

Theories of Conflict, Violence and War
SIS-610-002
Spring 2010

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Why do warfare and mass violence occur? Which theories best explain why interstate wars happen? Why civil wars take place? Why genocide or wartime rape occur? Resolving conflict and building peace require understanding why mass organized violence occurs.

This course sets forth the main theoretical frameworks, with empirical examples, for understanding the causes and conditions of violent conflict. It examines organized violence at four levels: the global system; the state or regime; social/ethnic groups; and the individual. By the end of the course you should know the main approaches to understanding what violence is, why warfare and violence occur, and how to apply those approaches to concrete cases.

More concretely, my goals for this course are as follows:

First, I hope you will learn how to think theoretically about warfare and mass political violence, using a variety of perspectives to explain the same set of events. At the end of this course, you should be able to think creatively and flexibly, escaping the intellectual straitjackets that often mark analyses of the topic.

Second, I intend to acquaint you with some key questions regarding war and violence in international relations. Has armed conflict changed since the Cold War? Since 9/11? Why do countries go to war? What explains the greater share of civil wars? Is warfare an inevitable byproduct of state-formation? State decay? How do individuals' beliefs and actions explain violent social conflict? Does democratization prevent or cause violent conflict? Why does political rape occur in some wars but not others? Is there some formula for minority representation that can prevent genocide or warfare?

Finally, I want you to improve your analytic skills. You should emerge from the course a more critical and analytic reader of texts. Your capacity to write analytically and persuasively should also improve. Finally, your ability to prepare for, carry out and evaluate oral presentations should also improve.

Required book: Nathaniel Philbrick, *Mayflower: A Story of Community, Courage and War* 2006

Course Requirements

10%: Performance in One Oral Presentation
60%: Three five-page Reading Reviews
30%: Final Exam

Marginal grade: Participation. Attendance is mandatory, and class participation is important. If you wish assistance in enhancing your participation, please let me know. More than one absence or lack of participation in classroom discussions will lower your grade by up to one letter grade. Conversely, quality participation will boost your grade. Unless your case is unusual, then this will make a difference if your grade is on a borderline.

Readings: Do all of the assigned readings. Otherwise, it will be difficult for you to participate, and you won't get as much out of the discussion. Through Blackboard, the articles and all readings should be available electronically, except for the assigned Philbrick text. Please read the articles in the order presented below, as I've arranged them with a certain logic in mind.

10%: Oral Presentation to Stimulate Discussion. Each student will be expected to team up with a classmate to make a single oral presentation at the beginning of class. The purpose of the presentations is to stimulate discussion through analytic points and questions based on the issues raised by the week's readings. The presentation should NOT summarize the readings! (regurgitation results in an automatic "C".) Instead they should indicate some combination of: the most important findings, points of divergence and convergence, relation to theories or arguments found earlier in the course, assessment of how compelling the arguments were, weaknesses in the argument, and/or reasons why a reading is useful for shaping how we look at conflict/peace. Each presentation should include 3 questions for class discussion. On Week 2, you will all sign up for the weeks of your choice (please bring back-up preferences). Each presentation cannot exceed 7 minutes (per person).

60%: Three Weekly Reading Reviews. Every 3-4 weeks, a Reading Review is due from each student. **The review will cover at least three of the readings assigned for a particular week (unless the review covers an entire book or there are fewer than 3 readings assigned).** Your review will be graded for its substantive points and for its clarity, persuasiveness and artfulness, as well as for being on time. The paper should be no more than 5 pages long, double-spaced (Times Roman, 12-pt font, normal margins). You should provide a brief (no more than 3-4 sentences) of the MAIN argument or point the author is trying to make – his or her ultimate agenda. In the rest of the reaction piece, you should make comments about the significance and persuasiveness of the readings, placing them in a broader context if possible.

You should e-mail YourName Review #X as an attachment in Word (format: Firstname Lastname Review #1.doc -- # refers to sequence of your papers, not week reviewed) to me (call@american.edu) by EIGHT P.M. on the night before the class in which the readings will be discussed. Late reviews will be downgraded by 1/3 letter-grade (e.g., B+ to B) if submitted up to three hours late, and a full letter-grade if submitted after then but before 11 a.m. Thursday. See my website for more specific guidance on writing critically, and I am happy to provide more guidance if needed.

30%: Final Exam. This class has a **REQUIRED 24-hour take-home final exam.** The exam will consist of 2-3 essay questions that allow you to demonstrate your ability to analyze and apply the theories of the entire course. The exam will be sent at 5 pm on Wednesday, due in by 7 pm on Thursday. Late exams will be downgraded by 1/3 letter-grade (e.g., B+ to B) if submitted less than 3 hours late, and a full letter-grade if submitted after then within 12 hours. After then, but before 24 hours later, a second full letter grade off. No exams will be accepted after that hour.

INTRODUCTION

Week 1 (Jan. 14) Introduction to the Seminar

Week 2 (Jan. 21) Overview. Has War Changed? Levels of Analysis: How useful?

- Jack S. Levy, “Theories of Interstate and Intrastate War: A Levels-of-Analysis Approach,” in Chester Crocker et al, *Turbulent Peace*, (USIP Press), pp. 3-27.
- Robert Kaplan, “The Coming Anarchy,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, February 1994.
- Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations,” in Betts Text, pp. 33-50.
- Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel Report on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, “Synopsis” of the Entire Report (pp. 11-14) plus Part II (pp. 25-52, para. 44-180). (hereafter “HLP Report”) (UN website, or www.globalpolicy.org/reform/initiatives/panels/high/1202report.pdf).
- “Human Security Report 2005,” Overview,” Human Security Centre, Univ. of British Columbia, 2005.

*** Review #1 covers Weeks 2, 3, 4 or 5. Due by 8 pm the Wednesday night before the class when reviewed readings will be discussed (penalty if more than 5 mins late).*

I. THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Week 3 (Jan. 28) Individual-level factors?: Suicide Attacks

- Robert A. Pape, the following chapters in *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005),
 - Chapter 2, “Explaining Suicide Terrorism,” pp. 8-26.
 - Chapter 6, “Occupation and Religious Difference,” pp. 79-101.
 - Chapter 9, “Altruism and Terrorism,” pp. 171-198.
 - Chapter 10, “The Demographic Profile of Terrorists,” pp. 199-216.
- Ghassan Hage, “‘Comes a Times We are all Enthusiasm’: Explaining Palestinian Suicide Bombers in Times of Exiphobia,” *Public Culture* 15(1), 65-89 (2003).

Week 4 (Feb. 4) War & Mass Killing due to Individual & Psychocultural Factors

- Stanley Milgram, in Betts text, pp. 184-190, “The Perils of Obedience” excerpted from his *Obedience to Authority : An Experimental View* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).
- Greg Cashman, Chapters 2 & 3, “The Individual Level of Analysis: Human Aggression,” and “The Individual Level: Psychological Explanations,” in his *What Causes War: An Introduction to Theories of International Conflict* (Lexington, 1993).

II. THE SOCIAL LEVEL**Week 5 (Feb. 11) War Due to Ethnic Hatred, Fear and Manipulation**

- Stathis Kalyvas, “Pathologies,” in *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 32-51.
- V.P. Gagnon, “Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia,” *International Security* 19, 3 (Winter 1994/95), pp. 130-166.
- Amy Chua, *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Markets and Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability* (New York: Doubleday, 2002). “Introduction” and Chapters 6 (“Backlash against Democracy”) & 7 (“Backlash against Market-Dominant Minorities”). Pp. 1-17; 147-175.
- James Fearon, “Commitment Problems and the Spread of Ethnic Conflict,” in David Lake and Don Rothchild, *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict* (Princeton, 1998), 107-126.

Week 6 (Feb. 18) War due to Economic Incentives and Opportunity

- Paul Collier, et al. *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy*. Washington, DC: World Bank and Oxford Univ. Press. Chapter 3 (pp. 53-91).
- Michael L. Ross, “Oil, Drugs and Diamonds: The Varying Roles of Natural Resources in Civil War,” in Karen Ballentine and Jake Sherman (eds), *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict: Beyond Greed and Grievance* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner and IPA, 2003), pp. 47-72.
- Karen Ballentine, “Conclusions”, in Karen Ballentine and Jake Sherman (eds), *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict: Beyond Greed and Grievance* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner and IPA, 2003), pp. 259-283.
- Michael Pugh and Neil Cooper, “The Regional Dimensions of Civil War Economies,” Chapter 2 in their *War Economies in Regional Context*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner & IPA, 2004), pp. 17-44.

** Review #2 covers Weeks 6, 7, 8 or 9. Due by 8 pm the night before the relevant class when reviewed readings will be discussed (penalty if more than 5 mins late)!

Week 7 (Feb. 25) Explaining Gendered Political Violence

- Cynthia Cockburn, “The Continuum of Violence: A Gender Perspective on War and Peace,” in Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman, *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones* (Univ. of California Press, 2004), pp. 24-44.
- Judy El-Bushra, “Fused in Combat: Gender Relations and Armed Conflict,” in *Development in Practice*, 13, No. 2 & 3 (May 2003), pp. 252-265.
- Elisabeth Jean Wood, “Sexual Violence during War: Explaining Variation,” Paper presented at Yale University conference on Order, Conflict and Violence, 30 April-1 May 2004, New Haven, CT.
- TBA

III. THE STATE / REGIME LEVEL

Week 8 (Mar. 4) War due to State Failure

- Kalevi Holsti, Preface and Chapters 1, & 2, in his *The State, War and the State of War* (New York: Cambridge Univ Press, 1996), pp. xi-xiv, 1-40.
- Robert I. Rotberg, “The Failure and Collapse of Nation-States” Chapter One in his *When States Fail* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 1-30 only (you may read the rest of the chapter if you wish).
- Charles T. Call, “The Fallacy of the Failed State,” *Third World Quarterly* 29, 8 (Dec 2008).

SPRING BREAK (Mar. 10-14).

NO CLASS

Week 9 (Mar. 18) War & Mass Killings due to Regime Type: The Democratic Peace Thesis

- Rudolph J. Rummel, "Power, Genocide and Mass Murder," *Journal of Peace Research* 31, no. 1 (February 1994), 1-10.
- James Lee Ray, "Does Democracy Cause Peace?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 1998:1, 27-46.
- Christopher Layne, "Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace," in *International Security*, 19,2 (Fall 1994), pp. 5-49.
- Edward D Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratic Transitions and War: From Napoleon to the Millenium's End," *Turbulent Peace*, pp. 113-126.

IV. THE SYSTEMIC LEVEL (Recall Realism and Liberalism!)

** Review #3 covers Weeks 10, 11, or 12. Due by 8 pm the day before the class when reviewed readings will be discussed.

Week 10 (Mar. 25) War as Unnecessary: Constructivism & Its Challenge

- Franke Wilmer, "International Relations Theory and the Problem of Violence." Chapter 1 in *The Social Construction of Man, the State, and War*. Routledge, pp. 1-24.
- Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science* 2001 Vol. 4, pp. 391-416.
- John Mueller, "The Obsolescence of Major War," Betts book, pp. 224-235.
- Margaret Mead, "War is Only an Invention – Not a Biological Necessity," Betts book, pp. 219-223.

Week 11 (Apr. 1) War due to Economic or Political Domination: Empire & Hegemony

- Greg Chapman, Chapter on "Hegemonic Theories," from his *What Causes War?*
- Johan Galtung. 1971. "A Structural Theory of Imperialism". *Journal of Peace Research*. 13:81 (selected pages only).
- Robert Gilpin, "Hegemonic War and International Change," in Betts book, pp. 93-104.
- Mark Duffield, "The Merging of Development and Security" in *Global Governance and*

the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security, (Zed Books, 2001).

Week 12 (Apr. 8) 'Just War' Theory

- President Obama's Speech on accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, 10 December 2009.
- Karma Nabulsi. (2008). "Traditions of justice in war: the modern debate in historical perspective." In *Order, Conflict, and Violence*. Stathis N. Kalyvas, Ian Shapiro, and Tarek Masoud, eds. Cambridge University Press. Pp. 120-138.
- Frédéric Mégret. (2006). "From 'savages' to 'unlawful combatants': a postcolonial look at international humanitarian law's 'other.'" In *International Law and its Others*. Anne Orford, ed. Cambridge University Press. Pp. 265-317.

CLOSING CASE STUDIES

Week 13 (Apr. 15) Explaining Rwanda's Genocide

- African Rights, *Death, Despair and Defiance* (London: African Rights, 1995), Executive Summary, pp. xviii-xxxiii).
- Mahmoud Mamdani, "Preface and Acknowledgements," "Introduction" and "Chapter 1. Defining Post-Colonial Citizenship," (pp. xi-xvi, 2-39) in his *When Victims Become Killers* (Princeton, 2002).
- Rene Lemarchand, "Exclusion, Marginalization and Political Mobilization: The Road to Hell in the Great Lakes," in Andreas Wimmer et al (eds) *Facing Ethnic Conflicts* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), pp. 61-77.
- Samantha Power, (2001) "Bystanders to Genocide," *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 288, No. 2 (Jan.), pp. 84-108.
<http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2001/09/power.htm>

Week 14 (Apr. 22) Explaining King Phillip's War in the American Colonies

- Nathaniel Philbrick, *Mayflower: A Story of Community, Courage and War* 2006.
 - Read the entire book, but concentrate especially on the last (third and longest) section called "War", which details King Philip's War, which will be the main subject of our discussions.

**April 29, 2010 TAKE-HOME 24-HOUR FINAL EXAM
Wednesday 5 pm – Thursday 7 pm**

SOURCES OF SUPPORT

If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please don't hesitate to consult with me. In addition to the resources of the department, a wide range of services is available to support you in your efforts to meet the course requirements.

Academic Support Center (x3360, MGC 243) offers study skills workshops, individual instruction, tutor referrals, and services for students with learning disabilities. Writing support is available in the ASC Writing Lab or in the Writing Center, Battelle 228.

Counseling Center (x3500, MGC 214) offers counseling and consultations regarding personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus mental health resources.

Disability Support Services (x3315, MGC 206) offers technical and practical support and assistance with accommodations for students with physical, medical, or psychological disabilities. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please notify me in a timely manner with a letter from the Academic Support Center or Disability Support Services so that we can make arrangements to address your needs.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE

All students must adhere to the Academic Integrity Code

(<http://www.american.edu/provost/registrar/regulations/reg80.cfm>). As the code states, "By enrolling at American University and then each semester when registering for classes, students acknowledge their commitment to the Code. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their rights and their responsibilities. In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, examinations of whatever kind, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Students are responsible for learning the conventions of documentation and acknowledgment of sources. American University expects students to complete all examinations, tests, papers, creative projects, and assignments of any kind according to the highest ethical standards, as set forth either explicitly or implicitly in this Code or by the direction of instructors."

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease), American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site (www.prepared.american.edu) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/ college-specific information.