Civil Conflict

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Time: Wednesday 11am-1pm
Location: Haven Hall 5664

Office Hours: Tuesday 12:30-3:30
Location: Institute for Social Research

Topic

History abounds with a diverse array of activities that take place within the territorial jurisdiction of nation-states that are classified as “conflictual” or “contentious”, involving (explicitly or implicitly) violence, force and aggression. This course is meant to serve as an advanced introduction to the topic through exploring the range of activities that are discussed within the literature but in a disjointed fashion. Clearly, the course will not be able to cover everything. The topic of civil conflict stands as a large and constantly growing area crossing disciplines (e.g., political science, sociology, history, psychology, economics and biology) and fields (e.g., international relations, comparative and american). Within the course we will address conceptualization, dominant theoretical as well as methodological approaches, data and findings. The objective is to set the student on the path toward creating original research. The final outcome of the course is partial completion of that path with the development of numerous parts of a research article.

The course involves six components

1) careful reading of the assigned material
2) active participation in class (15% of the grade)
3) clear and concise oral presentations (10% of the grade)
4) several brief (5 page) and well constructed review essays of specific readings (40% of the grade)
5) a 3-5 page outline of the final paper (5%)
6) 1 final paper (30% of the grade)

Number 3, 4 and 6 are discussed in more detail below.

Oral Presentations – These represent brief, efficient and entertaining summarizations of the article reviewed, following the outline provided below. We will likely begin with these and then, after having mastered some material, alter the format to be more interactive.
Review essays – each class different individuals will be selected to prepare and submit written assignments (the assignments will rotate between students). The paper is due at the beginning of the class. Late assignments will not be eligible for an A. As people may not be able to read everything the only access to a piece will likely be through the individual presenting it. Consequently do a good job.

The assignments themselves will be 5 pages in length and will address the criteria provided below. Students will be evaluated on how well they meet these criteria.

- review of article should address the following:
  - research question (what do they want to know)
  - literature review (what is known)
  - theory (why does the phenomenon of interest take place)
  - hypotheses (what do they expect)
  - data (what information do they examine to test the theory)
  - method (what approach is used to test the argument)
  - findings (what do they find)
  - conclusion (what do they conclude regarding the research question)
  - critique: is the research question clear, is the literature review complete, is the theory clear, do the hypotheses logically follow from the theory, does the data seem appropriate and are reasonable alternatives ignored, does the method seem appropriate for the research question/existing literature and are potential/standard problems with the method addressed, what are the findings specifically and how do they address the initial question, does the conclusion logically follow given all the evidence presented, and what is missed/what should be done (if you note a problem with something make sure to have a solution for it – you can get away with doing this once in a review but not more)
  - spreadsheet entry: place all the information above into a column that will be entered into one large spreadsheet for all of conflict studies (submit as excel file along with review submission)

As the objective is to write an article, only articles (published or in working paper format will be read). There might be one NGO or think tank report in there but only one or two.

Final paper – At the end of class, a paper will be submitted concerning a topic of the students choice (discussed ahead of time with the Professor). Primarily the student should seek to extend the already existing literature reviewed in the course or take the area in a new direction (exploring
unexamined arguments, sequences of tactics or comparisons across types of civil conflict). The paper should not exceed 20 pages in text (not including notes, tables, references and so forth). This work will not represent a complete piece of scholarship. Rather, it represents an article length paper up until the actual empirical analysis is undertaken: i.e., the puzzle, research question, literature review, theoretical contribution, hypotheses and research design. Preliminary data analysis will be an additional benefit.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at least two weeks prior to the time when the accommodation will be needed. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way the course is usually taught may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; http://www.umich.edu/sswd) typically recommends accommodations through a Verifed Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

**Communication**

There are three ways to communicate with the instructor and I wanted to provide expected response times so that you can make the selection that best meets the students needs.

- In-Person meeting during office hours: Immediate response
- Telephone: 3-5 days
- Email: 7-10 days

**Course Schedule**

September

5 – **Introductions, Definitions, Expectations**

**Reading (When you get a chance):** all material available via Google Scholar and related search engines:


12 – Protest

**Reading**


19 – Covert Action

**Reading**


“Taking a Look at Surveillance Studies: A Symposium Featuring Essays”

26 – Human Rights Violation/State Repression

Reading


October

3 – Revolution

Reading


10 – Genocide/Politicide/Democide/Mass Killing

Reading


17 – Armed Conflict & Civil War
Reading


24 – Protest Policing

Reading


“Stigmatization and Repression of Extreme-Right Activism in the Netherlands” – Annette Linden and Bert Klandermans, 2006.


31 – 21 Questions

November

7 – Everyday Resistance & Riots  ***Final Paper Submission Next Class***

Reading

Everyday Resistance:


Riots:


"Racial Rioting in the 1960s: An Event History Analysis of Local
14 – **Similarities/Differences**

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**Reading**


“Six Feet Over: Internal War, Battle Deaths and the Influence of the Living on the Dead” – Christian Davenport and David Armstrong, 2008. Chapter in *Insecurity in Intra-State Conflicts: Governments, Rebels, and Outsiders*, Stephen M. Saideman and Marie-Joëlle Zahar, eds. (Chapter to be provided)


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21 – **Sequences**

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**Reading**


"Understanding State Responses to Left vs. Right-Wing Threats" – David Cunningham, 2003. Social Science History 27. 3


28 – Escalation/De-escalation

Reading


“Repression, Backfire and the Theory of Transformative Events” –


“Why Respecting Physical Integrity Rights Reduces Terrorism” –


December

5 – Problems, Puzzles and Lucrative Areas of Further Exploration

Reading

Aftereffects

Building Nation-States


Creating Refugees/Forced Migrants


**Theoretical Insights**

**Clarifying the Old**


**Developing the New**

“Options in the Arsenal: Are Repressive Tactics Complements or Substitutes?” Courtenay Conrad and Jaqueline Demeritt, 2011. Working Paper


17 – Final Project Due (TBA)