.html) if you are involved in plagiarism the penalty will be failure in the course and you will be reported to judicial affairs. **In this one regard there are no second chances.** If you are not sure if something violates standards – ask. If you are not sure whether to cite or not to cite – cite. Every Student is expected to go through the following tutorial [http://library.albany.edu/usered/plagiarism/index.html](http://library.albany.edu/usered/plagiarism/index.html)

**Office hours.** Office hours are your opportunity to get personalized guidance for assignments as well as help better understanding the course material. Take advantage of it. If office hours are not at a good time for you then please email me your phone number and we will call you to set up a time that works in order to meet.

**Ombudsperson** “A government official, especially in Scandinavian countries, who investigates citizens’ complaints against the government or its functionaries ([www.answers.com](http://www.answers.com)).” One student will be asked to volunteer to act as an ombudsperson and will meet with me on a regular basis to offer feedback from students in terms of the direction the course is going and bring to my attention any problems with reading, assignments or other material.
Assignments before class:
- Each student will identify a research area of interest and begin to read in that area
- Each student should send out an email to everyone else in the class answering the following questions:
  1) What is the best work of political science/public policy/public administration that I have read – and why?
  2) What is the worst work of political science/public policy/public administration that I have read – and why?
  3) What is your goal for the course – write a prospectus, write an article, or make progress on your dissertation (i.e. you have already defended your dissertation)?
  4) What is the topic of your project (and this is not written in stone but so have some idea about the topic).
  5) What do you think is the best work you have read on this topic?
  6) What do you think is the worst work you have read on this topic?
  7) What do you recommend as the best review of the literature on your specific topic of interest
  8) Methodologically do you want to do your work using qualitative, Boolean quantitative or some mixed strategy?
  9) List some general topics of interest to you in terms of research

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<th>All classes on Friday</th>
<th>CLASS TOPICS</th>
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| 9/7/2012              | **Topic:** Research interest introduction and literature review with focus on contention-specifically terrorism  
  We will go over some of the terrorism literature and specifically discuss:  
  - Effective ways to do a literature gathering effort  
  - Key factors in doing an effective literature review  
  - Key literature review resources and tricks. Please email me any suggestions (for example see my discussion below of using Google to search http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/)  
  - Everyone will also discuss their goals for the class and their research interests  
  **Assignment:** please come prepared to talk for 5 minutes about your research interests  
  **Reading (please read before first day of class)**  
  1) Terror lit overview- A start of a literature parsing of terrorist literature for research that I started a number of years ago but have not had time to keep up. - if we decide to we may make this a collaborative effort for the larger topics we are looking at here.  
  2) Causesofterrorismork - The best overall (but dated) review of the terrorism literature I have ever found. Take a look but you don’t need to really read- unless this is your major research focus.  
  3) empirical study of terrorism-The best short review of terrorism I have seen in a while-everyone read.  
  4) Krieger and Meierrieks- Another excellent overview of the literature from a different perspective. Scan the tables – they are worth their weight in gold. – everyone read.  
  5) Abstract blitz template with a couple of examples – take a look. You don’t need to use it but several people have told me they have found it very useful. |
Also a couple of resources to know about (which as you will see have applications well beyond the course):

- [http://www.olivialau.org/ir/](http://www.olivialau.org/ir/) - it would be nice if there was an updated version and if you find one for comparative or for specific topics let me know.
- the Gale Virtual Reference Library - searching here- which you can do through the library (look under databases) can be very useful if you are trying to get a handle on a region of the world, a concept or a theory can be VERY useful. For example see the attachment civil liberties and human rights for an example of what I mean.
- also put this into google > Site: http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/ repression insurgency play around with words of interest. Very useful.
- [http://start.foxtrotdev.com/](http://start.foxtrotdev.com/)

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<td>No Class- send in reading recommendations for next class by Monday</td>
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| 9/21/2012    | **Topic:** Research brainstorming and data collection- More reading to be determined collectively  
              **Assignment:** nominate an article that gets your research mind going that you want to discuss as a launching pad for future research  
              **Reading:**  
              - Weight of Ideas in Decolonization- NEED TO ADD  
              - Transnational advocacy networks  
              - Marketing Of Rebellion article |
| 9/28/2012    | **Topic:** The challenges of being an academic rather than a scholar (i.e. how to actually finish and get published). Focus will be on inclusion  
              We will look at the first key research project I worked on.  
              - We will look at my prospectus, dissertation and then the article someone published using my data  
              - We will also look at the original version, the reviewer notes and the final version of a co-authored article on anti-sodomy laws  
              **Assignment:** please come prepared to talk for 5 minutes about what your SPECIFIC research effort will be this fall and an agenda to get to a finished project (which may extend into the spring). Also come with at least one out of the box idea that could be done with ethnic discrimination data  
              **Reading:**  
              - Discrimination prospectus  
              - ISA POS Assal  
              - ethnic discrimination article |
| 10/5/2012    | No class                                                               |
| 10/12/2012   | No class                                                               |
| 10/19/2012   | **Topic:** Getting from Idea to Article - where do ideas come from and how do they get to be articles with a focus on government repression  
              We will look very closely at one article from its start to its final version – including the review components for a paper on anti-sodomy laws. We will also work together to identify the format for an 8 page project prospectus that everyone will do.  
              **Assignment:** come prepared with a one page prospectus with a specific hypothesis and a plan of analysis – including data sources  
              **Reading:** |
<p>| 10/25/2012   | No class                                                               |</p>
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<td>11/30/2012</td>
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