1 Instructor Information

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Office Hours: M/W/Th 10–11
Class Location: C255 ESC

2 Course Overview, Format, and Objectives

Ethnic conflicts and civil wars pose one of the greatest threats to international peace and security today. Recent conflicts in contexts as diverse as Rwanda, Russia, Colombia, and India demonstrate the devastating consequences of violent civil conflict. Indicative of this broader trend in the outbreak and continuation of civil violence is the fact that 90% of UN peacekeeping operations since 1989 have been deployed to disputes that have a significant internal conflict component. Despite the threat posed by such conflicts, recent advances toward peace in areas such as Namibia, El Salvador, Cambodia, and Mozambique offer encouragement about the prospects for resolving long-standing civil conflicts.

This course is structured to consider various theoretical approaches in the study of civil wars and their management. Throughout, we will sample from numerous cases of civil war and violence paying close attention to the conflicts in South Africa, Rwanda, and the former Yugoslavia. The first segment of the course explores the basic dimensions of civil wars and ethnic violence. In particular, we examine the origins and development of ethnic and political identities and how they structure the parameters of conflict. Core questions include: What do we mean by “ethnicity”? Is a given identity inherent in individuals, or is it subject to change? If manipulable, do “instrumental” elites use ethnicity to their advantage? Is there an ethnic dimension to all civil violence?

The second section of the course is devoted to the process by which conflict among individuals and groups turns violent, with an emphasis on civil wars in Africa. Key questions include: What political incentives do leaders have to drum up support through violence? How do economic factors such as natural resources affect a group’s opportunity or willingness to engage in violence? What causes internal violence to “spill over” into other countries or regions?

The third and final section addresses strategies of conflict management and resolution. We consider some of the following questions: Does a feasible set of preventive solutions to civil wars exist? What is successful conflict management? Which strategies employed by international actors are most successful, and why? What are the obstacles to implementing conflict resolution measures?

The course will enable students to develop an understanding of: the nature of various identities, how identity contributes (or not) to civil war, what other dimensions shape civil war, and how such wars are resolved. In addition to considering various theoretical approaches, three detailed case studies, and brief examinations of many other cases, by writing the research paper you will carry out research on civil wars of your choice and should develop a solid understanding of them. These activities and assignments address the learning outcomes of the political science major by encouraging you to (1) gain a knowledge of countries and wars, theoretically and factually, (2) write professional research papers, and (3) think critically, analytically, and
I encourage you to take time to look at the full set of political science learning outcomes, which can be accessed at: https://learningoutcomes.byu.edu/

I hope that our sessions will be engaging, informative, and participatory. I eschew a strict lecture format. Instead, we will engage in a variety of activities including lectures, personal writing exercises, partner and group work, class discussions, video clips, demonstrations, problem-solving activities, and other critical thinking exercises. I value and will solicit your input on class activities both at the beginning of the semester as well as around midterm. I will make every reasonable effort to incorporate these ideas in the classroom.

3 Requirements

3.1 Required Readings

Three books are required for purchase, but other articles will be placed on blackboard and you will also be responsible for them.


Gourevitch, Philip. 1999. We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories From Rwanda. New York: Picador.


3.2 Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation are worth 10% of your grade. I expect all students to attend class regularly. On many days, we will spend a few minutes writing about various topics from the text or lecture. Frequently, you will hand in these writings for credit. These writing activities will enable us to think critically and they will also guide some of our discussion. I also encourage you to ask questions and make germane comments at any time during class. Furthermore, please finish the assigned readings by the date they appear in the syllabus. Read critically and be prepared to comment on the readings in class.

Your attendance and participation grade will be based primarily on “Readings Emails”. I borrowed this idea from my colleagues, Professors Wade Jacoby and Dan Nielson. For each class session, each of you is required to submit a short email of two paragraphs (750 words or less). I must receive the email before midnight on the Sunday and Tuesday before we meet in class on Monday and Wednesday to discuss the relevant reading. The first paragraph should synthesize the main arguments from the readings as well as the main findings.

The last paragraph of the email needs to connect the assigned readings to a new article or paper published or written since 2000 — and not included on the course syllabus — that you have discovered using appropriate research methods. I recommend the Social Science Citation Index or Google Scholar, with special attention to articles receiving citations by other scholars. You can reflect on how the new article or paper answers an unanswered question in the assigned readings, corrects a conceptual or empirical error, solves a puzzle created by the assigned reading, suggests an alternative or critique, or otherwise improves on what is known about the topic.
You can reflect on anything interesting about the new article, provided you connect it to the assigned readings.

At the top of the email, please include a full citation of the new article or paper using a citation style of your choice, but that is complete and consistent across emails. Part of the grade for your emails will reflect the quality, novelty, and relevance of the article you chose and the insights you have in connecting it to the assigned reading. You do not need to select a new article for every assigned reading, although you should feel welcome to do so. One new article per class session/email will suffice. But you do need to connect each assigned reading to the one new article you chose.

Important Note: I receive many emails in a given day, and I will need you to help me sort yours out of the mix. In the email’s subject line, please type “PLSC 475” followed by the last name(s) of the author(s) so that I can better keep track of your emails. If you do not do this, I may inadvertently fail to give you credit for your email. Do not put anything else in the subject line. That way, if you need to email me regarding something else, I won’t mistake it for an assignment email.

I will provide feedback on how you are doing on the emails at a few points in the semester, but a far better way to have them evaluated is to print them, bring them to class, and use them as the basis for our discussions. In addition to enriching our discussions, they are a great way for us to prepare for class — they help me see which points came across well and which did not and need emphasis. Finally, they are also a chance to explore ideas without the pressure of expanding them into full papers, though it is likely that great papers may well get their start as smart emails.

You should submit emails for each reading assignment every day that we have a reading assignment, though each student can skip one email without penalty. You should feel free to discuss the readings together before composing the emails. Collaboration and discussion is encouraged. However, you will be graded on your independence of thought in your analysis, so copying each other’s work will be penalized severely. Please engage the readings thoughtfully, critique them, ask questions of them, suggest new directions.

3.3 Assignments

Students are required to complete two writing assignments. You will analyze some broad trends in civil wars and ethnic violence and, because many of you have specific interests in a certain country or region of the world, you will be able to focus your writing on some particular conflicts of interest. The assignments build on each other and require extensive library research. Assignments 1 and 2 are worth 15% and 20% of your final grade respectively. Details are located at the end of the syllabus.

I strongly encourage you to submit a draft of your paper at least one week prior to the due date. I am happy to provide initial feedback on the direction of the paper if you get it to me far enough in advance. I will also post detailed guidelines as well as tips for doing the assignment well as we get closer. Please note that if you are considering using any part of a paper/exam from a previous (or concurrent) class, you must talk with me prior to beginning the assignment. In some limited cases, this will be acceptable, but only if you can document that substantial new work will be carried out and completed in this course.

Note: If you are interested in undertaking a research project in which you do original research on a topic that could be used for presentation or publication, I encourage you to consider this option. It could be more challenging to complete such a paper, but I would be happy to assist
you in identifying a topic and guiding you through some of the research decisions that you will need to make. Please see me about this if you would prefer to take this option.

In addition to the two writing assignments, you will also give a ten-minute oral presentation with other members of the class. You must turn in a detailed outline/paper (3–4 pages) summarizing your presentation. This is due at least two days prior to your presentation. You will be graded on the paper, the presentation, and on a peer evaluation. This assignment is worth 10% of your grade. Details appear at the end of the syllabus.

3.4 Exams

The midterm and final exams account for 45% of your final grade (20% for the midterm and 25% for the final). Both exams will consist of multiple choice, identifications, and essays. Closer to the exam dates, I will hand out more detailed information about preparing for, and taking, the exams.

3.5 Schedule of Important Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed, Sep 7</td>
<td>Email about syllabus</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon, Sep 26</td>
<td>Obtain presentation assignment</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct: 17–24</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>In class</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed, Oct 19</td>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>Beginning of class</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed, Oct 26</td>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>In class</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon, Dec 5</td>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td>Beginning of class</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed, Dec 14</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>2:30-5:30 pm</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>In class</td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
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4 Course Policies

4.1 Make-up Exams and Assignments

No make-up exams or quizzes will be given unless either prior consent is obtained from the instructor or a documented and valid excuse is provided. I will consent to give makeup exams only in the case of a documented emergency or some other commensurate event.

Assignments are due by the beginning of class on the date indicated in the schedule. Papers arriving late will be subject to a 1/3 grade reduction (i.e., an A will be lowered to an A−, an A− to a B+, and so on). DO NOT turn in your papers (whether late or on time) by email OR by slipping them under my office door. If you turn in a paper late, you must take it to the Political Science Office (745 SWKT) and put it in the assignment drop box.

4.2 Assignment of Grades

Grades are assigned on the following scale: A = 94–100; A− = 90–93; B+ = 87–89; B = 84–86; B− = 80–83; ... F = 63 or lower. If you have a complaint about how your exam (or paper) was graded, I am happy to take a second look. You must type a formal appeal addressing the problem and explain clearly what you originally wrote, why you wrote it, and how you think
your original response correctly answered the original question. Additionally, you must turn in the original exam (or paper) along with your typed appeal.

4.3 Online Resources

The syllabus, all grades, paper topics, lecture outlines, and more will be posted on blackboard, which is accessible through the BYU homepage. Although the lecture outlines will be posted here, do not assume that this exempts you from taking notes in class. The outlines will facilitate your note taking, but will not provide sufficient detail from which to study for exams.

4.4 Academic Integrity

BYU students should seek to be totally honest in their dealings with others. They should complete their own work and be evaluated based upon that work. They should avoid academic dishonesty and misconduct in all its forms, including plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, cheating, and other academic misconduct. Students are responsible not only to adhere to the Honor Code requirement to be honest but also to assist other students in fulfilling their commitment to be honest. (complete version of the Academic Honesty Policy available at honor-code.byu.edu).

While all students sign the honor code, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite sources, especially in this new age of the internet; as well as deal with the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. Please know that as your professor I will notice instances of cheating on exams or plagiarizing on papers. See honorcode.byu.edu for specific examples of intentional, inadvertent plagiarism, and fabrication, falsification.

Writing submitted for credit at BYU must consist of the student’s own ideas presented in sentences and paragraphs of his or her own construction. The work of other writers or speakers may be included when appropriate (as in a research paper or book review), but such material must support the student’s own work (not substitute for it) and must be clearly identified by appropriate introduction and punctuation and by footnoting or other standard referencing.

The substitution of another person’s work for the student’s own or the inclusion of another person’s work without adequate acknowledgment (whether done intentionally or not) is known as plagiarism. It is a violation of academic, ethical, and legal standards and can result in a failing grade not only for the paper but also for the course in which the paper is written. In extreme cases, it can justify expulsion from the University. Because of the seriousness of the possible consequences, students who wonder if their papers are within these guidelines should visit the Writing Lab or consult a faculty member who specializes in the teaching of writing or who specializes in the subject discussed in the paper. Useful books to consult on the topic include the current Harbrace College Handbook, the MLA Handbook, and James D. Lester’s Writing Research Papers.

4.5 Classroom Civility

Regrettably, a handful of students occasionally demonstrate insensitivity to other students and to instructors by disrupting classes unnecessarily. Arriving late for class, reading newspapers in class, packing up bags prior to the end of class, and cell phone use are all disruptive activities. Browsing the internet, checking email, and playing games on laptops are also inappropriate in class because you should be listening and participating. Certainly, taking notes on a laptop is
appropriate, but do not waste your time or mine by getting distracted by other activities on the web. Moreover, I will not tolerate incivility of one opinion to another. It is exciting and healthy to exchange a diversity of opinions, but in no case should anyone demean another because of his or her viewpoint. If you have any questions about what classroom civility entails, please contact me.

4.6 Syllabus

Each of you needs to email me by Wednesday, September 7 to let me know that you have read through the syllabus and that you understand all that is required of you. Also, readings for this course may be changed on an ad hoc basis. For the most part this will not happen, but if so, I will give as much notice as possible. I will likely assign short conflict summaries on a regular basis so that we can discuss specific civil wars in class.

4.7 Other Policies

**Discrimination:** Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education and pertains to admissions, academic and athletic programs, and university-sponsored activities. Title IX also prohibits sexual harassment of students by university employees, other students, and visitors to campus. If you encounter sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 801-422-5895 or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours), or [http://www.ethicspoint.com](http://www.ethicspoint.com) or contact the Honor Code Office at 801-422-2847.

**Access:** Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere which reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (422–2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the SSD office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Office at 422–5895, D–282 ASB.

5 Tentative Course and Reading Schedule

5.1 Syllabus and Trends in Armed Conflict (08/29 – 08/31)

- Read Syllabus
- Hewitt, 2008 (21–26 and 107–118; Blackboard)
- Harbom and Wallensteen, 2007 (623–634; Blackboard)

What is Civil War? (09/07 – 09/12)

- Sept 7: Email about the syllabus
- Mueller 2000, (42–70; Blackboard)
Identity Formation (09/14 – 09/19)
- Taras & Ganguly 2006, (11–13; Blackboard)
- Chandra 2006 (Blackboard)
- Brubaker 2004, (34–52; Wimmer volume)

Case Study — South Africa (09/19 – 09/21)
- Ross 1999, (5–20; Blackboard)
- Harris and Findley, (blackboard)
- McLaughlin 2007, (435–456; Blackboard)

5.2 From Conflict to Violence

General Reading & Introduction (09/26)
- Sept 26: Obtain presentation assignment
- Kaufman 2001, (15–48; Blackboard)
- Lake and Rothchild 1998, (3–23; Blackboard)

Political Dimensions of Civil War (09/28 – 09/30)
- Gagnon 1995, (130-166; Blackboard)
- Wilkinson 2004, (1–18, 236–242; Blackboard)
- Sambanis 2001, (259–282; Blackboard)
- Posen 1993, (27–47; Blackboard)
- Lake and Rothchild 1998, (23–32; Blackboard)
- Sambanis and Schulhofer-Wohl 2009, (82–118; Blackboard)
- Hegre et al 2001, (16–33; Blackboard)

Economic Dimensions of Civil War (10/03 – 10/05)
- King 2001, (524–552; Blackboard)
- Ross 2004, (337–356; Blackboard)
- Fearon & Laitin 2003, (75–90; Blackboard)
- Collier and Sambanis, Chp 1
Ethnicity, Socialization, and Nonviolence (10/10 – 10/12)
- Cederman, Wimmer, Min 2010, (87–119; Blackboard)
- Cederman and Girardin 2007, (173–185; Blackboard)
- Stephan and Chenoweth 2008, (7–44)
- Findley, Beck, Noyes, Van Alfen, (all; Blackboard)

Applications of the Collier/Hoeffler Model (10/17 – 10/24)
- Assignment 1 due 10/19
- Collier and Sambanis, Chp 2 and 3, Burundi and D.R.C.
- Collier and Sambanis, Chp 4 and 5, Nigeria and Kenya
- Collier and Sambanis, Chp 6 and 7, Mozambique and Sudan
- Collier and Sambanis, Chp 8 and 9, Algeria, Senegal, and Mali

Midterm Exam, Oct 26, In Class

5.3 From War to Resolution

Case Study: Rwanda (10/31 – 11/02)
- Watch the documentary: “Ghosts of Rwanda” at the LRC prior to class
- Davenport and Stam 2009: Working Paper on Rwanda (Blackboard)
- Gourevitch 1998, (all; Gourevitch book)

Conflict Management Overview (11/07)
- Harff & Gurr 2004, (181–195; Blackboard)
- Fearon, Humphreys, and Weinstein 2009, (287–291; Blackboard)

Negotiated Settlements (11/09 – 11/14)
- Downes 2006, (49–61; Blackboard)
- Höglund 2008, (95–122; Blackboard)
Prevention, Mediation, & Peacekeeping (11/16 – 11/21)

- Walter 2006, 313–330
- Zartman 2004, (141–159; Wimmer volume)
- Stedman 1995, (14–20; Blackboard)
- Esman 1995, (21–47; Blackboard)
- Doyle and Sambanis 2006, (197–223 & 243–256; Blackboard)

Challenges to Peace Processes (11/28 – 11/30)

- Stedman 1997, (5–53; Blackboard)
- Greenhill and Major 2007, (7–40; Blackboard)
- Findley, (various readings on blackboard)
- Stepanova 2006, (78–104; Blackboard)

Case Study: Bosnia (12/05)

- Assignment 2 due 12/05
- Woodward 1999, (73–115; Blackboard)
- Cousens 2002, (531–566; Blackboard)
- Weidmann Forthcoming, (JOP; Blackboard)

5.4 Conclusions

Consequences and Future Directions (12/07)

- Gurr 2000, (52–64; Blackboard)
- Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006, (335–366; Blackboard)
- Plümper Eric Neumayer 2006, (723–754; Blackboard)

Final Exam, Weds, Dec 14, 2:30–5:30 pm

References


Assignments

In what follows, I describe the assignments that you will need to complete for this course. Note that these may change somewhat, but I will give you advance notice. Before you work on each assignment, I will hand out any updates to clarify things that might be unclear in this version. The purpose of providing this now is so that you get a good sense of where we are going. I will also give other handouts throughout the semester on guidelines for writing and giving oral presentations. All papers need to be turned in by the beginning of class on the date they are due. I do not care what citation style you use, just be consistent and accurate. You need to upload each paper and assignment to blackboard and submit a hard copy.

Writing Assignment 1

The first writing assignment requires you to examine some data on civil wars to understand trends over time as well as some important, but under appreciated, facts about civil wars. The maximum page limit for this paper is 8 pages and it is worth 15% of your grade.

To begin, you need to obtain a data set on civil wars from the web page of Nicholas Sambanis at Yale University. You should download the data and codebook and learn about the civil wars coded there. Obtaining the data might be a bit challenging, because you need to go find it, download it, and then open the data. I am not going to provide the data in easy to use formats, because an important step in the research process is to deal with data in whatever format it comes in. I am happy to help you by answering questions or working through the problem, but only after you have tried it on your own. Once you figure out how the data are provided, you are free to convert them to whichever software you desire, so long as you can compute some basic statistics.

For the assignment, you need to obtain the following information from the data (and document the answers):

1. How is civil war defined and measured in this data set?
2. How many civil war onsets occur according to any two of the civil war onset measures?
3. Which 3 countries had the most civil war onsets?
4. Which region is the most civil-war prone?
5. Which decade had the most civil wars?

Once you obtain these specific pieces of information, then I would like you to learn three other trends about civil wars in the world. You can choose other trends yourself, so long as they are not isolated facts. Please write an 8 page paper that reports the results of your data searches both in brief tables as well as in the text. You should talk about each result and discuss what you thought about the trend prior to seeing the data, what your impressions are now that you have examined the trends, and why you think the trend exists. Finally, please identify three possible research questions that you could address with these data.

Grading Criteria:

- Accuracy of results
- Completeness of the assignment
- Writing style and clarity
Writing Assignment 2

The second writing assignment requires you to analyze the determinants of internal conflict in at least two countries that you choose. If you prefer analyzing all of the civil wars in the data set from assignment 1 statistically, then I encourage you to do that. You can look at a wide range of domestic turmoil including civil wars, revolutions, terrorist acts, and riots among others, but you should emphasize civil war. The maximum page limit for this paper is 12 pages and it is worth 20% of your grade.

This is primarily an analytical assignment. You must offer a discussion of why the internal conflicts have occurred followed by a prognosis for future conflict over the next decade or two. Whether you regard the probability of future conflict as high or low, your analysis must include the rationale for the assessment as a central piece of the assignment.

Based on your analysis in the first half of this assignment, offer a detailed set of suggestions on how to minimize the chances for internal conflict. If you analyze only a limited number of wars, then the suggestions should be for the government facing the civil wars. If you analyze all of the wars statistically, then make recommendations to the United Nations. These policy ideas should be plausible and described in some detail (that is, do not merely offer goals, but the policy means to achieve those goals).

Grading Criteria:

- Reasonableness of assessment
- Quality of rationale/justification
- Plausibility & innovation of proposals
- Level of specificity
- Writing style and clarity
- Supporting references/research

5.5 Presentation

The presentation requires you to apply the Colier/Hoeffler model of civil war onset to a particular civil war. You will partner with at least one other person in the class and report on one of the substantive civil war chapters from the Collier and Sambanis book. From the dates and list below, please let me know what your top three choices are for a terrorist group. Also, let me know what your top three choices are for a date to present.

1. Presentation Dates: October 17, 19, 24

2. Civil war chapters:
   - Burundi
   - Democratic Republic of Congo
   - Nigeria
   - Kenya
   - Mozambique
3. Substance of the presentation:

- Describe the background to the war (very short — everyone will have read the chapter)
- Analyze whether the Collier and Hoeffler model fits well (the bulk of the presentation)
- Discuss other potential explanations for the war(s)
- Initiate and lead a class discussion about the causes of the war (and future likelihood of war)

4. Logistics

- 8–10 minute presentation followed by class discussion
- You need to be very professional
- Distribute a handout
- See Edwards reading on giving talks
- Turn in 3–4 page outline/paper
- Email me independently (within 48 hours) with a peer evaluation of your group
- The presentation is worth 10% of your grade