

# **Political Violence and Violent Politics**

## **Government Department Seminar**

(Fall 2014)

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### **COURSE OVERVIEW**

What is political violence? What are the links between the practices of politics and of violence? Is violence a political expression—an option in a range of individual and collective forms of participation? Scholarly studies view violence as an aberration from the practice of “normal,” functioning politics and a result of the failure of political institutions and processes. This seminar explores how individuals and institutions—from gangs, insurgents, ordinary people, military forces, and bureaucrats—“use violence to impose and contest notions of order, rights, citizenship, and justice” (Arias and Goldstein 2010).

The course examines the incidence of violence in a number of geographic areas, with attention to politics in societies of South Asia, Latin America, and Africa, as well as in the United States. We will study large-scale manifestations of political violence, such as war and genocide—and their political origins and consequences—as well as riots, looting, homicide, and criminal violence.

The course will go beyond the turn to micro-politics, “the local,” and sub-national data in the study of civil wars, focusing on how localities, intimate relationships, and the historical roots of mobilization are implicated in the commitment of violent acts. How does violence emerge and reproduce in a society? How does the practice of politics structure opportunities for individuals to join forces in violent action? An increasing number of ethnographers trained in various disciplines are investigating political violence, responding to claims that the “averted gaze” of anthropological study made researchers bystanders over the last century as violence took place around them. We consider what the renewed focus on communities and states affected by political violence may imply for theories and research methods in comparative politics and international relations.

Focused squarely on the ways in which participation in both violence and voting are political choices, the course challenges students to consider how power, governance, and everyday expressions of grievance interact to generate incentives and opportunities for violence.

Course readings are drawn from relevant literatures in political science, anthropology, history, and sociology, from thinkers and writers such as Elisabeth Wood, Lisa Wedeen, Steven Wilkinson, and James Scott. We will consider the implications for policy of our discussion: how does political violence shape the interests and actions of actors “on the ground”? Readings

include not only ethnographic and anthropological perspectives on political violence, but wide-ranging examples of approaches and methods adopted by political scientists. The selected readings aim to engender a dialogue among researchers who study different manifestations of violence and political mobilization in distinct ways. Students will conclude the course having gained an understanding of research beyond a single theoretical paradigm.

Participants in the course are required to complete three short response papers; a critical book review; and a research paper. Students' active participation is critical to the success of the seminar.

Students who have taken Comparative Political Systems (GOVT 121) and/or International Relations (GOVT 006) will be positioned very well to take this course. Please discuss your participation in this seminar with the instructor if you have not yet taken either of these courses.

## **LEARNING GOALS**

Students who complete this course successfully will be able to:

- Comprehend and interpret claims and methods of understanding violent phenomena
- Discuss and evaluate the employment of categorization in the study of violence and politics
- Demonstrate thoughtful synthesis of course readings
- Appreciate the diversity of approaches to the study of violence and politics in multiple traditions of empirical research
- Construct and articulate arguments among informed peers
- Apply various methodological tools to examine contemporary political violence and develop a research paper using evidence and argument

## **METHODS OF ASSESSMENT**

### **Requirements**

1. Engaged participation in every class session is required. Exchanging knowledge, questions, and experiences in class is central to learning and success in the course. (20%)

2. Three (3) response papers, written throughout the semester. In 800 words, students are asked to evaluate and critique the central argument of one of the week's readings. Once you have identified the author's argument, you should develop your own critique based on logic and evidence. How would you improve the argument? (30%)
3. A critical book review of an approved ethnography. Students will select a work that explores themes of politics and violence in any locality or region and write a review of 5 pages. Students may choose any book listed in the required or recommended course readings and are encouraged to seek suggestions from the instructor on books. (15%)
4. Research paper of 20-25 pages in length on a theme—related to political violence and violent politics—of the student's choosing. A draft will be submitted one month before the final paper's due date. Students will develop their papers in consultation with the instructor on topics, methods, and sources. (35%)

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Under the Honor Code and Standards of Conduct, you are obligated to uphold excellence and honesty in all your academic efforts. Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be handled according to the [university's Honor System](#).

## **THEMES AND READINGS**

**Session 1:** Course Overview and Introductions

### **Week 2**

#### **Session 1: The Politics of Violence I**

Raymond Williams. 1976. "Violence," In *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. New York: Oxford U. Press. p. 278-9.

Arendt, Hannah. 1969. *On Violence*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, World, Inc. Part II, p. 35-56.

Chandra, Kanchan. 2011. Why is Democracy in India so Violent? *Seminar* 620: 2-5.

#### **Session 2: The Politics of Violence II**

Tilly, Charles. 2003. *The Politics of Collective Violence*. Cambridge U. Press. "Violence as Politics," p. 26-54.

Dunning, Thad. 2011. Fighting and Voting: Violent Conflict and Electoral Politics. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55(3): 327-339.

King, Charles. 2004. The Micropolitics of Social Violence. *World Politics* 56(3): 431-455.

Staniland, Paul. 2012. States, Insurgents, and Wartime Political Orders. *Perspectives on Politics* 10(2): 243-264.

### **Week 3**

#### **Session 1: Violence, Regimes, and Control**

Wilkinson, Steven. 2006. *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India*. Cambridge Univ. Press. Chapter 2, p. 19-40.

Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan Way. 2008. *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*. Cambridge U. Press. Ch. 1, Introduction, p. 3-36.

#### **Session 2: Violence, spectacle, and performance**

Wedeen, Lisa. 1999. *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*. U. Chicago Press. Ch. 2, Killing Politics.

Brass, Paul. 1997. *Theft of an Idol: Text and Context in the Representation of Collective Violence*. Princeton U. Press. Ch. 5-6, Horror Stories and Horror Stories Untold, p. 129-203.

Fujii, Lee Ann. 2013. The Puzzle of Extra-lethal Violence. *Perspectives on Politics* 11(2): 410-426.

*Recommended:* Tolnay, Stewart, and E.M. Beck. 1974. *A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882-1930*. "The Role of King Cotton", p. 119-165. (Skim)

### **Week 4**

#### **Session 1: Violence, Borders, and the State**

Mazower, Mark. 2002. Violence and the State in the Twentieth Century. *American Historical Review* 107(4): 1158-1178.

Danner, Mark. 1993. The Truth of El Mozote. *The New Yorker*. 6 Dec.  
<http://www.markdanner.com/articles/127>

Finnegan, William. 2012. The Kingpins. The Fight for Guadalajara. *The New Yorker*. 2 July. [http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/07/02/120702fa\\_fact\\_finnegan?currentPage=all](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/07/02/120702fa_fact_finnegan?currentPage=all)

## **Session 2: Postcolonial violence**

Khan, Yasmin. 2007. *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan*. Yale U. Press. p. 1-103. (Skim next chapter)

Verkaiak, Oscar. 2004. *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan*. Princeton U. Press. Ch. 3, Pakka Qila.

*Recommended:* Chatterjee, Partha. 1999. *The Partha Chatterjee omnibus*. Oxford U. Press. Ch. Histories and Nations. p. 95-115.

## **Week 5**

### **Session 1: Violence, Rebellion, and Governance**

Shah, Alpa. 2010. *In the Shadows of the State: Indigenous Politics, Environmentalism, and Insurgency in Jharkhand, India*. Duke U. Press. Ch. 6, “The Terror Within: Revolution Against the State?” (p. 162-191)

Mampilly, Zachariah. 2011. *Rebel Rulers*. Ithaca: Cornell U. Press. Ch. 2, Bandits, Warlords, Embryonic States, Black Spots, and Ungoverned Territories. p. 25-47.

*Recommended:* Ashcroft, Adam. 2005. *Witchcraft, Violence, and Democracy in South Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

### **Session 2: Politics and Society during Civil War**

González, Olga. 2010. *Unveiling Secrets of War in the Peruvian Andes*. U. Chicago Press. Read Ch. 11, “The Village and the Impact of Political Violence.” p. 25-48. Browse paintings.

Stoll, David. 1993. *Between Two Armies in the Ixil Towns of Guatemala*. Columbia U. Press. Ch. 3, Violence Comes to the Ixil Country, p. 61-91.

Race, Jeffrey. 2010. Interview with author of *War Comes to Long An* (1972). Feb 20-21. Bangkok. Read interview; some skimming may be necessary: <http://www.jeffreyrace.com/jvsv6nr1.pdf>

## Week 6

### Session 1: Social practices, political participation, and agency in civil war

Wood, Elisabeth. 2003. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. Cambridge U. Press. Ch. 1, The Puzzle of Insurgent Collective Action, p. 1-30.

Weinstein, Jeremy. 2007. *Inside Rebellion*. Cambridge U. Press. Ch.1, The Industrial Organization of Rebellion, p. 27-60.

Kalyvas, Stathis. 2003. The Ontology of “Political Violence”: Action and Identity in Civil Wars. *Perspectives on Politics* 1(3): 475-494.

### Session 2: Participation in violence and war

Gurr, T.R. 1970. *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton U. Press. Chs.1-2. (Skim)

Humphreys, Macartan, and J. Weinstein. 2008. Who Fights? Determinants of Participation in Civil War. *American Journal of Political Science* 52(2): 436-455.

Wood, Elisabeth. 2003. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. Cambridge U. Press. Ch. 2, Ethnographic Research in the Shadow of Civil War, p. 31-50.

La Serna, Miguel. 2012. *Corner of the Living: Ayacucho on the Eve of the Shining Path Insurgency*. Ch. 4, To Cross the River: Initial Peasant Support for Shining Path.

## Week 7

**Session 1: FILM:** Scenes from *Hazaar chaurasi ki maa* (Mother of 1084), based on a novel by Mahasweta Devi.

### Session 2: Psychology, crowds, and violence

Collins, Randall. 2013. “Forward Panic,” in *Violence: a Micro-sociological Theory*. Princeton U. Press. Ch.3.

Tambiah, Stanley J. 1996. *Leveling Crowds*. Univ. California Press. Ch. 7, Some General Features of Ethnic Riots and Riot Crowds; and Ch. 8, The Routinization and Ritualization of Violence, p. 213-243.

## **Week 8**

### **Session 1: Ethnicity, race, categories**

Petersen, Roger. 2002. *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment*. Cambridge U. Press. Ch. 2, “An Emotion-Based Approach to Ethnic Conflict.”

Chandra, Kanchan. 2009. Categorizing violence. Unpublished manuscript.

### **Session 2: Genocide**

Schafft, Gretchen E. 2002. Scientific Racism in the Service of the Reich. *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide*, Ed. Alexander Hinton. p. 117-134.

Bringa, Tone. 2002. Averted Gaze: Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1992-1995. Ch.8, In Hinton, Ed., *Annihilating Difference*, p. 194-225.

Straus, Scott. 2006. *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda*. Cornell U. Press. Chs. 2-3, “Genocide at the National and Regional Levels,” and “Local Dynamics,” p. 41-94.

King, Charles. 2012. Can There Be a Political Science of the Holocaust? *Perspectives on Politics* 10(2): 323-341.

## **Week 9**

### **Session 1: Crime, territoriality, and violence**

Cep, Casey N. 2014. The Allure of the Map. *New Yorker Blog*. 22 Jan. <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/books/2014/01/the-allure-of-the-map.html>

Scott, James C. 2009. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. p. 1-40, Hills, Valleys, and States: An Introduction to Zomia.

Lemaitre Repolli, Julieta. 2013. Civilization, Barbarism, and the War on Drugs: The Normalization of Violent Death in Mexico and Colombia. APSA Annual Meeting Paper.

Desmond Arias, Enrique. n.d. Understanding Criminal Networks, Political Order, and Politics in Latin America and the Caribbean. Working paper, Princeton Univ.

### **Session 2: Networks of Violence**

Fujii, Lee Ann. 2009. *Killing Neighbors: Webs of Violence in Rwanda*. “Genocide Among Neighbors” (p. 1-23) and “The Power of Local Ties” (p. 128-153).

Auyero, Javier. 2007. *Routine Politics and Violence in Argentina: The Gray Zone of State Power*. Cambridge U. Press. Ch. 1, The Gray Zone, p. 31-54; Ch. 4, Moreno and La Matanza Lootings, p. 97-130.

*Recommended:* Wood, E. 2008. The Social Processes of Civil War: The Wartime Transformation of Social Networks. *Annual Review of Political Science* 11: 539-561.

## **Week 10**

### **Session 1: Violence and economic processes**

Collier, Paul, and Anke Hoeffler. 2001. Greed and Grievance in Civil War. World Bank, unpublished paper. 21 Oct.

Pachirat, Timothy. 2009. The Political in Political Ethnography: Dispatches from the Kill Floor. In *Political Ethnography*, Ed. Schatz, Edward. p. 143-161.

### **Session 2: Discussion of research papers**

## **Week 11**

### **Session 1: Testimonies of violence: participants and victims of war**

Peters, Krjin, and Paul Richards. 1998. "Why We Fight": Voices of Youth Combatants in Sierra Leone. *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 68(2): 183-210.

Allina-Pisano, Jessica. 2009. How to Tell an Axe-Murderer: An Essay on Ethnography, Truth, and Lies. In *Political Ethnography*, Ed. Schatz, Edward. p. 53-73.

Fujii, Lee Ann. 2010. Shades of truth and lies: Interpreting testimonies of war and violence. *Journal of Peace Research* 47(2): 231-241.

### **Session 2: Memories of violence**

Wolff, Tobias. 2001. War and Memory. *The New York Times* 28 Apr. pg. A15.

"In Fire and Forget, Vets Turned Writers Tell Their War Stories." 11 Nov 2013. Listen to the interview: <http://www.npr.org/2013/11/11/244520706/in-fire-and-forget-vets-turned-writers-tell-their-war-stories>

Malkki, Liisa H. 1995. *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*. U. Chicago Press. Ch, 3, The Uses of History in the Refugee Camp: Living the Present in Historical Terms.

## **Week 12**

**Session 1: FILM:** *Granito: How to Nail a Dictator*

### **Session 2: Interpretation of evidence following violence**

Cohen, Dara K. 2013. Explaining Rape During Civil War: Cross-National Evidence (1980-2009). *American Political Science Review* 107(3): 461-477.

Theidon, Kimberly. 2004. *Entre prójimos*. Instituto de Estudios Peruanos. English translations, "The ambiguity of violence" and "Killing our neighbors," p. 159-183.

Starn, Orin. 2004. Missing the Revolution: Anthropologists and the War in Peru. In *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*, Eds. Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois. Blackwell. p. 395-401.

#### *Recommended:*

Manz, Beatriz. 2002. Terror, Grief, and Recovery. Genocidal Trauma in a Mayan Village in Guatemala. In *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide*, p. 292-309.

Magnarella, Paul J. 2002. Recent Developments in the International Law of Genocide. An Anthropological Perspective on the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide*, p. 310-322.

## **Week 13**

**Session 1:** Review and short presentations of research papers.

**Session 2:** Conclusions.