



POSC 241: Ethnic Conflict

Carleton College, Winter 2007

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I. Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the theories and empirics necessary to analyze and understand ethnic conflict. The course is organized around two core questions: what causes ethnic conflict? What can we do to manage, mitigate, or eliminate ethnic conflict? To answer these questions, we will begin by investigating different theories of ethnicity and identity and the ways in which such identities can be shaped, manipulated, and used to generate discord among different groups. We will then turn to the exploration of how these underlying disagreements can escalate into conflicts, and how different kinds of social, economic, and political conditions contribute to increasing hostility. As part of this investigation, we will also consider a range of historical case studies of ethnic conflict, as well as a few “negative” cases where conflict could have occurred, but did not. We will conclude by focusing on a range of possible solutions to ethnic conflict.

By the end of the course, students will be exposed to basic theoretical tools and concepts needed to understand and analyze ethnic conflicts, possess knowledge of several case studies of ethnic conflict, and have the ability to evaluate different proposed solutions to conflict. Students will also acquire some passing familiarity with the techniques and methodologies needed to formulate and test hypotheses about ethnic conflict.

II. Course Materials

The following books are required for this class. They are available at the bookstore and have also been placed on closed reserve at the library:

Ted Gurr and Barbara Harff, Ethnic Conflict in World Politics, 2nd edition (Westview Press, 2000). ISBN: 0813398401

Ashutosh Varshney, Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India (Yale University Press, 2003). ISBN: 0300100132

Additional course readings will be available on e-reserve and accessible via the library’s website or through Moodle.

III. Requirements and Expectations

Your grade in this class will be based on the following components:

| <u>Assignment</u> | <u>Weight</u> |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Class participation | 15% |
| 2. Discussion paper | 20% (10% each) |
| 3. Movie review | 10% |
| 4. Case study wiki entry | 15% (group grade) |
| 5. Case study presentation | 10% (individual grade) |
| 6. Final paper | <u>30%</u> |
| | 100% |

- 1. Class participation:** your participation grade will be based on informed contribution during regular class discussions. When calculating your participation grade, I will be weighing the quality of contribution over quantity. You will receive a higher grade for making thoughtful comments or raising questions that enhance our understanding of the material or further our investigation of ethnic conflict rather than speaking just for the sake of hearing yourself talk. Students who are perennially late or absent, or who come to class unprepared for discussion will receive low marks for participation.
- 2. Discussion paper:** you will have the opportunity to respond critically to assigned readings via two discussion papers. For this assignment, you will select two eligible articles (marked with asterisks) and write a 2-3 page reaction paper that (a) briefly summarizes the main argument of the piece, (b) assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the argument and/or the research methods, and (c) raises no more than three questions that we might consider during the in-class discussion. You may also be asked in class to elaborate on some of the issues or concerns raised in your paper. Discussion papers are due no later than 9pm of the day before the class for which the reading is assigned (e.g., if you are writing a paper on an article assigned for Thursday, Jan. 4th, the paper is due by 9pm on Wednesday, Jan. 3rd).

PLEASE NOTE: To ensure that we spread discussion papers evenly throughout the term, you **must** sign up ahead of time for your two papers. Sign-up sheets will be posted on the door of Willis 404 during common time on Thursday, and will be first come, first served. If you fail to sign up by noon on Monday, I will assign you to two open time slots of my choosing!

- 3. Movie review:** during the term, we will screen two movies on ethnic conflict. For this assignment, you will select one of these movies and write a review of 3-4 pages in which you should comment on what the movie illustrates or reveals about the dynamics of ethnic conflict, particularly given our prior discussions about group identity and violence. The movie review will be due by 5pm on Thursday, February 8th.
- 4. Case study wiki and presentation:** in the middle of the term, we will pause to consider several historical and contemporary examples of ethnic conflict and use these cases to assess some of the theoretical arguments encountered at the beginning of the class. For this assignment, you will work in small groups to research and write an online wiki entry in Moodle on a selected case of ethnic conflict. The wiki entry should include the following sections: (a) overview or

executive summary; (b) background and history; (c) discussion of relevant ethnic organizations and their political objectives; (d) summary of any past or ongoing attempts to negotiate a resolution; and (e) analysis of why this case escalated from latent disagreements to active conflict. This last section should incorporate and evaluate the various theories and hypotheses of escalation that we have encountered in the readings and in class discussion. Finally, your wiki entry should include links to additional resources (on- and off-line) for those interested in learning more about the case. The wiki entry must be completed no later than 5pm on Tuesday, February 20th.

In addition to the wiki entry, groups will also be responsible for developing a twenty-minute presentation on their cases for the entire class. More details of the wiki and presentation component will be provided during the term.

5. **Final paper:** the final assignment for the class is to write a paper of no more than 12 pages that evaluates one of several hypotheses about the onset, duration, or termination of ethnic conflict. The hypotheses will be provided in class, and will derive in part from our discussions about the assigned readings, where they succeed, and where they fail.

Students can approach the final paper in one of two ways, both of which reflect representative research methodologies in the study of ethnic conflict:

- a. Comparative case analysis: those who pursue this path will test the chosen hypothesis using the comparative case study method. In addition to the case study that you have already researched and prepared, you will select 1 supplementary case for use in your paper. Your choice of case studies should reflect some thought about research design and how cases should be paired. The case wikis prepared by your colleagues will help you get started with your research on your secondary case, but should be a first, not a last step.
- b. Quantitative analysis: those who pursue this path will test the chosen hypothesis using a dataset and simple statistical techniques. You will be able to use one of several freely available datasets to complete this paper, but may also seek out additional or alternative data if you believe to will be useful for the analysis. You will not need sophisticated statistical skills to complete the assignment, but to carry out this line of analysis successfully, you will need to know basic regression techniques.

Please note that I am not advocating one approach over the other. Both quantitative and qualitative methods can yield compelling insights about ethnic conflict. Your choice should reflect your interests and your skills.

Regardless of your chosen methodology, the final research paper is due by 5pm on the last day of classes (Friday, March 9th).

IV. Course Policies

- **Policy on late papers:** Papers are due on the dates specified above. Late work will not be accepted. If you are unable to complete an assignment on time due to illness, you can get an extension provided you can furnish a note from a doctor or the Wellness Center.
- **Policy on attendance and preparation:** Attendance is required, and you are expected to complete the assigned readings before coming to class. However, if you need to miss class for some reason, it is your responsibility to get notes from your fellow classmates and, if needed, come to office hours to go over any questions that you may have.
- **Policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty:** Both are serious offenses. Anyone caught cheating will automatically receive a zero for the assignment. To avoid any semblance of impropriety, please take pains to cite your sources correctly. You are also strongly encouraged to keep any outlines or rough drafts of your papers to document the evolution of your work.

For more information on Carleton's policy on academic honesty, please consult http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/dos/handbook/academic_regs/?policy_id=21359

- **Policy on special needs:** If you require special accommodation due to a documented physical or learning disability, please come see me during the first week of class to discuss how I might best assist you in meeting the objectives and requirements of this course.

V. Schedule of Readings

The readings for this class come from a variety of sources. Some will be more historical and descriptive while others will be based more on quantitative or game theoretic analysis. For all the assigned readings, you should pay attention to the core theoretical argument being made as well as the methodologies and evidence used to support that argument. Think critically not only about the author's claims, but about the approaches chosen to verify those claims.

| Date | Topic | Readings |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Thursday, Jan. 4 | Introduction to the course | |
| Tuesday, Jan. 9 | Ethnic identity & ethnic groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gurr and Harff, ch. 1-2 • Joanne Nagel (1994). "Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture." <i>Social Forces</i>, 41(1): 152-176. |
| Thursday, Jan. 11 | Ethnic mobilization | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gurr and Harff, ch. 5-6 ** • Susan Olzak (1983) "Contemporary Ethnic Mobilization." <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i>, 9: 355-374 ** • V.P. Gagnon, Jr. (1994-95). "Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia." <i>International Security</i>, 19(3): 130-166. ** |
| Tuesday, Jan. 16 | Grievances and deprivation, I | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ted Gurr (1993). "Why Minorities Rebel: A Global Analysis of Communal Mobilization and Conflict since 1945." <i>International Political Science Review</i>, 14(2): 161-201 ** • Robert Blauner (1969). "Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt." <i>Social Problems</i>, 16(4): 393-408 ** |
| Thursday, Jan. 18 | Grievances and deprivation, II | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Lichbach (1990). "Will Rational People Rebel Against Inequality? Samson's Choice." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>, 34(4): 1049-1076. ** • Susan Olzak, Suzanne Shanahan, and Elizabeth H. McEneaney (1996). "Poverty, Segregation, and Race Riots: 1960-1993." <i>American Sociological Review</i>, 61(4): 590-613. ** |
| Tuesday, Jan. 23 | Political and social institutions, I | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen M. Saideman, David J. Lanoue, Michael Campenni and Samuel Stanton (2002). "Democratization, Political Institutions, and Ethnic Conflict: A Pooled Time-Series Analysis, 1985-1998." <i>Comparative Political Studies</i>, (35)1: 103-129. ** • Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler (2003). "Regime Types and Discrimination against Ethnoreligious Minorities: A Cross-Sectional Analysis of the Autocracy-Democracy Continuum." <i>Political Studies</i>, 51(3): 469-489 ** |
| Thursday, Jan. 25 | Political and social institutions, II | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stuart Kaufman (1996). "Spiraling to Ethnic War: Elites, Masses, and Moscow in Moldova's Civil War." <i>International Security</i>, 21(2): 108-138. ** • James Fearon and David Laitin (1996). "Explaining Interethnic Cooperation." <i>American Political Science Review</i>, 90(4): 715-735 ** |
| Tuesday, Jan. 30 | Civil society, I | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varshney, ch. 1-4 ** |
| Thursday, Feb. 1 | Civil society, II | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varshney, pp. 113-115, ch. 12, <u>AND</u> either <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ch. 5-6 ** ➤ Ch. 9-10 ** |

| Date | Topic | Readings |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Tuesday, Feb. 6 | Psychology and Culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ervin Staub (1989). <u>The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and other Group Violence</u>. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), ch. 3-5, 12. ** |
| Thursday, Feb. 8 | Conflict and the international system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gurr and Harff, ch. 7-8 ** |
| Tuesday, Feb. 13 | In-class presentations | No readings today! |
| Thursday, Feb. 15 | In-class presentations | No readings today! |
| Tuesday, Feb. 20 | In-class presentations | No readings today! |
| Thursday, Feb. 22 | Managing ethnic conflict, I | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gurr and Harff, ch. 9 John Coakley (1992). "The Resolution of Ethnic Conflicts: Towards a Typology." <u>International Review of Political Science</u>, 13(4): 343-358. ** Frederic S. Pearson (2001). "Dimensions of Conflict Resolution in Ethnopolitical Disputes." <u>Journal of Peace Research</u>, 38(3): 275-287. ** Charles William Maynes (1993). "Containing Ethnic Conflict." <u>Foreign Policy</u>, 90: 3-21. |
| Tuesday, Feb. 27 | Managing ethnic conflict, II | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chaim Kaufman (1996). "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars." <u>International Security</u>, 20(4): 136-175. ** Nicholas Sambanis (2000). "Partition as a Solution to Ethnic War: An Empirical Critique of Theoretical Literature." <u>World Politics</u>, 52(4): 437-483 ** |
| Thursday, Mar. 1 | No class today! | No readings today! |
| Tuesday, Mar. 6 | Post-conflict reconciliation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> James Gibson (2004). "Does Truth Lead to Reconciliation? Testing the Causal Assumptions of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Process." <u>American Journal of Political Science</u>, 48(2): 201-217. ** |
| Thursday, Mar. 8 | Wrap-up and concluding thoughts | Remember: FINAL PAPER IS DUE ON FRIDAY, MARCH 9 TH ! |