

CRI 000: Transnational Criminal Organizations and Crime

Class Location: TBD
Class Time: TBD

Instructor: Haley Daarstad
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Office Location: Kerr Hall 569
Office Hours: TBD

Course Description

Students will explore the history and current activities of transnational criminal organizations such as cybercrime, environmental crime, racketeering and extortion, trafficking (e.g. narcotics, human, arms, wildlife, organs), and money laundering. In this course students are going to examine how criminal organizations protect their markets from the state, how they engage in these markets, the impacts they have on societies, and policies used to manage organized crime (both successful and unsuccessful implementations).

Learning objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to...

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the scientific definitions of transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and transnational organized crime
- Demonstrate an ability to articulate the social scientific theories of transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and transnational organized crime (TOC).
- Demonstrate the governmental approaches (national and international) that have been employed to counter transnational organized crime (C-TOC)
- Demonstrate an ability to develop and present persuasive oral and written arguments to prepare students to work in agencies or organizations that create policies or counter transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and transnational organized crime (TOC).

Study time

This is an approximate amount of time per week that should be dedicated to this course. Some weeks you will experience higher or less amount depending on assignments and readings.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Lectures</i>	3 hours/Week
<i>Private Study</i>	1.5 hours/Week
<i>Papers</i>	2 hours/Week
<i>Readings</i>	4 hours Week
<i>Weekly Total</i>	9.5 hours Week
<i>Course Total</i>	95 hours

Community and UC Davis Policies

Inclusive community

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.

Please note we will be discussing political issues. Furthermore, as each of us comes into the section with unique opinions about political issues, there may be disagreements. I insist we discuss our differences with respect, civility, and empathy. Please do your best to keep an open mind about your peers' perspectives as your peers will expect the same of you.

Note: This does not mean you should avoid participating if/when you have an alternative point of view just because you may not wish to provoke an argument. Be bold, and share what you think (respectfully)

- If I believe any of the discussion is becoming disrespectful or includes hateful or inappropriate speech, I hold the right to end the discussion.

Accessibility

If there is any portion of the course that is not accessible to you due to challenges with technology or the course format, please let me know so we can make appropriate accommodations.

It is the Professor's responsibility to help make this course accessible to all students. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation or would like additional information about the resources available for students with disabilities, please visit the UC Davis Student Disability Center website at sdc.ucdavis.edu.

- Students must contact me about any accommodations in advance.
- Outside Resources - The Student Academic Success Center is a campus wide resource assisting students by helping them improve in study skills, academic writing, and other specific topics

Mandatory Reporter

In my role as faculty, I am required by policy to report concerns that come to my attention related to sexual harassment, sexual violence, discrimination, or harassment involving students. Please know you are still free to discuss these concerns with me, but I will need to pass along any information shared with me to the Harassment and Discrimination Assistance and Prevention Program (HDAPP) so they can reach out to you and talk to you about resources and possible resolution options. If you would prefer to speak to a confidential resource, who does not have the same responsibility to report, I can help you get connected.

Alternatively, here is a link to information about available resources on campus (including confidential resources): <https://hdapp.ucdavis.edu/resources>. Also, here is a link to information about reporting directly to HDAPP: <https://hdapp.sf.ucdavis.edu/report-incident>.

Counseling & Psychiatry Services

Life at Davis can be complicated and challenging. You might feel overwhelmed, experience anxiety or depression, or struggle with relationships or family responsibilities. UC Davis Counseling Services provide confidential support for students who are struggling with mental health and emotional challenges. Please do not hesitate to contact them for assistance—getting help is a smart and good thing to do.

Communication

What are office hours for?

- Office hours are when the professor sets aside two hours each week making themselves available to students. Office hours are often underutilized by all students in college. Consider this your time.
- You do not need an appointment to come by.
- My job as a Professor is to help each of you succeed; however, I can only help you if you ask. (PLEASE COME ASK ME!)
- I strongly encourage students to come to my office hours and chat about topics from the readings or lectures, talk over potential study strategies, or to simply converse.

What are Emails for?

- If your question cannot wait until office hours, section, or class, then you should/may use email to contact your Professor. However, please note, email should not be used as an alternative to direct conversation or an in-depth discussion.
- As a simple rule of thumb, emails should be used to address quick questions, not for requests to exhaustively review material from lecture or section.
- I will respond to emails within one business day, so between 9 am and 6 pm on weekdays. This means if you email me past 6 pm on a weekday you will not receive any email till the next day in the morning around 9 am. If you email me on the weekends or past Friday at 6 pm, I will respond promptly on Monday
- I will not respond to emails that are rude, unintelligible, or inquiring about information readily accessible on the syllabus.
- I will typically communicate announcements through Canvas. Please make sure your Canvas information is up to date and that you check it frequently over the quarter.

Course Materials

All materials for this course are free and online. The readings for the course can be found on Canvas or accessed through the journals using a campus VPN. Other materials for the course can be found online or for free from the campus library resources.

Lectures

The goal of both the lectures is for them to be as interactive as possible. My role as instructor is to introduce you to new materials and perspectives, but it is up to you to take them and make use of them. I believe that is best learned by doing. Therefore, as much as possible, you will be working on a variety of tasks and activities throughout each lecture. A lot of what you do in this

course will involve discussing readings and using course materials to make arguments. You are expected to attend all lectures and meaningfully contribute to in-class discussion and activities.

Laptop Policy

Computers will not be allowed in the classroom for any purpose unless instructed by the professor or due to official accommodations. I understand that students use laptops for note taking purposes; however, many studies have shown that taking notes by hand leads to better recall. iPads are exempt, unless they become a disruption, then I hold the right to exclude those as well.

Furthermore, if a laptop is seen in class, I will ask that you kindly put it away. Please refer to the articles below for more information on research related to notetaking by hand compared to computers:

- Aragón-Mendizábal, E., Delgado-Casas, C., Navarro-Guzmán, J., Menacho-Jiménez, I., & Romero-Oliva, M. F. (2016). A comparative study of handwriting and computer typing in note-taking by university students. *Comunicar*, 24(48), 101-107.
- Horbury, S. R., & Edmonds, C. J. (2021). Taking class notes by hand compared to typing: Effects on children's recall and understanding. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 35(1), 55-67.
- Mueller, P. A., & Oppenheimer, D. M. (2014). The pen is mightier than the keyboard: Advantages of longhand over laptop note taking. *Psychological Science*, 25(6), 1159-1168.

Grading

The final course grade will be calculated as follows:

<i>Category</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Paper 1</i>	15 %
<i>Paper 2</i>	15 %
<i>Paper 3</i>	30 %
<i>Midterm</i>	25 %
<i>Participation</i>	15%

The final letter grade will be determined based on the following thresholds:

<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Final Course Grade</i>
<i>A</i>	≥ 93
<i>A-</i>	90 - 92.99
<i>B+</i>	87 - 89.99
<i>B</i>	83 - 86.99
<i>B-</i>	80 - 82.99
<i>C+</i>	77 - 79.99
<i>C</i>	73 - 76.99
<i>C-</i>	70 - 72.99

<i>D+</i>	67 - 69.99
<i>D</i>	63 - 66.99
<i>D-</i>	60 - 62.99
<i>F</i>	< 60

Papers (60%):

Papers will be assessed based on the quality of the argument and following the instructions in the assignment. Papers should effectively communicate an argument that follows the prompt, have a logical organization of ideas and structure, use evidence to support the argument, clearly and effectively analyze the evidence to support the argument, and engage with the course materials and topics. Please refer to the assignment for the paper for further instructions and prompt.

In-Person Midterm (25%):

The midterm test will take place in-person on DAY 00 MONTH. The full class time will be used for the completion of the exam. If you need accommodations, please contact the UC Davis Student Disability Center, so we can accommodate.

The midterm will not be rescheduled; students are expected to take this exam as scheduled. The exam will cover topics from weeks 1 through 4. The exam will include multiple choice, short answers, and 1 – 2 long answer questions.

Participation (15%):

Active participation of all students is essential to a successful class; thus, participation will be assessed. The participation grade will be based on the following:

- Regular attendance
- Engagement in the course through readings, prepared questions for lecture, etc.
- Active participation in the course activities

Attendance will be randomly taken throughout the course, engagement can be shown through attendance of office hours or talking in lecture, and course activities will be done at least once a week.

Furthermore, an individual can earn an “A” if they regularly have attended courses, participated in lecture with relevant comments and questions, attended a few office hours to ask questions that showed critical engagement with the texts and course materials, and actively participated, engaged, and contributed with the course activities.

Paper Assignments

Assignment #1 – TCO Presence and Consequences Case Report

Write a 2-page report on the presence and consequences of a transnational criminal organization in a country of your choice.

- 12 pt font in Times New Roman
- Citations in APA format
- Works Cited/Sources page not included in page count

- 2 pages, 10 points will be deducted for each page over the 2-page limit.
- Use credible sources (e.g. UN, State Department, academic journals)

Assignment #2 – TOC Crime Case Report

Write a 2-page report on a specific type of crime:

- Drug Trafficking
- Illicit Smuggling
- Illegal Gambling and Money Laundering
- Racketeering and Extortion
- Environmental Crime
- Cybercrime

The goal is to provide a report on the current state of this crime related to transnational criminal organizations. This can be global or country specific.

Requirements:

- 12 pt font in Times New Roman
- Citations in APA format
- Works Cited page not included in page count
- 2-3 pages, 10 points will be deducted for each page over the 3-page limit.
- Use credible sources (e.g. UN, State Department, academic journals)

Assignment #3 – Combating TOC Policy Proposal/Report

Using the materials from this course, present the case for a policy implementation or report on the effects of a policy already enacted and if it is successful or not to combat transnational organized crime.

Requirements:

- 12 pt font in Times New Roman
- Citations in APA format
- Works Cited page not included in page count
- 4 pages, 10 points will be deducted for each page over the 4-page limit.
- Use credible sources (e.g. UN, State Department, academic journals)

Course policies

Academic integrity

Cheating and plagiarism will be evaluated and disciplined according to university policy. For information on academic integrity, please read: <http://cai.ucdavis.edu/aip.html>. You are responsible for understanding and following all aspects of university policy on academic integrity; ignorance is not an excuse. All suspected violations will be referred to the Office of Student Support and Judicial Affairs (OSSJA) for evaluation. You will be notified promptly by email if a referral is made.

Policy on AI

AI is not allowed for usage in this classroom. You may not use artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Grok, etc. to complete academic work being submitted for credit in the UC Davis Department of Political Science. The Office of Student Support and Judicial Affairs (OSSJA) considers the unauthorized use of content generated by artificial intelligence (AI) to be academic misconduct and/or plagiarism (see: <https://ossja.ucdavis.edu/code-academic-conduct>).

This includes taking credit for any work not created by the student; work includes, but is not limited to, books, articles, experimental methodology or results, compositions, images, lectures, computer programs, internet postings, and content generated by software or artificial intelligence.

Late work policy

The due dates for assignments are there to help you keep up with the course material and to ensure the teaching team can provide feedback in a timely manner. We understand that things come up periodically that could make it difficult to submit an assignment by the deadline.

- Labs may be submitted up to 3 days late. There will be a 5% deduction for each 24-hour period the assignment is late.
- The late work policy for the project will be provided with the project instructions.

Waiver for Extenuating Circumstances

If there are circumstances that prevent you from completing a lab or project assignment by the stated due date, you may email me before the deadline to waive the late penalty. In your email, you only need to request the waiver; you do not need to provide explanation. This waiver may only be used once in the quarter, so only use it for a truly extenuating circumstance.

Try Three Things Rule

Before you reach out to the teaching team with a question, you must try three things:

- Read the Syllabus
 - Can your question be answered by the syllabus?
- Check the lectures or readings
 - Was this already discussed in the lecture material?
- Ask a classmate
 - Does my classmate know this information?

Regrade Request Policy

Regrade requests must be submitted within a week of when an assignment is returned. A regrade request will be considered if there was an error in the grade calculation or if you feel a correct answer was mistakenly marked as incorrect. Requests to dispute the number of points deducted for an incorrect response will not be considered. Note that by submitting a regrade request, the entire question will be graded which could potentially result in losing points.

No grades will be changed after the final paper has been submitted.

Attendance Policy

Responsibility for class attendance rests with individual students. Since regular and punctual class attendance is expected, students must accept the consequences of failure to attend. Participation will be 15 percent of your grade.

If attendance was taken and you were absent due to illness, religious reasons, etc. please email me directly. Please note that work conflicts are not considered an excused absence.

Policy on Photos and Video Recording Course Content

If you feel that you need to record or take pictures of the lectures yourself, you must get permission from me ahead of time and these recordings should be used for personal study only, not for distribution. Unauthorized distribution is a cause for disciplinary action by the Office of Student Support and Judicial Affairs (OSSJA).

Note: If you've read this far in the syllabus, email me a picture of your pet if you have one or your favorite meme for extra credit!

Copyright

My lectures and course materials, including presentations, essay questions, outlines, exams, and similar materials, are protected by U.S. copyright law and by university policy. I am the exclusive owner of the copyright in those materials I create. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own use. You may also share those materials with another student who is enrolled in or auditing this course. You may not reproduce, distribute or display (post/upload) lecture notes or recordings or course materials in any other way (whether or not a fee is charged) without my express prior written consent. You also may not allow others to do so. Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Support and Judicial Affairs and may be subject to student conduct proceedings under the UC Davis Code of Academic Conduct.

Credits

This course draws on content, ideas, inspirations and much more from work by Lauren Peritz, Juan Tellez, Lauren Young, Manuel Meléndez-Sánchez, Tim Clark, Jessica Kahler, and many more individuals whose materials were public and contributed to the formation of the syllabus.

Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Assignments
1	Introduction to the Course & What is Organized Crime?	
2	The Gray Zone of Criminality	

3	The Consequences of Organized Crime	TCO Presence and Consequences Case Report
4	Drug Trafficking	
5	Illicit (non-drug) Smuggling	Midterm
6	Illegal Gambling and Money Laundering	
7	Racketeering and Extortion	
8	Environmental Crime	TOC Case Report
9	Cybercrime	
10	Countering Transnational Criminal Organizations	
Finals		Combating TOC Policy Proposal/Report

Week 1: Introduction to the Course & What is Organized Crime?

- Kalyvas, Stathis. 2015. “How Civil Wars Help Explain Organized Crime—and How They Do Not.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59(8): 1517-1540.
- Catino, Maurizio. 2019. *Mafia Organizations: The Visible Hand of Criminal Enterprise*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 6, pp. 260-303.
- Varese, Federico. 2010. “General Introduction: What is Organized Crime?” In *Organized Crime*, ed. Federico Varese. London: Routledge, pp. 1-33.
 - Note: Read only pp. 1-17 (up to the section labeled “The Mafia”).
- UN Peace and Security. *What is transnational organized crime?*

Week 2: The Gray Zone of Criminality

- Lessing, B. (2021). Conceptualizing Criminal Governance. *Perspectives on Politics*, 19(3), 854–873.
- Trejo, Guillermo and Sandra Ley. 2020. *Votes, Drugs, and Violence: The Political Logic of Criminal Wars in Mexico*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 (pp. 31- 65)

Week 3: The Consequences of Organized Crime

- Lessing, Benjamin. 2018. *Making Peace in Drug Wars: Crackdowns and Cartels in Latin America*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2 (pp. 37-55) and Chapter 3 (pp. 56-81).
- Arias, Enrique Desmond. 2006. “The Dynamics of Criminal Governance: Networks and Social Order in Rio de Janeiro.” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 38(2): 293-325.
- Durán-Martínez, Angélica. 2015. “To Kill and Tell? State Power, Criminal Competition, and Drug Violence.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59(8): 1377-1402.
- Dal Bó, E., Dal Bó, P., & Di Tella, R. (2006). “Plata o Plomo?": bribe and punishment in a theory of political influence. *American Political science review*, 100(1), 41-53.

TCO PRESENCE AND CONSEQUENCES CASE REPORT DUE 00/00

Week 4: Drug Trafficking

- UN Office on Drugs and Crime. *Drug Trafficking*.

- Reuter, Peter. 2014. “Drug Markets and Organized Crime.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Organized Crime*, ed. Letizia Paoli. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 359-380.
- Global Initiative. (2021). *The Cocaine Pipeline to Europe*.
- Mackenzie, S. (2020). Drug trafficking. In *Transnational Criminology: Trafficking and Global Criminal Markets*. Bristol University Press.
- Rêgo, X., Oliveira, M.J., Lameira, C. et al. (2021). 20 years of Portuguese drug policy—developments, challenges and the quest for human rights. *Subst Abuse Treat Prev Policy* 16, 59.

Videos & Podcasts (suggested):

1. GI-TOC Podcast: Fentanyl and Third Gen Gangs Latin America (69 mins)
2. Drugs in the Netherlands, with Stephen Snelders @ 56 mins
 - a. The long history of Dutch drug smuggling, organized crime today in the Netherlands

Week 5: Illicit Smuggling

- Aranowitz, A and Veldhuizen, M. The human trafficking–organized crime nexus in Allum, F., & Gilmour, S. (2022). *The Routledge handbook of transnational organized crime* (2nd edition). Routledge.
- Mehlman-Orozco, K. (2020). Projected heroes and self-perceived manipulators: understanding the duplicitous identities of human traffickers. *Trends in Organized Crime*
- ICAT. (2021). *Trafficking in Persons for the Purpose of Organ Removal*.
- Wyatt et al. (2017). Corruption and wildlife trafficking: Three case studies involving Asia. *Asian Criminology*, doi:10.1007/s11417-017-9255-8.

IN-PERSON MIDTERM DUE 00/00

Week 6: Illegal Gambling and Money Laundering

- FDIC. *History of Anti-Money Laundering Legislation*.
- Video: HSBC: Tax Evasion, Money Laundering for the Mafia & Currency Manipulation.
- Pol, Ronald F. (2020). Anti-money laundering: The world's least effective policy experiment? Together, we can fix it, *Policy Design and Practice*, 3:1, 73-94.

Week 7: Racketeering and Extortion

- Anzola, D. (2016). Basic dynamics of extortion racketeering. In *Social dimensions of organised crime: modelling the dynamics of extortion rackets* (pp. 25-46). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Piemontese, L. (2023). Uncovering illegal and underground economies: The case of mafia extortion racketeering. *Journal of Public Economics*, 227, 104997.
- Savona, E. U., & Zanella, M. (2019). Extortion and Organized Crime. In M. Natarajan (Ed.), *International and Transnational Crime and Justice* (pp. 186–191). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- UN Office on Drugs and Crime. *Extortion*.
- UN Office on Drugs and Crime. *Extortion Racketeering*.

Week 8: Environmental Crime

- Bisschop, L. and van Wingerde, K. Transnational organized environmental crime in Allum, F., & Gilmour, S. (2022). *The Routledge handbook of transnational organized crime* (2nd edition). Routledge. Ch. 15.
- Warchol & Harrington (2016). Exploring the dynamics of South Africa's illegal abalone trade via routine activities theory. *Trends in Organized Crime*, 19(1), 21-41.
- Cowan et al. (2020). Applying crime pattern theory and risk terrain modeling to examine environmental crime in Cambodia. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 36(3), 327-350.
- Wilson & Boratto (2020). Conservation, wildlife crime, and tough-on-crime policies: Lessons from the criminological literature. *Biological Conservation*, 251.

Videos & Podcasts (suggested):

1. [Environmental Organized Crime in Venezuela, and Throughout the Americas](#)
2. [Fish Pirates \(Full Episode\) | Trafficked with Mariana Van Zeller](#)

TOC CASE REPORT DUE 00/00

Week 9: Cybercrime

- Wall, D. Cybercrime as a transnational organized criminal activity in Allum, F., & Gilmour, S. (2022). *The Routledge handbook of transnational organized crime* (2nd edition). Routledge. Ch. 18.
- UN Office on Drugs and Crime. *Criminal groups engaging in cyber organized crime*.
- UN Office on Drugs and Crime. (2026). *An Interconnected Criminal Ecosystem: Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment for South-East Asia*.

Week 10: Countering Transnational Criminal Organizations

- Magaloni, Beatriz, Edgar Franco-Vivanco, and Vanessa Melo. 2020. "Killing in the Slums: Social Order, Criminal Governance, and Police Violence in Rio de Janeiro." *American Political Science Review* 114(2): 552-572.
- Calderón, Gabriela, Gustavo Robles, Alberto Díaz-Cayeros, and Beatriz Magaloni. 2015. "The Beheading of Criminal Organizations and the Dynamics of Violence in Mexico." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59(8): 1455–1485.
- Gagne, David. 2016. "Criminal Truces in Latin America: The Ultimate Catch-22." *InSight Crime*, June 1, 2016. <https://insightcrime.org/news/analysis/criminal-truces-in-latin-america-the-ultimate-catch-22/>.
- Brotherton, David and Rafael Gude. 2018. "Social Inclusion from Below: The Perspectives of Street Gangs and Their Possible Effects on Declining Homicide Rates in Ecuador." IDB Discussion Paper No. IDB-DP-578.

COMBATING TOC POLICY PROPOSAL/REPORT DUE 00/00