Substance of the Course

Why does violent conflict persist in post-independence Africa? Why do so many of the 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 class focuses on recent conflict and post-conflict situations in Sub-Saharan Africa, and it uses studies of these conflicts as a lens for understanding the distinct dynamics of violence and international interventions in civil wars.

The course has three goals. First, to provide participants with the intellectual tools to understand and analyze civil wars and international interventions. Throughout the course, participants will acquire a broad knowledge of the concepts, theoretical traditions, and debates in the study of civil war, emergency aid, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. The course will also introduce participants to new issues in the field, such as the micro-foundations of peace settlements. Second, the course will provide participants with an in-depth understanding of the most salient civil conflicts and peace processes in recent African history, notably the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sudan and South Sudan. 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 both of lectures and discussion.

Grading and Requirements

1) Attendance to all lectures and sections; participation to class discussions during the sections. (15% of the final grade).

   This portion of the grade will be based primarily on your participation during the TA-led sections and your attendance to the lectures. It will assess whether you have completed and understood the readings, and whether you have attended the lectures and understood them.

   If you miss particular class meetings because of a religious holiday that forbids work, an illness, or a family emergency, and wish to make up for the missed section or lecture, please plan to write a review of the book(s) assigned for that day, post it online (on Amazon, Goodreads,
Barnes and Noble, Wikipedia, and/or whatever site you prefer), and email your TA a link to your
posted review, copying me on your message. This extra review will make up for missed
participation and will count towards your participation grade.
Side note: Book reviews are tremendously important for authors and readers. So I encourage you
to review online (on Amazon, Goodreads, Barnes and Noble, Wikipedia, and/or whatever site you
prefer) any book that you read for this class. 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.

2) Readings: Assignments are on the attached list.
   All the articles are available for free through Columbia library databases (just go on CLIO and
type the title of the article in the search box, and then follow the instructions).
The required books are available for purchase at the Columbia University Bookstore. In addition,
all these books are on reserve at the Barnard and Butler libraries, under course number POLS UN3614.
Low-income students can also borrow them from the new Barnard lending library
located in the Milstein Center. And if you want to purchase the books but don’t have the means to
do so, look at https://www.columbiaspectator.com/spectrum/2018/06/12/on-avoiding-book-
culture-how-and-where-to-get-cheap-textbooks/.
The whole Collier & Sambanis book is available online through the Colombia library website, as
well as the Srinivasan book chapter. In addition, whenever authorized by copyright laws, I have
placed specific other book chapters on the Coursework / Canvas site for the class.
Note: If you want to look at the recommended readings, but can’t get them through the Barnard /
Columbia library system because they have been borrowed, try the Schomburg Center for
Research in Black Culture (www.nypl.org/locations/schomburg). The Schomburg Center has an
excellent African Studies collection, in which you can find many of the books listed on this
syllabus. It also has a quiet reading / study room.

PLEASE NOTE: It is essential that students keep up with the weekly reading assignments. Readings are
designed as building blocks for understanding topics in subsequent weeks. The readings are often
difficult, it is therefore in the students’ best interest to attend all discussion sections, to ensure that they
understand the main claims and the fine points of the readings. It is also essential that students attend all
lectures. The lectures and the readings are complementary (the lectures will not substitute for the weekly
readings and discussion sections, and vice-versa). The short, long, and final essays will test your
understanding of the material covered both during lectures and in the readings.

3) A short essay (take-home, open-books, 15% of the final grade). The essay question will cover the
material learned during the first month of classes. The paper must be typed; no handwritten material
will be accepted. It must be a maximum of 4 pages double-spaced, with 1 inches margins, and in font
Times New Roman 12. It should use the material covered in the readings and during the lectures and
the discussion sessions. The essay question will be given on September 25 and the paper will be due
on October 2.

4) A long essay (take-home, open-books, 30% of the final grade). The essay question will cover the
material learned during the first part of the semester. The paper must be typed; no handwritten material
will be accepted. It must be a maximum of 8 pages double-spaced, with 1 inches margins,
and in font Times New Roman 12. It should use the material covered in the readings and during the
lectures and the discussion sessions. The essay question will be given on October 16 and the paper
will be due on October 30.

5) A final essay (take-home, open-books, 40% of the final grade). The essay question will cover the
material learned during the entire semester. The paper must be typed; no handwritten material will be
accepted. It must be a maximum of 8 pages double-spaced, with 1 inches margins, and in font Times
New Roman 12. It should use the material covered in the readings and during the lectures and the
discussion sessions. The essay question will be given on November 20 and the paper will be due on
December 4.
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

Late assignments

The papers must be submitted when scheduled. Late papers will be reduced by 1/3 of a grade for each 24-hour period for which they are turned in after the deadline. For example, a paper turned in one day late with a grade of B+ would be marked down to a B.

Extensions will be granted only in case of documented medical or family emergency. In case of emergency, please contact me via email (copying your TA) before the paper is due, and please submit any form of documentation available.

Challenging grades

Any student who believes a grade was given in error should follow the following procedure. S/he should wait a week before submitting a complaint. S/he should meet first with the TA who graded the paper and bring to the meeting a one-page typed document explaining why the student believes that s/he deserves a better grade and telling which grade s/he thinks s/he deserves. If the student and the TA still disagree about the grade after their meeting, the student should come to discuss the situation during my office hours. S/he should bring the one-page document annotated by the TA. Students should realize that a change in grade is very unlikely, and that I reserve the right to lower a grade as well as raise it.

Please note that this does not apply to your final grade. As stipulated by the Dean of Studies, “Course grades are final and may be changed only in the event of clerical error or if the work of all of your classmates is reevaluated. A course grade may not be improved by reexamination or by the submission of additional or revised work.”

Writing Center

All students are strongly encouraged to use the Erica Mann Jong Writing Center to work on their writing skills. The Erica Mann Jong Writing Center is currently located in 18 Milbank; you can sign up for an appointment at http://www.barnard.columbia.edu/writing/writingcenter.html. Columbia students are welcome to use the Barnard Writing Center for papers assigned in this course. For further information on writing resources at Barnard College and helpful strategies for writing assignments, please check http://www.barnard.columbia.edu/english/writing.html.

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities who wish to take this course and who need disability-related accommodations are encouraged to let me know as soon as possible. Disabled students who need test or classroom accommodations must be registered in advance with the Office of Disabilities Services (ODS) in 105 Hewitt (for Barnard students) or the Office of Disabilities Services at Columbia.
Barnard 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.

For each paper, all students (whether or not they are Barnard College students) must sign the Barnard College Honor Code statement, affirming that their written work is completely their own. Any student found to have violated the Honor Code will face the disciplinary rules of his or her home college.

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 hesitate to ask me if you have any doubts or questions):
- http://www.library.ucla.edu/bruinsuccess (the tutorial is fun and very useful)
- http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01 (another very helpful site on avoiding plagiarism)
- http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sources (very detailed information about how and why to cite sources)

Use of laptops in the classroom: The use of laptops (or Ipads, or other kinds of electronic equipment) in the classroom is only permitted for taking notes on the 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 (or other kind of electronic device) should give me a written document promising never to use his or her laptop (or ipad, etc) 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 (or ipad, etc) during future class sessions. Students using laptops (or ipad, etc) should sit at the back of the classroom in order to not disturb their colleagues.

Here is the rationale for this policy. (Basically, students who multitask during classes learn less, and thus get lower grades. Worse, the students who sit next to the multitaskers learn even less and get even poorer grades, even when they try their best to focus on the lectures and discussions).

Recording lectures: Because of copyright & intellectual property issues, recording lectures is forbidden. However, I can make exceptions on a case-by-case, ad hoc basis. Please contact me.

Pre-requisite: At least sophomore standing.

Sub-field & Requirements: The course fulfills the Barnard College’s General Education Requirement: Social Analysis (SOC). Alternatively, Columbia College and Barnard College political science majors can count this class toward their international relations sub-field requirement OR their comparative politics sub-field requirement.

Enrollment restriction: 70 students.

Learning Objectives

Students who complete this course will learn how to:
1. Evaluate and critique the theories about the causes of violence and the determinants of international interventions
2. Integrate and apply conceptual tools and theories from various disciplines, in particular political science, in order to analyze issues related to civil wars and international interventions
3. Develop rigorous and convincing political science arguments
4. Demonstrate knowledge of several salient cases of conflicts and peace processes in recent African history
5. Express themselves effectively in writing
6. Perform independent research on political science, human rights, and/or African studies topics
Sept. 4 – Introduction and key concepts

Please read the first four pages of this syllabus very carefully and feel free to ask in class if you have any clarifying questions.

Please also read the following two texts:


Recommended


Sept. 11 – The role of the state: legacies of colonialism, regime type, & state violence

Christensen, Darin; and Laitin, David D. 2019. The Long Walk from Freedom: African States Since Independence. Yale University Press. Browse the introduction; read chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9; browse chapter 13; read the sections on Rwanda on pp. 113-115 and 318-319.

NOTE: This book is still in press and has not been released yet, so I have made it available on google drive (https://drive.google.com/open?id=1YwTPShajWrQxvXYP0ddFKJQgSeRPqmU, read only version—please make sure that you sign in with your Columbia address). Also, the authors would be grateful if you could let them know if you see any typos or mistakes, so that they can correct them before the book goes to print. If you do catch errors in the chapters, please email Prof. Darin Christensen, darinc@luskin.ucla.edu.

Recommended


Gourevitch, Philip. 1998. We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families: stories from Rwanda. New York: St Martin’s Press.


Sept. 18 – Identity and Violence


Recommended


Sept 25 – Research and Writing

No readings this week, review the readings for the first few weeks of the semester and get a head-start on the readings for next week.

How to think and write like a political scientist: Advice on research and writing for political science papers.

Training by Yuusuf Caruso, Columbia University Librarian in charge of the Africa collections, on how to find good research resources on African wars and peace processes.

End of class: distribution of topics for the short essay & explanation of requirements and grading criteria.

Recommended

The Columbia librarian for African Studies has put together a very useful research guide for our class: http://guides.library.columbia.edu/cwii-africa. It lists many research resources that should prove very useful as you work on your research papers.

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 (plenty of handouts on everything you need: how to make a theoretically informed argument, core theories and concepts used in IR, etc)
- http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/errors.html#errors (common errors to avoid)
- http://library.columbia.edu/locations/undergraduate/seedtexts.html and http://library.columbia.edu/research/citation-management.html (Various sources and resources on citations, bibliographies, and footnotes)


Oct. 2 - Economic explanations of civil war violence
Collier, Paul; Sambanis, Nicholas (eds). 2005. *Understanding Civil Wars: Evidence and Analysis: Vol 1 - Africa*. Washington: The World Bank. Chapter 1 + one of the case-study chapters of your own choosing (focus on the African conflict you most want to learn about, and make sure you look only at the chapters in volume 1).

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

Short essays due at the beginning of class. No extension except in case of documented medical or family emergency.

Recommended


**Oct 9 – State failure, Warlordism, & Insurgencies**


Recommended


Documentary Kony, the M23 and the Real Rebels of Congo. 2012. VICE. www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSEaTQMI5AA

Oct. 16 – Micro-level dynamics of violence and Review session


Autesserre, Séverine. 2010. The Trouble With the Congo. Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 2 and 4. Distribution of topics for the long essay at the end of class.

Recommended


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

**Oct. 23 – Negotiations**


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

**Recommended**

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


Oct. 30 – Humanitarian Aid


Long essays due at the beginning of class. No extension except in case of documented medical or family emergency.

Recommended


Nov. 13 – Peacekeeping


Recommended


**Nov. 20: Peacebuilding**

Autesserre, Séverine. 2014. *Peaceland : Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention*. Cambridge University Press. Introduction (pp. 1-19), Peacebuilding and its effectiveness (pp. 20-24), and Part I (pp. 59-159).

*End of class: distribution of topics for the final essay.*

**Recommended**


Documentaries “The Road to Justice” (on Burundi, DR Congo, and Ouganda). Available at [https://www.roadtojustice.eu](https://www.roadtojustice.eu)


Computer games: [http://peacemakergame.com](http://peacemakergame.com) and [https://www.missionzhobia.org/](https://www.missionzhobia.org/).

**Nov. 27 – Case studies: South Sudan and DR Congo**

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 readings on Congo


Recommended readings on South Sudan


Johnson, Hilde F. South Sudan: The Untold Story from Independence to Civil War. I.B. Tauris.


Dec. 4 – Concluding session

Session devoted to catching up if we are behind, Q&As, and wrapping up the semester.

Guest speaker (TBC): Leymah Gbowee, Liberian peace activist and 2011 Nobel Peace Prize winner, on war, peace, and international interventions in Liberia.

Final essay due at the beginning of the class. No extension except in case of documented family or medical emergency.

Strongly recommended (but not required):
- Review the Gbowee and Mither chapters that you read for the session on identity and violence
- Watch the documentary "Liberia: America's Stepchild" available on Youtube (it's a 1h20 documentary split into six videos of 10 - 15 minutes each; the link for the first part is: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=94j2DMWCErg. If the link doesn't work simply go to YouTube and search for "Liberia: America's stepchild.")