US National Security & Civil Wars Syllabus
Fall 2014
W 8:10-10:40, EQB 205

Instructor Information
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Course Description
Arguably, one of the greatest threats to international security is civil war. This form of political violence tends to spill across borders, spark conflicts in other regions, last for many years, and influence millions of lives. This course examines why civil wars start, the process of how they build, and how and why they end. Throughout, we pay particular attention to how international policies, such as aid or intervention, can influence the dynamics of civil wars.

We begin by clarifying what civil war is and what it is not. Next, we examine how scholars study civil war. Then, we turn to understanding why civil war begins by looking at some of the dominant claims in the literature. After examining civil war onset, we delve into the causes for different forms of violence during civil war, why discriminate or indiscriminate violence is used, why sexual violence sometimes occurs, and why some wars experience terrorism. Some states deal with chronic violence, and we thus examine state weakness or what some observers term state failure. In the last portion of the course, we examine why and how civil wars end. Each week, we will read scholarly articles and policy briefs that are based on insights by scholars and practitioners. We also read blogs that apply these claims to current civil conflicts.
Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand and apply theories of violence to explain the origins of civil war
2. Explain contemporary and past historical trends in the prevalence of civil war across the globe
3. Offer policy recommendations, based on academic theories, for dealing with the problem of civil wars
4. Read and analyze diverse kinds of scholarly work
5. Create an original research project that offers an argument and provides evidence in support of the claims related to why a current civil occurred, and how to end it
6. Prepare and deliver a presentation that applies academic theories to a particular conflict

Assessment

1. Attendance and Participation (20%)—Attendance and participation in all class activities is required. Reading assigned course material is the critical element in being prepared. You must come to class on time and remain for the entire period. I randomly call on students, so be prepared.

2. Case Analysis (10%)—Each student will select a case (contemporary or historical) to analyze. Each week one student will analyze a case for the class. This analysis includes:
   
   (a) Providing a 20 minute Powerpoint (or equivalent) lecture to the class.
   This lecture will provide: a succinct historical background, an analysis linking the case to our readings for the work, research that provides a prediction for how the civil war might resolve or COULD have been resolved differently based on course material.

   (b) Provide at least one discussion question for each of the readings for the week. Engage students in discussion of these questions to link readings to current conflicts, previous research, or new research areas.

3. Midterm Exam and Final Exam (30%)—The Midterm and Final exam will operate similar to a comprehensive exam. You will be asked to answer several questions relating to applying course material to current concerns of US foreign policy as they relate to civil wars. These exams will require you to know authors, arguments, debates, and policy recommendations based on academic research.
4. Final Paper (40%)—I expect this paper to apply theories and case knowledge from the course to make an original claim about why civil war occurs, why it goes on, or why it ends. This paper should be at least 20 pages and include appropriate academic citation. I will provide a detailed rubric that explains how you will be assessed.

I have found that papers are of much higher quality when we break the writing process into pieces. A draft of each piece is due on the following dates. We will discuss each piece in class and you will get a pass/fail grade on each. You may resubmit any piece that was deemed insufficient.

Week 4—Sept 17. Research Questions due, identify the case/region/topic, why we should care and a paragraph on why this topic is interesting/important

Week 6—Oct. 1. Thesis/Hypotheses due, what is your argument? what are the main testable claims? how will we evaluate the claims?

Week 8—Oct 15. Literature Review/Bib due, identify core debate, who the main scholars involved are, put them in a conversation drawing out areas of similarity/difference, what we know/don’t

**Academic Integrity Code**

Students should be aware of the contents of the AU Academic Integrity Code. I regard violations of this code seriously and will immediately refer the matter to the Dean, should such violations occur. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the code either in general or as they apply to particular requirements of this course.

**Additional Support Services**

If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please do not hesitate to contact me. In addition to the resources of the department, a wide variety of services are available to help you in your efforts to meet the requirements of the course.

- Academic Support Center (x3360, MGC 243): offers study skills workshops, individual instruction, tutor referrals, and services for students with learning disabilities.

- Writing support is available in the ASC Writing Lab or in the Writing Center, Battelle 228.

- Counseling Center (x3500, MGC 214): offers counseling and consultations regarding personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus mental health resources.
- Disability Support Services (x3315, MGC 206): offers technical and practical support and assistance with accommodations for students with physical, medical or psychological disabilities.

If you qualify for accommodations due to a disability, please notify me in a timely manner with a letter from the ASC or DSS so that we can make arrangements to address your needs.

Emergency Preparedness

In the event of an emergency that leads to university closure, we will use an alternative method to hold class. I will communicate class-specific information via AU e-mail and Blackboard. You are responsible for checking AU e-mail regularly. In the event of a declared emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site (www.prepared.american.edu) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information.

Schedule of Topics and Reading Materials

Studying Civil War

August 27–What is Civil War?

Required Readings


Further Readings

September 3—What Civil War is Not?

Required Readings


Policy

- Iraqs Civil War
  http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/62443/james-d-fearon/iraqs-civil-war

- Is Ukraine a civil war?
  http://www.thelocal.ch/20140723/red-cross-declares-civil-war-in-ukraine

Blog

- There is no such thing as a Civil War, Jay Ulfelder
  http://dartthrowingchimp.wordpress.com/2014/06/13/there-is-no-such-thing-as-civil-war/

- If Gaza Isn't Genocide, What is?, Megan MacKenzie
Further Readings


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September 10–Studying Civil War

*Fieldwork/Qualitative Research*


*Formal Theory*


*Computational Methods*


*Quantitative Methods*


*Field Experiments*


*Communicating with Policy Makers*

Conflict Data (peruse for possible use in your paper).

- PRIO/Uppsala Conflict Armed Conflict Dataset (http://www.prio.no/cwp/ArmedConflict/)
- Correlates of War Intrastate War Dataset (http://www.correlatesofwar.org)
- Minorities at Risk Data (http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/)
- State Failure Task Force (http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/stfail/index.htm)
- Battle Deaths in Civil War (http://www.prio.no/page/CSCW_research_detail/Programme_detail_CSCW/9649/45656.html)
- Christian Davenports Archive (Rwanda, Northern Ireland, US, and other data) (http://christiandavenportphd.weebly.com/archiving.html)
- Global Terrorism Database (http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/)
- Iraq Data (www.iraqbodycount.org)
- Coalition deaths in Afghanistan (http://icasualties.org/oef/)
- Armed Conflict Location Data (http://www.acleddata.com)
- Social Climate in Africa Database (https://www.strausscenter.org/scad.html)

Origins of Civil War

September 17–Origins of Civil Wars I: Security Dilemmas, the Commitment Problem, and International Factors

Case Analysis: Iraq 2003-Present

- Fearon’s “Rationalist Explanations for War” again!

SIMULATION

Blog

- Refugees, Transnational Rebels, and the Syrian Civil War
  http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2012/10/04/refugees-transnational-rebels-and-the-syrian-civil-war/

Further Readings


September 24–Origins of Civil War II: Political Economy (Poverty, State Weakness)

Case Analysis: Nicaragua mid 1970s to early 1990s


*Policy*


*Blog*

- The Worlds Newest War in the Worlds Newest State
  http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2014/01/06/the-worlds-newest-war-in-the-worlds-newest-state/

*Further Readings*


October 1–Origins of Civil War III: Political Economy (Natural Resources)

Case Analysis: Liberia 1989 - Present


Policy

- http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/palestinian-natural-resources-lie-beneath-this-terrible-conflict-9621494.html

- USIP Report
  http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/08sg.pdf

Further Readings


October 8–Origins of Civil War IV: Grievances

Case Analysis: El Salvador 1979 – mid 1990s


Blog

- James Fearon, Grievances and Civil War
  http://themonkeycage.org/2012/06/27/grievances-and-civil-war/

Further Readings


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Origins of Civil War

October 15–MIDTERM EXAM and Is Ethnic War Different?


Further Readings

- This article is awful, but you should probably know it (if you dont already): Samuel Huntington. 1993. “The Clash of Civilizations,” Foreign Affairs 72(3)


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**October 22–Violence in Civil War: Discriminate vs. Indiscriminate Killing**

*Case Analysis: Syria 2011 to present*


**Blog**


**Further Readings**


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October 29—Failed or Fragile States? and Recurring Civil War

*Case Analysis: Somalia 1979 to present*


Blog

- http://ffp.statesindex.org
- http://www.worldpolicy.org/blog/2012/07/17/failure-failed-states-index

Policy

- http://globalpolicy.gmu.edu/political-instability-task-force-home/

Further Readings


Ending Civil War

November 5–How do Civil Wars End? Why do Civil Wars Last So Long?

Case Analysis: Angola 1975  2002


**Blog**


**Policy**

- http://globalpolicy.gmu.edu/political-instability-task-force-home/


**Further Readings**


November 12 Foreign Intervention into Civil Wars

Case Analysis: Cambodia early 1970s to early 1980s or Ukraine currently


Blog

- The Need for Multilateral Intervention in Syria
  http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2012/07/04/the-need-for-multilateral-intervention-in-syria/

- Peacekeeping is more successful than you think
  http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2014/08/12/peacekeeping-works-better-than-you-may-think/

Policy


- Betts, Richard. The Delusion of Impartial Intervention

- Stanley Hoffmann The Debate about Intervention Chapter 17, Croker et al. (2001)

Further Readings


November 19–Settling Civil Wars I–Designing Agreements and Power Sharing

*Case Analysis: Mozambique 1977-1992*


Blog

- The Four Things We Know About How Civil Wars End (and What This Tells Us About Syria)
  http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2013/10/18/the-four-things-we-know-about-how-civil-wars-end-and-what-this-tells-us-about-syria/
Further Readings


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NOVEMBER 26–NO CLASS–THANKSGIVING

December 3–Settling Civil Wars II–Partition, Spoilers, and Reintegration

*Case Analysis: Mozambique 1977-1992*


Final Exam Review

Blog

- Partition of Iraq Not a Good Idea

- Partitioning of Iraq is Inevitable
  http://www.jwkraft.com/iraq-partitioning-inevitable/

Further Readings


FINAL EXAM

May 15