

Theories of Conflict, Violence and War

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.

IPCR has set out the course outcomes/learning objectives as follows:

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% of your grade). 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

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substantive points and for its clarity, persuasiveness and artfulness. The paper should be no longer than five pages long (Times Roman, 12-pt font, normal margins) double-spaced. 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 piece, you should comment on the significance and persuasiveness of the readings, placing them in a broader context if possible.

- **Final Exam.** (30%). **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.
- **Participation.** (10%). This includes class attendance, participation in classroom discussions, and completion of in-class written assignments. Attendance is mandatory, and class participation is important. You must do all of the assigned readings on time for class. 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 those in required books. Please read the articles in the order presented.

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! 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. 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).

REQUIRED BOOKS

Andreas, Peter. 2008. *Blue Helmets, Black Markets: The Business of Survival in the Siege of Sarajevo*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Catherine Besteman. 2002. *Violence: A Reader*. New York: New York University Press.

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

Week one: August 23: Introduction

Week two: August 30: States and Violence

- Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation.” *Violence: A Reader*, chapter two, pp 13- 18.
- Hannah Arendt, “Reflections on Violence.” *Violence: A Reader*, chapter three, pp 19-34.
- Charles Tilly, “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime.” *Violence: A Reader*, chapter four, pp 35-60.
- _____ “War and State Power” Middle East Report, No 171 (Jul - Aug. 1991) pp 38 – 40
- Franke Wilmer, “International Relations Theory and the Problem of Violence.” Chapter 1 in *The Social Construction of Man, the State, and War: Identity, Conflict, and Violence in Former Yugoslavia*. Routledge. pp. 1-24.

Week three, September 13: Structural Violence

- Johan Galtung. “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research.” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol 6. No 3. (1969); pp. 167-191.
- Paul Farmer. “On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below.” *Daedalus*. Vol. 125. (1996); pp. 261-283.
- Walter D. Mignolo “The Darker Side of the Renaissance” *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (Winter, 1992); pp. 808-828.
- Enrique Dussel “The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America” *Boundary 2*, Vol. 20, No. 3, (Autumn, 1993); pp. 65-76
- Lizabeth Zack, “Who fought the Algerian War? Political Identity and Conflict in French Ruled Algeria.” *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*. Vol. 15. No. 1 (Fall 2002); pp 55 -97.

Week four; September 20: Neo-realism and War

- Walt, Stephen. “International Relations: One World, Many Theories.” *Foreign Policy*. No. 110. (Spring 1998); pp 29-46.
- Franz Kohout, “Cyclical, Hegemonic, and Pluralistic Theories of International Relations: Some Comparative Reflections on War Causation.” *International Political Science Review*. 24(1): pp 51-66.

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- Robert Jervis. “The Remaking of a Unipolar World” *The Washington Quarterly* 29: 2 (2006); pp 5 – 19.
- Robert Gilpin. “War is too important to be left to ideological amateurs” *International Relations* 19 (2005); pp 5 - 18
- Michael Ignatieff, “Who are Americans to Think that Freedom is Theirs to Spread?” *New York Times Magazine* (July 2005); pp. 42-47.

Week five: September 27: Identity and the Clash of Civilizations?

- Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 72. No. 3 (Summer 1993); pp 22 – 49.
- Peter Katzenstein, “Walls” between those Peoples? Contrasting Perspectives on World Politics” (Presidential Address) *Perspectives on Politics*. Vol. 8. No 1. (March 2008); pp 11- 25.
- Errol Henderson and J. David Singer. “‘New Wars’ and Rumors of ‘New Wars.’” *International Interactions*. 28 (2002); pp 165-190.
- Mary Kaldor. “Old Wars, Cold Wars, New Wars, and the War on Terror.” *International Politics*. 42 (2005); pp 491-498.

Recommended:

- Peter Katzenstein. “Same War, Different Views: Germany, Japan and Counterterrorism.” *International Organization*. Vol. 57. No. 4 (Autumn 2003); pp 731 – 760.

FIRST SHORT REVIEW PAPER DUE (What are some of the commonalities and contrasts between structuralist and realist theories of war?)

Week six: October 4: Just War in 21st Century

- President Obama’s Nobel Remarks, December 11 2009.
- Karma Nabulsi. “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. (2008); pp. 120-138.
- Neta C. Crawford. “Just War Theory and the U.S. Counterterror War.” *Perspectives on Politics*. Vol 1, No. 1 (Mar, 2004); pp 5 – 25.
- Frédéric Mégret. (2006). “From ‘savages’ to ‘unlawful combatants’: a postcolonial look at international humanitarian law’s ‘other.’” *International Law and its*

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Others. Anne Orford, ed. Cambridge University Press. Pp. 265-317.

Week seven: October 11: The Impact and Function of Terror

- Martha Crenshaw “The Causes of Terrorism” *Violence: A Reader*, Chapter six
- *Human Security Brief 2007*. Human Security Report Project, Simon Fraser University, Canada.
- Beck, Ulrich. “The Terrorist Threat: World Risk Society Revisited.” *Theory, Culture & Society*. Vol. 19 No. 4 (2002); pp 39-55.
- Charles Tilly, “Terror, Terrorism and Terrorists.” *Sociological Theory*. Vo 22, No 1. Theories of Terrorism: A Symposium (March 2004); pp 5 – 13.
- Pape, Robert A. “The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism.” *American Political Science Review*. Vol. 97 No. 3 (2003); 343-361.
- Charles Lane, “Superman meets Shining Path: Story of CIA success, with agency Aid Peru Captured Chief Rebel” *Washington Post*, Thursday, December 7, (2000); pp A 01

Week eight: October 18: The Politics of Genocide

- Stathis Kalyvas, “Pathologies,” in *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge University Press, (2006); pp. 32-51.
- Samantha Power, "Bystanders to Genocide," *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 288, No. 2 (Jan., 2001); pp. 84-108. <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2001/09/power.htm>
- John Hagan and Wenona Rymond-Richmond. “The Ambiguous Genocide: The U.S. State Department and the Genocide in Darfur.” in Peter Andreas and Kelly M. Greenhill. *Sex, Drugs and Body Counts*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press (2010); pp 188 – 214
- Kelly Greenhill, “Counting the Cost: The Politics of Numbers in Armed Conflict” in *Sex, Drugs and Body Counts*, pp 127 – 158.

SECOND SHORT REVIEW ESSAY DUE (Are wars in the 21st century new and centered on identity conflicts?)

Week nine: October 25: Black Markets and Protection Rackets

- Vadim Volkov. “The political economy of protection rackets in the past and the present.” *Social Research*. Vol. 67, No. 3 (Fall, 2000); pp 709 - 744
- Winifred Tate. “Accounting for Absences: The Colombian Paramilitaries in U.S. Policy Debates,” *Sex, Drugs and Body Counts*, pp 215 – 243

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- Peter Andreas. *Blue Helmets and Black Markets*, pp 1 – 41

Week ten: November 1: Violence and the Politics of Peace: Case study, Bosnia

- *Blue Helmets and Black Markets*, pp 42 - 165

Week eleven: November 8: Primary Commodities and War

- Pierre Englebert and James Ron “Primary Commodities and War: Congo-Brazzaville’s Ambivalent Resource Curse.” *Comparative Politics*. Vol. 37. No 1. (Oct. 2004); pp 61 – 81.
- Stathis N. Kalyvas. “The Paradox of Terrorism in Civil War” *Journal of Ethics*. Vol. 8. No.1 Terrorism (2004): pp 97 – 138.
- 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.
- Karen Ballentine. “Beyond Greed and Grievance: Reconsidering the Economic Dynamics of Armed Conflict.” 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 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.

Week twelve: November 15: Gender and Violence

- Rhonda Copelon “Surfacing gender: reconceptualizing crimes against women in time of war/ Rhonda” in *Violence: A Reader* chapter eleven, pp 193 – 210.
- Wood, Elisabeth. “Variation in Sexual Violence during War.” *Politics & Society*. Vol. 34 (2006); pp 307 – 341.
- Meredith Turshen. “The political economy of violence against women during armed conflict in Uganda. *Social Research*. Vol. 67 (Fall 2000); pp 803 - 824
- Judy El-Bushra. “Fused in Conflict: Gender Relations and Armed Conflict.” *Development in Practice*. Vol 13. No 2/3 (May 2003): pp 252 – 265.
- THIRD SHORT REVIEW ESSAY DUE (What are the politics of genocide and interventions to prevent genocide?)

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Only for your own personal interest:

Week thirteen: November 22: The Culture of Violence

- Michael Taussig. “Putumayo report and the explanation of torture,” *Violence: A Reader*, chapter twelve, pp 211 – 243.
- Julie Peteet. “Male Gender and Rituals of Resistance in the Palestinian *Intifada*: A Cultural Politics of Violence” *Violence: A Reader*, chapter thirteen, pp 244 – 272.
- Carolyn Nordstrom. “Terror warfare and the medicine of peace” *Violence: A Reader*, chapter fourteen, pp 273 – 298.

For your interest only:

- Cathy Lisa Schneider “Violence, Identity and Spaces of Contention in Chile, Argentina and Colombia.” *Social Research*. Vol. 67 (Fall 2000); 773 – 802

Week fourteen: November 29: Breaking the Conflict Trap

- Samir Elhawary. “Violent Paths to Peace: The Conflict-Development Nexus in Colombia.” *Colombia International* 67 (Jun 2008): pp 84 – 100.
- Charles T. Call. “War Transitions and the New Civilian Security in Latin America.” *Comparative Politics*. Vol. 35. No. 1 (October 2002): pp 1 – 20.
- *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy*. World Bank Policy Research Report. 2003. (Available online)
- Catherine Besteman, “Conclusion. Political violence and the contemporary world” *Violence: A Reader*, pp 299 – 312.

FINAL EXAM HANDED OUT DECEMBER 5, DUE DECEMBER 6

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE

Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's Academic Integrity Code. By registering, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary actions will be taken should such violations occur. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the Code in general or as

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they relate to particular requirements for this course. See
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In the event of an emergency, 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. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of an emergency, students should refer to the AU Student Portal, 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.