

Political Science 391-H01: Understanding Intrastate Conflict

Spring 2019

Course Information

Instructor

Dr. Chelsea Estancona
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Meeting Times

Lecture: TR 10:05-11:20, Honors Residence B119
Office Hours: Tu: 12:00-1:30

Course Description

This course is an advanced honors seminar on the causes and patterns of organized, politically motivated violence within states. We begin with the assumption that groups use such violence rationally in pursuit of goals when other means of political communication, participation, and persuasion break down. With this in mind, we will focus on what makes groups more or less 'successful'. Our task is to evaluate scholarly attempts to uncover patterns in intrastate conflict, to apply such research to empirical examples, and to consider how scholarly findings might be applied to states' policy decisions.

The course presupposes basic familiarity with international and comparative politics as taught at the level of POLI 315. The emphasis will be on developing your analytical capacity to examine and assess scholarly arguments. The ability to memorize factual material is taken for granted, but it is not the primary goal of the course. Please note that this is ***not*** a current events course or a foreign policy course. Current events will be incorporated when relevant to learning about and evaluating the theories and empirical investigations at hand, but they are tools for learning how to assess broader patterns.

Grading

Research Projects	60% (see component grades below)
Reading Responses	10%
Discussion Leadership	10%
Class Participation	15%
Reading Quizzes	5 %

Class Participation (15%)

The majority of the class will be devoted to discussions of scholarly readings. The class will proceed in a seminar format, with as little lecturing as possible. You are expected to have read the assigned material when we discuss it in class. I (and you) will ask questions, and the class will be responsible for providing the answers. Students should feel free to ask questions and debate the topics at hand. There are no wrong questions, and you are strongly encouraged to participate – *especially* if you found the readings difficult or problematic. The participation grade evaluation will be based on the quantity and quality of comments and questions and demonstration of knowledge of the course material. Attendance *per se* will not be evaluated, but if you are not in class you cannot participate. We will also break into active learning sessions several times throughout the semester to apply the skills you are acquiring to the study of a particular puzzle. Your enthusiasm and attention in these sessions directly impacts your participation score. In order to help you assess how well you are participating, mid-semester participation grades will be provided.

Discussion Leadership (10%)

In addition, you will each have an opportunity to lead a discussion in class. You will sign up for these assignments in class on January 17, and I will post the schedule on the Blackboard site. Working in teams of two, your job will be to introduce the material and guide the class into a discussion. It is also a chance to highlight portions of the reading that are challenging or problematic. Keep in mind that leading a discussion does not mean that you are required to understand everything in the readings! You may choose to start the class with a formal presentation, or you may choose an active learning exercise to lead the class through the analysis. Creativity is welcomed, but the ultimate goal is effectively enhancing the learning environment. You are encouraged to consult with me as a group in office hours prior to your assigned date as needed.

I am aware that many students are often intimidated by or uncomfortable with classroom discussion. Throughout the semester, I will endeavor to use a number of participatory activities to help create an environment where all students are willing and able to participate. In addition to these efforts, I expect that all members of this course be respectful of the opinions and statements made in class. At times, we will be engaging in topics that may be sensitive to particular individuals. Healthy debate is welcome, but must rely on mutual respect and attentive listening to different points of view. If anyone has any questions or concerns about participation or course discussions at any point, please feel free to come see me.

Reading Responses (10%)

Each student will be responsible for writing two short responses to an assigned reading. One will be written prior to February 28, and the second will be submitted sometime after February 28. You will be responsible for writing about a specific assigned reading; you will sign up for these assignments in class on January 17, and I will post the schedule on the Blackboard site. The aim of these summaries is to further develop your capacity to read, evaluate and react to social scientific research, and to identify issues for class discussion. Summaries should be between 400 and 500 words in length, with the following sections, and with your name, date and the word count at the top of the first page:

- Summary of the main argument: what is the overall aim of the article or chapter? (Think about whether the author is making a causal claim; providing a descriptive overview; synthesizing a body of research. Most of what we read will make one or more causal claims).
- Discussion of empirical content: What evidence does the author present to test or support his or her claim? Is this article based on one or more qualitative case studies? On statistical analysis? Which countries, regions, groups, or years are covered?
- Reaction to the article: What's your assessment of the argument and evidence? What questions does it raise for you? What would make for a stronger argument? How does it challenge or contradict other things you've so far read/learned for this class?

Be sure that you do each of these three things; do not spend the bulk of the paper providing a summary. You do not need to provide citation or bibliographic information for the reading. If you cite additional resources, please provide bibliographic information for those. Summaries are to be submitted via Blackboard no later than 9 am on the day of the class meeting for which the reading is assigned. Late submissions are not accepted.

Reading Quizzes (5%):

I will regularly give short reading quizzes on the assigned materials. These quizzes will ask open-ended questions related to the main concepts and/or arguments from that day's reading assignments. These provide you with a chance to assess your recall of the key information, and they provide me with information about students' comprehension of the material. Please note that these are low-stakes assessments: I will record whether you took each quiz, and I will read

your answers, but I will not assign a specific grade to each quiz. (Completing the entire quiz earns you a grade of 100; not completing or not taking a quiz results in a grade of 0). Please keep in mind that quizzes are usually given at the start of the class session, and that makeup quizzes are not offered.

Research Projects (60%)

Each student is required to design, research and write a research paper, due at the beginning of our last day of class (**Thursday, April 25**). This paper must be between 3,500 and 4,500 words (approximately 12 to 15 pages) in length, excluding references. This assignment provides each student with the opportunity to conduct independent research on a specific topic related to intrastate conflict. Papers should be theoretically-informed, should present one or more testable hypotheses, and should employ empirical (qualitative and/or quantitative) evidence to test their hypotheses. Research is a slow process. To minimize the natural tendency to procrastinate, we will break up this project into several components:

Research Proposal (10%):

To encourage you to think about this project early in the semester, a one page statement of the research question, hypotheses and methods to be used is due, via Blackboard, on **February 21 by 5pm**. This statement is a required part of the research paper assignment. You will receive feedback on this statement by March 3. Final papers will not be accepted unless you have turned in this statement and subsequent components. My approval is required for any changes in topic made after March 3.

Rough Draft (10%):

All papers or books you will read in this class underwent multiple drafts and edits before publication. You will turn in drafts of your paper via Blackboard on **March 19 by 5 pm**. These drafts do not have to be 100% complete, but simple outlines are not appropriate. A good goal is to have 3/4 of your paper written - less will result in points taken off. I will provide you with comments on your drafts by March 29. Additionally, you will receive comments anonymously from one of your peers (see below). To accomplish this, please submit two forms of your draft online: one with your name and one with only your student ID.

Peer Review (10%):

Peer review is a vital part of academic work, allowing us to ensure the standards and rigor of our field are met. All work you read has seen multiple rounds of peer review. We will replicate this with our own double-blind process: I will randomly assign your draft to be read by one of your peers with all identification removed, and you will then receive these comments anonymously. I will circulate the drafts via Blackboard by March 21st, and peer reviews will be due via Blackboard on **March 28 by 5 pm**. Please upload two versions of your document: one with your name, and one with only your student ID. While this process is anonymous among your classmates, remember that I will see all of your comments. Both non-constructive criticism *and* no criticism at all will reflect poorly on your grade. I will post a guide for constructive academic criticism as well as a set of real reviews (my own) to aid you in this process.

Research Presentation (10%):

On our last two days of class, we will have a mini-conference and you will have a chance to present your research questions, theories, and findings. I will randomly assign students to the **23rd or the 25th of April** and will post the schedule on Blackboard by April 16. Each presentation should be 8-10 minutes long with 3-5 minutes of time for questions afterwards. You will be graded on the thoroughness and clarity of your presentation, with an eye to answering why you chose the puzzle that you did, how you approached the issue, your findings, and how you feel you could

better tackle this work if given more time and/or skills. Audience members are asked to read a short guide to conference questions posted on Blackboard beforehand. Please be aware that I will pay particular attention to participation during the question time.

Final Paper (20%):

With all of these components in place, your final paper should be easy to complete. Please be sure to incorporate (within reason) the comments received on your drafts. Your papers are due as hard copies at the end of the last day of class (**April 25**). A separate guide to help you with formatting can be found on Blackboard.

Additional paper housekeeping:

There is a zero-tolerance plagiarism policy in effect. Please be aware that borrowing someones ideas or arguments without attribution is just like borrowing text passages directly without crediting them plagiarism. If you quote directly from a specific source, please provide a citation with a page number (e.g. Simmons 2004, p. 3). If you use an idea advanced by a particular author, provide a reference in the text (e.g. Milner 2005). On-line sources also should be cited, providing the title, the URL, and the date accessed. If you are uncertain whether you should cite something, err on the side of caution and provide a citation. For each source cited, please provide a parenthetical citation in the text, and include the bibliographic information at the end of your paper.

Spellcheck and proofread your essay; automated spell and grammar check are a start, but they dont pick up all errors. Avoid using long quotations from other sources; it generally is far better to put ideas and concepts into your own words. A penalty will be applied to research papers that do not fall within the word count range, that do not report a word count, or that do not follow the other guidelines presented in class.

Late Policy for Project Components: Please note that I do not accept late work with the exception of previously approved communication due to extenuating circumstances.

Writing policy: This class should be an opportunity to build your writing skills. To this end, I am happy to talk about good practices in office hours. While I cannot read multiple drafts prior to submission (other than the assigned rough draft), I will gladly talk through outlines. I also strongly encourage you to take advantage of USC's Writing Center.

Course Materials

The following required books are available in the USC Bookstore.¹

- Arjona, Ana. *Rebelocracy: Social Order in the Colombian Civil War*. 2016. Cambridge: New York, Cambridge.²
- Christia, Fotini. *Alliance Formation in Civil Wars*. 2012. Cambridge: New York, Cambridge.³

All other readings are available electronically via the [USC library e-journals and e-resources databases](#) or on the course Blackboard site. These readings are meant to provide a sampling of information about intrastate conflict. If there are additional topics you wish to learn more about, please let me know and I will direct you to additional resources or courses at USC.

In addition to books and academic articles, I have assigned posts from the Political Violence at a Glance blog, available [here](#). These readings are not posted, but instead are found through the links contained in the syllabus. I encourage interested students to consider this blog as an excellent source of additional information.

¹You need not purchase the book through the bookstore, but take care to purchase the correct titles!

²Henceforth 'Rebelocracy'

³Henceforth 'Alliance Formation'

Important Dates

- February 21: Research Proposals due, library visit
- March 19: Rough Drafts due
- March 28: Peer Reviews due
- April 23 and 25: Research Presentations
- April 25: Final paper due

Expectations

Technology in Class: Please turn your mobile phones off or to silent mode before class. No calls, no Snapchat, no Insta, no text messaging during class. Laptops are permitted **for class purposes only!** Readings should be downloaded prior to class. Please do not use your laptops for email, Facebook, Twitter, games, web surfing, or any activity that is unrelated to the course. This sounds impossible, but I promise you can do it. Learning by lecture is hard enough, and you distract yourself and your neighbors when you use phones & laptops for anything non-course related. **Each time that I note you are using your laptop for non-course related activity, your participation grade will be reduced by 2 points. Yes, I promise you that I will notice.**

Grading Policies: From time to time, students may have questions regarding grades received on exams and papers. I am willing to review any graded assignment, however I will not accept any questions or concerns until 24 hours after the assignment has been returned to you. In addition, I will only take grade appeals up to two weeks after the posting of a grade. Students are required to express grade concerns in writing (in two forms, electronically and hard-copy) and include specific details as to why the grade should be changed. When the I review an assignment, I will re-grade the entire assignment. I reserve the right to either raise or lower your grade during the review based on the reassessment of the assignment. Thus, it is important to read comments carefully and to be honest with oneself before contacting me with a grade appeal. Finally, if you send me a .gif from your favorite TV show prior to January 22 I will raise your final grade by a point.

Instructor Communication: I may not be able to answer all email immediately, but will do my best to do so promptly. If you need to notify me of something important (e.g., expectation of late work or missing an important class), come to my office hours **before** the absence. If you have an emergency and can't inform me in person, you may do so by email, but you will need to follow up with an office visit when you are able. Please note that emails received after 5 pm are unlikely to receive an answer until the next day.

If you have course related questions that require a detailed response from me (e.g. about your chosen paper topics or understanding of key topics in the readings), email is not likely to work. Come see me during our office hours (top of page). If these office hours do not fit with your course schedule, I am happy to schedule another time to meet.

Honor Code: The Carolinian Creed is in effect in this class and all others at the University. I am committed to treating violations seriously and urge all students to become familiar with its terms set out [at this website](#). If you have questions, it is your responsibility to ask about the Creed's application. **All written work must be submitted with the following signed statement: I have practiced personal and academic integrity in completing this assignment.**

Calendar and Class Schedule

Date	Topic	Lecture Readings
The following schedule is tentative. Any changes will be announced in advance.		
January 15	Greetings and Logistics	Course Syllabus
January 17	Theory Building and Intrastate Conflict	<p>Souva, M. "Fostering Theoretical Thinking in Undergraduate Classes." <i>PS: Political Science and Politics</i> 2007. 40(3): 557-61.</p> <p>Florea, A. "Where Do We Go from Here? Conceptual, Theoretical, and Methodological Gaps in the Large-N Civil War Research Program." <i>International Studies Review</i>. 2012. 14. 78-98.</p>
January 22	The Bargaining Model	<p>Muthoo, Abhinay. "A Non-Technical Introduction to Bargaining." <i>World Economics</i> 2000. 1(2): 145-166.</p> <p>Walter, B. "Bargaining Failures and Civil War." <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> Vol. 12, 2009.</p>
January 24	What influences civil war bargaining?	<p>Fearon, J. and Laitin, D. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." <i>American Political Science Review</i>. 2003. 97(1).</p> <p><i>Note: As you read, consider how each of the explanatory variables discussed by F+L impact bargaining between rebels and the state. Be ready to discuss this.</i></p> <p>Tunc, H. "Are Micro Level Studies Important for Our Understanding of Civil War, Irregular Warfare, and Political Violence?" <i>Political Violence at a Glance</i>. November 2017 Link Here</p>
January 29	Operationalizing Conflict	<p>Stanliand, Paul. "Armed politics and the study of intrastate conflict." <i>Journal of Peace Research</i>. 2017. 54(4): 459-467.</p> <p>Gutiérrez Sanín, F. and Wood, E. "Ideology in Civil War: Instrumental Adoption and Beyond." <i>Journal of Peace Research</i>. 2014. 51(2). 213-226.</p>
January 31	Social Order in Civil War	<i>Rebelocracy</i> , pp. xxi-40

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Date	Topic	Lecture Readings
		Weigand, F. "Building Legitimacy during Armed Conflict - Lessons from the Taliban." <i>Political Violence at a Glance</i> . August 2017. Link Here
February 5	Social Order in Civil War II	<i>Rebelocracy</i> , pp. 41-83
February 7	Groundwork: the Colombian Conflict	<i>Rebelocracy</i> , pp. 84-110. Felter, C. and Renwick, D. "Colombia's Civil Conflict." <i>CFR Backgrounder</i> . January 2017. Link Here .
February 12	Micro-Level Tests of Rebel Governance	<i>Rebelocracy</i> , pp. 111-136 Zeitsoff, T. "Why IR and Conflict Research Need Micro-Foundations." <i>Political Violence at a Glance</i> . April 2013. Link Here .
February 14	Conditional Rebel Order	Young, J. "More on Microfoundations." <i>Political Violence at a Glance</i> April 2013. Link Here <i>Rebelocracy</i> , pp. 136-158 Zeitsoff, T. "Why the Method Matters." <i>Political Violence at a Glance</i> . May 2016. Link Here .
February 19	Building Order, Waging War	<i>Rebelocracy</i> , pp. 159-180 Matanock, A. and Garcia-Sánchez, M. "How to Distinguish Supporters from Opponents in Counterinsurgency." <i>Political Violence at a Glance</i> November 2016. Link Here
February 21	Research Consultations	Political Science Writing Guidelines
February 26	Civilian Resistance and Bargaining	<i>Rebelocracy</i> , pp. 180-210 Kaplan, O. "Civilian Nonviolent Resistance to ISIS." <i>Political Violence at a Glance</i> . May 2015. Link Here

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Date	Topic	Lecture Readings
February 28	Rebel Control and Recruitment	<p>Mouly, C., Garrido, M. and Idler, A. "How Nonviolent Resistance Works: Factors for Successful Peacebuilding in Samaniego, Colombia." <i>Political Violence at a Glance</i> July 2016. Link Here</p> <p><i>Rebelocracy</i>, pp. 262-295</p> <p>Henshaw, A. "Revisiting Rebellion: Why Women Participate in Armed Conflict." <i>Political Violence at a Glance</i>. August 2016. Link Here</p>
March 5	Social Order in Conflict: External Validity?	<p><i>Rebelocracy</i>, pp. 295-305</p> <p>Stewart, Megan. "Civil War as State-Making: Strategic Governance in Civil War." <i>International Organization</i>. 2018. 72. 205-226.</p>
March 7	Rebels' Support: Who Competes?	<p>Estancona, Chelsea. "Rebel Primary Commodity Markets and Negotiation in Civil War." Working Paper, 2019.</p> <p>Mosinger, Eric. "Brothers or others in arms? Civilian Constituencies and Rebel Fragmentation in Civil War." <i>Journal of Peace Research</i>. 2018. 55(1). 62-77.</p>
March 12	No Class	Spring Break
March 14	No Class	Spring Break
March 19	Multiparty Intrastate Conflict	<p><i>Alliance Formation</i>, pp. 1-31.</p> <p>Mosinger, E. "How Assad Won the Syrian Civil War Before it Began." <i>Political Violence at a Glance</i>. September 2018. Link Here</p>
March 21	Shifting Multiparty Alliances	<p><i>Alliance Formation</i>, pp. 32-54.</p> <p>Findley, M. and Rudloff, P. "Combatant Fragmentation and the Dynamics of Civil Wars." <i>British Journal of Political Science</i>. 2012. 42. 879-901. <i>Skim computational modelling section.</i></p>

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Date	Topic	Lecture Readings
March 26	In-class screening: <i>Last Man in Aleppo</i>	Peer Reviews Due - Turned in on Blackboard by 11 AM
March 28	Writing Day (No Class, Writing Groups Encouraged)	
April 2	Case Studies: Afghanistan I	<i>Alliance Formation</i> , pp. 57-100. Optional: Laub, Z. "The Taliban in Afghanistan." CFR Backgrounder. July 2014. Link Here
April 4	Case Studies: Afghanistan II	<i>Alliance Formation</i> , pp. 101-145
April 9	Multiparty Dynamics: External Validity	<i>Alliance Formation</i> , pp. 213-245 Waldman, Matt. "System Failure: The Underlying Causes of US Policy-Making Errors in Afghanistan." <i>International Affairs</i> . 2013. 89(4): 825-843.
April 11	Multiparty Dynamics: Competing Explanations	Pischedda, C. "Wars within Wars: Why Windows of Opportunity and Vulnerability Cause Inter-rebel Fighting in Internal Conflicts." <i>International Security</i> . 2018. 43(1): 138-176. Fjelde, H. and Nilsson, D. "The Rise of Rebel Contenders: Barriers to Entry and Fragmentation in Civil Wars." <i>Journal of Peace Research</i> . 2018. 55(5): 551-565.
April 16	Effects of Changing Conflict Landscapes	Zeigler, Sean. "Competitive Alliances and Civil War Recurrence." <i>International Studies Quarterly</i> . 2016. 60. 24-37. Wood, R. and Kathman, J. "Competing for the Crown: Inter-rebel Competition and Civilian Targeting in Civil War." <i>Political Research Quarterly</i> . 2015. 68(1). 167-179.
April 18	Big Picture: Cause for Hope?	READINGS TBD
	Your Turn!	
April 23	Student Research: Day 1	Guide to Constructive Academic Feedback
April 25	Student Research: Day 2	Final Research Papers Due