Substance of the Course

In recent years, civil wars have been five times more frequent and more than five times deadlier than international wars. How can we understand violence in civil wars? Why do so many countries that emerge from war lapse back into violence after a few years? Why do most international interventions fail to bring peace to affected populations? This seminar focuses on recent conflict and post-conflict situations and uses studies of these conflicts as a lens for understanding the distinct dynamics of violence and peacebuilding in civil wars.

The course has three goals. First, to provide participants with the intellectual tools to understand and analyze civil wars and peacebuilding processes. Throughout the course, participants will acquire a broad knowledge of the concepts, theoretical traditions, and debates in the study of civil war and peacebuilding. The course will also introduce participants to new issues in the field, such as the micro-foundations of violence and the causes of peacebuilding success. Second, the course will provide participants with an in-depth understanding of the most salient civil conflicts and peace processes in recent history. Third, the course will develop students’ research, analytical, and writing skills through assignments and papers.

Readings for this course are drawn from a variety of disciplines (political science, anthropology, and others), approaches (rational choice, constructivist), and methodologies (qualitative and quantitative). They include both theoretical works and case studies of recent conflicts. Classes will consist of lectures, discussions, and small-group exercises.

Grading and Requirements

1. Readings: Assignments are on the attached list. All of the articles are available for free through Columbia databases. The required books are available at the Columbia University Bookstore. In addition, all these books are on reserve at the SIPA library, under course number INAF U8869. The full text of many of the books can also be accessed online through CLIO. Whenever authorized by copyright laws, I have placed specific book chapters on electronic reserves for the class (accessible through Coursework).

2. Class participation (30% of the final grade). The class participation grade will be based on:
   a. participation in the discussion during each session (15% of the final grade),
   b. and the oral presentations and constructive feedback during weeks 11, 12, and 13 (15% of the final grade).

3. One review of the readings, maximum two pages single-spaced (20% of the final grade). The review should briefly summarize the argument all of the required readings assigned for that week, and it should use the rest of the space to assess the required readings critically, evaluating their strengths and weaknesses. The summary of the required readings should be half a page maximum in total, so
that the bulk of the review (the 1.5 pages remaining) can be devoted to a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the various required texts. Reviews should be submitted by the beginning of the class during which we will discuss the required readings that the review focuses on (meaning, Tuesday, 4:10 p.m.). No need to sign up or give me advance notice, simply submit a review for a session of your own choosing. But please keep in mind that 4:10 p.m. is a hard deadline – I won’t accept any late reviews (even reviews submitted later on Tuesdays).

Please bring a hard copy to class and upload an electronic copy on Coursework.

Side note: Book reviews are tremendously important for authors and readers. So I encourage you to post relevant sections of your book reviews online (on Amazon, Goodreads, Barnes and Noble, Wikipedia, Bookbub, and/or whatever site you prefer). This would help raise the profile of the various books that we read this semester, be a kind gesture to their authors, and hopefully help potential readers decide whether or not to buy the book.

4. A research paper (50% of the final grade), 15 to 20 pages double-spaced. Ancillary material due throughout the term: research question due on week 5 (5% of the final grade); 1-page outline due on week 8 (15% of the final grade); final paper due on week 14, i.e. April 28, the last day of class (30% of the final grade). Please bring a hard copy to class and upload an electronic copy on Coursework. The research paper should build on the material studied in class. It should apply the theories and concepts studied to specific debates or cases of interest to the students.

You should come see me during office hours sometime between weeks 3 and 8 to discuss your paper topic and research question. This is a mandatory meeting. You are also of course always welcome to come discuss your research during my office hours at any other point of the semester.

Here are some very useful websites, full of advice for research and writing:
- [http://www.nd.edu/~dlindley/handouts/handoutlinks.html](http://www.nd.edu/~dlindley/handouts/handoutlinks.html) (plenty of handouts on everything you need: how to make a theoretically informed argument, core theories and concepts used in IR, etc)
- [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl) (the sections on “The Writing Process”, “General Academic Writing”, “Research and Citations”, and “Grammar and Mechanics” are especially helpful).
- [http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/errors.html#errors](http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/errors.html#errors) (common errors to avoid)
- [http://library.columbia.edu/locations/undergraduate/seedtexts.html](http://library.columbia.edu/locations/undergraduate/seedtexts.html) and [http://library.columbia.edu/research/citation-management.html](http://library.columbia.edu/research/citation-management.html) (Various sources and resources on citations, bibliographies, and footnotes)

All material must be typed.

No late review will be accepted. For the research paper & ancillary material, late submissions will be penalized one-third of a letter grade per day after the deadline unless you contact me beforehand to request an extension. Extensions will be given only in the case of documented illness, family emergency, or another crisis situation (please bring any form of documentation available).

Please inform me beforehand if you expect to miss particular class meetings because of a religious holiday that forbids work, an illness, or a family emergency. Please plan to write an additional review of the readings on the required book(s) assigned for that day (in addition to the two reviews assigned throughout the course), post it online (on Amazon, Goodreads, Barnes and Noble, Wikipedia, and/or whatever site you prefer), and email me a link to your posted review. (No need to give me a printed copy). This extra review will make up for missed participation and will count towards your participation grade.

**Conversion Scale**
- A+: 99 - 100
- A: 93 - 98.99
- A-: 90 - 92.99
• B+: 87 - 89.99
• B: 83 - 86.99
• B-: 80 - 82.99
• C+: 77 - 79.99
• C: 73 - 76.99
• C-: 70 - 72.99
• D: 60 - 69.99 (there is no D+ or D-)
• F: below 60

Electronic Etiquette

Please do not use your cell phones during class for any reason. This will allow more focused discussion and intellectual exchange.

Please use laptops only if this will facilitate bringing readings to class. In other words, the use of laptops (or ipads, etc) in the classroom is only permitted for taking notes on class lectures and discussions. Students are forbidden to use laptops in the classroom to browse the Internet or work on something other than the material discussed in class. Any student who wants to use a computer should give me a written document promising never to use his or her laptop in class for something other than taking notes on class lectures / discussion. Students caught doing otherwise will be given a participation grade of F and will be forbidden to continue to use their laptops during future class sessions.

I aim to be responsive to emails from students. However, please do not expect an answer to your question any sooner than 48 hours (not including weekends) after it is sent. Last-minute email questions and requests are bad for everyone involved. Please also use office hours rather than email if you have any substantive questions.

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities who wish to take this course and who need disability-related accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me as soon as possible. Disabled students who need test or classroom accommodations must be registered in advance with the Office of Disabilities Services.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT

The School of International & Public Affairs does not tolerate cheating and/or plagiarism in any form.

Those students who violate the Code of Academic & Professional Conduct will be subject to the Dean’s Disciplinary Procedures. The Code of Academic & Professional Conduct can be viewed online at: http://sipa.columbia.edu/resources_services/student_affairs/academic_policies/deans_discipline_policy.html.

Please familiarize yourself with the proper methods of citation and attribution. The School provides some useful resources online; we strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with these various styles before conducting your research: http://sipa.columbia.edu/resources_services/student_affairs/academic_policies/code_of_conduct.html

Violations of the Code of Academic & Professional Conduct should be reported to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

In other words (Columbia Honor Code): Students affirm that all work turned in is their own, and that they have fully and accurately cited every written source, including web-based sources, used in their writing. Students who do not comply with the Honor Code will face appropriate sanctions.
Here are some very helpful websites for all your questions on intellectual property, citing and documenting sources, avoiding disasters, etc. (And of course don't ever hesitate to ask me if you have any doubts or questions):

- [http://www.library.ucla.edu/bruinsuccess](http://www.library.ucla.edu/bruinsuccess) (the tutorial is fun and very useful)
- [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01) (another very helpful site on avoiding plagiarism)
- [http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sources](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sources) (very detailed information about how and why to cite sources)
**Week 1 (Jan. 22) – Introduction**

Required reading, to be completed before the first class meeting: Please read the first 4 pages of this syllabus very carefully and come to class prepared to ask any clarifying questions you need. Please also browse the rest of this syllabus.

*Please remember to fill out and submit your Student Form on Coursework.*

**Recommended**


**PART 1: EXPLAINING VIOLENCE IN CIVIL WARS**

**Week 2 (Jan 29) – The “new wars, old wars” debate**

Case studies: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq, and Afghanistan


**Recommended**


**Week 3 (Feb. 5) – The role of the state: state violence, state failure, and insurgencies**

Case studies: DR Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Israel-Palestine as a civil war.


Guest Speaker: Kae Bara Kratcha, Entrepreneurship & Social Science Librarian. “How to find good bibliographic resources on civil wars and peace settlements.”

Recommended


Documentary *Kony, the M23 and the Real Rebels of Congo*. 2012. VICE. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSEaTQMISAA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSEaTQMISAA)

**Week 4 (Feb. 12) – Identity and Violence**  
Case studies: former Yugoslavia.


**Recommended**


**Week 5 (Feb 19) - Economic causes of violence**  
Case studies: Nigeria, Congo, Indonesia, Colombia, and the Caucasus.

*Note: the whole book is available as an e-book through the Columbia library website.*

**Reminder: research question due. Maximum length: 50 words.**
Recommended


Week 6 (Feb 26) – Micro-level dynamics of violence: local agendas and private motivations
Case study: Democratic Republic of Congo.


Note: the whole book is available as an e-book through the Columbia library website.

2017 debate in Foreign Affairs online:
- Severine Autesserre, "What the Uproar Over Congo’s Elections Misses"
- Jason Stearns, Koen Vlassenroot, Kasper Hoffmann, and Tatiana Carayannis, “Congo’s Inescapable State”

Recommended


Documentaries:
- *This is Congo*, by Daniel McCabe. 2018. https://www.thisiscongo.com/

**PART II – FROM WAR TO PEACE**

**Week 7 (March 5) – Peacemaking and Negotiations**

Case: Former Yugoslavia; Congo


In-class exercise: role-play on negotiations to resolve the Congolese conflict

*Assignment in preparation for the role-play: prepare a 1-minute presentation on your actor’s position during the mock peace talks. Recommended sources:*

- The official webpage of your actor (usually easily accessible through a google search), its twitter account, facebook page, etc.

**Recommended**

Crocker, Chester A; Hampson, Fen Oslder; and Aall Pamela R. 2004 *Taming intractable conflicts: Mediation in the hardest cases*. USIP Press


For case studies, texts of recent peace agreements, practical guides, and other resources on mediation: http://peacemaker.un.org.

**Week 8 (March 12) – Peacekeeping**

Case studies: Rwanda


*Note: the whole book is available as an e-book through the Columbia library website.*


*Reminder: 1-page outline due. Remember to write your revised research question at the top of your outline.*

**Recommended**


**Week 9 (March 26) – Research and Writing**

No class meeting on that day (I'll be at the International Studies Association conference in Toronto). Take the opportunity to work on your research papers and prepare your first full draft.

Make-up class: schedule a 15- or 30-minute appointment with me during week 3 through 8 to discuss your research topic for this semester. This will be an individualized tutorial, and it is a mandatory meeting.

**Recommended**


See Also: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/)

Various sources on citations, bibliographies, and footnotes available at: [http://sipa.columbia.edu/resources_services/student_affairs/academic_policies/code_of_conduct.html](http://sipa.columbia.edu/resources_services/student_affairs/academic_policies/code_of_conduct.html)

The following websites provide many very useful pieces of advice for research and writing, which may become handy as you write your essays:
- [http://www.nd.edu/~dlindley/handouts/handoutlinks.html](http://www.nd.edu/~dlindley/handouts/handoutlinks.html) (plenty of handouts on everything you need: how to make a theoretically informed argument, core theories and concepts used in IR, etc)
- [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl) (the sections on “The Writing Process”, “General Academic Writing”, “Research and Citations”, and “Grammar and Mechanics” are especially helpful).
- [http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/errors.html#errors](http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/errors.html#errors) (common errors to avoid)
- [http://library.columbia.edu/locations/undergraduate/seedtexts.html](http://library.columbia.edu/locations/undergraduate/seedtexts.html) and [http://library.columbia.edu/research/citation-management.html](http://library.columbia.edu/research/citation-management.html) (Various sources and resources on citations, bibliographies, and footnotes)
Week 10 (April 2) - Peacebuilding


*Note: the whole book is available as an e-book through the Columbia library website.*

**Recommended**


**Documentaries:**
- "The Road to Justice" (on Burundi, Columbia, DR Congo, Guatemala, Nepal, Ouganda). Available at https://www.roadtojustice.eu

**Fun / light reading:** Todd Moss’ two novels, *The Golden Hour* (2014) and *Minute Zero* (2015)

**Computer games:** [http://peacemakergame.com](http://peacemakergame.com)
Conclusion: Our Cases, Puzzles, Debates, and Findings

Week 11 (April 9) – Mock Book Incubation Workshop: Alternative Ways to End Wars and Build Peace


*I will distribute a hard copy of the full book manuscript on March 26.*

Recommended


Week 12 and 13 (April 16 and 23) – Brainstorming

These two weeks will be devoted to brainstorming your research papers.

On weeks 12 and 13, each seminar participant will do a 10-minute presentation of his / her research paper (topic, puzzle, main argument), followed by Q&As with their classmates. Students should use PowerPoint slides (or similar kinds of visual aids) to illustrate their presentations.

Each student will send his/her draft paper to his/her peer partner by Friday, April 12 and copy me on the message. Each student will be responsible for preparing constructive criticism of his/her peer partner’s paper (peer partners will be assigned on April 2). On week 12, we will break into small groups and each student will get constructive criticisms from his/her peer partner.

Week 14 (April 30) – Conclusion

Group work on the main contributions of the class.

*Final papers due!*