

PSCI 3143: Problems in International Relations: Civil War, Intervention, and Peacekeeping

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Spring 2008 Syllabus

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Office Hours: M,F 10-10:50, W 1-1:50, or by appointment

About the Course

The purpose of this course is to work toward an answer to one of the most pressing questions facing the international community today. How can the international community avoid, terminate, and prevent the re-occurrence of civil wars, especially in the developing world? To answer this question (or rather questions) we will first consider the causes of civil wars, and then discuss how potential interveners may attack these causes to help bring about the end of civil wars and build a lasting peace.

The class will be a mix of theoretical arguments and cases studies where we examine how valid those arguments are. We will use the “scientific method” inasmuch as possible. The class will also be a balance of lectures (in which I do most of the talking) and class discussions and debates (in which you do most of the talking).

Materials

There are 4 required books for this class, as well as several articles. The books can be found at the campus bookstore, but also note that you have about 3 weeks before we begin to get into the books. That should be plenty of time to find used copies at Amazon or another used book dealer.

The required books are:

- Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda*
- Roy Licklider, *Stopping the Killing: How Civil Wars End*
- Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict*
- Barbara F. Walter and Jack Snyder, *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention*

All required articles will be available on the class website.

Requirements

This will be a demanding class. There is a great deal of reading, and I will also expect you to put some serious thought into applying the theoretical concepts we cover into analyzing the case studies. There will also be a great deal of discussion that occurs in this class, and I will expect you to be prepared to participate each day.

This class is not about simply memorizing facts that can be spit back out for tests or discussion. I expect you to put in some time thinking about the topics we will cover and forming your own opinions. These opinions will come out both in class discussion and in the papers you will write.

Grading

Your grade will be based on the following:

- A mid-term exam will count for 25% of your final grade. This exam will be given in class on February 22. You will be given 4 possible essay questions at least 1 week prior to the exam. For the exam, you will be given 3 questions and you will answer 2. You will need to bring a blue book.
- You will write 4 “comparison briefs” for this class. Each brief will make up 10% of your grade. These briefs should be 2-3 pages in length. In each brief, you will compare two civil war case studies covered that week in class. You should focus on causality by comparing similar and different independent variables and similar and different outcomes. These papers are not summaries! Pick some aspect of causality and focus on it.

To get an A on these papers you need a clear argument (thesis). Don’t try to cover every point in the article! Focus on something important. Don’t straddle fences. Take a stand and stick to it. You should use sound logic demonstrating an understanding of the theoretical concepts covered in class. Your arguments should be well developed, sophisticated, and not obvious. You also need to employ proper grammar and spelling, and write elegantly.

B papers will not have a sophisticated main argument. They may be unclear or under-developed. The logic may not link directly with the argument. They may also be excellent summaries without an original argument. Grammar must still be sound, but there may be some awkward portions.

C papers have an unclear, vague, or simple main argument. They may try to cover too much without saying anything meaningful. The logic is very underdeveloped. Grammatical errors may occur frequently.

D papers have little or no argument. The papers may be unorganized or contain contradictory logic. Frequent grammatical errors occur.

DO NOT write me an F paper!!!

All papers are due at the beginning of class on the day specified on the syllabus. **Late papers will not be accepted!** If your paper is not on my desk when I say “Happy (whatever day it is),” you are out of luck.

You must give me a hard copy. Emailing is not sufficient.

- Your last writing assignment will be a New York Times style op-ed. This paper will be worth 15% of your grade. This paper will be limited to 3 pages, normal type-face and margins. Do not put so much as one word on a fourth page or I will not grade the paper! To get a feel of what this paper is, you should read the op-eds in the Times or similar paper. Your topic will be to write on some aspect of US foreign policy that has to do with internal conflict abroad. Your grade will be based on the persuasiveness of your argument, and the strength of your writing.
- Each of you will be part of a group that takes charge of the class for a day. The groups will be responsible for giving a brief presentation based on a specific civil war, and then leading a group discussion about the conflict. These presentations will occur from February 25 to March 19 (the specific date of each case is given on the course website). The presentation will make up 10% of your final grade. More information will be forthcoming about this project.
- The final 10% of your grade will be made up of a class participation grade. Classes will often consist of discussions and debates. I expect you to come to class having read the assigned readings and ready to discuss your opinions about what you read. To get the full 10 points for your participation grade, you must contribute to class.

Any students reading newspapers, sleeping, or doing other homework in class lose all 10 points. In addition, rude behavior in class (talking while others are talking for example) will result in the loss of points.

I know that speaking in front of your peers is something that is difficult for many of you. I encourage you to step out of your comfort zone and speak in class even though it is difficult. Nevertheless, you may also earn participation points by coming to my office hours and discussing class topics with me in a small setting.

Prerequisite

The prerequisite for this class is PolSci 2223. Because we will be building on the terminology and concepts covered in 2223, it is necessary for you to have passed this prerequisite in order to remain in this class. For those of you who have not taken 2223 (and I do have a list of you), you may only stay in this class if you can pass the 2223 final exam by January 25. Please see me to make arrangements to take this exam.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty in fulfilling any assignment will be grounds for failing the course. Thus, for instance, you must not represent someone else's work as your own in carrying out your paper assignment. And, when presenting another person's ideas or data, you must provide explicit citation to acknowledge your intellectual debt. Quotation marks must be used when you are quoting someone. Minor changes that try to paraphrase someone else's ideas do not relieve you of the responsibility of acknowledging your intellectual debt. When in doubt, you should err on the conservative side (that is, by citing your sources) or you should at least consult with your teaching assistant or me. You are responsible to learn about the Honor Code adopted by the University. You can find relevant information at the following websites:

www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/faculty.html

www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html

<http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>

Special Considerations

If you happened to have three final exams scheduled on the same day, you are entitled to request a change in the time designated for the last exam for that day. If this last exam of the day happens to be this course, please provide the relevant documentation to the professor during the first two weeks of the semester in order to schedule an alternate time for your exam. You should direct your request for an alternate exam time to another professor if the third exam on the same day happens to be for another course.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, University faculty are required to make "reasonable and timely accommodations" for students with disabilities. By University policy that obligation only extends to students who have registered with the Office of Disability Services, which makes the determination of whether, for example, students have real learning disorders. If you are a student with a disability, please notify the professor in writing within the first two weeks of semester what accommodations are needed. Please provide me documentation from Disability Services (303-4928671, Willard 322, www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices).

If a student has religious obligations that may conflict with this course, please notify the professor in writing within the first two weeks of semester in order to seek a reasonable and fair arrangement. The campus policy regarding religious observance is available at www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.

Class Outline

Please see the class web site for a list of each day's readings as well as links to download the electronic texts.