

The American University
School of International Service
International Peace and Conflict Resolution Program

“Theories of Conflict, Violence, and War”

SIS-610-001, Spring 2011, Thursdays 5:30 PM – 8:00 PM, Ward 114

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 4-7 PM and by appointment

Course Summary: 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 various levels (global system, state, group, and individual) and across disciplines (political science, sociology, philosophy, psychology, anthropology, and more). 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.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the course, students will have:

Knowledge

- Understanding of the importance of a strong theoretical foundation in the fields of peace studies and conflict resolution in that resolving conflict and building peace require understanding why mass organized violence occurs.
- Knowledge of the range of main theories and key questions explaining violence and war, and how they are related to each other.
- Awareness of the implications for practice of adopting various theoretical positions.
- Familiarity with various levels of analysis for studying violence and war: the global system, the state or regime, social or ethnic group, and individual.
- Familiarity with various disciplinary approaches to the study of conflict, violence, and war, notably those of political science, anthropology, sociology, economics, and psychology.
- Familiarity with feminist perspectives on the study of conflict, violence, and war.

Skills

- Ability to think theoretically and critically about warfare and mass political violence.
- Ability to look at conflict, violence, and war from multiple perspectives.

Attitudes (Values)

- Respect for different disciplinary traditions in addressing violence and war.

Grading:

Your course grade will be based on the following elements:

Three five-page Reading Reviews. (60%). Every four to five weeks, a Reading Review is due from each student. The review will cover at least three of the readings assigned for a particular week. Your review will be graded for its substantive points and for its clarity, persuasiveness and artfulness. The paper should be no longer than five pages long, double-spaced. You should provide a brief summary of the authors' main arguments. In the rest of the piece, you should comment on the significance and persuasiveness of the readings, placing them in a broader context if possible.

You should e-mail the assignment to me as an attachment in Word. Late reviews will be down graded by a third of a letter grade for each day they are late.

Final Exam. (30%). The exam will include several essay questions requiring you to synthesize course themes.

Participation. (10%). This includes class attendance, participation in classroom discussions, and completion of in-class written assignments.

Required Texts:

- Besteman, Catherine. (2002). Violence: A Reader. NYU Press.
- Betts, Richard K. (2008). Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace. Pearson Longman.
- Waller, James. (2007). Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing. Oxford University Press.

All other readings are available on Blackboard.

Week One, 1/13/11: Introduction to the course

Manda Bala

Week Two, 1/20/11: Frameworks

- Walt, Stephen. (1998). "International Relations: One World, Many Theories." *Foreign Policy*. No. 110. Spring 1998. Pp. 29-46.
- Cashman, Greg and Leonard C. Robinson. (2007). "Introduction." In *An Introduction to the Causes of War: Patterns of Interstate Conflict from World War I to Iraq*. Rowman & Littlefield. Pp.1-26.
- Human Security Report Project. *Human Security Report 2009/2010: The Causes of Peace and the Shrinking Costs of War*. Pre-publication. The first 20 pages.

Week Three, 1/27/11: Violence and the State

- Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation." (Chapter 2 in *Violence: A Reader*. Pp. 13-

- 18).
- Charles Tilly, “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime.” (Chapter 4 in *Violence: A Reader*. Pp 35-60).
 - Hannah Arendt, “Reflections on Violence.” (Chapter 3 in *Violence: A Reader*. Pp. 19-34).
 - Sartre, Jean Paul. (2004). “Preface to Frantz Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth*.” In *Violence in War and Peace*. Edited by Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois. Blackwell. Chapter 27, pp. 229-235.

Week 4, 2/3/11: Structural Violence, Cultural Violence, Symbolic Violence

- Johan Galtung. (1969) “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research.” *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3). pp. 167-191.
- Paul Farmer. “On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below.” *Daedalus*. Vol. 125. 1996. Pp. 261-283.
- Johan Galtung, “Cultural Violence.” *Journal of Peace Research*. 27(3): 291-305.
- Margaret Mead, “Warfare is Only an Invention—Not a Biological Necessity” Richard K. Betts, *Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace*. Pearson, Longman. Pp. 219-223.
- Philippe Bourgois. (2001). “The Power of violence in war and peace: Post-Cold War lessons from El Salvador.” *Ethnography*. 2(1). 5-34.

Week 5, 2/10/11: Gender

- Tickner, J. Ann. “Men, Women, and War.” In Betts, *Conflict after the Cold War*. Pp. 252-264.
- 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.
- Rhonda Copelon, “Surfacing Gender: Reconceptualizing Crimes Against Women in time of War.” In *Violence: A Reader*. Pp. 193-208.
- Elisabeth Wood. 2006. “Variation in Sexual Violence during War.” *Politics & Society*. 34; 307

FIRST READING REVIEW DUE BY 2/15/11

Week 6, 2/17/11: Just War Theory

- President Obama’s Speech on accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, 10 December 2009.
- Rengger, Nicholas. (2002). “On the Just War Tradition in the Twenty-First Century.” *International Affairs*. 78(2): 353-363.
- 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.
- Sjoberg, Laura. (2008). “Why Just War Needs Feminism Now More Than

Ever.” *International Politics*. 45. 1-18.

Week 7, 2/24/11: War and Development

- *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy*. World Bank Policy Research Report. 2003. (Available online). Read only Parts I and II.
- Duffield, Mark (2001) “The Merging of Development and Security” and “Global Governance and the Causes of Conflict” in *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security*. Zed Books.
- Elhawary, Samir. (2008). “Violent Paths to Peace? Rethinking the Conflict-Development Nexus in Columbia.” *Columbia International*, 67. Pp 84-100.

Week 8, 3/3/11: War and 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
- Charles T. Call, “Beyond State Failure: Weak States, Insecure States and Illegitimate States,” article accepted by *European Journal of International Relations*, 2009.

Week 9, 3/17/11: Resource Curse

- Paul Collier, “Doing Well Out of War,” in Mats Berdal and David M. Malone (eds), *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000), pp. 91-111.
- 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.

SECOND READING REVIEW DUE BY 3/22/11

Week 10, 3/24/11: New War?

- Errol Henderson and J. David Singer. (2002). “‘New Wars’ and Rumors of ‘New Wars.’” *International Interactions*. 28: 165-190.
- Mary Kaldor. (2005). “Old Wars, Cold Wars, New Wars, and the War on Terror.” *International Politics*. 42: 491-498.
- Richards, Paul (2005) “New War: An Ethnographic Approach” in *No Peace, No War: An Anthropology of Contemporary Armed Conflicts*. Ohio University Press.
- Kalyvas, Stathis. (2006). “Pathologies,” in *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge University Press. Pp 32-51.

Week 11, 3/31/11: Migration, Resources, Environment

- Myron Weiner, "Security, Stability, and Migration." Betts, p. 580-595.
- John K. Cooley, "The War Over Water." Betts, p. 596-606.
- Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Changes as Causes of Acute Conflict." Betts, p. 607-622.
- Hendrix, Cullen S. and Sarah M. Glaser. (2007). "Trends and Triggers: Climate, climate change, and civil conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa." *Political Geography*. 26: 695-715.

Week 12, 4/7/11: Terrorism

- T. E. Lawrence, "Science of Guerilla Warfare." Betts, pp. 466-474.
- Mao Tse-Tung, "On Guerilla Warfare." Betts, pp. 475-485.
- Goody, Jack. (2002). "What is a Terrorist?" *History and Anthropology*. 13(2): 139-143.
- Crenshaw, Martha (2002) "The Causes of Terrorism" in *Violence: A Reader*, Chapter 7
- Pape, Robert A. (2003). "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism." *American Political Science Review*. 97(3): 343-361.
- Richard K. Betts, "The Soft Underbelly of Primacy." Betts, pp. 559-575.

Week 13, 4/14/11: Psychology of Mass Violence

- Waller, James. (2007). *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*. Oxford University Press.

Week 14, 4/21/11: The Poetics of Violence

- Whitehead, Neil (2004) "On the Poetics of Violence" in *Violence*, SAR Press.
- Hinton, Alex (2004) "The Poetics of Genocidal Practice: Violence under the Khmer Rouge" in *Violence*, SAR Press.
- Cynthia Keppley-Mahmood, "Playing the Game of Love: Passion and Martyrdom among Khalistani Sikhs." In *Violence: A Reader*, Chapter 8.
- Nordstrom, Carolyn. (2002). "Terror Warfare and the Medicine of Peace," in *Violence: A Reader*, Chapter 14

THIRD READING REVIEW DUE BY 4/26/11

4/28/11: FINAL EXAM (details to be announced)

Messages from our sponsors:

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.