Civil Wars and International Interventions in Africa
POLS V3604

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 3-5 p.m.

Undergraduate lecture class, Spring 2010
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:10-2:25 p.m.

504 Diana Center (Barnard campus)

Office Hours: Thursdays, 3-5 p.m.
Barnard & Columbia Colleges

You can schedule an appointment during my office hours by clicking here. Walk-ins are of course welcome – on a first come, first served basis. However, I give priority to people who have scheduled an appointment, so you are better off scheduling an appointment if you do not want to wait.

Teaching Assistants:
- Stephanie Schwartz (srs2197@columbia.edu), Office hours: Tuesdays, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., in Joe Coffee (northwest corner building, on 120th and Broadway, 2d floor)
- Kuei-min Chang (kc2499@columbia.edu), Office hours: Thursdays, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., in Joe Coffee (northwest corner building, on 120th and Broadway, 2d floor)

Substance of the Course

Why does violent conflict persist in post-independence Africa? Why do nearly half of the countries that emerge from war lapse back into violence after five years? Why do most international interventions fail to bring peace to affected populations? This class focuses on recent conflict and post-conflict situations in Africa, and 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 peace building. 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, Liberia, Rwanda, and 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. Guest speakers will be invited for several class sessions, to exchange with students and explain how the specific issues under consideration play out in the "real" world.

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.

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 books by Mamdani, Straus, Reno, Gbowe, Collier & Sambanis, Weinstein, Duffied, Autesserre, Johnson, and Barnett are available for purchase at the Columbia University Bookstore. All of these books are also available on Library Reserves at Barnard and Butler
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 26 and the paper will be due on October 3.

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 22 and the paper will be due on October 29.

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 26 and the paper will be due on December 5.

The papers must be submitted when scheduled. Extensions will be granted only in case of documented medical or family emergency (please bring any form of documentation available). 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.

Writing resources

The following websites provide many very useful 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://www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/plagiarism/handouts/index.cfm](http://www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/plagiarism/handouts/index.cfm) (you can find hundreds of useful tips on research and writing)
- [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.themonkeycage.org/2010/02/good_writing_in_political_scie.html](http://www.themonkeycage.org/2010/02/good_writing_in_political_scie.html) (tips for essay writing)
- [http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/errors.html#errors](http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/errors.html#errors) (common errors to avoid)

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](http://www.barnard.columbia.edu/writing/writingcenter.html). Columbia students are welcome to use the 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.

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

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.”

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).

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 (ODS) in 105 Hewitt (for Barnard students) or the Office of Disabilities Services at Columbia.

Pre-requisite: At least sophomore standing, except in consultation with the instructor.

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. 3 – Introduction and key concepts

Assignment: please read the first four pages of this syllabus very carefully and don’t hesitate to ask in class if you have any clarifying questions.

Recommended


PART 1: EXPLAINING VIOLENCE IN AFRICAN CIVIL WARS

Sept. 5 - Can we understand violence? The “new barbarism” idea & the “new wars old wars” debate


Recommended


Sept. 10 – The role of the state I: legacies of colonialism


Recommended


Sept 12 – The role of the state II: regime type & state violence


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. 17 – The role of the state III: state failure & warlordism


Recommended


Sept. 19 & 24 – Identity and Violence


Recommended


**Sept 26 & Oct. 1 – Research and Writing**

*September 26: How to think and write like a political scientist:
- Advice on research and writing for political science papers.
- End of class: distribution of topics for the short essay & explanation of requirements and grading criteria.*

*October 1: Training by Yusuf Caruso, Columbia University Librarian in charge of the Africa collections, on how to find good research resources on African civil wars.*

*No readings this week, review the readings for the first few weeks of the semester and work on your essay.*

**Recommended**


*See Also: 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

Oct. 3 – Applied case study: the Liberian civil war


Guest speaker: Leymah Gbowee, Liberian peace activist and 2011 Nobel Peace Prize winner

Short essays due at the beginning of class

Recommended


Oct. 8 & 11 - Economic explanations of civil war violence


Recommended


**Oct. 15 – Insurgencies**


**Recommended**


**Recommended**


**Oct. 22 – Review session**

No readings for today. Review the readings you did during the first part of the class.

Distribution of topics for the long essay at the end of class

**PART II – TOPICS IN INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTIONS**

**Oct. 24 – International interventions to Support Warring Parties**

No readings for today, work on your essay.

**Recommended**


**Oct. 29 – Humanitarian Aid**


\textit{Long essay due at the beginning of class on October 29. No extension except in case of documented medical or family emergency.}

**Recommended**


Oct 31 & Nov. 7 – From war to peace: organizing negotiations (& applied case study on Sudan and South Sudan)


**Recommended**

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


Nov. 12, 14, and 19 – Peacekeeping


*Documentary screening: The Peacekeepers.*

*Guest speaker: Eugenia Zorbas, UN Department of Political Affairs (formerly UN peacekeeping mission in Congo), on humanitarian, peacekeeping, and political interventions.*

**Recommended**


**Nov. 21, Nov. 26 & December 3 – Peacebuilding (and applied case study on Congo)**


*End of class on November 26: distribution of topics for the final essay.*

**Recommended**


**Dec. 5 – Concluding session**

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

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