

## PLSC 380P – Fighting The State

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### *Course Description:*

This course critically examines how opposition groups challenge the state. Challenges come in many forms; we will focus on three tactics – protest, civil war and terrorism. At the end of the course, students will understand how resource constraints, collective action and armed capabilities dictate an opposition group's tactics. The course provides a comprehensive examination of confrontation between the state and non-state actors, but pays particular attention to the Arab Spring and al-Qaida to illustrate the dynamics of opposition movements.

As this is a distance-learning (or online) course, participation in discussions moderated through Blackboard is imperative. Students are expected to be critically engaged with the assigned reading and contribute each week to the dissection and analysis of the material we cover. Doing so forces a weekly Blackboard discussion of research methodology, theory building and formulating hypotheses. By the end of the semester, students will have an understanding of how to use research methods to study components of civil conflict and will practice these skills in a final term paper.