

PS139 - THE POLITICS OF ARMED REBELLION

Course Syllabus

Summer, 2021

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Office Hours: Thursday, 9am-10:30am

And by Appointment

Sessions

Tuesday / 10:45am-12:50pm

Thursday / 10:45am-12:50pm

Course Description:

The core focus of this course is understanding the causes and consequences of contemporary civil wars and insurgencies through the lens of social science and public policy. Rebellion is the predominant source of armed violence in the world today, affecting countries as diverse as Colombia, Syria, Myanmar, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, among many others. This course applies insights from social science to tackle important questions such as: Why do ordinary people join rebel groups? Why are some countries more likely to experience armed conflict than others? And, how can governments respond effectively to rebellions?

Learning Objectives:

The aims of this course are threefold. First, the subject matter of this course is designed to introduce students to the wide variety of contemporary armed conflicts, from the communist insurgency in the Philippines to the emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. Second, the course materials are designed to develop students' critical thinking skills. Students will learn how scholars use the tools of social science to understand why these armed conflicts occur, what their effects are, and how they can be ended peacefully. These materials include not only classic scholarly publications, but also cutting edge new research, and journalistic accounts of conflict. Third, the assignments in this course are designed to equip students to effectively communicate social scientific insights to a broader audience of policymakers and the public. Over several weeks, students will work in groups to study and become experts on a specific contemporary armed conflict. For their final project, students will produce a policy paper that draws on the insights of scholarly research to provide advice to policymakers on how to respond to the conflict.

Major Assignments:

In the first week, students will choose one from a list of selected armed conflicts on which they will become an expert over the course of the class. No more than 3-5 students will be able to choose the same conflict. In the third week, students will individually complete a 1-2 page factsheet, based on research from primary and secondary sources, that includes information on the history and current status of the group they chose. In the fifth week, they will produce an 5-8 page policy brief, that draws on the scholarly research in the class to offer advice to policymakers on how to deal with the armed group. In the final two weeks of class, students who chose the same group will work together to produce a 10-15 minute slide presentation based on their policy briefs, which they will present to the class. More detailed descriptions of each of these assignments will be posted on the class website.

Participation and Discussion:

All students are expected to actively participate during class sessions. This includes but is not limited to, asking questions during lecture and discussion, answering questions posed to the class, and commenting on the course materials. In addition, 2-3 students will be selected as discussion leaders for each class session. Students serving as discussion leaders will be responsible for raising questions about and commenting on the materials assigned for that session. To prepare for this role, students selected as discussion leaders should read the assigned materials and at least one of the recommended readings thoroughly, and have questions and comments ready in advance of the session.

Evaluation:

- Attendance & Participation: 15%
- Discussion leader: 5%
- Fact Sheet (1-2 pages): 20%
- Policy Brief (5-8 pages): 40%
- Group Presentation (10-15 minutes): 20%

Policies and Expectations:

- **Attendance:** Participation is worth a very high percentage of the overall grade in this course. Unexcused absences will lower participation grades, so if students cannot attend for some reason, they need to contact me *before* lecture to let me know. Showing up on time is key to getting full points for participation, and shows respect for fellow students. For online sessions, this means logging in to the Zoom meeting at or before the time when the session is scheduled to begin.
- **Course Materials:** Students do not need to purchase any books for this course. Readings and excerpts will be posted on the class website. Students are expected to have thoroughly read all the required materials *before* each session, and are encouraged to explore the recommended readings as fits their time and interest.
- **Contacting Me:** Please ask questions in class—if something isn't clear to you it is likely unclear to others as well. Also don't hesitate to attend my virtual office hours. I have an hour and a half of regular office hours on Thursdays, and reserve the remaining half hour for appointments. Please email me if you would like to schedule an appointment. If you email me, please include "PS139" in the subject line so that I don't accidentally delete it. I will attempt to respond within 24 hours to messages sent on weekdays, and on the next working day to messages sent during the weekend.
- **Technology:** Please ensure that you have installed and used the latest version of Zoom successfully before the first section. Try not to look at your phone or switch tabs during our discussions.
- **Academic Integrity:** UCLA has a zero-tolerance policy for cheating and plagiarism. I will likely fail work that has been plagiarized, and I am required to report such behavior to the dean.
- **Late Work:** Late assignments lose half a letter grade (5%) for each 24 hours they are submitted after the deadline. After 72 hours, assigned work will receive a zero.
- **Respect:** Comments in class should be respectful. Disagreement is welcome, and even encouraged, but personal attacks are unacceptable, as are any statements or actions that harass or discriminate on the basis of gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, etc. With regards to sexual violence or harassment, UC faculty are required to report to the Title IX Coordinator if they become aware that any student has experienced sexual violence or sexual harassment.
- **Disability Accommodations:** Students needing academic accommodations based on a disability should contact the CAE through [their website](#) or at (310) 825-1501. Please do so as early as possible.
- **Personal Hardships:** If you are experiencing a personal hardship that is affecting your performance in this class, please do not hesitate to bring it up with me. It is better to address such issues early, rather than the end of the term. If you are not comfortable speaking with me, UCLA offers many other resources, which can be found at [their website](#). In addition, counseling is available through the [CAPS website](#) or their 24-hour crisis line (310) 825-0768.

Weekly Plan:¹

Week 1:

- **Tuesday: *Global and Historical Trends***

- **Questions for Discussion:** What are civil wars? Why should we study them? How are today's civil wars different from those in the past?
- **Required Readings:**
 - * Stathis N Kalyvas and Paul D Kenny, "Civil wars," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies* (2010)
 - * Barbara F Walter, "The new new civil wars," *Annual Review of Political Science* 20 (2017): 469–486
- **Recommended Readings:**
 - * Nicholas Sambanis, "What is civil war? Conceptual and empirical complexities of an operational definition," *Journal of conflict resolution* 48, no. 6 (2004): 814–858
 - * Therése Petterson and Magnus Öberg, "Organized violence, 1989–2019," *Journal of peace research* 57, no. 4 (2020): 597–613
- **Assignments:** Fact Sheet Assigned

- **Thursday: *Origins***

- **Questions for Discussion:** How do civil wars begin? Are civil wars driven by grievances or by opportunity? Why are civil wars violent?
- **Required Readings:**
 - * James D Fearon and David D Laitin, "Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war," *American political science review* 97, no. 1 (2003): 75–90
 - * James D Fearon, "Rationalist explanations for war," *International organization* 49, no. 3 (1995): 379–414
- **Recommended Readings:**
 - * Lars-Erik Cederman, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min, "Why do ethnic groups rebel? New data and analysis," *World politics* 62, no. 1 (2010): 87–119
 - * Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and grievance in civil war," *Oxford economic papers* 56, no. 4 (2004): 563–595

Week 2:

- **Tuesday: *Participants***

- **Questions for Discussion:** Who joins armed groups and why? How do armed groups recruit members? What roles do women and children play in armed groups?
- **Required Readings:**
 - * Ishmael Beah, [Interview](#), *Eye to Eye*, CBS News, 2007.
 - * Chapter 3: Jeremy Matthew Weinstein, *Inside rebellion: The political economy of rebel organization* (Harvard University, 2003)
- **Recommended Readings:**
 - * Güneş Murat Tezcür, "Ordinary people, extraordinary risks: Participation in an ethnic rebellion," *American Political Science Review* 110, no. 2 (2016): 247–264

1. Note: This plan is preliminary, and I reserve the right to make adjustments as I see fit. Any changes to the syllabus will be announced in lecture or via email.

- * Ethan Bueno De Mesquita, “The quality of terror,” *American journal of political science* 49, no. 3 (2005): 515–530
- * Stathis N Kalyvas and Matthew Adam Kocher, “How “Free” is Free Riding in civil wars?: Violence, insurgency, and the collective action problem,” *World politics* 59, no. 2 (2007): 177–216
- **Assignments:** Policy Brief Assigned

- **Thursday: *Resources & Governance***

- **Questions for Discussion:** How do armed groups finance rebellion? Does the source of their money matter? Why do some armed groups behave like governments, while others behave like bandits?
- **Required Readings:**
 - * Excerpts (Chapters 1 & 3): Toby Muse, *Kilo: Life and Death Inside the Secret World of the Cocaine Cartels* (Penguin Random House, 2020)
 - * Raul Sanchez de la Sierra, “On the origins of the state: Stationary bandits and taxation in eastern congo,” *Journal of Political Economy* 128, no. 1 (2020): 000–000
- **Recommended Readings:**
 - * Oeindrila Dube and Juan F Vargas, “Commodity price shocks and civil conflict: Evidence from Colombia,” *The review of economic studies* 80, no. 4 (2013): 1384–1421
 - * Rukmini Callimachi, “The ISIS Files,” *The New York Times*, April 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/04/04/world/middleeast/isis-documents-mosul-iraq.html>
- **Assignments:** Fact Sheet Due: Friday, 5pm

Week 3:

- **Tuesday: *Allies and Rivals***

- **Questions for Discussion:** Why do armed groups fight each other? Why do they make alliances? Why do armed groups “defect” to the state?
- **Required Readings:**
 - * Excerpts (Chapters 2-3): Fotini Christia, *Alliance formation in civil wars* (Cambridge University Press, 2012)
 - * Paul Staniland, “Between a rock and a hard place: Insurgent fratricide, ethnic defection, and the rise of pro-state paramilitaries,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56, no. 1 (2012): 16–40

- **Thursday: *Politics***

- **Questions for Discussion:** How does armed conflict interact with politics? Does violence affect voting? Why do armed groups interfere in elections?
- **Required Readings:**
 - * Guillermo Trejo and Sandra Ley, “Why did drug cartels go to war in Mexico? Subnational party alternation, the breakdown of criminal protection, and the onset of large-scale violence,” *Comparative Political Studies* 51, no. 7 (2018): 900–937
 - * Anna Getmansky and Thomas Zeitzoff, “Terrorism and voting: The effect of rocket threat on voting in Israeli elections,” *American Political Science Review* 108, no. 3 (2014): 588–604
- **Recommended Readings:**
 - * Abbey Steele, “Electing displacement: political cleansing in Apartadó, Colombia,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55, no. 3 (2011): 423–445
 - * Gianmarco Daniele and Gemma Dipoppa, “Mafia, elections and violence against politicians,” *Journal of Public Economics* 154 (2017): 10–33
 - * Aila M Matanock and Paul Staniland, “How and why armed groups participate in elections,” *Perspectives on Politics* 16, no. 3 (2018): 710–727

Week 4:

- **Tuesday: *Civilians***

- **Questions for Discussion:** What role do civilians play in armed conflicts? Why do armed groups target civilians with violence? How do civilians resist or collaborate with armed groups?
- **Required Readings:**
 - * Excerpt (Chapter 4) Stathis N Kalyvas, *The logic of violence in civil war* (Cambridge University Press, 2006)
 - * Excerpt (Introduction) Oliver Kaplan, *Resisting war: How communities protect themselves* (Cambridge University Press, 2017)
- **Recommended Readings:**
 - * Amelia Hoover Green, “The commander’s dilemma: Creating and controlling armed group violence,” *Journal of Peace Research* 53, no. 5 (2016): 619–632

- **Thursday: *Strategy***

- **Questions for Discussion:** What is asymmetric or guerrilla warfare? Why is it difficult for governments to combat? How effective are indiscriminate violence, leadership targeting, or “hearts and minds” campaigns as counterinsurgency strategies?
- **Required Readings:**
 - * Andrew Beath, Fotini Christia, and Ruben Enikolopov, “Winning Hearts and Minds through Development?,” 2012,
 - * Matthew Adam Kocher, Thomas B Pepinsky, and Stathis N Kalyvas, “Aerial bombing and counterinsurgency in the Vietnam War,” *American Journal of Political Science* 55, no. 2 (2011): 201–218
 - * Anouk S Rigterink, “The Wane of Command: Evidence on Drone Strikes and Control within Terrorist Organizations,” *American Political Science Review* 115, no. 1 (2021): 31–50
- **Recommended Readings:**
 - * Jason Lyall, “Does indiscriminate violence incite insurgent attacks? Evidence from Chechnya,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53, no. 3 (2009): 331–362
 - * Benjamin Valentino, Paul Huth, and Dylan Balch-Lindsay, ““Draining the sea”: mass killing and guerrilla warfare,” *International organization* 58, no. 2 (2004): 375–407
- **Assignments:** Group presentation assigned

Week 5:

- **Assignments:** Policy Brief Due: Monday, 5pm

- **Tuesday: *Foreign Intervention***

- **Questions for Discussion:** How and why do foreign powers get involved in domestic conflicts? What is the effect of external support on armed groups’ behavior? Do international organizations like the ICC and UN help or hurt?
- **Required Readings:** *Any two of the following...*
 - * *Charlie Wilson’s War*, 2007
 - * Stathis N Kalyvas and Laia Balcells, “International system and technologies of rebellion: How the end of the Cold War shaped internal conflict,” *American Political Science Review* 104, no. 3 (2010): 415–429
 - * Richard K Betts, “The delusion of impartial intervention,” *Foreign Aff.* 73 (1994): 20

- * Virginia Page Fortna, “Does peacekeeping keep peace? International intervention and the duration of peace after civil war,” *International studies quarterly* 48, no. 2 (2004): 269–292

– **Recommended Readings:**

- * Idean Salehyan, David Siroky, and Reed M Wood, “External rebel sponsorship and civilian abuse: A principal-agent analysis of wartime atrocities,” *International Organization* 68, no. 3 (2014): 633–661
- * Hyeran Jo and Beth A Simmons, “Can the International Criminal Court Deter Atrocity?,” *International Organization* 70, no. 3 (2016): 443–475

• **Thursday: *Negotiated Settlements***

- **Questions for Discussion:** Why is it so difficult for armed groups and governments to negotiate? What exactly do they negotiate about? Does international mediation help or hurt?

– **Required Readings:**

- * Barbara F Walter, “The critical barrier to civil war settlement,” *International organization* 51, no. 3 (1997): 335–364
- * Alex De Waal, “I will not sign,” *London Review of Books* 30 (2006)
- * Colombia, *Final agreement to end the armed conflict and build a stable and lasting peace*, 2016

Week 6:

• **Tuesday: *Postconflict***

- **Questions for Discussion:** How do societies heal after armed conflict? What obstacles must be overcome? Does trying and convicting perpetrators help or hurt?

– **Required Readings:**

- * Mara Revkin, Interviewed by Korva Coleman, “[What Life After ISIS Looks Like In Iraq](#),” National Public Radio (Mar. 30, 2019).
- * Patrick Radden Keefe, “Where the bodies are buried,” *The New Yorker* 16 (2015)
- * Salma Mousa, “Building social cohesion between Christians and Muslims through soccer in post-ISIS Iraq,” *Science* 369, no. 6505 (2020): 866–870

• **Thursday: *Group Presentations***

- **Assignments:** Group presentations due