

INTL 8365	Comparative Political Violence	Fall 2025
Wednesday 3:00-6:10 p.m.	Room 117 Candler Hall	Pre/Corequisites: None
Danny Hill	Dept. of International Affairs	dwhill@uga.edu
Office Hrs: Thursday, 2-4 p.m. (or by appointment)	Office: 319 Candler	

## Course Description

This is a graduate course that reviews the systematic study of violent political conflict. The course covers various forms of “intrastate” conflict and mostly excludes interstate conflict. We will begin by reading about and discussing general theories of organized violence and then move to more empirically-oriented studies that examine specific forms of political violence such as civil war, ethnic conflict, state repression, and violent dissent.

## Grades/Assignments

Grades are based upon class discussion, two response papers, and a final paper. Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Class Discussion: 20%

Response Papers (2): 30%

Final Paper

- Submission of paper proposal by 12 September: 5%
- Submission of revised proposal by 3 October: 5%
- Paper: 40%

## Class Discussion

Students are expected to read the assigned material and be ready to discuss it in class. Consider and be prepared to discuss the following questions when reading:

- What research question is the author trying to answer?
- What is the author’s argument?
- How does the argument fit with the rest of the literature?
- Is the argument logically consistent?
- If the author makes a causal argument, is it plausible?
- Does the evidence support the author’s theoretical claims?
- Does the author operationalize concepts appropriately?

- Is the method of analysis appropriate?
- Does the argument have implications that are unexamined?
- Does the study tell us something new and interesting?

Each week students will submit to me 5-10 discussion questions (not the ones above). Questions should be sent via email no later than one day prior to the meeting (by 3:00 p.m. Tuesday). The purpose of the questions is to facilitate a discussion, so broad, open-ended questions are encouraged.

## Response Papers

Response papers are 6-10 page papers that offer a constructive, critical evaluation of the week's readings. You must turn in two response papers by the end of the semester. You may turn in your response essays at the end of any week we meet (except the last), but you must submit your first essay by Friday, 26 September. You may focus on as many or as few readings as you like. Your essay must offer a well-reasoned critique of the arguments/evidence presented in each piece and *suggestions on how the research could be improved*. Writing responses to one or more of the questions above is a good way to begin. Response papers should be submitted through the eLC course site. Papers should be single spaced with one inch margins, 12-point font, and only your name at the top.

## Final Paper

For the final paper, students may choose to write either a critical literature review, a research design, or a full research paper. Students must submit a 1-2 page (single-spaced) proposal for their final paper by the end of the day on Friday, 12 September. Paper proposals should be submitted through the ELC course site. I will provide comments on proposals by Friday, 26 September. Students will revise their proposals in response to my comments and distribute them to the entire class by the end of the day on Friday, 3 October. Students should distribute their revised proposals to the rest of the class via email. Class meetings on 8 and 15 October will be devoted to workshopping your paper proposals - sharing your ideas and offering each other comments and suggestions. Final papers are due on Friday, 5 December. Final papers should be submitted through the eLC course site. Late papers will be penalized one letter grade per day.

## Critical Literature Review

A critical literature review is an essay that surveys literature on a topic and constructs an argument about how different pieces of research on that topic relate to each other. *It is not simply a summary of existing research*. Students who choose this option should write a paper that compares and contrasts different approaches to the chosen topic, assesses the state of accumulated knowledge on the topic and its limits (what we know and what we don't), and identifies useful directions for future research. For helpful examples look through any issue of the *Annual Review of Political Science*.

## Research Design

A research design is a paper that explains the motivation for an empirical research project and describes a plan to conduct that project. It is basically a research paper without analysis and results. Choosing this option entails identifying a research question, developing a coherent argument, and describing in detail an empirical study (to be executed later) that answers the question. Your research design can be qualitative or quantitative, but there must be a plan to execute an empirical analysis (the paper cannot be purely theoretical/conceptual).

## Research Paper

A full research paper is a fully complete paper with a detailed discussion and presentation of your analysis and results. Students are encouraged to choose this option if they have a paper that is already underway and fits with the subject matter.

## Books

We will be reading selected portions of the following books (listed in the order they appear on the syllabus). *I will make an electronic copy of selected chapters or the entire book available on the eLC course site, so you do not need to purchase any of these books unless you want your own copy.*

Wagner, Harrison. 2007. *War and the State*. University of Michigan Press.

Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Harvard University Press.

Lichbach, Mark Irving. 1995. *The Rebel's Dilemma*. University of Michigan Press.

Wood, Elisabeth. 2003. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. Cambridge University Press.

Cederman, Lars-Erik, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Halvard Buhaug. 2013. *Inequality, Grievances, and Civil War*. Cambridge University Press.

Kalyvas, Stathis. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge University Press.

Walter, Eugene Victor. 1969. *Terror and Resistance: A Study of Political Violence*. Oxford University Press.

Rejali, Darius. 2007. *Torture and Democracy*. Princeton University Press.

Simmons, Beth A. 2009. *Mobilizing for Human Rights: International Law and Domestic Politics*. Cambridge University Press.

## Course Website

Can be accessed through the course website on [eLC](#). You will need to check this site regularly for posted readings and any updates to the syllabus.

## Syllabus Change Policy

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

## 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 during regular office hours or by appointment.

## University Honor Code/Academic Honesty Policy

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy which can be found [here](#). 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.

## Reading Schedule

### 13 August: Introduction and Course Overview

No reading.

### 20 August: The State and Organized Violence

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

Wagner, Harrison. 2007. *War and the State*. University of Michigan Press, pp. 105-122.

Bates, Robert, Avner Greif, and Smita Singh. 2002. "Organizing Violence." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46 (5): 599-628.

Olson, Mancur. 1993. "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development." *American Political Science Review* 87 (3): 567-576.

Gurr, Ted Robert. 1988. "War, Revolution, and the Growth of the Coercive State." *Comparative Political Studies* 21 (1): 45-65.

### 27 August: Collective Action and Coordination Problems

Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Harvard University Press. chaps 1-2.

Tilly, Charles. 1978. *From Mobilization to Revolution*. McGraw-Hill, chap 3.

Lichbach, Mark Irving. 1995. *The Rebel's Dilemma*. University of Michigan Press. chap 1.

- Moore, Will H. 1995. "Rational Rebels: Overcoming the Free-Rider Problem." *Political Research Quarterly* 48 (2): 417-454.
- Wood, Elisabeth. 2003. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. Cambridge Press, chap 8.
- Weingast, Barry. 1997. "The Political Foundations of Democracy and the Rule of Law." *American Political Science Review* 91 (2): 245-263.
- Kuran, Timur. 1991. "Now out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989." *World Politics* 44 (1): 7-48.
- Lohmann, Susanne. 1994. "The Dynamics of Informational Cascades: the Monday Demonstrations in Leipzig, East Germany, 1989-1991." *World Politics* 47( 1): 42-101.

### **3 September: Grievance and Civil War**

- Sambanis, Nicholas. 2004. "What is Civil War? Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48 (6): 814-858.
- Fearon, James D. and David D. Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 97 (1): 75-90.
- Collier, Paul and Anke Hoeffler. 2004. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." *Oxford Economic Papers* 56 (4): 563-595.
- Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2001. "New and Old Civil Wars: A Valid Distinction?" *World Politics* 54 (1): 99-118.
- Muller, Edward and Mitchell Seligson. 1987. "Inequality and Insurgency." *American Political Science Review* 81 (2): 425-452.
- Cederman, Lars-Erik, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Halvard Buhaug. 2013. *Inequality, Grievances, and Civil War*. Cambridge University Press. chaps 2-5.
- Wucherpfennig, Hunziker, and Cederman. 2015. "Who Inherits the State? Colonial Rule and Postcolonial Conflict." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(4): 882-898.
- Dyrstad, Karin, and Solveig Hillesund. 2020. "Explaining Support for Political Violence: Grievance and Perceived Opportunity." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64(9): 1724-1753.

### **10 September: Ethnic Conflict**

- Fearon, James D. and David D. Laitin. 2000. "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity." *International Organization* 54 (4): 845-877.
- Chandra, Kanchan. 2006. "What is Ethnic Identity and Does it Matter?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 9: 397-424.
- Robinson, Amanda Lea. 2024. "Ethnic Visibility." *American Journal of Political Science* 68(4): 1234-1251.
- Müller-Crepon, Carl, Guy Schvitz, and Lars-Erik Cederman. 2025. "'Right-Peopling the State: Nationalism, Historical Legacies, and Ethnic Cleansing in Europe, 1886-2020.'" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 69(2-3): 211-241.
- Fearon, James D. and David D. Laitin. 1996. "Explaining Interethnic Cooperation." *American Political Science Review* 90 (4): 715-735.

Mueller, John. 2000. "The Banality of Ethnic War." *International Security* 25 (1): 42-70.

### **17 September: Rebel Group Organization and Violence in Civil War**

One page paper proposals due by end of the day.

Gates, Scott. 2002. "Recruitment and Allegiance: The Microfoundations of Rebellion." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46 (1): 111-130.

Weinstein, Jeremy M. 2005. "Resources and the Information Problem in Rebel Recruitment." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49 (4): 598-624.

Humphreys, Macartan and Jeremy M. Weinstein. 2006. "Handling and Manhandling Civilians in Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 100 (3): 429-447.

Kalyvas, Stathis. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge University Press. chaps 6 and 7.

Welsh, Blair. 2023. "Your space or mine? Competition, control, and the spatial profile of militant violence against civilians." *Journal of Peace Research* 60(4): 557-572.

Andrés F. Aponte González, Daniel Hirschel-Burns, and Andres D. Uribe. 2024. "Contestation, Governance, and the Production of Violence Against Civilians: Coercive Political Order in Rural Colombia." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 684: 616-641.

Cohen, Dara Kay. 2013. "Explaining Rape During Civil War: Cross-National Evidence (1980-2009)." *American Political Science Review* 107 (3): 461:477.

### **24 September: State Violence, Repression, and Terror**

Walter, Eugene Victor. 1969. *Terror and Resistance: A Study of Political Violence*. Oxford University Press, chaps 1-3.

Gurr, Ted Robert. 1986. "The Political Origins of State Violence and Terror: A Theoretical Analysis." In Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez (eds.) *Government Violence and Repression: An Agenda for Research*. Greenwood Press.

Poe, Steven C. and Neal C. Tate. 1994. "Repression of Human Rights to Personal Integrity in the 1980s: A Global Analysis." *American Political Science Review* 88 (4): 853-872.

Hill Jr., Daniel W. and Zachary M. Jones. 2014. "An Empirical Evaluation of Explanations for State Repression." *American Political Science Review* 108 (3): 661-687.

Davenport, Christian and Benjamin J. Appel. 2022. "Stopping state repression: An examination of spells." *Journal of Peace Research* 59(5): 633-647

Ron, James. 1997. "Varying Methods of State Violence." *International Organization* 51 (2): 275-300.

Rejali, Darius. 2007. *Torture and Democracy*. Princeton University Press. chap 2.

Wong, Stan Hok-Wui, and Kelvin Chun-Man Chan. 2021. "Determinants of political purges in autocracies: Evidence from ancient Chinese dynasties." *Journal of Peace Research* 58(3): 583-598.

### **1 October: Dissident Violence and Terror**

Revised proposals due by end of the day (send it to the whole class).

- Stohl, Michael. 1983. "Myths and Realities of Political Terrorism." In Michael Stohl (ed.) *The Politics of Terrorism*. Marcel Dekker.
- Kydd, Andrew H. and Barbara F. Walter. 2006. "The Strategies of Terrorism." *Security Studies* 31 (1): 49-80.
- Kalyvas, Stathis. 1999. "Wanton and Senseless? The Logic of Massacres in Algeria." *Rationality and Society* 11 (3): 243-285.
- Belgioioso, Margherita, and Ches Thurber. 2024. "From doctrine to detonation: Ideology, competition, and terrorism in campaigns of mass resistance." *Journal of Peace Research* 61(3): 333-350.
- Hand, Ashlyn W. and Nilay Saya. 2023. "Democracy's Ambivalent Effect on Terrorism." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 67(7-8): 1618-1643.
- Fortna, Virginia Page. 2023. "Is Terrorism Really a Weapon of the Weak? Debunking the Conventional Wisdom." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 67(4): 642-671.
- Iqbal, Zaryab and Christopher Zorn. 2006. "Sic Semper Tyrannis? Power, Repression, and Assassination Since the Second World War." *Journal of Politics* 68 (3): 489-501.

## **8 October: Paper Workshop 1**

No reading

## **15 October: Paper Workshop 2**

No reading

## **22 October: Mass Killing and Genocide**

- Krain, Matthew. 1997. "State-Sponsored Mass Murder: The Onset and Severity of Genocides and Politicides." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41 (3): 331-360.
- Valentino, Benjamin. 2000. "Final Solutions: The Causes of Mass Killing and Genocide." *Security Studies* 9 (3): 1-59.
- Harff, Barbara. 2003. "No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust? Assessing Risks of Genocide and Political Mass Murder Since 1955." *American Political Science Review* 97 (1): 57-73.
- Valentino, Benjamin, Paul Huth, and Dylan Balch-Lindsay. 2004. "Draining the Sea: Mass Killing and Guerrilla Warfare." *International Organization* 58 (2): 375-407.
- Krain, Matthew. 2005. "International Intervention and the Severity of Genocides and Politicides." *International Studies Quarterly* 49 (3): 363-388.
- Eck, Kristine and Lisa Hultman. 2007. "One-Sided Violence Against Civilians in War: Insights from New Fatality Data." *Journal of Peace Research* 44(2): 233-246.
- Ulfelder, Jay and Benjamin Valentino. 2008. "Assessing Risks of State Sponsored Mass Killing." Working Paper, Social Science Research Network. Available at [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1703426](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1703426)
- DeMeritt, Jaqueline H.R. 2015. "Delegating Death: Military Intervention and Government Killing." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59 (3): 428-454.

## **29 October: The Dissent-Repression Nexus**

- Lichbach, Mark. 1987. "Deterrence or Escalation? The Puzzle of Aggregate Studies of Repression and Dissent." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 31 (2): 266-297.
- Rasler, Karen. 1996. "Concessions, Repression, and Political Protest in the Iranian Revolution." *American Sociological Review* 61 (1): 132-152.
- Moore, Will H. 1998. "Repression and Dissent: Substitution, Context, and Timing." *American Journal of Political Science* 42 (3): 851-873.
- Pierskalla, Jan Henryk. 2010. "Protest, Deterrence, and Escalation: The Strategic Calculus of Government Repression." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 54 (1): 117-145.
- Ritter, Emily Hencken. 2014. "Policy Disputes, Political Survival, and the Onset and Severity of State Repression." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58 (1): 143-168.
- Ritter, Emily Hencken and Courtenay Conrad. 2016. "Preventing and Responding to Dissent: The Observational Challenges of Explaining Strategic Repression." *American Political Science Review* 110(1): 89-95.
- Steinert, Christoph V., and Christoph Dworschak. 2022. "Political Imprisonment and Protest Mobilization: Evidence From the GDR." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 67(7-8): 1564-1591.
- Rozenas, Arturas, Sebastian Schutte, and Yuri Zhukov. 2017. "The Political Legacy of Violence: The Long-Term Impact of Stalin's Repression in Ukraine." *Journal of Politics* 79(4): 1147-1161.

## **5 November: International Relations and Civil Conflict**

- Fortna, Virginia Page. 2004. "Does Peacekeeping Keep the Peace? International Intervention and the Duration of Peace After Civil War." *International Studies Quarterly* 48 (2): 269-292.
- Hultman, Lisa, Jacob Kathman, and Megan Shannon. 2014. "United Nations Peacekeeping and Civilian Protection in Civil War." *American Journal of Political Science*. 57 (4): 875-891.
- Blair, Robert A., Jessica Di Salvatore, and Hannah M. Smidt. 2023. "UN Peacekeeping and Democratization in Conflict-Affected Countries." *American Political Science Review* 117(4): 1308-1326.
- Gleditsch, Kristian Skrede. 2007. "Transnational Dimensions of Civil War." *Journal of Peace Research* 44 (3): 293-309.
- Gleditsch, Kristian Skrede and Halvard Buhaug. 2008. "Contagion or Confusion? Why Conflicts Cluster in Space." *International Studies Quarterly* 52 (2): 215-233.
- Salehyan, Idean, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch and David E. Cunningham. 2011. "Explaining External Support for Insurgent Groups." *International Organization* 65 (4): 709-744.
- Qiu, Xiaoyan. 2022. "State Support for Rebels and Interstate Bargaining." *American Journal of Political Science* 66(4): 993-1007.

## **12 November: Gender and Conflict**

- Caprioli, Mary. 2005. "Primed for Violence: The Role of Gender Inequality in Predicting Internal Conflict." *International Studies Quarterly* 49 (2): 161-178.
- Melander, Erik. 2005. "Gender Equality and Intrastate Armed Conflict." *International Studies Quarterly* 49 (4): 695-714.



Hudson, Valerie M., Mary Caprioli, Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Rose McDermott, and Chad F. Emmett. 2009. "The Heart of the Matter: The Security of Women and the Security of States." *International Security* 33 (3): 7-45.

Cohen, Dara Kay, and Sabrina Karim. 2022. "Does More Equality for Women Mean Less War? Rethinking Sex and Gender Inequality and Political Violence." *International Organization* 76(2): 414-444.

Plümper, Thomas and Eric Neumayer. 2006. "The Unequal Burden of War: The Effect of Armed Conflict on the Gender Gap in Life Expectancy." *International Organization* 60 (3): 723-754.

Devereaux, Tessa. 2025. "The Determinants of Insurgent Gender Governance." *International Organization* 79(1): 36-80.

## **19 November: International Human Rights Law and Advocacy**

Note that this is our last class meeting!

Vreeland, James Raymond. 2008. "Political Institutions and Human Rights: Why Dictatorships Enter Into the United Nations Convention Against Torture." *International Organization* 62 (1): 65-101.

Simmons, Beth A. 2009. *Mobilizing for Human Rights: International Law and Domestic Politics*. Cambridge Press. chaps 4 and 7.

Conrad, Courtenay and Emily Hencken Ritter. 2013. "Treaties, Tenure, and Torture: The Conflicting Domestic Effects of International Law." *Journal of Politics* 75 (2): 397-409.

Lupu, Yonatan. 2013. "Best Evidence: The Role of Information in Domestic Judicial Enforcement of International Human Rights Agreements." *International Organization* 67 (3): 469-503.

Hafner-Burton, Emilie M. 2008. "Sticks and Stones: Naming and Shaming the Human Rights Enforcement Problem." *International Organization* 62 (4): 689-716.

Murdie, Amanda, and David R. Davis. 2012. "Shaming and Blaming: Using Events Data to Assess the Impact of Human Rights INGOs." *International Studies Quarterly* 56 (1): 1-16.

Morrison, Kelly. 2024. "Named and Shamed: International Advocacy and Public Support for Repressive Leaders." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 68(2-3): 294-321.

## **26 November: Thanksgiving break**

Final papers due by end of the day, Friday, 5 December.