

POL 530A: Dynamics of Civil Wars SPRING 2016

Course Description

This course is intended to be a survey of the general dynamics of civil wars, with a complementary focus on this form of unrest as it plays out in African countries. Modules address various aspects of civil wars (e.g. onset, termination, natural resources, international responses), and then examines those aspects in the context of a conflict in sub-Saharan Africa. Students will have an opportunity to explore in-depth a conflict of their choosing, applying the general theories covered in class to their specific civil war of choice.

Instructor Information

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Course Format and Teaching Methods

This course is taught entirely online, with weekly lectures from the instructor as well as discussions amongst the students. The lectures for this course can be accessed through the D2L course site, and will be accessible at the start of each week. In addition to participating in the online discussion forum, you will be expected to write a series of short papers, culminating in a larger writing project at the end of the session.

Course Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes

- Develop an extensive knowledge of civil war dynamics: why they occur, strategies to end/manage them, and their broader implications for society
- Gain an increased understanding of a variety of methodological approaches to addressing social science questions.
- Nurture critical thinking skills by assessing applicability of general theories from the literature on civil war to specific cases in Africa.

Required/Recommended Knowledge

While this course does not have any prerequisites, it would benefit students to have a basic background in general international relations theories and African politics (e.g. through POL 544A), as well as a passing familiarity with applied statistics in the social sciences.

Grading Policy

A breakdown of final grade calculations is as follows:

Participation = 35%
Short Papers = 30%
Final Paper = 35%

The grading scale for this course is as follows:

A: 90-100
B: 80-89.9
C: 70-79.9
D: 60-69.9
E: 59.9 and below

Requests for incompletes (I) and withdrawal (W) must be made in accordance with university policies which are available at <http://catalog.arizona.edu/2014-15/policies/grade.htm#I> & <http://catalog.arizona.edu/2014-15/policies/grade.htm#W> respectively.

Participation

Your participation grade depends on the degree to which you engage in thoughtful conversation on the online discussion forum. "Thoughtful conversation" involves posting one original response to the discussion question of the week (minimum 300 words), as well as responding to at least one of your peers' original posts (minimum 100 words). You are also expected to respond to questions posed by your peers in response to your original post. To be eligible for full points you must reference (and cite) assigned readings from the week. All contributions to the discussion forum are expected to be courteous and collegial in tone and content, and should address topics not previously raised by others – so you have an incentive to participate early! Participation in each discussion forum is worth 5 percent of your final grade (7 modules = 35 percent total). *The forum closes for original responses to the discussion question at 11:59 pm Sundays, and for responses to your peers at 11:59 pm Mondays. **Late submissions will not be accepted.***

Weekly participation points are determined in the following manner:

Original post and response to comments on it: 3 points
Response to another peer's post: 2 points

Short Papers

You are expected to write two short papers (lengths are detailed in the assignment guides) about a civil war that is of interest to you. Choose wisely, as this conflict will be the subject of all your writing assignments for this course. Good papers will engage relevant course readings and all references must be cited appropriately. Each paper is worth 15 percent of your final grade. Papers must be turned in by 11:59 pm (MST) on Sunday of the week in which they are due. Late assignments will be accepted, but at a penalty of one letter grade for each day it is late – *even if it's only a few minutes late*. Paper assignments are explained in greater detail under the weekly modules, but an overview is as follows:

Paper #1: discuss general details of your civil war and demonstrate that it meets the criteria we use to define this form of conflict.

Due at the end of WEEK 2, Sunday at 11:59 pm

Paper #2: assess the dynamics of onset, duration and termination of your chosen civil war. Discuss whether this conflict exhibited tendencies that are in keeping with our general understanding of civil wars, or whether it seems to be an outlier.

Due at the end of WEEK 4, Sunday at 11:59 pm

Final Paper

This exercise is aimed at encouraging you to think about your civil war of interest in the broader context of what we know about this form of violence. Provided you make a solid effort in writing the two short papers, the final paper should be an easy task to complete. This is a longer paper (2500-3000 words, double-spaced) applying the themes from the readings of the course to the conflict about which you've been writing. Good papers will compare and contrast what general findings have been identified in the literature concerning civil wars more broadly, and will discuss these with respect to the conflict you chose. In particular, this paper should also assess the role of the international community and its activities (or lack thereof) during and after your civil war. Was the international response appropriate, or should alternative activities been undertaken based on what we've learned about civil wars?

This paper is due at the end of WEEK 8 (Sunday at 11:59 pm MST) and is worth 35 percent of your final grade. A penalty of one letter grade will be assessed for each day that your paper is late – *even if it's only a few minutes late*. Papers turned in one week or more after the original due date will not be accepted.

Late Work Policy

As a rule, work will not be accepted beyond the terms described in this syllabus, except in case of documented emergency or illness. You may petition the professor in writing for an exception if you feel you have a compelling reason for turning work in late.

"Classroom" Behavior

To foster a positive learning environment, students must conduct themselves respectfully in online discussions. Any comments that are derogatory or threatening will not be tolerated, and appropriate action will be taken through University channels.

The Arizona Board of Regents' Student Code of Conduct, ABOR Policy 5-308, prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to one's self. See: <http://policy.arizona.edu/threatening-behavior-students>

Student Code of Academic Integrity

The University Libraries have some excellent tips for avoiding plagiarism available at: <http://www.library.arizona.edu/help/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html>

Course lectures are the property of the instructor. *Selling class notes and/or other course materials to other students or to a third party for resale is not permitted without the instructor's express written consent.* Violations to this and other course rules are subject to the Code of Academic Integrity and may result in course sanctions. Additionally, students who use D2L or UA email to sell or buy these copyrighted materials are subject to Code of Conduct Violations for misuse of student email addresses. This conduct may also constitute copyright infringement.

Violations of academic integrity are not tolerated. The first such violation in this class will result in a failing grade for the assignment, and a subsequent violation will lead to a failing grade for the course. Even in your discussion posts, if you are drawing material verbatim from an outside source, that material must be properly presented and documented in the post.

Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog. See: <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/academic-integrity/students/academic-integrity>

Confidentiality of Student Records

<http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/ferpa/default.htm>

Subject to Change Statement

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Additional Resources for Students

UA Non-discrimination and Anti-harassment policy is available at:
<http://policy.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/Nondiscrimination.pdf>

UA Academic policies and procedures are available at:
<http://catalog.arizona.edu/2014-15/policies/aaindex.html>

Student Assistance and Advocacy information is available at:
<http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/student-assistance/students/student-assistance>

Course Materials

All assigned articles and book chapters (aside from those in the required books) will be made available to students on the course website. It is expected that you will have read the assigned material by the start of class each week. Course lectures will incorporate ideas and findings from the assigned material, and your participation grade will benefit greatly from being familiar with the material and being able to incorporate it directly into your discussion comments.

Required books

Collier, Paul et al. 2003. *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy*. World Bank Publications.

DeRouen, Karl. 2015. *An Introduction to Civil Wars*. Congressional Quarterly Press.

Course Schedule

WEEK 1: CIVIL WAR OVERVIEW

DeRouen CHAPTER 1: "Introduction"

Collier et al. CHAPTER 4: "Why is Civil War So Common?"

Lectures: "Defining civil war"

Discussion begins on Wednesday at noon MST. You must post an original response to the discussion question, a response to a post by a peer, and answer your peers if/when they comment on your post. You must post your reply to the discussion question by 11:59 pm Sunday, but you have until Monday at 11:59 pm to respond to your peers' comments.

WEEK 2: CIVIL WAR ONSET

*** Short paper #1 due by 11:59 pm (MST) on Sunday, Jan 24th ***

Collier et al. CHAPTER 3: "What Makes a Country Prone to Civil War?"

DeRouen CHAPTER 4: "What Causes Civil War?"

Lectures: "Causes of civil war onset" & "The outbreak of conflict in Liberia"

Discussion begins on Wednesday at noon MST. You must post an original response to the discussion question, a response to a post by a peer, and answer your peers if/when they comment on your post. You must post your reply to the discussion question by 11:59 pm Sunday, but you have until Monday at 11:59 pm to respond to your peers' comments.

WEEK 3: CIVIL WAR TERMINATION

DeRouen CHAPTER 6: "The Termination of Civil War and Post-Conflict Issues"

Collier et al. CHAPTER 5: "What Works Where?"

Lectures: "How civil wars end" & "The termination of conflict in Ethiopia"

Discussion begins on Wednesday at noon MST. You must post an original response to the discussion question, a response to a post by a peer, and answer your peers if/when they comment on your post. You must post your reply to the discussion question by 11:59 pm Sunday, but you have until Monday at 11:59 pm to respond to your peers' comments.

WEEK 4: NATURAL RESOURCES

***Short paper #2 due by 11:59 pm (MST) on Sunday, Feb 7th ***

DeRouen CHAPTER 5: "Natural Resources and Civil War"

Michael Ross. 2004. "How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War?: Evidence from Thirteen Cases." *International Organization* 58(1): 35-67.

Lecture: "What role do natural resources actually play?" & Video: "Diamonds of War: Africa's Blood Diamond"

Discussion begins on Wednesday at noon MST. You must post an original response to the discussion question, a response to a post by a peer, and answer your peers if/when they comment on your post. You must post your reply to the discussion question by 11:59 pm Sunday, but you have until Monday at 11:59 pm to respond to your peers' comments.

WEEK 5: CIVIL WAR COSTS

Collier et al. CHAPTER 1: "Civil War as Development in Reverse"

DeRouen CHAPTER 2: "Costs of Civil War"

Lectures: "The human security dimension of civil war" & "Costs of fighting in the DRC"

Discussion begins on Wednesday at noon MST. You must post an original response to the discussion question, a response to a post by a peer, and answer your peers if/when they comment on your post. You must post your reply to the discussion question by 11:59 pm Sunday, but you have until Monday at 11:59 pm to respond to your peers' comments.

WEEK 6: INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCES

DeRouen CHAPTER 7: "International Intervention"

Collier et al. CHAPTER 6: "An Agenda for International Action"

Lectures: "The pros and cons of intervention" & "International dimensions of the conflict in Mozambique"

Discussion begins on Wednesday at noon MST. You must post an original response to the discussion question, a response to a post by a peer, and answer your peers if/when they comment on your post. You must post your reply to the discussion question by 11:59 pm Sunday, but you have until Monday at 11:59 pm to respond to your peers' comments.

WEEK 7: RESEARCH WEEK

Discussion begins on Wednesday at noon MST. You must post an original response to the discussion question, a response to a post by a peer, and answer your peers if/when they comment on your post. You must post your reply to the discussion question by 11:59 pm Sunday, but you have until Monday at 11:59 pm to respond to your peers' comments.

WEEK 8: WRITING WEEK

Final paper is due on Sunday, March 6th at 11:59 pm MST