POLS 4903:  
Senior Capstone Seminar (Ethnic Conflict)  
Fall 2018  
2:30-3:20 MWF  
Math Sciences 422

Contact info
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Murray Hall 203
Email: holleyh@okstate.edu

Office Hours: 9am-noon & 2-3pm Th,\(^1\)
10:30am-12:30 pm F,  
or by appointment.

Course Description
The capstone seminar is designed as a conclusion of a student’s undergraduate study in Political Science at Oklahoma State University. This course gathers senior Political Science majors for an in-depth review and application of many of the fundamentals of this field.  

To provide thematic focus to the senior seminar experience, the readings for this class will focus on ethnic, ethno-religious, and racial conflict. Ethnicity in particular has been an organizing principle in a number of conflicts, from ethnic riots to civil wars to ethnic terrorism. Furthermore, conflicts over ethnicity have particularly costly consequences for civilians, including ethnic cleansing and genocide. In this course, students will study the origins, nature, and political consequences of communal cleavage and conflict.

Required Reading
The following book is required for the course, and is available for purchase from the university bookstore:


Additional readings will be found on the Brightspace page. You are expected to read each assignment *before* class time the day it is due.

Class Expectations
This course is **NOT**...

...easy. Expect to read and work hard, especially on your capstone project.

...somewhere you get to talk about your feelings. In the social sciences, strong arguments are made with *evidence*, not opinion or ideology, and we judge the quality of our readings, our discussions, and your work based on what facts we can bring to bear.

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\(^1\) I am one of the volunteers for the Pete’s Pet Posse Therapy Dogs program along with my dog, Cooper. As part of my volunteer activities, Cooper will be present during my Thursday office hours. If you need to meet during this time and would prefer not to have a dog around, just let me know and I will make alternative arrangements.
I do expect…

…manners. College is a stepping stone to your professional career, and you should conduct yourself as a professional in the classroom. No need for you to wear a suit and tie, but these things will help make the classroom experience more fulfilling for all students:

- No sleeping in class, and especially, no snoring!
- Cell phones can be distracting to fellow students – please make sure to mute yours and avoid checking your messages during class.
- Keep computer use off the games and/or social networks and on academic content.

…regular attendance. While I do not take daily attendance (see “Participation” in the grading section for more details), you will fail the course if you regularly miss lecture.

…assignments to be completed in a timely manner. Any assignments for the class handed in after the due date will be penalized 1/2 of a letter grade for every day it is late (beginning at the end of class time). Assignments will not be accepted for grading 1 week after the due date.

…academic integrity. Any work submitted by the student must reflect the student’s own work. Plagiarism is theft of another’s work or ideas, and is a violation both of the student handbook and academic ethics. Not only that, it’s a felony that violates US copyright laws.

In case you are wondering, plagiarism includes:

1) Claiming someone else’s work as your own.
2) Copying the exact phrase from a source without giving the author(s) credit.
3) Using data from a source without giving author(s) credit.
4) Failing to put a quotation in quotation marks.
5) Using an idea or concept from an author without giving credit to the source.
6) Giving incorrect information about the citation source.
7) Changing the words or phrasing of the sentence but still keeping the original meaning without giving credit to the source.

From this list, you might notice that most of the time, all it takes to NOT plagiarize is to properly cite and give credit to the people from whom you are borrowing information or ideas. When in doubt, cite it!

For more information, see the OSU Syllabus attachment at the end of this syllabus.

Grading
Following university guidelines, our grading scale is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Exceptional &amp; outstanding work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Very good work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Adequate work; superficial grasp on concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Very poor work; poor understanding of the material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 60</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failing; unacceptable work</td>
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Remember, “A” is a rare grade reserved for projects that demonstrate outstanding skill and effort.
Our class work includes:

- **Participation and Attendance (25% total).** Given this class is a seminar (which means in-depth discussion of readings), regular attendance is essential. Students will play a significant role in shaping the details of this course, and will be key to the success of our daily discussions and workshops.

  While I will not be taking attendance, I will make note of who participates each day, and will calculate your participation grade based on:

  - **The first 15%:** Weekly participation during class discussions. To receive your weekly point, you need to contribute something of *substance* at least once a week; one word answers will not net you any points.
  
  - **The remaining 10%:** At the end of the semester, I'll judge the overall *quality* of your participation. Students who regularly attend the course and actively participate will receive full points here…other students, not so much!

  I will update the online gradebook every few weeks so you can see how you are doing in your participation.

- **Reading Response Papers (10% total, or 5% each).** You will sign-up for at least 2 weeks this semester where you will be our topic “expert.” For those weeks, you will write a short (2 paragraph) summary and response to the reading; if we have multiple readings that week, choose one.

  Your summary should be organized as follows:
  
  **Paragraph 1:** A *one sentence* summary of the author’s argument at the beginning of the paragraph. For the remainder of the paragraph, summarize what evidence they present to try to convince you their argument is right.

  **Paragraph 2:** Your assessment of the article. To help write your assessment, you might consider focusing on one (or two) of the following questions:

  - *Is there something really interesting that stood out to you?*
  - *Do you agree or disagree with what the author is arguing? Why?*
  - *Do you know of an example that the author(s)’s theory might help explain? Or, do you know an example that does not fit the theory?*
  - *What alternative explanations or evidence do you think the author should consider?*

  As these are meant as brief writing assignments, I will also follow a pretty basic grading rubric (0-5 point scale, no half points!).

  While this type of writing can be challenging at first, you will get the hang of it pretty quickly! In addition, this sort of skill will serve you well in graduate or law school, or on any job that will require you to summarize complex arguments into a few basic points.

- **Capstone Research Paper (40%).** Students will choose a research topic and have it approved by the professor. There is a great deal of flexibility in this paper; students can either
propose an original research paper on a topic they find interesting, or they can write a paper about a modern ethnic conflict, using the theories we use in class to explain why this conflict is occurring. Either way, students will work with the professor to envision how they could carry out a research project about this topic in a way that would be up to the standards of good social science research.

Be sure to meet your deadlines – a portion of your grade is based on finishing these rough drafts on time! For more details, see the capstone assignment handout (posted online).

- **Research Presentations (10%).** On Monday, November 12, we will hold a public poster session where you will present your work. It will be open forum, meaning that other professors or students are welcome to attend. Be prepared to summarize your project and answer any questions people might have on it!

  This grade is all or nothing – show up with a poster, and you will receive full credit.

- **“The Causes (and a Possible Solution) to Ethnic Conflict” Final Paper (15%).** At the end of the semester, students will write a final paper summarizing what they learned this semester in the readings. The topic: “What are two main causes of ethnic conflict, and what is one good solution to address these causes?”

  The requirements:
  - You have a **maximum** of 4 pages to complete this assignment.
  - You must use at least 3 citations from the syllabus.
  - Formatting must be Times New Roman, double-spaced body of the paper (title page and reference list can be single-spaced), 12 point font with 1 inch margins
  - Title pages and reference lists do NOT count towards your page limit.
  - You must use APSA or Chicago style citation (in-text parenthetical cites + a reference list at the end).
  - All sources must be professional sources (academic press books, peer-reviewed journals, or government/professional organization reports).
  - The final paper must be uploaded to D2L by the beginning of our final exam period (2pm on Tuesday, May 9), and a paper copy of the paper must be dropped off at Dr. Hansen’s office no later than 5pm that day.
**Major Deadlines**

Below is a list of important deadlines for the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday, September 7</td>
<td>Assignment 1: Research Question + Bibliography with 3 academic sources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, September 26</td>
<td>Assignment 2: Annotated Bibliography with 5 sources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, October 10</td>
<td>Assignment 3: Theory and 1 Hypothesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, October 24</td>
<td>Assignment 4: Research Design / Methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, November 12</td>
<td>Poster Presentation (3-5 pm)</td>
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<td><em>In Murray Hall Parlor</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, November 30</td>
<td>Final Research Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, December 10</td>
<td>“The Causes (and a Possible Solution) to Ethnic Conflict” Paper</td>
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**Some Tips on Quality Writing**

On all assignments, students will be grade on their accuracy and detail in presenting the material as well as their ability to communicate this information efficiently and effectively. As such, I expect all assignments to be well-written; poorly written assignments will lose points.

All work will be graded on the quality of writing, clarity, organization, and inclusion of all the necessary components. Quality academic writing includes:

**Basic writing skills**
- Proper grammar & spelling
- Proper verbal agreement
- Proper punctuation use
- Proper paragraph construction (3-6 sentences, no 1+ page paragraphs please!)
- Agreement between subjects in a sentence (e.g. the party, it)
- Correct possessive plural form (e.g. the United States’ not the United State’s; its, not it’s)
- No apostrophes in plural nouns (e.g. the 1990s, not the 1990’s)
- Well-organized and clear structure

**Proper academic/social science writing**
- No contractions (e.g. don’t, it’s)
- Avoid normative or opinion comments (focus on the facts!)
- No colloquialisms or slang
- Minimal use of adverbs
- Minimal passive voice
- Use active voice in the present tense (when appropriate)
- Use headings & subheadings to clearly organize your discussion
- Proper citation

Also, in the social sciences it is ok to write “I think,” “I argue,” or “I recommend” in your writing, especially as it helps distinguish your thoughts from someone else’s!
Course Schedule and Readings

Topic I: Why Study Ethnic Conflict?

Mon, Aug 20 – First day of class
Go over class expectations
  ○ Begin watching PBS Frontline episode “Children of Aleppo”

Wed, Aug 22 – What is ethnic conflict and why do we care?
Readings
In class
  ○ Finish watching PBS Frontline episode “Children of Aleppo”

Fri, Aug 24 – Workshop: Social Media and the Job Market
Readings
  ○ From Forbes, read "Why College Freshmen Need to Major in LinkedIn" and"Social Media Can Cost You A Job: 6 Solutions"
  ○ From Business Insider, "These foolproof tips from LinkedIn will help you land your dream job"
  ○ From U.S. News & World Report, “Pro Tips to Stay Social and Professional on LinkedIn”
In class
  ○ If you own a laptop, bring it in – this is a good chance to look over your social media and see how it compares to suggestions from professionals.

Topic II: The Causes of Ethnic Conflict

Mon, Aug 27 – Primordialism & the Clash of Civilizations
Readings
  ○ Optional:
    ▪ Watch PBS Frontline episode “Children of Syria”
In class
  ○ Reading response papers due

Wed, Aug 29 – The Real Causes of Conflict
Readings
  ○ Optional:

**In class**
- Reading response papers due (Laitin reading only!)

**Fri, Aug 31 – Class Workday**

**Readings**
- Baglione, Chapter 2

**No class meeting!**
- I will be away at the APSA conference this weekend, so you should use this time to get started on the first research paper assignment.

**Mon, Sept 3 – No class**

*Labor Day.*

**Wed, Sept 5 – Constructivist Explanations for Conflict**

**Readings**

**Optional:**

**In class**
- Reading response papers due (Choose either Snyder or Bowen)

**Fri, Sept 7 – Historical Case Study: Ethnic Resurgence and the Bosnian War**

**Readings**

**In class**
- **Assignment 1 (Research Question + bibliography with 3 academic sources) due**

**Mon, Sept 10 – Historical Case Study: Ethnic Resurgence and the Bosnian War (part II)**

**Readings**

**Wed, Sept 12 – Explanations from Social Psychology**

**Readings**

**Optional:**

**In class**
- Reading response papers due
Fri, Sept 14 – Office Meetings
No class. I’ll be holding extended office hours for those who need extra help!

Mon, Sept 17 – Inequalities and Grievances
Readings
- Optional:

In class
- Reading response papers due

Wed, Sept 19 – Workshop: Writing a Literature Review
Readings
- Baglione, Chapter 3, pp. 45-50, 57-69
- Baglione, Chapter 4, pp. 77-88

Fri, Sept 21 – Office Meetings
No class. I’ll be holding extended office hours for those who need extra help!

Mon, Sept 24 – The Security Dilemma (Two Views)
Readings

In class
- Reading response papers due: Compare & contrast Posen & Saideman et al., and tell me which argument you find more convincing

Wed, Sept 26 – Workshop: Group Feedback
Readings
- Baglione, Chapter 4, pp. 77-88

In class
Assignment 2 (Annotated Bibliography with 5 sources) due
You will be pairing up with a classmate and exchanging your annotated bibliography assignments for peer feedback.

Fri, Sept 28 – Office Meetings
No class. I’ll be holding extended office hours for those who need extra help!

Mon, Oct 1 – Natural Resources & Ethnic Conflict
Readings

In class
- Reading response papers due

Wed, Oct 3 – Hypothesis Writing Workshop
Readings
- Baglione, Chapter 5

Fri, Oct 5 – Office Meetings
No class. I’ll be holding extended office hours for those who need extra help!

Mon, Oct 8 – Political Institutions & Ethnic Outbidding
Readings
- Optional:

In class
- Reading response papers due

Wed, Oct 10 – Workshop: Group Feedback
No readings today!
In class
- Assignment 3 (Theory & 1 Hypothesis) due
- You will be pairing up with a classmate and exchanging your theory and hypothesis sections for peer feedback.

Fri, Oct 12 – Office Meetings
No class. I’ll be holding extended office hours for those who need extra help!

Mon, Oct 15 – Picking Apart a Conflict: The Rwandan Genocide
Readings
- Optional:
In class:
We will examine how the theories we learned help explain the Rwandan genocide. To help prepare you for the discussion, focus your note-taking on these main questions:

- How did colonialism contribute to ethnic conflict in Rwanda?
- What choices did leaders make after colonialism that pushed the country to a governmental crisis?
- What were the immediate factors leading up to the Rwandan genocide which served to destabilize the country? How were the Hutu’s prepared by the government to carry out the slaughter?

Wed, Oct 17 – Workshop: What goes into a Methodology Section?

Readings
- Baglione, Chapter 7 (focus on pp. 121-122 and 126-140 as these pages overview the main sections that will need to be present in your research design)

Skim before class:

Optional Readings (if you would like to see other examples of methodology sections):
- Large-N Statistical Research:
- Case Study Research:
- Experimental Research:

Optional, but highly recommended for those doing comparative case research:

Fri, Oct 19 – No class

Fall Break
Topic III: Resolving Ethnic Conflict

Mon, Oct 22 – Resolving Conflict through Electoral Design: Consociationalism vs. Centripetalism

Readings
- Optional:

In class
- Reading response papers due: Compare & contrast Lijphart & Reilly, and tell me which argument you find more convincing

Wed, Oct 24 – Economic Solutions to Violence

Readings
- Optional:

In class
- Assignment 4 (Research Design) due

Fri, Oct 26 – Office Meetings

No class. I'll be holding extended office hours for those who need extra help!

Mon, Oct 29 – International Intervention

Readings
- Optional:

In class
- Begin watching the *PBS Frontline* episode, “The Triumph of Evil”

Wed, Oct 31 – Intervention Success…and Failure

Readings

**In class**
- Reading response papers due
- Finish Watch *PBS Frontline* episode, “The Triumph of Evil”

**Fri, Nov 2–Fri, Nov 9 – Office Meetings**

**Readings:**
- Baglione, Chapter 8 & 9

No class.

*Work on finishing your research projects! I’ll be holding extended office hours for those who need extra help.*

**Mon, Nov 12 – Poster Presentations (3-5pm)**

*Meet in the Murray Hall Parlor. Set up begins at 2:30, with judging starting at 3.*

**Wed, Nov 14 – Class Workday**

No class. *Work on finishing your research projects!*

**Fri, Nov 16 – Career Workshop: Salary Negotiation**

No Readings

**In class**
- Ms. Lindsay Vallaster from Career Services will give a talk today on how to negotiate for salary after getting hired for a new job.

**Mon, Nov 19 – Reforming the “Coercive Apparatus”**

**Readings**
- Optional:

**In class**
- Reading response papers due

**Wed, Nov 21 & Fri, Nov 23 – Thanksgiving Break**

No class.

**Mon, Nov 26 & Wed, Nov 28 – Office Meetings**

No class.

*Work on finishing your research projects! I’ll be holding extended office hours for those who need extra help.*

**Fri, Nov 30 – Historical Case Study: Sectarian Conflict in Northern Ireland**

**Readings**
- Online Handout: The Basics – The Northern Ireland Conflict
In class
  o Final research papers due.

Mon, Dec 3 – “The Troubles” in Northern Ireland
Readings

Wed, Dec 5 – Reforms under “Good Friday”
Readings

Fri, Dec 7 – How Do You Unfreeze a “Frozen” Conflict?
Readings

Mon, Dec 10 @ 2pm – Final “Exam”
  “The Causes (and a Possible Solution) to Ethnic Conflict” Paper Due