

Introduction to the Study of Civil Conflict

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Course Description:

This is a course covering the study of civil conflict in world politics. The focus is on the use of organized violence by groups within countries that are attempting to either take control of a government or secede to form a new one. The readings below constitute an introduction to the empirical and theoretical study of civil conflict. In this class, in addition to learning about individual civil wars, we will focus on the analytical tools that scholars use to study civil wars.

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Identify episodes of civil violence;
- Logically evaluate explanations for civil conflict;
- Characterize the types of actors that engage in sub-state violence;
- And apply theories of civil violence to appropriate episodes.

It is imperative that you come to class having done the readings. A typical class will involve questions and discussions over the readings; a review of the methods and analysis used in the readings; and an application to particular cases presented in lecture. Since your performance on exams and on your paper (described below) will follow a similar logic, you will greatly improve your grade by keeping up with the assigned readings.

Class Policies

I. Grading (note that the following cutpoints include all rounding):

A	92.50-100%	C	72.50-76.49%
A-	89.50-92.49%	C-	69.50-72.49%
B+	86.50-89.49%	D+	66.50-69.49%
B	82.50-86.49%	D	62.50-66.49%
B-	79.50-82.49%	D-	59.50-62.49%
C+	76.50-79.49%	F	<59.50%

Breakdown: Participation, in the form of class attendance and completion of short in-class assignments from time to time, will comprise twenty percent of your final grade. We will also have two in-class quizzes worth 5% each. You will also write a paper worth 20%. Two examinations worth 20% and 30% will account for the remainder of your grade. These exams will be a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions that are designed to gauge your comprehension of the material presented in class. Both quizzes and exams are comprehensive and will cover material up to and including the day before.

II. Books. Nope! Readings are all either online or will be available on Canvas. Note that the academic articles linked below need to be accessed on the university's network or else you will need to sign in through

Participation	20%
Two quizzes	5% each
First exam	20%
Second exam	30%
Paper	20%

JSTOR.

III. Readings. You should complete the readings before you come to the class period under which the reading is marked. That means that yes, there is reading you should have finished on the first day of class.

IV. Paper. The primary project for this class is a paper, in which you will choose a case study of civil war and evaluate it using the theoretical arguments and insights from the course. In doing so, be sure to address the following three questions:

1. Why did the civil war break out when it did?
2. Why did it last as long as it did?
3. Why did it end?

You are welcome to use any conflict as a case study, but please clear your choice with me first.

The paper itself should be 10-12 double-spaced pages in Times New Roman size 12 font. It is due on the date listed below on the syllabus at the beginning of class. You should bring a printed copy with you to class. If for some reason you are unable to do so, you should email me a copy of your paper before class; otherwise it will be considered late. There are no exceptions to this rule.

V. Disability Accommodations. Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the [Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities](#) (471-6259). If you require accommodation, it is your responsibility to bring your note to me EARLY in the term – preferably within the first two weeks – so we can work out arrangements.

VI. Academic Integrity. Plagiarism, cheating, and other academic misconduct are serious violations of your contract as a student. Plagiarism is using someone else's language without quotations and attribution or using someone else's idea (even in different language) without attribution. We expect that you will know and follow the University's policies on cheating and plagiarism. If you are unsure about the standards of academic integrity, it is your responsibility to ask either myself or the teaching assistant. Any suspected cases of academic misconduct will be handled according to University regulations.

VII. Grade Complaints. If you feel a quiz, writing assignment, or test has been graded incorrectly or unfairly you may request that I regrade the portion you feel was scored in error. This request must be made IN WRITING (email is fine) no later than one week after the assignment has been returned. Your request should include (1) the question or questions you believe was graded unfairly and (2) the specific reason you believe you should have received a different score.

VIII. Religious Holidays. Please notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed

work within a reasonable time after the absence.

IX. Email. I am generally available to answer questions about class via email, at the address listed above. However, I request at a minimum 24 hours on time-sensitive issues. Emails sent after 9 pm are unlikely to receive a response until the next day. **Please include in your subject line the class number followed by your concern.** If you do not title your emails this way there is a decent chance they will become lost in my inbox.

X. Make-ups and late turn-ins. Let me know if you are unable to take a quiz or exam on the appointed day. In order to get full credit for the make-up, you MUST inform me of your absence BEFORE the test/quiz. I reserve the right to change the format of make-up assignments. Turning in a writing assignment late is subject to a 5 point grade penalty per day (including weekends).

Unit 1: What is a civil war, anyway? Establishing the fundamentals

Day 1: Introduction

- [“What Is Civil War? Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition,”](#) by Nicholas Sambanis. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 48, No. 6 (December 2004), pp. 814-858.

Day 2: ♪♪Why can't we be friends? ♪♪

- [“Rationalist Explanations for War,”](#) by James Fearon. *International Organization*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (Summer 1995), pp. 379-414.

Day 3: What sorts of groups fight in civil wars?

- [“Horizontal Inequalities and Ethnonationalist Civil War: A Global Comparison,”](#) by Lars-Erik Cederman, Nils B. Weidmann, and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 105, No 3 (August 2011), pp. 478-495.

Day 4: What sorts of groups fight in civil wars? Part II

- **Quiz 1**
- [“Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,”](#) by James Fearon and David Laitin. *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No 1 (February 2003), pp. 75-90.

Day 5: Do democracies have more civil wars than autocracies?

- [“Toward a Democratic Civil Peace? Democracy, Political Change, and Civil War, 1816–1992,”](#) by Havard Hegre. *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 95, No. 1 (March 2001), pp. 33-48.

Day 6: Does oil grease the wheels of conflict?

- [“How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War? Evidence from Thirteen Cases,”](#) by Michael Ross. *International Organization*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (February 2004), pp. 35-67.

Day 7: Why are civil wars so hard to end?

- [“The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement,”](#) by Barbara Walter. *International Organization*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (Summer 1997), pp. 335-364.

Unit 2: The organization of violence in civil war

Day 8: *Who gets targeted for violence?*

- [The Logic of Violence in Civil War](#), by Stathis Kalyvas. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Chapters 6 and 7, pp. 146-209.

Day 9: *Do civil wars have to be so violent?*

- [“Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict,”](#) by Marisa J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth. *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Summer 2008), pp. 7-44.

Day 10: *Why are civilians sometimes targeted for violence?*

- [“Rivalry and Revenge: Violence against Civilians in Conventional Civil Wars,”](#) by Laia Balcells. *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (June 2010), pp. 291-313.

Day 11: *Why are civil wars often accompanied by terrorism?*

- [“Terrorism in the Context of Civil War,”](#) by Jessica Stanton. *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 75, No. 4 (October 2013), pp. 1009-1022.

Day 12: **Exam 1**

Unit 3: Civil war, international politics

Day 13: *Are civil wars really “civil?”*

- [“Transnational Dimensions of Civil War,”](#) by Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (May 2007), pp. 293-309.

Day 14: *What made the Cold War different?*

- [“International System and Technologies of Rebellion: How the End of the Cold War Shaped Internal Conflict,”](#) by Stathis Kalyvas and Laia Balcells. *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 104, No. 3 (August 2010), pp. 415-429.

Day 15: *Why do civil wars tend to go together?*

- [“The End of Hierarchy and the Global Outbreak of Civil War,”](#) by Daniel McCormack. Working paper.

Day 16: *The bad neighbor theory: What’s a civil war like you doing in a place like this?*

- [“Transnational Rebels: Neighboring States as Sanctuary for Rebel Groups,”](#) by Idean Salehyan. *World Politics*, Vol. 59, No. 2 (January 2007), pp. 217-242.

Unit 4: Stopping the killing

Day 17: *Can you stop a war by expanding it?*

- **Quiz 2**
- “[Third-Party Intervention and the Civil War Process](#),” by Dylan Balch-Lindsay, Andrew Enterline, and Kyle Joyce. *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (May 2008), pp. 345-363.

Day 18: *What makes a peace settlement last?*

- “[Making and Keeping Peace](#),” by Suzanne Werner and Amy Yuen. *International Organization*, Vol. 59, No. 2 (April 2005), pp. 261-292.

Day 19: *How do you design an effective treaty?*

- “[Fostering Peace After Civil War: Commitment Problems and Agreement Design](#),” by Michaela Mattes and Burcu Savun. *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (September 2009), pp. 737-759.

Day 20: *Is peacekeeping always a good thing?*

- “[Problematic Potential: The Human Rights Consequences of Peacekeeping Interventions in Civil Wars](#),” by Amanda Murdie and David Davis. *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (February 2010), pp. 49-72.

Day 21: *Should we study civil wars on their own?*

- “[Combining Civil and Interstate Wars](#),” by David Cunningham and Doug Lemke. *International Organization*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (July 2013), pp. 609-627.

Day 22: **Exam 2**