



New Course

GOVT-743

Catalog Course Title: Political Violence in Comparative Perspective

Name and contact information for future correspondence:

Adrienne LeBas Lebas@american.edu; Saul Newman snewan@american.edu

Academic Unit - School/College:

- CAS
- KSB
- SOC
- SIS
- SPA
- SPExS
- Other:

Teaching Unit - Department or Program: GOVT

Date effective: Fall 2016

Required Signatures	Name	Signature	Date
Teaching Unit Chair or Director	Saul Newman		12/17/2015
EPC Chair	Susan Glover		2/21/16
Primary Academic Unit Assoc. Dean	Vicky Wilkins		1/21/2016
Second Academic Unit Assoc. Dean			
Faculty Senate Chair			
Provost's Designee (VPUG or VPGR)			

Date sent to the Office of the University Registrar:

New Course Proposal: GOVT 743, Political Violence in Comparative Perspective

I.

- a. Proposed effective date Fall 2016

- b. Academic Unit SPA
- c. Teaching Unit Government
- d. Course Title Political Violence in Comparative Perspective
- e. Course Number GOVT743
- f. Credits 3
- g. Prerequisites Admission to MA or Ph.D. program or instructor permission
- h. Course description for University Catalog

This graduate seminar in comparative politics provides an introduction to the study of political violence and intra-state conflict. The course extends the study of political violence beyond civil war by examining lower-level violence ranging from communal riots to extortion rackets to crime. A variety of methodological approaches both qualitative and quantitative, are included.

- i. Grade type A/F
- j. Expected frequency of offering Alternate Springs
- k. Check all that apply: None

II. Rationale

- a. Please explain the main purpose of the new course, including whether it will be a requirement for an existing or proposed program or an elective, and how the new course relates to the existing courses in the program and department.

The course extends the SPA's comparative politics offerings and will be of particular interest to graduate students in both GOVT, and JLC. It serves as a general introduction to theories of violence, order, and communal conflict short of civil war. The new course is unique due to its focus on intra-state violence, communal conflict, rioting, and non-state security provision. There are no similar courses offered in SPA. The proposed course will also contribute to the school's cross-disciplinary research concentration in security and counterterrorism, and it is currently listed as one of the foundation-level courses for JLC's new Master's program in Terrorism & Homeland Security Policy. The course is also important for other graduate-level programs at AU, and it serves as an example of successful SIS-SPA faculty coordination. It is already listed as fulfilling the core seminar requirement for SIS's doctoral concentration in political violence under its current course number (GOVT 696).

b. Will the course require students to pay a special fee? NO

c. Has the course previously been offered under a rotating topics course or an experimental course number? Yes.

i. Semesters/year offered – 2010S, 2014S

ii. Course number – GOVT 696

iii. Instructor – Adriene LeBas

iv. What observations and conclusions were derived from the previous offering(s) that new lead to proposing this course as a permanent part of the curriculum? Political Violence has been offered twice by SPA under the number GOVT 696. It is under this number that it has been included in program requirements in JLC and in SIS. The SIS-SPA political violence faculty group – which will serve as the core faculty for the SIS doctoral concentration in political violence – has approved the course (as currently numbered) as a core seminar for the concentration. This faculty group includes Sharon Weiner, Joe Young, Boaz Atzili, Susan Shepler, Cathy Schneider, Keith Darden, Carolyn Gallaher, and Adrienne LeBas. The current course number, GOVT 696, GOVT 696 is a number used by other comparative course offerings in SPA, so a new number for the Political Violence seminar would likely minimize confusion among SIS and SPA graduate students and graduate advisory staff.

d. Please indicate other units that offer courses or programs related to the proposed course and provide documentation of consultations with those units.

Though SIS has several courses that look at civil wars and large-scale conflict, the focus of this course is unique due to its focus on intra-state violence, communal conflict, rioting, and non-state security provision. This unique focus will appeal to students in SPA as well as SIS.

SIS has a security concentration, but they do not have courses that directly compete with this course. In addition to Sharon Weiner, the heads of all MA programs were approached regarding potential conflicts between SIS courses and this course. The USFP, CRS, and Global Governance MA programs confirmed that GOVT 743 would not conflict or substantively overlap with their existing SIS course offerings. We were not able to receive official confirmation from the International Peace & Conflict Resolution MA program, but earlier emails with group faculty member Susan Shepler suggest that her related course is both distinct and would be coordinated or rotated with LeBas's course in terms of offerings.

SIS and SPA political violence faculty (listed above) have been working on coordinating course offerings in order to ensure healthy enrollments in selected graduate courses, including this core intrastate violence seminar.

e. Estimated enrollment per semester 15

f. Does your teaching unit's classroom space allotment support the addition of this course? YES

g. Are present university facilities (library, technology) adequate for the proposed course? YES

h. The proposed course will be taught by full-time faculty

i. Will offering the new course involve any substantial changes to the scheduling of existing courses? NO

j. What are the learning outcomes including the competencies that students are expected to demonstrate for the course and how are those outcomes assessed?

Students will be exposed to cutting edge political science research on violence, which will result in three learning outcomes: (1) understanding the diversity of comparative politics as a sub-field; (2) the abilities to evaluate other scholars' arguments, methodological approaches, and the quality of data; (3) achieve the skills necessary to produce original research linking theory and empirics. Course evaluation will be based on critical reading response memos, presentation of a case study, and an original research paper, as well as discussion in class.

k. Please attach a draft syllabus

Syllabus attached.

III. Catalog Copy

GOVT-743

Political Violence in Comparative Perspective (3)

Course Level: Graduate

This graduate seminar in comparative politics provides an introduction to the study of political violence and intra-state conflict. The course extends the study of political violence beyond civil war by examining lower-level violence ranging from communal riots to extortion rackets to

crime. A variety of methodological approaches both qualitative and quantitative, are included. Usually offered alternate springs.

GOVT 743: Political Violence in Comparative Perspective

American University School of Public Affairs
Spring 2014

Prof. Adrienne LeBas
Email: lebas@american.edu
Office: Ward Circle 218
Office phone: 202-885-6229

Class hours: Tuesdays 5:30-8pm
Class location: Ward 201
Office hours: Tuesday 1:30-4:30 &
Wednesday 2-4

This course provides an introduction to the study of political violence and intra-state conflict. Rather than focusing exclusively on the literature on civil wars, which dominates the study of violence in political science, the course looks at lower-level violence, ranging from communal riots to extortion rackets to crime. I have tried to balance readings in order to give students a sense of a variety of methodological approaches, so we will read both ethnography and large-N quantitative research.

In addition to providing an introduction to the study of political violence, this course is intended to help students acquire the skills to do their own research. For this reason, portions of class will be devoted to discussion of methodological issues raised by the readings under examination and to the formulation of alternative research strategies. These discussions are intended to be practical aids that will assist in the design of the semester research project and, for some students, subsequent dissertation research. I highly recommend that all comparative politics graduate students purchase the following book and read sections from it throughout the semester. It will also be available on reserve at the library.

Henry Brady and David Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

Learning Objectives

The key aim of the seminar is to teach you how to both evaluate scholarly work and develop your own original arguments. For each reading, students should aim at: (a) understanding the author's aim and argument; (b) assessing the quality and sufficiency of the data used to advance the argument; (c) developing their own opinions about how well the author persuades. Like other seminars, this course is intended to hone your skills as a critical and inventive thinker. The structure of the course is loose, the topics and questions we address are big, and the connections between readings may not always be immediately clear. This is to encourage you to think inventively about how social and political phenomena are connected to one another. The authors assigned also have very different approaches to explanation and analysis, and I hope this will spur discussion about what kinds of data or argumentation are most compelling.

Structure of the Course & Grading

Response memos. Class discussion will be organized around response papers written and circulated in advance of class. Over the course of the semester, students must write at least two 2-3 page response papers. Response memos are not to be mere synopses of the week's readings. Instead, they are an opportunity to critically reflect on the readings: the best memos will make a strong argument, point out weaknesses or strengths of particular readings, and make the readings "talk" to one another. You are very much encouraged to incorporate insights from your own research, and you're encouraged to check out recommended reading (if assigned) for the weeks for which you're writing. Memos must be posted to Blackboard by 11pm the night before class (look under "Discussions" and locate the proper string).

Class participation. It is crucial that students come to class *every week* prepared and with thoughts on the assigned readings. Your course participation grade will be assessed on how well you make "regular and informed contribution to class." Students should aim to make one significant contribution to class discussion – either in the form of a question or an argument – during each session. Non-excused absences will result in a "zero" for class participation for that day. In addition to examining a reading's argument and evidence, you should devote attention to methodology or research design: are there flaws of case selection? Does the methodological approach fit the question posed? Is there a better way of examining this question? Are there flaws or drawbacks to the data used?

As part of their class participation grade, all graduate students – including those auditing – must contribute two substantive questions to the Blackboard thread by noon on the day of class. This is part of your participation grade. Questions may address an author's core assumptions, the reliability / scope / etc of the evidence used, the strength or weakness of mechanisms, how articles relate to one another, how one week's readings differ from past weeks, etc, etc. Put simply, try to post questions that might spark debate about the strengths and weaknesses of a particular theory or methodological approach.

Final paper. All students will be responsible for a semester research paper. This paper may address any relevant topic you like, but it should be modeled on papers that would be found in the major journals of political science and comparative politics (e.g., *American Political Science Review*, *World Politics*, *Comparative Politics*, etc). The paper should clearly lay out the puzzle addressed, establish its significance, and defend the methods used in the paper. For more on the paper and on beginning research, please see "Notes on Research" attached at the end of this syllabus.

A paper proposal with annotated bibliography must be turned in by **February 9th**. The quality of your proposal will affect your participation grade. Final papers must use proper citation in the style used in either *American Political Science Review* or *World Politics*. Papers should be double-spaced and approximately 25 pages. The final paper will be due on **May 6th at 5:30pm**. The paper must be emailed to me as a **Microsoft Word document** with your last name in the file name. Points will be deducted if this instruction is not followed. Undergraduate students will write a slightly shorter paper (double-spaced, 15-20 pages).

Case study presentation. Students will be responsible for a short class presentation and handout (7-10 minutes) summarizing a recent episode of political violence and offering a

synopsis of the following: (1) what happened; (2) who the perpetrators were and how they were organized; (3) the grievances or *claimed* causes of the violence; (4) state response / involvement; (5) victim response; (6) how it ended. Unlike your research paper, which will need to draw on a body of academic literature, this assignment is explicitly designed to familiarize the class with multiple episodes of *recent* political violence. The intuition is that these presentations will provide us with an evidentiary base with which to evaluate theories read through the rest of the semester. Sources for this assignment might include: newspapers, Human Rights Watch, International Crisis Group, and other advocacy or NGO reports. Presentations will be scheduled for classes beginning January 28th. Sign up for dates via the sign-up sheet.

If you are taking the course at the 600-level, grades will be calculated as follows:

Class participation	30%
Response papers	20%
Case study presentation	10%
Final research paper (at 600-level) 25 pages	50%

If you are struggling in the course, please come to see me as soon as possible.

Materials

In the syllabus below, all starred readings are available on Blackboard in one of two places. These will either be on the content tab in either the required or recommended folder (as appropriate), or they will be under the reserves tab (provided by the library). If a reading is not starred, then it is available online in an e-journal. Please consult library staff if you do not know how to locate these articles. If you are off-campus, you'll need to use the AU VPN in order to get access to electronic resources.

The following books are on reserve at the library. The Wilkinson and Varshney books will be read in part; you may wish to purchase them. They'll pop up for purchase at the AU bookstore, which seems to have fumbled the course order.

Javier Auyero, *Routine Politics & Violence in Argentina: the Grey Zone of State Power* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007).

Diego Gambetta, *The Sicilian Mafia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

Steven Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Henry Brady and David Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

Alan Gerber & Don Green, *Field Experiments: Design, Analysis & Interpretation* (2012).

Academic Integrity Code: By enrolling in this course, you agree to comply with American University's Academic Integrity Code. The Code covers not just plagiarism but also other violations of academic honesty, including *the submission of work completed in another course to fulfill requirements in this course*. You are expected to be aware of what practices lie outside this code. Penalties include failure in this course, as well as other disciplinary actions. Please further review the content of this code at:

<http://www1.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.htm>

Academic violations in this course will be referred to the appropriate authorities immediately. If you have any questions about the code, please consult with me *before* turning in assignments.

Additional Support Services: If you qualify for accommodations due to a disability, please notify me in a timely manner with a letter from the ASC or DSS so that we can make arrangements to address your needs. If you will have several absences of the course of the semester (e.g., sports), let me know.

If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please do not hesitate to contact me. In addition to the resources of the department, a wide variety of university services are available to help you in your efforts to meet the requirements of the course.

Academic Support Center (x3360, MGC 243): offers study skills workshops, individual instruction, tutor referrals, and services for students with learning disabilities.

Writing assistance: 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.

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.

**** Readings may be dropped, or additional readings may be added.
Please consult with me whenever you miss a class. ****

Suggested films (in no particular order)

Ran (Kurosawa); *Seven Samurai*; *A Fistful of Dollars*; *The Godfather I & II*; *Before the Rain*; *City of God*; *Better Mus Come*; *Ghosts of Cité Soleil*; *Tsotsi*; *Nairobi Half Life*; *The Year of Living Dangerously*; *Waltz with Bashir*; *The Killing Fields*; *Men with Guns*; *Z*; *Battle of Algiers*; *Lumumba*; *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*; *Earth*; *Hazaaroon Khwaishein Aisi*;

District 9; *La Haine*; *Children of Men*; *Gangs of New York*.

And *The Wire* gets its own line.

READINGS

1/14 Introduction to the course + lecture on methods

** Brady & Collier, Chapters 2, 3, 9 (in 2nd edition; 9 = 13 in 1st)

**Laitin, *Hegemony and Culture*, Appendix pp. 185-206.

** Alan Gerber & Don Green, *Field Experiments: Design, Analysis & Interpretation* (2012), Chapter 1

Barbara Geddes, "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics," *Political Analysis* 2:1.

Recommended:

Gerber & Green, Chapters 2 & 12.

Brady & Collier, Chapters 5 and (if you have the 2nd edition) 14.

Thad Dunning, *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences* (2012), Chapters 1 & 11.

Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, & Social Analysis* (2004) OR his 2000 APSR piece (concept of path dependency).

1/21 Approaches to Political Violence [discussion of methods readings + lecture]

Stathis Kalyvas, "The Ontology of Political Violence," *Perspectives on Politics* 1:3 (2003), pp. 475-494.

Rogers Brubaker and David Laitin, "Ethnic and Nationalist Violence," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 423-52.

** Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments & Civil Politics in the New States," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973).

1/28 Why? Structural Approaches [please note that I will not hold office hours on Wed 1/29]

Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil Wars" *Oxford Economic Papers* 56: 4 (2004): 563-95.

Mark Mazower, "Violence and the State in the Twentieth Century," *American Historical Review* 107:4 (2002), pp. 1158-1178.

** Colin Kahl, *States, Scarcity & Civil Strife in the Developing World*, chapters 1, 2, 4 & 183-208.

Edward Miguel, "Poverty and Witch Killing," *Review of Economic Studies* 72 (2005).

Recommended:

Michael Ross, "How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War? Evidence from Thirteen Cases," *International Organization* 58: 1, pp. 35-67.

2/4 Why? Rationalist Approaches

Stathis Kalyvas, "Wanton and Senseless? The Logic of Massacres in Algeria," *Rationality and Society* 11, 3 (1999): 243-285.

** Rui De Figueiredo and Barry Weingast, "The Rationality of Fear: Political Opportunism and Ethnic Conflict," in *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention* (1999), 261-302.

Andrew Colman, "Crowd Psychology in South African Murder Trials." *American Psychologist* 46, no. 10 (1991): 1071-79.

Kristen Renwick Monroe, "Cracking the Code of Genocide: The Moral Psychology of Rescuers, Bystanders and Nazis during the Holocaust," *Political Psychology* 29:5 (2008), 699-736.

Recommended:

Donald Green and Rachel Seher, "What Role Does Prejudice Play in Ethnic Conflict?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 6 (2003), pp. 509-531.

2/11 Violence and States

** Donatella Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence* (CUP, 2013), Chapter 10 & Chapter 2.

** Jeff Goodwin, *No Other Way Out: States & Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991* (CUP, 2001), Chapters 2 & 4

Jason Lyall, "Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks? Evidence from Chechnya," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53:3, 331-362.

Charles King, "The Benefits of Ethnic War: Understanding Eurasia's Unrecognized States," *World Politics* 53:4 (2001), 524-552.

Recommended:

James Ron, *Frontiers and Ghettos: State Violence in Serbia and Israel* (U of California, 2003). Why states police some places, treat others as military problems.

2/18 Violent Organizations as State Alternatives

**Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in Evans et al, *Bringing the State Back In*, pages 169-191.

** Diego Gambetta, *The Sicilian Mafia* (1993), Chapters 1 & 4.

** Alberto Diaz-Cayeros, Beatriz Magaloni, Aila Matanock, & Vidal Romero, "Living in Fear: Mapping the Social Embeddedness of Drug Gangs & Violence in Mexico," working paper (Stanford).

** Javier Auyero, *Routine Politics & Violence in Argentina: the Grey Zone of State Power* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007). Pages posted.

Recommended:

Bates, Robert, Avner Grief, & Smita Singh. 2002. "Organizing Violence," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46:5, 599-628. [introduction to formal work]

2/25 MIDTERM DUE FRIDAY 2/27 BY NOON (UNDERGRADS)

2/25 Popular Participation: Elite Persuasion

Scott Straus, "What is the Relationship between Hate Radio & Violence? Rethinking Rwanda's Radio Machete," *Politics & Society* 35 (2007), 609-637.

Jack Snyder & Barbara Walter, "Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas," *International Security* 21:2 (1996).

** Lisa Malkki, *Purity & Exile* (1995), Chapter 2.

Recommended:

Steven Levitt and Sudhir Venkatesh, "An Economic Analysis of a Drug-Selling Gang's Finances," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 115 (August 2000): 755-789.

3/4 Popular Participation: Grievances & Identities

Robert White, "From Peaceful Protest to Guerilla War: Micromobilization of the Provisional Irish Republican Army," *American Journal of Sociology* 94:6 (1989), 1277-1302.

E.M. Beck and Stewart Tolnay, "The Killing Fields of the Deep South: The Market for Cotton and the Lynching of Blacks, 1882-1930," *American Sociological Review* 55:4 (1990), 526-539.

Alex Scacco (NYU), dissertation section to be posted.

Peter Bearman, "Desertion as Localism: Army Unit Solidarity & Group Norms in the US Civil War," *Social Forces* 70:2 (1999).

3/11 SPRING BREAK. NO CLASS.

3/18 Democracy & Violence

Villarreal, Andres. 2002. Political Competition and Violence in Mexico: Hierarchical Social Control in Local Patronage Structures. *American Sociological Review* 67 (4):477-498.

** Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy* (2005), Chapter 1.

Adrienne LeBas, "Polarization as Craft: Party Formation & State Violence in Zimbabwe," *Comparative Politics* 38:4 (2006).

Susan Olzak, "The Political Context of Competition: Lynching and Urban Racial Violence, 1882-1914," *Social Forces* 69:2, 395-421.

3/25 Communal Riots in India [Note that these books use the same dataset, available at ICPSR under Varshney-Wilkinson]

** Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life*, pages posted.

** Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence*, pages posted.

4/1 Electoral Violence

** Leo Arriola & Chelsea Johnson, "Electoral Violence in Democratizing States," 2013 working paper.

** Emilie Hafner-Burton, Susan Hyde, and Ryan Jablonski, "When do Governments Resort to Electoral Violence," *British Journal of Political Science*, forthcoming.

** Pippa Norris, "Why Electoral Malpractices Heighten the Risk of Electoral Violence," paper presented at 2012 APSA.

**Michele Osborn, "Fuelling the Flames: Rumor & Politics in Kibera," *J of East African Studies* 2:2 (2008).

Recommended:

** Scott Straus and Charlie Taylor, "Democratization and Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa," in Beko, ed., *Voting in Fear* (2012).

4/8 Case Study #1: Colombia

** George Packer, "An Excursion during a Festival in Wartime," *New Yorker* (July 3, 2008).

Abbey Steele, "Electing Displacement: Political Cleansing in Apartado, Colombia," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55:3 (2011): 423-445.

Chacon, Mario, James A. Robinson, and Ragnar Torvik. 2011. When is Democracy an Equilibrium? Theory and Evidence from Colombia's La Violencia. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55 (3): 366-396.

** Nazeh Richani, *Systems of Violence: The Political Economy of War & Peace in Colombia* (SUNY Press, 2002), pages posted.

Recommended:

Lesley Gill, "The Parastate in Colombia: Political Violence and the Restructuring of Barrancabermeja," *Anthropologica* 51:2 (2009).

4/15 Case Study #2: Cote d'Ivoire

** George Packer, "Gangsta War," *New Yorker* (November 3, 2003).

Scott Straus, "It's sheer horror here': patterns of violence during the first four months of Cote d'Ivoire's post-electoral crisis," *African Affairs* 110:440 (2011).

** Readings in folder on BB.

4/22 Interventions. And wrap-up.

Ichino, Nahomi, and Matthias Schundeln. "Deterring or Displacing Electoral Irregularities? Spillover Effects of Observers in a Randomized Field Experiment in Ghana," *Journal of Politics* 74:1 (2012): 292-307.

Abhijit Banerjee, Don Green, Jeffrey McManus, and Rohini Pande, "Are Poor Voters Indifferent to Whether Elected Leaders are Criminal or Corrupt? A Vignette Experiment in Rural India," working paper 2012.

Either Marcel Fafchamps & Pedro Vicente, "Political violence & social networks: experimental evidence from a Nigerian election," *Journal of Development Economics* (2012).

Or ** Paul Collier & Pedro Vicente, "Votes and Violence: evidence from a field experiment in Nigeria," CSAE Working Paper 2008.

Recommended:

Andrew Kydd and Barbara Walter, "Sabotaging the Peace: The Politics of Extremist Violence," *International Organization* 56 (2002): 263-296.

Monica Duffy Toft. "Ending Civil Wars: A Case for Rebel Victory?." *International Security* 34, no. 4 (Spring 2010): 7-36

Guidelines for Research Projects
Professor Adrienne LeBas
Spring 2014

About Research Papers

In order to earn a high grade, a paper must contain three components:

- (1) a tight focus (e.g., it should *not* be an overview of the country or the entire history of a rebellion);
- (2) empirical support (e.g., a particular event, a period of time, etc plus *several* sources on what actually occurred);
- (3) ***an argument***. As I have said regarding your reading memos and exam essays, your grade will be determined by your ability to frame a strong argument and support it with adequate evidence.

As stated in the syllabus, you have freedom to choose any research topic, so long as you make a case for its relevance to the key topics, questions, and readings addressed in this course. Your empirical strategy in the paper is open: you could focus on a single case study, a selection of several case studies, the analysis of quantitative large-N datasets, or comparative public opinion data. In terms of thinking about empirical strategy, however, you should keep in mind the need for your paper to have a tight focus. For instance, if you choose to do case study work, I urge you to select a bounded period (a cluster of protests, for instance, rather than the whole history of protest in a country) or a single social movement or organization (rather than all women's groups in a given country, for instance).

Regardless of empirical strategy, your research paper should contain a mix of theoretical and more empirical literature. First of all, you should critically examine your case studies or empirical data by drawing on insights from scholarly literature that uses similar data. If you're writing a case study-based paper, you should demonstrate some familiarity with the existing secondary literature on your selected case. Secondly, you should engage with theoretical literature on your particular *topic* (i.e., mobilizing structures, role of culture, etc), which will likely address different cases or may be purely theoretical. Papers should mix insights from these two types of literature (more theoretical, more empirical).

You *must* properly cite your sources (academic articles, newspapers, websites), and you must be consistent in your citation style (i.e., do not use this syllabus as a model). You may use any citation style you wish, but I will deduct if you use incomplete or inconsistent citation, or if you do not use a recognized standard citation style. If you're uncertain about how to cite sources, I would recommend that you look at the *American Political Science Review* or the *Journal of Democracy*, and use the citation style in one of these publications. For materials found on a website (e.g., memos released by the World Bank), you need to provide the full web address and date accessed. For journals and newspapers, you should use standard citation style, *even if you accessed them via the web*.

Four important tips (three of which are possibly subsumed under the “so?” question):¹

- Ask yourself: even if someone were not interested in my particular case, why would she keep reading my paper? Make your case analysis relevant to larger questions and debates in political science.
- Assume that the reader has no knowledge of your case or the literature you’re citing. Even if you cite one of our class readings, you have to give a brief synopsis of the kernel argument, and you have to tell us why that kernel argument is important / relevant to your point. You cannot say “this is similar to the argument made by Doug McAdam” without conveying to the reader McAdam’s argument. The same is also the case for any other source: make sure to make introductions and also make clear why and how you’re using a piece of literature to advance your argument.
- Avoid historical narrative. Focus on giving a selective critical analysis of a case or of your examples, rather than a comprehensive history. Your references to particular events or other developments should advance your argument. For instance, don’t give a catalogue of four protests organized by the movement and where they occurred. Instead, tell how those four protests shared particular characteristics or were organized in some way that sheds light on the importance of the factor you emphasize, etc. Case introductions / elaborations are at great risk of “so?”
- Having cautioned you against pure historical narrative, some introduction to a case or a historical event is often necessary. For instance, if you are writing a case study, you may want to give a description of the particular case or historical episode when introducing the case. The goal here, as I’ve signaled above, is to make your work accessible and “reader-friendly” while retaining the analytical (rather than descriptive) bent of the work. You might want to think of introductory description as a “potted history” of the event or case study: you want to convey necessary background information, but you want to make sure that your description remain contained and does not compose too large a section of the paper (/ does not turn into bamboo). Again, keep the focus on argument and criticism: do not include too much extraneous detail or description.

About Research

I recommend that you rely on academic articles rather than books. Academic articles require a lower investment of time, and they allow you to situate your own argument in a wider, more diverse set of viewpoints. Also, it is a bit easier to locate high-quality academic articles than academic books. At the very least, before investing time in a book that sounds promising, you want to read book reviews to make sure that the book is well-researched and relevant to your topic.

In terms of locating academic articles, I encourage students to use ISI Web of Science or a similar searchable academic database. You can ask library staff for assistance in using these

¹ The “So?” question is an inscrutable question written repeatedly with no elaboration in the margins of papers by one of my first-semester Ph.D. professors. You should ask yourself this question repeatedly (after each sentence?); in other words, write on the defensive. Make sure you justify explicitly the inclusion of empirical examples, individual points, and references to a particular citation or theoretical literature, and then *explicitly* tie each elaborated point back to your overarching argument.

databases. Google Scholar is a similar resource. You can search these databases by keyword, which results (usually) in a very long, very disparate set of sources. Much of your research will involve sifting through these extensive lists of potential sources in order to find the articles that will be of greatest value to you. In addition to reading the articles' abstracts, I urge students to use two other means of narrowing sources:

- 1) Take into account the article source. Top general political science journals include: *American Political Science Review*, *World Politics*, *Comparative Politics*, *Comparative Political Studies*, and *Theory and Society*. There are also very highly regarded sub-field journals, like *Latin American Research Review*, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, and *Party Politics*. Contact me if you want a sense of the best journals for a particular kind of work. Though there can be good work published in all kinds of journals, the competitiveness of peer review at these top journals means that the journal name is a fairly reliable signal of quality. For our course, the top sociology journals – the *American Sociological Review* and *American Journal of Sociology* – may also be key sources for your topic.
- 2) Use citation chains. Authors will always include some discussion of the scholarly literature and current debates in order to situate their own work. You may want to look up the articles they cite in this literature review, particularly if they seem to be the classic sources on an issue. Secondly, articles only cite sources published in the past (obviously), but you can also follow citation chains forward. Both ISI Web of Science and Google Scholar allow you to look at what more recent articles have cited a particular work. On ISI Web of Science, this is called a "cited reference search;" on Google Scholar, you simply click on the link that gives you the current citation count. This means that if you find a really strong article on your topic, you can look up the works that cite it. This will also give you a sense of whether and how that article has been critiqued by other scholars. It can also let you know if an older article has remained an important work for other scholars.

Generally, you want to steer away from compiling a bibliography full of older or infrequently-cited citations. Debates in the social sciences change, and it's better to situate your own research within a living or more "cutting edge" literature.

Finally, keep in mind that I'm a source as well! If you feel stuck, feel free to email or drop by my office hours to discuss your project.