

POSC 241: Ethnic Conflict

Carleton College, Spring 2009

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Spring Office Hours:

Tuesdays, 3:00-4:00pm

Wednesdays, 11:00-2:00pm

Thursdays, 3:00-4:00pm



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 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.

Required Texts

The following books are required for this class. All have been ordered through the campus bookstore.

Ashutosh Varshney. Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003.

Vamik Volkan. Blood Lines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997.

John Paul Lederach. Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies. Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace, 1997.

In addition, the following book has been ordered from the bookstore, but is an optional purchase, as an e-version is also available:

Beth Roy. Some Trouble with Cows: Making Sense of Social Conflict. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004. [The e-version of this book is available at <http://www.escholarship.org/editions/view?docId=ft629007fg&brand=ucpress>]

Additional readings will be made available on Moodle.

Course Requirements

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

Participation	15%
Midterm	30%
Movie review	20%
Final paper	35%

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. You will also take turns serving as discussion leaders.

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 5-6 page (double-spaced) response to be turned in the following week.

Movie Review. We will screen a movie about ethnic conflict during class and reserve a class session to discuss the film. For this assignment, you will write a 3-4 page (double-spaced) essay that reflects on the movie's themes, using the theoretical approaches from the readings and class discussions to analyze the dynamics of group identity formation and conflict that are dramatized.

Final Paper. For the final paper, you will select one of several provided hypotheses about the onset, duration, dynamics, or termination of ethnic conflict and evaluate it using evidence and case studies of your own choosing. You may approach the paper in one of two ways, both of which reflect representative research methodologies in the study of ethnic conflict:

Comparative case studies: those who pursue this path will test the chosen hypothesis using two case studies that should be selected based on either the logic of most-similar or most-different case logic.

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. The final paper is due on the last day of class and should be no more than 12 (double-spaced) pages, INCLUDING all references, notes, charts, and figures.

Course Policies

Policy on late papers: Papers are due on the dates specified. Late work will be penalized by 1/3 of a grade per 24 hours late. 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. Please make note: technological difficulties will not excuse late work. Extensions will not be granted except in exceptional circumstances involving unforeseen complications or obstacles. Simply having three papers due in a week is not sufficient grounds for getting an extension.

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.

Schedule of Readings

You are expected to do the assigned readings carefully and thoughtfully before coming to class. Your ability to discuss these readings – both the author’s arguments and, if appropriate, the methodology used – will be key factors in your participation grade. Readings noted with an (M) will be available on Moodle.

	Date	Topic	Readings
Week 1	March 31	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reading
	April 2	No class!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lederach, ch. 1-2 (skim for an introduction and useful background to the topic)
Week 2	April 7	Ethnic identities and ethnic groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volkan, ch. 1, 6 • Joanne Nagel (1994). “Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture.” <u>Social Forces</u>, 41(1): 152-176. (M)
	April 9	Ethnic mobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susan Olzak (1983) “Contemporary Ethnic Mobilization.” <u>Annual Review of Sociology</u>, 9: 355-374. (M) • V.P. Gagnon, Jr. (1994-95). “Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia.” <u>International Security</u>, 19(3): 130-66. (M) • Daniel Posner (2005). <u>Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa</u>, ch. 4. (M)
Week 3	April 14	Myth, memory, and grievance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volkan, ch. 2-4 • Jack Snyder and Karen Ballentine (1996). “Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas.” <u>International Security</u>, 21(2): 5-40. (M)
	April 16	Economic deprivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amy Chua (2003). <u>World on Fire</u>, ch. 4. (M) • Ted Gurr (1993). “Why Minorities Rebel: A Global Analysis of Communal Mobilization and Conflict since 1945.” <u>International Political Science Review</u>, 14(2): 161-201. (M) • Mark Lichbach (1990). “Will Rational People Rebel Against Inequality? Samson’s Choice.” <u>American Journal of Political Science</u>, 34(4): 1049-1076. (M)
Week 4	April 21	Political institutions	<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.” <u>Comparative Political Studies</u>, (35)1: 103-129. (M) • Stuart Kaufman (1996). “Spiraling to Ethnic War: Elites, Masses, and Moscow in Moldova’s Civil War.” <u>International Security</u>, 21(2): 108-138. (M)
	April 23	Conflict processes and escalation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roy, ch. 1-5.

		<i>(discussion sections)</i>	
Week 5	April 28	Civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varshney, ch. 1-4
	April 30	Civil society, continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varshney, ch. 5,6, 9, 10 <p>**Take-home midterm handed out**</p>
Week 6	May 5	Movie screening: "Earth"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reading
	May 7	Discussion of movie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reading <p>**Take-home midterm due in class**</p>
Week 7	May 12	Ethnic conflict and the international community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barbara Harff and Ted Robert Gurr (2004). <u>Ethnic Conflict in World Politics</u>, ch. 8. (M) • Stephen John Stedman (1993). "The New Interventionists." <u>Foreign Affairs</u>, 72: 1-16. (M) • Terry Nardin (2002). "The Moral Basis of Humanitarian Intervention." <u>Ethics and International Affairs</u>, 16(1): 57-70. (M)
	May 14	Peacekeeping and intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patrick Regan (1996). "Conditions of Successful Third-Party Interventions in Intrastate Conflicts." <u>Journal of Conflict Resolution</u>, 40(2): 336-359. (M) • David Carment and Patrick James (1998). "The United Nations at 50: Managing Ethnic Crises, Past and Present." <u>Journal of Peace Research</u>, 35(1): 61-82. (M) <p>**Movie review due in class**</p>
Week 8	May 19	Conflict resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lederach, ch. 3-9
	May 21	Conflict settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaim Kaufmann (1996). "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars." <u>International Security</u>, 20(4): 136-175. (M) • Nicholas Sambanis (2000). "Partition as a Solution to Ethnic War: An Empirical Critique of the Theoretical Literature." <u>World Politics</u>, 52(4): 437-483. (M)
Week 9	May 26	Conflict settlements, continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ulrich Schneckener (2002). "Making Power-Sharing Work: Lessons from Successes and Failures in Ethnic Conflict Regulation." <u>Journal of Peace Research</u>, 39(2): 203-228. (M)
	May 28	Post-conflict reconciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krishna Kumar (1999). "Promoting Social Reconciliation in Postconflict Societies." USAID Operations Assessment Report #24, Center for Development Information and Evaluation, US Agency for International Development, Washington, DC. (M) • Eugenia Zorbas (2004). "Reconciliation in Post-Genocide Rwanda." <u>African Journal of Legal Studies</u>, 1(1): 29-52. (M)
Week 10	June 2	Concluding discussion	**Final paper due in class**