

# Transnational Organised Crime

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## **Course Objectives:**

The challenges that organised crime pose to a state and its citizens are hardly new. Nor are the concerted efforts to eradicate or ameliorate them. What has changed, at least since the early 1990s, is the perception that organised crime poses a globalised threat to national and international security. The failure of global governance to keep pace with globalisation and its economic growth and development since the end of the Cold War has provided new opportunities for criminals to prosper. Specifically, so the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), organised crime “has diversified, gone global and reached macro-economic proportions”. Transnational organised crime crosses borders, challenges states, exploits individuals, pursues profit, wrecks economies, destroys civil society, and ultimately weakens global democracy. This course will trace the increasingly global nature of transnational organised crime, its growing portfolio of illicit activities in the world’s economy, and its impact on security.

## **Requirements and Evaluation:**

*Participation in Class Discussion* (30 percent) - The topics examined in this course are timely and of high political relevance. Students are given room to explore the topics by brainstorming and analysing ideas, viewpoints, scenarios, potentials, and risks and limitations. They are encouraged to ask questions and draw their own conclusions based on facts and intellectual debate.

*Presentation* (20 percent) - Each student will be asked to present one of the course’s topics to the class. The presentation will serve as a brief analytical introduction to the sessions based on the provided reading, and complement it with case studies and examples to illustrate the topic, make it accessible, and establish a connection with current developments and issues through contemporary sources. In doing so, the presentations will introduce to the class the different angles, arguments, viewpoints, strategies, and interests involved in the handling of the topic. Moreover, the presentation should develop a hypothesis or central question that will feed the following class debate.

*Research Paper* (50 percent) - Each student is expected to formulate a research question and analyse all relevant aspects in an essay of not more than 25 pages. Students are encouraged to tackle a policy relevant question and make use of DC's rich environment and the expertise of policy makers, academics, consultants, military experts, and international NGOs. The goal of the research paper is to combine analytical concepts discussed in class with empirical research and policy relevant conclusions. Deadlines for intermediate steps in the process of writing are as follows:

- one-page statement of research question, due in class in week 3
- bibliography, due in class in week 5 (5 percent)
- partial draft (eight pages), due in class in week 7 (5 percent)
- first full draft, due in class in week 9 (10 percent)
- final draft, due in class in week 10 (30 percent).

Assignments should be submitted both in hard copy (in class) and electronically as an email attachment (prior to class.)

### *Session 1: Introduction*

The first session will serve as an introductory meeting and answer any questions regarding to the course outline and its requirements and evaluation. It will also give a brief introduction to the theme of the course.

## **Section I: Contemporary Transnational Organised Crime**

### *Session 2: Transnational Organised Crime as a Security Concept in the US and Europe*

In just one decade, organised crime has gone from being considered a problem limited to certain countries or regions, scarcely affecting the international political decision making, to become a factor when defining threats to the national security in general, and democratic governance in particular. This session will assess the adequacy and practicality of this view by establishing a definition of transnational organised crime and examining its effects on the security of society in the US and Europe.

Readings:

Mónica Serrano, "Transnational Organized Crime and International Security: Business As Usual?", Mats Berdal and Mónica Serrano, *Transnational Organized Crime and International Security: Business As Usual?*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002, 13-36.

Mike Woodiwiss, "Transnational Organised Crime: The Global Reach of an American Concept", Adam Edwards and Peter Gill (eds.), *Transnational Organised Crime. Perspectives on Global Security*, London: Routledge, 2003, 13-27.

Martin Elvins, "Europe's Response to Transnational Organised Crime", Adam Edwards and Peter Gill (eds.), *Transnational Organised Crime. Perspectives on Global Security*, London: Routledge, 2003, 28-41.

### *Session 3: The Geography of Transnational Organised Crime*

This third session will identify and analyse the prevalence and concentration of transnational organised crime throughout the world. It will identify centres of crime for specific issue areas, such as narcotics, human trafficking, and small arms, and develop an understanding of the environmental factors that facilitate the persistence of organised crime. It will emphasise the transnational character of contemporary organised crime which needs to be taken into account by policy.

Reading:

Tim Hall, "Where the money is: the geographies of organised crime", *Geography* 95(1) (2010): 4-13.

Mark Galeotti, *Global Crime Today: The Changing Face of Organised Crime*, London: Routledge, 2007.

## **Section II: Areas of Transnational Organised Crime**

### *Session 4: The International Drugs Trade and Human Trafficking*

This session will examine the international drugs trade and its effects on producers, and transit and consumer countries, many of which are subject to domestic conflict and political instability. The session will discuss the relationship between narcotics and violence, and the influence of cartels on politics. Moreover, will analyse the practice of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring, and receiving a person through use of force, coercion or other means, for the purpose of exploiting them. It will examine the scope of the problem, the policies in force to combat human trafficking, and the reasons for its prevalence and continuous spread.

Reading:

Mark Kleiman, Jonathan P. Caulkins, and Angela Hawken, *Drugs and Drug Policy: What Everyone Needs to Know*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Alexis Aronowitz, *Human Trafficking, Human Misery: The Global Trade in Human Beings*, Westport: Praeger, 2009.

#### *Session 5: Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Crime-Terror Nexus*

Since the end of the Cold War, criminal activities have become a major source of revenue for terrorist groups worldwide. Particularly in recent years, this trend has received increasing attention in policy circles. However, systematic links between criminal and terrorist groups remain nebulous and vary considerably, based on region and context. This session will examine the validity and impact of the crime-terror nexus and assess the policies in place to combat it.

Reading:

Tamara Makarenko, "The Crime–Terror Continuum. Tracing the Interplay between Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism", *Global Crime* 6(1) (2004): 129-145.

Steven Hutchinson and Pat O'Malley, "A Crime-Terror Nexus? Thinking on Some of the Links between Terrorism and Criminality", *Studies in Conflict Terrorism* 30 (2007): 1095-1107.

### **Section III: Aspects of Transnational Organised Crime**

#### *Session 6: Rule of Law and Corruption*

This session begins looking at the enabling factors for the flourishing of transnational organised crime on the national level. As such, a weak rule of law system and corruption are often cited factors for permitting organised crime to grow. This session will discuss the influences of weak rule of law and corruption on organised crime, and assess the approaches for building appropriate institutions and practices.

Reading:

Margaret E. Beare (ed.), *Critical Reflections on Transnational Organized Crime, Money Laundering and Corruption*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003.

Alexandra V. Orlova, "Organized Crime and the Rule of Law in the Russian Federation", *Essex Human Rights Review* 2(1) (2005): 23-37.

#### *Session 7: Money Laundering*

This session will examine the practices of transnational organised crime that allow for the concealment of money acquired through illicit activities. Restricting the possibilities to

launder money represents a key point of attack for combatting organised crime nationally as well as internationally. The session will examine different policy options that have been pursued on both sides of the Atlantic, and their successes and failures.

Reading:

Peter Alldridge, *Money Laundering Law: Forfeiture, Confiscation, Civil Recovery, Criminal Laundering and Taxation of the Proceeds of Crime*, Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2003.

Michael Levi, "Money laundering and its regulation", *The Annals of the American Academy of Social and Political Science* 582 (2002): 181-194.

## **Section IV: Policy Implications?**

### *Session 8: Harm Reduction and Health Policy*

This session will examine demand-side oriented policy measures to reduce the scope and impact of organised crime. Particularly with regard to drug use and prostitution, the aim is to reduce the harmful consequences associated with organised crime and human weaknesses. Particularly, the debate between legalisation and criminalisation will be analysed, and existing national programmes involving either - for example for alcohol use and prostitution - will be examined for their successes and failures.

Reading:

Craig Reinerman and Harry G. Levine, "Real Opposition, Real Alternatives. Reducing the Harms of Drug Use and Drug Policy", Craig Reinerman and Harry G. Levine (eds.), *Crack in America: Demon Drugs and Social Justice*, Ewing: University of California Press, 1997, 345-366.

Michael Goodyear and Linda Cusick, *Protection of Sex Workers*, Editorial, BMJ, 2007.

### *Session 9: Legal Regulation and Law Enforcement, Intelligence and Interconnectivity*

This session will explore existing crime prevention and crime reduction strategies on all sides of the Atlantic Basin. It will analyse their successes and failures, and discuss regulation and enforcement innovations that aim to go beyond conventional and situational forms of crime and organised crime. The session will also analyse different approaches to gathering intelligence about illicit groups and networks, and address the global interconnectivity of both organised crime and the fight against it.

Reading:

Michael Levi and Mike Maguire, "Reducing and preventing organised crime: An evidence-based critique", *Crime, Law and Social Change* 41(5) (2004): 397-469.

Angela Gendron, "Transnational organized crime and terrorism. Global networks in pursuit of plunder; global alliances in pursuit of plunderers", Felia Allum and Stan Gilmour (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Transnational Organized Crime*, London: Routledge, 2011.

*Session 10: Media and Myths of Transnational Organised Crime and Conclusion*

This session will examine the importance of the culture and perceptions that organised crime has established. Its reputation often resembles a Godfather-like system of favours and hard but just forms of loyalty and punishment, while its reality is often far removed from the promise of wealth and legacy. The class will close with an open discussion about what students have learned in the previous weeks, their insights, and remaining questions.

Reading:

Ioan Grillo, *El Narco. Inside Mexico's Criminal Insurgency*, New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2011 (chapter 10)