

POSC 241: Ethnic Conflict

Carleton College, Winter 2011



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Winter Term Office Hours
Mondays, 12:00-3:00pm
Tuesdays, 2:00-5:00pm
Thursdays, 10:00-1:00pm

Skype office hours on Wednesday
evenings, by appointment
(ID: devashree.gupta1)

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? And 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. We will conclude by focusing on a range of possible solutions to ethnic conflict.

Required Texts

The following books have been placed on order at the bookstore.

Beth Roy. Some Trouble with Cows: Making Sense of Social Conflict. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004.

Neal G. Jesse and Kristen P. Williams. Ethnic Conflict: A Systematic Approach to Cases of Conflict. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2010.

Lisa Schirch. Strategic Peacebuilding. Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2004.

Additional readings will be available on the class Moodle page.

Course Requirements

Your grade in this course will be based on the following elements:

Participation	15%
Reaction paper	5%
Take-home midterm exam	20%
Group data analysis project	35%
Take-home final exam	25%

Class participation. Your participation grade will be based on regular, informed contributions during class discussions and selected Moodle discussion topics. 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. You will also take turns posting discussion questions to Moodle in advance of class to get our in-class discussions started. Students who are perennially late or absent, or who come to class unprepared for discussion will receive low marks for participation.

Reaction paper. You are responsible for turning in one short critical reaction paper on one of the assigned readings for class. This reaction paper (2 pages, double-spaced) should include a BRIEF summary of the author's core argument, and then your analysis of the merits (and possible limitations) of this argument. You may write your paper at any time, but papers must be turned in at the beginning of class for which the reading is assigned. Eligible readings are starred (*) in the syllabus.

Midterm. Halfway through the course, there will be a take-home midterm exam. You will be given a list of questions that ask you to draw from the readings and in-class discussions. You will select one question and write a 6-8 page (double-spaced) response to be turned in the following week.

Group data analysis project. Throughout the term, you will work in small groups of 3-4 people to investigate a specific real-world policy question pertaining to ethnic conflict. As a group, you will be responsible for collecting the data that you believe will help you understand and answer the question, analyze those data, write up your results, and present the results to the class. The specific graded portions of this project are divided as follows:

Short paper/review of literature	5% (group grade)
Compilation of dataset and codebook	5% (group grade)
Short paper/initial data exploration	5% (individual grade)
Final paper	10% (group grade)
In-class presentation	5% (group grade)
Individual contribution to group	5% (individual grade)

Please note: I am not assuming you have taken any prior statistics/research methods classes. While such background will certainly be helpful for this assignment, I will provide you with very detailed instructions and guidance so that no one will be at a disadvantage.

Final exam. The final exam for this class will consist of multiple essay questions that you will answer based on your understanding of the readings and discussions from class. The questions will be handed out on the last day of class, and your responses will be due on the last day of the exam period.

Course Policies

Attendance

You are expected to come to class regularly and on time. If you are unable to attend due to illness or some other personal matter, please notify me in advance. A pattern of unexcused and unexplained absences, or chronic tardiness will affect your participation grade. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to come see me in office hours and/or get notes from a classmate. Emailing me to ask “did I miss anything?” is NOT an acceptable substitute.

Late work

Late work will be penalized by 1/3 grade per day unless you provide documentation of extenuating circumstances (illness, family emergency, etc.) Make a note: computers do crash, printers sometimes jam, and files do occasionally disappear into thin air. Plan ahead, make back-ups of your work, and do not count on technological difficulties to excuse late work.

Extensions

Extensions will not be granted unless there are compelling reasons involving unforeseen complications or obstacles to completing your work on time. Simply having a busy week full of exams and papers is not, in itself, grounds for getting an extension. Please make note of assignment due dates and plan your workload accordingly.

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty

Both are offenses that the College and I take very seriously. Anyone caught cheating will automatically receive a zero for the assignment, and will have the case referred to the Dean’s office for further investigation and possible disciplinary action. To avoid landing yourself in this kind of trouble, please take pains to cite your sources accurately and thoroughly. You are also strongly encouraged to keep any outlines or rough drafts of your papers to document the evolution of your work. If you have any doubts or questions about citing and using sources, please feel free to consult with me.

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 can best help you get the most out of this class.

Schedule of readings

You should complete the assigned readings carefully and thoughtfully before coming to class. Readings available on Moodle are marked (M). Readings that eligible for your response paper are marked **.

Tuesday, January 4 Introduction to ethnic conflict

Thursday, January 6 Creating and mobilizing ethnic identities

- Jesse and Williams, Ethnic Conflict, ch. 1
- Joane Nagel (1994). "Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture." Social Forces, 41(1): 152-176. (M) **
- Daniel Posner (2005). Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa, ch. 4 (M) **

Explaining ethnic conflict

Tuesday, January 11 Myth, memory, and grievance

- Vamik Volkan (1997). Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, ch. 1-4, 6. (M) **

Thursday, January 13 Economic deprivation and competition

- Ted Gurr (1993). "Why Minorities Rebel: A Global Analysis of Communal Mobilization and Conflict since 1945." International Political Science Review, 14(2): 161-201. (M) **
- Amy Chua (2003). World on Fire. New York: Anchor, ch. 1, 4, 7 (M). **

Tuesday, January 18 Political institutions and elites

- Jesse and Williams, Ethnic Conflict, pp. 31-61
- Steven M. Saideman, David J. Lanoue, Michael Campenni, and Samuel Stanton (2002). "Democratization, Political Institutions, and Ethnic Conflict: A Pooled Time-Series Analysis, 1985-1998." Comparative Political Studies, 35(1): 103-129. (M) **
- Stuart Kaufman (1996). "Spiraling to Ethnic War: Elites, Masses, and Moscow in Moldova's Civil War." International Security, 21(2): 108-138. (M) **

Thursday, January 20 Civil society

- Ashutosh Varshney (2002). Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, ch. 1-4. (M) **

**** Group lit review paper DUE in class ****

Tuesday, January 25 Conflict spirals (small group discussion day)

- Beth Roy, Some Trouble with Cows, ch. 1-5

**** Take-home midterm exam handed out ****

Thursday, January 27 In-class movie: "Earth"

(we will discuss this movie for the first part of class on Tuesday)

Case studies

Tuesday, February 1 Sri Lanka

- Jesse and Williams, Ethnic Conflict, ch. 6

**** Take-home midterm exam DUE in class ****

Thursday, February 3 Northern Ireland

- Jesse and Williams, Ethnic Conflict, ch. 3

Tuesday, February 8 Rwanda

- L. R. Melvern (2000). A People Betrayed. London: Zed Books, pp. 1-73 (M).

Thursday, February 10 Sudan (guest lecture: Noah Salomon)

- Jesse and Williams, Ethnic Conflict, ch. 5

Tuesday, February 15 Israel/Palestine

- Jesse and Williams, Ethnic Conflict, ch. 7

**** Short data exploration paper DUE in class ****

What can be done to stop ethnic conflict?

Thursday, February 17 International intervention and peacekeeping

- Jesse and Williams, Ethnic Conflict, pp. 65-76
- Gareth Evans (2008). The Responsibility to Protect: Ending Mass Atrocity Crimes Once and For All. Washington, DC: Brookings, ch. 2-3 (M) **

Tuesday, February 22 Peacebuilding

- Lisa Schirch, Strategic Peacebuilding, entire

Thursday, February 24 Peace settlements

- Chaim Kaufman (1996). "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars." International Security, 20(4): 136-175. (M) **
- Nicholas Sambanis (2000). "Partition as a Solution to Ethnic War: An Empirical Critique of the Theoretical Literature." World Politics, 52(4): 437-483. (M) **

Tuesday, March 1 Post-conflict reconciliation

- Dinka Corkalo, Dean Ajdukovic, Harvey M. Weinstein, Eric Stover, Dino Djipa, and Miklos Biro (2004). "Neighbors Again? Intercommunity Relations after Ethnic Cleansing." In My Neighbor, My Enemy: Justice and Community in the Aftermath of Mass Atrocity, Eric Stover and Harvey M. Weinstein, eds. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 143-161. (M)
- Nadim N. Rouhana (2008). "Reconciling History and Equal Citizenship in Israel:

Democracy and the Politics of Historical Denial.” In The Politics of Reconciliation in Multicultural Societies, Will Kymlicka and Bashir Bashir, eds. New York: Oxford University Press, pp.70-93. (M)

Class research projects

Thursday, March 3 In-class presentations

Tuesday, March 8 In-class presentations

***** Final group paper DUE in class *****
***** Take-home final exam handed out *****