**Course Syllabus**

**ISSS 4005: IRREGULAR WARFARE: TERRORISTS, INSURGENTS, and TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINALS**

**Fall 2014**

**University of Virginia**

**Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies**

**Charlottesville Campus**

**Tuesday 4-6:45 pm, Zehmer Room D**

**Aug 26 – Dec 2**

Instructor: Sean Edwards, Ph.D.

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Irregular warfare is a violent struggle between state and non-state actors for legitimacy and/or influence over a relevant population. Irregular wars waged by insurgents, terrorists, and criminal organizations have comprised 80% of all armed conflict since 1945. These types of conflicts are protracted, costly, messy, and more likely along the "arc of instability." We expect this trend to continue. This course will educate students on the history and theory behind terrorist and insurgent campaigns, with specific case studies drawn mostly from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, to include current crises in Syria-Iraq and Nigeria. Students will explore the underlying political, social, economic, and other factors that lead to the birth of insurgencies and terrorist movements in the first place, the competing strategic approaches to insurgency and counterinsurgency, and explore US policy options for how we can best avoid large scale conflict in the first place by smart early intervention. We will also explore the national security threat posed by transnational criminal organizations and gangs in Central and South America.

Students will be expected to take an active role in class discussions. Grades will be based upon attendance and class participation, two 5-10 page papers, and one take home essay exam. Note the emphasis on participation - 30% of the grade - so I strongly encourage you read the recommended readings to maximize that opportunity.

**Instructor:** Sean Edwards is currently the Senior Intelligence Officer (SIO) for Irregular Warfare for a US Government agency. He served as an airborne ranger in the US Army before attending college and has worked as an analyst, branch chief, and SIO for the past 13 years. He deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan as a senior advisor to ISAF Joint Command in the summer of 2011. He holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in Policy Analysis from RAND*,* an M.A. in National Security Studies from Georgetown University, and B.A. in History and Mathematics from UVA. He has written dozens of classified assessments and published several monographs in open source on topics ranging from urban warfare to the US Army's role in space. His dissertation, *Swarming and the Future of Warfare,* was published by RAND in 2005.

**Learning Outcomes**

A comprehensive understanding of the conceptual issues associated with irregular warfare, and particularly, of insurgency, terrorism, and transnational criminals.

Improved research and writing skills associated with a complex analytical subject that spans multiple social science disciplines. Writing assignments are timed essay format or home study research papers.

Basic awareness and vocabulary associated with the theory and practice of irregular warfare.

A basic understanding of the political, economic, social, historical, and geographical drivers of violent political instability around the world today.

Important questions to be explored and potential paper topics:

* Why did irregular warfare come to dominate conflict after 1945?
* What is the difference between a terrorist and an insurgent?
* What motivates people to join terrorist or insurgent groups? What factors correlate with terrorist or insurgent success?
* What are the most effective counterinsurgent and counter terrorist practices? How can the US build partner capacity to defeat violent extremists?
* Can population-centric counterinsurgency work for the United States?
* How has the changing information environment affected the capability of non-state actors to engage in irregular warfare? What is driving the empowerment of small groups and individuals?
* Has the nature of insurgency changed in the 21st Century?
* Which jihadist groups pose the greatest threat today?
* How do we choose where, when and how to counter insurgent and terrorist movements given our limited resources?

**Assessment Components:**

Papers must be referenced and have a bibliography in a recognized format (Chicago Manual of Style is recommended).

**Required Texts:**

Max Boot, *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare from Ancient Times to* *the Present*, New York & London, Liveright Publishing Corporation, a Division of W.W. Norton & Company, 2013, (ISBN 978-0-87140-424-4).

**Class Requirements**

Students will be expected to take an active role in class discussions. Grades will be based upon class participation, two 5-10 page papers, and one take home essay exam (timed). Note there is no class on Oct 14.

PAPERS: Students will write two 5-10 page papers.

EXAMS: Students will complete one essay exam at home under a 2 hour time constraint.

PARTICIPATION/ATTENDANCE: Given the importance of discussion, attendance is particularly important. Note that participation is 30% of your grade. If you must miss a class, please notify me by e-mail or telephone in advance, if possible. Missing class will affect the class participation grade: one missed class will have no effect on the grade, but each subsequent class missed will potentially lower the class participation grade.

READINGS: Students are expected to read the assigned readings and be prepared to discuss the various discussion questions. I have made efforts to distribute the reading equally but some issues necessarily required more reading than others, especially at the beginning. The lecture and reading schedule has been made as specific as possible to give the course structure and direction. However, realize that this schedule is subject to change to accommodate extended discussion of matters of interest for the class and to account for breaking events in Syria, etc.

**Evaluation Criteria**

Grades will be assigned as follows:

Level and quality of participation - 30%

First paper - 25%

Second paper - 25%

Essay exam - 20%