INTL 4280 62996 Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict

Fall 2026
M/W 8:15 - 9:35 AM
Location: MLC 0207

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Office: IA Building Rm. 329
Office Hours: M/W 10:00 - 11:30 AM, or by appointment
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Course Description

The emergence of nationalist politics, its consequences for sovereignty, and its effects on maintaining peace.

Course Overview

Nationalism and ethnic identity are among the most influential forces in contemporary politics but often carry a negative reputation. Nationalism is frequently seen as a dangerous ideology, while ethnic divides are blamed for issues ranging from inefficient public service delivery to chronic political instability and protracted violent conflicts. But are these concerns warranted? Are national and ethnic divides inherently conflictual? This course engages with both classic and contemporary research on the politics of nationalism and ethnic identity to better understand *how* these forces shape our socio-political world and the conditions under which they cause conflict. Key topics include the origins of national consciousness, nationalist mobilization, electoral violence, civil war, and immigrant integration. Students will also be introduced to a number of datasets scholars have relied on to test theories related to nationalism and ethnicity.

Learning Objectives

The objectives of this course are twofold: (1) to develop a deep understanding of existing explanations for how nationalism and ethnic identity shape our socio-political world and (2) to enhance critical thinking, analytical writing, and research skills through the study of nationalism and ethnic conflict. By the end of this course, students will:

- Become familiar with the key theories and interpretations in the realm of nationalism and ethnic conflict;
- Be able to critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of these theories;
- Become familiar with relevant cases and evaluate the extent to which the theories explain real world cases; and
- Effectively apply theoretical insights and critiques in oral discussions, presentations, and written assignments.

Course Requirements

Readings
Students are expected to read approximately 70 to 80 pages per week. The readings should be completed prior to coming to class. Students are strongly encouraged to print out the assigned readings, take notes by hand, and bring them to class.

Your course grade is composed of the following:

1. Participation - 20%
2. Quizzes - 5%
3. Exams - 30%
4. Paper - 45%

Participation – 20%
There are two participation components: online discussion on eLC and discussion in-class. Each accounts for 10% of the overall course grade.

1. *Discussion on eLC*: To facilitate active reading, students are expected to submit two questions based on the reading before each class. These questions can be about the reading itself (e.g., a confusing concept) or inspired by the reading (e.g., a tension between two class readings). Be sure to provide a brief context for each question. Students are also expected to respond to a peer's post.

   Complete this assignment by 10 pm ET the day before the class meeting. Late submissions are accepted with penalty, but submissions at/after class time (1:15 pm ET) will not be accepted. Your submission points will be earned on the following scale:
   - Meaningful engagement and thoughtful reflection = 5/5
   - Somewhat superficial engagement or mostly descriptive = 4/5
   - Late submission with otherwise strong content = 3/5
   - Late submission with weaker content = 2/5
   - No submission, off-topic, or submitted at/after class time = 0

   Failure to respond to a peer will result in a 1-point deduction from the assignment score.

   The first reading response, based on the readings for **August 24**, is due on **August 23**. This assignment cannot be made up, but you will have three passes. Use them wisely.

2. *Discussion in class*: Students are expected to come prepared with comments on the readings and to actively contribute to discussion. Participation includes more than answering the instructor's questions—it also includes asking thoughtful questions and engaging with peers. Students should use questions/comments submitted on eLC as a starting point for in-class discussion.

   Students will be graded on the quality of their participation in each class meeting. After each class meeting, students will assign themselves a participation score, which the

instructor will review and adjust as needed. Participation points will be earned on the following scale:

Absent = 0
In class, but not engaged (e.g., falling asleep) = 2/5
Engaged but no contribution = 3/5
Make an okay contribution = 4/5
Make quality contributions = 5/5

Since meaningful participation requires being present, absence will affect your participation grade. That said, simply attending does not count as participation.

Note that there is no separate grade for attendance. Any absence (due to sickness, traveling with the debate team, family emergency, etc.) automatically counts as non-participation (i.e., no contribution to class discussion).

Participation grades cannot be made up. Each student is allotted three participation "passes," which may be used for absences or for days when participation is not possible. These passes automatically drop your lowest three participation scores, including zeros due to absences. If you attend all class sessions, your lowest three participation grades will be dropped automatically. If you are absent for three or fewer class sessions, those zeros will be dropped automatically; no notes or documentation are required.

If you are absent for four or more class sessions, you must email me documentation (e.g., a doctor's note or dean's note) toward the end of the semester (as a single attachment) so that I can determine which absences are excused.

Participation evaluation will begin on **August 24**.

Quizzes – 5%
There will be **nine** in-class quizzes throughout the semester. The first will be a syllabus quiz, scheduled for **August 19**. The remaining eight will be unannounced reading quizzes, which are intended to encourage students to keep up with the readings.

Each student will have two "passes." This means the lowest two grades will be dropped automatically. You do not need to provide notes or documentation for these passes.

Exam – 30% [M]
There are **two** in-class exams, each worth 15% of the final grade; both are open-book and open-notes. Students may consult their notes and printed readings but may not use any electronic devices. This is a written exam with no multiple-choice section. A blue or green book is required. They are tentatively scheduled for **September 28** and **November 18**.

Paper – 45%
Students are expected to (1) identify an empirical puzzle related to national and ethnic conflict, (2) evaluate the extent to which theories covered in the course explain the puzzle, and (3) propose a theory that adequately resolves the puzzle. This assignment is broken down into three milestone assignments.

1. **Presentation** - 5%
   Students will first conduct background research to identify an empirical puzzle and formulate a suitable research question. Students will give a 5-minute presentation of their case and research question. The presentations are scheduled for class meetings before the short paper deadline so that students have an opportunity to receive feedback and necessary revision. The instructor will assign each student a presentation date. If your assigned date presents a conflict, you must inform me at least one week in advance so an alternative can be arranged. Students who are not in attendance on their scheduled presentation day will receive a zero for the assignment.

2. **Short Paper** - 10%
   To what extent do existing theories explain real-world cases of nationalism and ethnic conflict? Students will write a short analytical theory-to-case paper (each 4-5 pages double-spaced) to address this question. Building on the case and research question they have presented, students will identify the most relevant theories from course material and apply them to their case. This assignment is due on Thursday, **November 5** at noon. Detailed instructions will be discussed in class.

3. **Final Paper** - 30%
   Students write a theoretically-driven research paper that is 10 to 15 pages in length (excluding bibliography). The paper should include literature review, theoretical argument, and some evidence. This paper should build on the theory-to-case paper which serves as a basis for the introduction and literature review sections. The paper is due on Monday, **December 7** at noon. Detailed instructions will be discussed in class.

The following scale will be used to determine your overall grade in the course:
A: >94%, A-: 90-93.9%, B+: 87-89.9%, B: 84-86.9%, B-: 80-83.9%, C+: 77-79.9%,
C: 74-76.9%; C-: 70-73.9%; D+: 67-69.9%; D: 64-66.9%; D-: 60-63.9%; F: <60%.

There is **no** extra credit in this course. However, if your final grade is borderline (e.g., 89.6%), I will round it up if you have consistently demonstrated full effort—this includes active class participation and timely submission of all assignments. Please do not email me to get a grade bump. If you have done all you can, it will be reflected in your final grade.

Course Policies & Statements

Attendance
There is no separate grade for attendance. However, it should be clear from course requirements specified above that class attendance is expected and necessary to do well in this course.

If you anticipate arriving more than five minutes late, please notify me by email in advance. Repeated tardiness will negatively affect your in-class participation grade, as it limits your engagement and may disrupt the learning environment.

Emails and office hours
For administrative questions and clarifications, the best way to contact me is via email. I aim to answer emails within 24 hours during the week. If you have not received a response in 24 hours, email me again. For substantive issues related to course materials, stop by during my drop-in office hours. If you are unable to stop by at the regular time, email me so that we can find a time that works for you.

Assignment Due Date Extension
Students are expected to submit assignments on time. However, I understand that unforeseen circumstances may arise. If you anticipate needing an extension, you must contact me at least 48 hours before the assignment deadline. Note that this policy applies only to the Theory-to-Case Paper and the Final Paper. Last-minute requests (within 24 hours of the deadline) will only be considered in cases of serious emergencies and must be supported with documentation. Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis and are not guaranteed.

Please note that poor time management or overlapping deadlines in other classes are not valid reasons for an extension.

Late Assignments
Late submissions of the Theory-to-Case paper and the Final Paper will be accepted *within 48 hours* of the deadline. However, your grade will be penalized by one-third of a letter grade for every 6 hours the assignment is late. For example:

- An A paper submitted 1 to 3 hours late will be downgraded to A-.
- A B paper submitted 5 to 8 hours late will be downgraded to C+.

After 48 hours, the assignment will receive a zero, unless prior arrangements have been made due to documented emergencies.

Make-up procedures
Students may make up the course requirements indicated by [M] in the cases of sickness (requiring a doctor's note) or family emergency (requiring a Dean's note). If you cannot be in attendance for presentations or exams due to religious observance, notify the instructor at least one week in advance to arrange an alternative. There are no exceptions.

Appeals
If you believe a grade you are given does not reflect your performance, you may dispute the grade in writing, explaining why you should receive a higher grade. This should be done within a week after the grade is announced and submitted after class or in office hours. I reserve the right to raise or lower your grade.

Use of Technology in Class
While electronic devices are not prohibited, students are strongly encouraged to put them away during lectures and presentations. In my experience, using laptops or phones in class often leads to distraction and can negatively affect learning and performance. Students are also encouraged to print out assigned readings and take notes by hand, as doing so typically supports deeper engagement with the material.

UGA Honor Code
You have agreed to the UGA Student Honor Code: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at www.uga.edu/ovpi.

Cheating, plagiarism, and all forms of academic dishonesty are expressly forbidden in this class, and by the university's Academic Honesty Policy. Plagiarism includes reprinting the words of others without both the use of quotation marks and citation.

Generative AI Tools
To ensure you develop and master the foundational knowledge and skills in this course, the use of generative AI (GAI) tools is prohibited when completing written assignments for this course. This includes all stages of your work process, even the preliminary ones. This prohibition extends to AI-assited writing tools like Grammarly and Wordtune, as well as GAI tools like ChatGPT. If you are uncertain about using a particular tool to support your work, please consult with me before using it.

Prohibition on Recording Lectures
In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, students may not make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course. For information on securing an accommodation to record lectures, see: https://accessibility.uga.edu/faculty-guidelines-for-record-lecture/

Accommodation for Disabilities
If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting http://drc.uga.edu.

UGA Well-being Resources
UGA Well-being Resources promote student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community.

Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care & Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit sco.uga.edu. Student Care & Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the Embark@UGA program which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity.

UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.

- Well-being Resources: well-being.uga.edu
- Student Care and Outreach: sco.uga.edu
- University Health Center: healthcenter.uga.edu
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: caps.uga.edu or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273
- Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: healthpromotion.uga.edu
- Disability Resource Center and Testing Services: drc.uga.edu

Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting https://well-being.uga.edu.

Disclaimer

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

Class Schedule

Week 1 August 17 **Introduction & Overview**

- Syllabus and course requirements
- What is comparative politics?

August 19 **Conceptualizing Ethnic Identity**

- Hale, Henry E. 2004. "Explaining ethnicity." *Comparative Political Studies*, 458-485.

Week 2 August 24

- Wimmer, Andreas. 2013. *Ethnic Boundary Making: Institutions, Power, Networks*. Oxford University Press. Chapters 1 and 2. [44]

August 26 **Origins of Ethnic Identity**

- Posner, Daniel N. 2003. "The colonial origins of ethnic cleavages: The case of linguistic divisions in Zambia." *Comparative Politics*, 127-146.

Week 3 August 31 **(Some) Functions of Ethnic Identity**

- Posner, Daniel N. 2004. "The political salience of cultural difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are allies in Zambia and adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 529-545.

September 2

- Wamble, Julian J., Laird, Chryl N., McConnaughy, Corrine M., & White, Ismail. K. 2022. "We are one: the social maintenance of black democratic party loyalty." *The Journal of Politics* 84(2): 682-697.

Week 4 September 7 **Labor Day - No Classes**

September 9 **Communal Violence**

- Brass, Paul R. 1997. *Theft of an Idol: Text and Context in the Representation of Collective Violence*. Chapter 7. [56]

Week 5 September 14 **Civil War**

- Cederman, Lars-Erik, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min. 2010. "Why do ethnic groups rebel? New data and analysis." *World Politics* 62(1): 87-119.

September 16

- Lewis, Janet I. 2017. "How does ethnic rebellion start?." *Comparative Political Studies* 50(10): 1420-1450.

Week 6 September 21

- Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2003. “The ontology of ‘political violence’: action and identity in civil wars.” *Perspectives on Politics* 1(3): 475-494.

September 23 **Genocide**

- Straus, Scott. "Contested meanings and conflicting imperatives: A conceptual analysis of genocide." *Journal of Genocide Research* 3, no. 3 (2001): 349-359 only.
- Straus, Scott. 2012. “Retreating from the Brink: Theorizing Mass Violence and the Dynamics of Restraint.” *Perspectives on Politics* 10(2): 343–62.

Week 7 September 28 **Exam 1**

September 30 **What is the Nation?**

- Anderson, Benedict. 1983. Imagined Communities. Chapter 1 [7]
- Gellner, Ernest. 1983. *Nations and Nationalism*. Chapter 1 and Chapter 5: 52-57 only. [13]
- Hechter, Michael. 2000. Chapter 1: 1-15 only. [15]

Week 9 October 12

- Hechter, Michael. 2000. *Containing nationalism*. Oxford University Press. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 [51]

October 14 **Mass Schooling**

- Weber, Eugen. 1976. *Peasants into Frenchmen: the modernization of rural France, 1870-1914*. Stanford University Press. Chapter 18 [35]
- Balcells, Laia. 2013. Mass schooling and Catalan nationalism. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 19(4): 467-486. [19]

Week 10 October 19 **Nationalism in the Colonies**

- Lawrence, Adria. 2013. *Imperial rule and the politics of nationalism: Anti-colonial protest in the French empire*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 [49]

October 21 **Origins of Nation-States**

- Roeder, Phillip G. 2007. *Where nation-states come from: Institutional change in the age of nationalism*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 1: 1-37 only [37]

Week 11 October 26 **Presentation**
October 28 **Presentation**

Week 12 November 2 **Nationalism in Modern Nation-States**

- Robinson, Amanda L. 2014. "National versus ethnic identification in Africa: Modernization, colonial legacy, and the origins of territorial nationalism." *World Politics* 66(4): 709-723, skim the rest. [18]

November 4 **Language and Nation-Building**

- Safran, William. 1992 Language, ideology, and state-building: A comparison of policies in France, Israel, and the Soviet Union. *International Political Science Review*, *13*(4): 397-414. [17 pages]

Submit the theory-to-case paper by noon on Thursday, November 5.

Week 13 November 9 **Religion**

- Jap, Jangai, Amy H. Liu, and Sam Selsky. "Religious Identity and National Pride" *Working paper*.

November 11 **Democracy**

- Darden, Keith, and Anna Grzymala-Busse. "The great divide: Literacy, nationalism, and the communist collapse." World Politics 59, no. 1 (2006): 83-115.

Week 14 November 16 **Review session**

November 18 **Exam 2**

Thanksgiving - No Classes (November 23 to 27)

Week 15 November 30 *Workshop the final paper*

Submit the final paper by noon on Monday, December 7.