

INTL 4455	Violent Political Conflict	Spring 2024
T/Tr 11:10-12:25	Baldwin Hall 311	Pre/Corequisites: none
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Office hours: By appointment	Office: 319 IA Building	

## Course Description

This course examines a broad range of topics related to political violence. Its primary focus is “internal” political violence, meaning we will not read much about international conflict and war. For the most part, we will read about and discuss violent political events that take place in the context of a dispute between a country’s national government and individuals or groups that live in that country. Topics covered include state formation, civil war, mass protest and rebellion, ethnic conflict, terrorism, state violence, and genocide. From time to time you will encounter material that contains graphic discussions or depictions of violence. I will always let you know about this material beforehand.

## Course Objectives

One purpose of this course is to acquire knowledge of actual violent conflicts that have taken place in the past or that are still ongoing. To this end, we will read several detailed historical and journalistic accounts of particular events. However, this is not a history course. Its main purpose is to examine violent political conflict using the tools of social science. For this purpose, we will read studies that use theoretical models intended to apply to many different events, as well as studies that use statistical analysis to look for meaningful patterns (for example, to see whether certain kinds of countries are more prone to violent conflict than others). By the end of the course you will have a better understanding of what a social science approach to studying violent conflict entails, and how it can provide useful insights into real world events.

## Required Reading

There will be no textbook in this class. All readings will be available on the ELC course site or through the UGA library’s website. You are expected to read the assigned material, and it is very unlikely that you will do well in the course if you do not. There will usually be 1 assigned reading per meeting. Some readings are more difficult than others. For more difficult or technical readings, and especially those that use theoretical models or statistical analysis, I will provide a non-technical overview and summary. To make sure everything is clear, I assume that you do not know anything about the topics we cover or the concepts and research methods used in the readings, though I am sure that is not true!

## Grades

Midterm Exam: 30%

Final Exam: 30%

Response Essay 1: 20%

Response Essay 2: 20%

Grade Distribution (note that I do not assign minus grades):

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90 - 100: A	
86 - 89: B+	80 - 85: B
76 - 79: C+	70 - 75: C
66 - 69: D+	60 - 65: D
below 60: F	

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## Exams

There are 2 exams in this course. They will have the same format and roughly the same length. Each will include around 20 multiple choice questions, 3-5 short answer questions that require a response of about 1 paragraph, and two essay questions that require a response of 1 page (about 3-5 paragraphs). The midterm exam will take place on February 29th. Students will receive their midterm exam grade via email within 2 weeks of completing the exam. The final exam is on Tuesday, May 7th at 12 p.m.

## Response Essays

Students must submit 2 essays in response to general questions related to course topics/readings. Essay prompts will be provided during 5 select weeks, and will appear on the ELC site on Monday. If you want to submit a response essay for that week, you must submit it no later than 5 p.m. on Friday. Students choose which weeks they submit essays but must submit their first essay by Friday, February 16th, and must submit their second essay by Friday, April 19th. Essays should be submitted via the course website on ELC. Essays should be 1-2 pages, single spaced, with 1-inch margins and nothing in the heading except your name. Use a common font. The schedule for essay prompts is as follows:

Prompt 1: Available Jan 14, due Jan 19 (states as violent organizations)

Prompt 2: Available Feb 11, due Feb 16 (causes of civil war)

Prompt 3: Available Mar 17, Mar 22 (ethnic conflict)

Prompt 4: Available Apr 1, due Apr 5 (terrorism)

Prompt 5: Available Apr 14, due Apr 19 (state violence in democracies)

## Course Website

The course website can be accessed through [elc.uga.edu](http://elc.uga.edu). You will need to use this site to access the syllabus, course readings that are not available through the library's website, and online course materials.

## Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a plan for the course, and we may deviate from it. I will clearly communicate to students any changes that become necessary, and will do so in a timely manner.

## Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations in order to participate in course activities or meet course requirements should contact the instructor or designate during regular office hours or by appointment.

## Well-being, Mental Health, and Student Support

If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit [their webpage](#). They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services. UGA has several resources to support your well-being and mental health. Find out more [here](#).

[Counseling and Psychiatric Services](#) (CAPS) is your go-to, on-campus resource for emotional, social and behavioral-health support. See also the [Therapy Assistance Online Support](#) site (TAOS), or call 706-542-2273 for 24/7 support. For crisis support see [this page](#). The University Health Center offers FREE workshops, classes, mentoring and health coaching led by licensed clinicians or health educators. See [here](#) for more.

## University Honor Code/Academic Honesty Policy

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found at [www.uga.edu/honesty](http://www.uga.edu/honesty). Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

## Withdrawal Policy

Students who withdraw from the class before the withdrawal deadline (Thursday, March 21st) will be assigned a grade based on their performance (pass/fail) in the class up the point of withdrawal. This means that students who are failing will be assigned a "WF" grade even if they withdraw before the deadline. The university automatically assigns a "WF" grade upon withdrawal to students who withdraw from a class after the withdrawal deadline.

# Reading and Assignment Schedule

## 1 States as violent organizations

**Tuesday Jan 9:** Syllabus review, class overview. No reading.

**Thursday Jan 11:** Tilly, Charles. 1985. "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." in Theda Skocpol (ed.) *Bringing the State Back In.*, Cambridge Press.

**Tuesday Jan 16:** Callimachi, Rukmini. "The ISIS Files: When Terrorists Run City Hall." New York Times, April 4, 2018. ([link](#))

**Thursday Jan 18:** Gurr, T.R. 1988. "War, Revolution, and the Growth of the Coercive State." *Comparative Political Studies* 21: 45-65.

First opportunity to submit a response essay, due 5 p.m. Friday Jan 19.

## 2 Coordination and Collective Action Problems

**Tuesday Jan 23:** Little, Daniel. 1991. *Varieties of Social Explanation*. Westview Press, chap 3.

**Thursday Jan 25:** Weingast, Barry. 1997. "The Political Foundations of Democracy and the Rule of Law." *American Political Science Review* 91: 245-263.

**Tuesday Jan 30:** Kuran, Timur. 1991. "Now out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989." *World Politics* 44: 7-48.

**Thursday Feb 1:** Horne, Alistair. 2006 [1977]. *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962*. Excerpts from pages 23-74.

## 3 The Causes of Civil War

**Tuesday Feb 6:** Fearon, James and David Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 97: 75-90.

**Thursday Feb 8:** Collier, Paul and Anke Hoefler. 2004. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." *Oxford Economic Papers* 56: 563-595.

**Tuesday Feb 13:** Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2001. "New and Old Civil Wars: A Valid Distinction?" *World Politics* 54(1): 99-118.

**Thursday Feb 15:** Cederman, Lars-Erik, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Halvard Buhaug. 2013. *Inequality, Grievances, and Civil War*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 3 and 4.

Second opportunity to submit a response essay, due 5 p.m. Friday Feb 16.

**Tuesday Feb 20:** Walter, Barbara. 1997. "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement." *International Organization* 51: 335-364.

**Thursday Feb 22:** No reading

**Tuesday Feb 27:** Review session

**Thursday Feb 29:** Exam 1

**Tuesday Mar 5:** Spring Break

**Thursday Mar 7:** Spring Break

## 4 Ethnic Conflict

**Tuesday Mar 12:** Mueller, John. 2000. “The Banality of Ethnic War.” *International Security* 25: 42-70.

**Thursday Mar 14:** Fearon, James, and David Laitin. 2000. “Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity.” *International Organization* 54: 845-877.

**Tuesday Mar 19:** Watch excerpts from [PBS documentary](#) “Bitter Rivals: Iran and Saudi Arabia”

**Thursday Mar 21:** No reading.

Third opportunity to submit a response essay, due 5 p.m. Friday Mar 22.

## 5 Terrorism

**Tuesday Mar 26:** Stohl, Michael. 1983. “Demystifying Terrorism.” In Michael Stohl (ed.) *The Politics of Terrorism*. Marcel Dekker. Pages. 1-19.

**Thursday Mar 28:** Kydd, Andrew H. and Barbara F. Walter. 2006. “The Strategies of Terrorism.” *Security Studies* 31(1): 49-80.

**Tuesday Apr 2** Horne, Alistair. 2006 [1977]. *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962*. Excerpts from pages 78-188.

## 6 State Violence in Democracies

**Thursday Apr 4:** Rejali, Darius. 2007. *Torture and Democracy*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 2.

Fourth opportunity to submit a response essay, due 5 p.m. Friday Apr 5.

**Tuesday Apr 9:** Horne, Alistair. 2006 [1977]. *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962*. Excerpts from pages 190-207.

**Thursday Apr 11:** Watch excerpts from documentary “[Standard Operating Procedure](#)”

**Tuesday Apr 16:** No reading.

## 7 Genocide (and predicting large-scale violence)

**Thursday Apr 18:** Brief introduction to the Genocide Convention by William Schabas ([link](#)). Harff, Barbara. 2003. “No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust: Assessing Risks of Genocide and Political Mass Murder since 1955.” *American Political Science Review* 97: 57-74

Fifth (and last) opportunity to submit a response essay, due 5 p.m. Friday Apr 19.

**Thursday Apr 25: Friday Apr 22:** Ward, Michael D., Brian D. Greenhill, and Kristin M. Bakke. 2010. “The Perils of Policy by p-value: Predicting Civil Conflicts.” *Journal of Peace Research* 47(4): 363-375.

**Tuesday May 7:** Final Exam