

# Politics 314: Political Violence: Causes and Solutions

Spring 2016, Wednesday 1:15-4:05, Clapp 126

Professor: Andy Reiter

Office Hours: Skinner 107, T 2:45-3:45, TH 10:45-11:45, or by appointment

## Course Description and Materials

This course is an introduction to political violence. Throughout the semester, we will examine the various manifestations of political violence, focusing on diverse topics such as genocide, terrorism, and civil war. We will explore the debates in the field of political science regarding the nature and causal factors behind these types of violence, with an eye toward understanding how to stop or prevent their occurrence. We will conclude the semester by looking more directly at how violence ends, how peace is maintained, and how societies attempt to heal from past violence. There are no texts to purchase for the course, all readings are provided electronically. In addition to the course readings, you are encouraged to follow the blog <http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/> throughout the semester.

## Course Requirements

Your grade is based on class participation, a book review, a movie review, and a final project, for which you will have to write a policy brief and make a class presentation. The books for review are of your choosing, but must be first-hand accounts or histories of specific episodes of political violence. In other words, the goal is not to pick another academic book on the politics of violence and explain how the scholar builds off the theories we have discussed in class, but rather to apply the theories we have learned to gain a better understanding of events. For example, perhaps a memoir of a rebel soldier reveals definitive ideological reasons for fighting, which contradicts the literature that emphasizes the role of greed in civil wars. Similarly, the movie review should examine how violence is portrayed to popular audiences and how that supports or contradicts the academic literature. Each review should be 1,200-1,500 words and books and movies must be pre-approved. The main project for the course will task you with selecting an episode of ongoing violence somewhere in the world. You will research and follow this case throughout the semester, will be expected to add insights from this case into discussion where relevant, and write a 5,000-word policy brief that outlines the key issues, causes, and effects of this violence. Most importantly, it must also generate policy prescriptions for stopping and recovering from this violence. You will present and defend your analysis and recommendations during the final two weeks of the course to our class and a panel of outside faculty. Failure to complete any of the assignments will result in an F for the course.

## Grade Breakdown

Participation	20%
Book Review	15%
Movie Review	15%
Presentation	20%
Policy Brief	30%

## Course Guidelines

Any cheating or plagiarism of any kind will result in a zero for the course. If you have any questions on what constitutes plagiarism, please ask. The onus is on you not to ensure your work abides by academic standards. Late assignments are not accepted for credit unless there are extenuating circumstances and you obtain *prior* approval from me. If a class is canceled for any reason, we will trim and combine readings; I will email instructions accordingly.

## A Note on Course Content

While most of the readings are academic in nature, this is a course on violence, and as such, you will, at times, be exposed to descriptions of violent acts (including mass killings and sexual crimes), confessions of perpetrators, testimony of victims, and difficult moral and ethical questions. Some of you may also have experienced violence or are from a country in which mass violence occurred. So if at any point you anticipate that particular readings or discussions will be difficult for you, please contact me ahead of time. Similarly, if after readings or a discussion, you feel unsettled or troubled in anyway, please contact me. It is also important to respect the views of each other during discussions. For many of the questions we will engage, there is no right answer. For example, the debate on which individuals are guilty in a crime as large as the Holocaust will never be settled. So we will strive to take a step back and analyze these questions analytically. Rather than weigh the merits of different views on a question like this, we will instead seek to understand the reasons why those different views exist and what implications each has for the study of the events.

## Course Schedule

### Wednesday January 20 Introduction to the Course and Defining Violence

- ❖ Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6:3 (1969), 167-91.

### Wednesday January 27 Is Violence Human?

- ❖ Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1-25.
- ❖ Stanley Milgram, "Some Conditions of Obedience and Disobedience to Authority," *Human Relations* 18:1 (1965), 57-75.
- ❖ Dave Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (New York, NY: Back Bay Books, 2009), 302-336

### Tuesday February 2 \*\*Case Selections Due\*\*

**Wednesday February 3 Collective Action and Recruitment**

- ❖ Ted R. Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), 22-58.
- ❖ Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy M. Weinstein, "Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War," *American Journal of Political Science* 52:2 (2008), [Excerpts, 436-43].
- ❖ Jeremy Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1-24.

**Wednesday February 10 Who Engages in Violence?**

- ❖ Daniel J. Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1997), 203-62.
- ❖ Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1998), 38-77.
- ❖ Scott Straus, "How Many Perpetrators Were There in the Rwandan Genocide? An Estimate," *Journal of Genocide Research* 6:1 (2004), 85-98.
- ❖ James Waller, *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 55-87, 133-135.

**Wednesday February 17 Genocide**

- ❖ The Wave (1981) – 47 minutes
  - Optional: The Wave (Die Welle) (2008) – 107 minutes
- ❖ Stathis Kalyvas, "Wanton and Senseless? The Logic of Massacres in Algeria," *Rationality and Society* 11:3 (1999), 243-85.
- ❖ Benjamin Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 66-90.
- ❖ Scott Straus, "Retreating from the Brink: Theorizing Mass Violence and the Dynamics of Restraint," *Perspectives on Politics* 10:2 (2012): 343-62.

**Tuesday February 23 \*\*First Review Due by 1:15 PM on Moodle\*\***

**Wednesday February 24 Gender Dynamics of Conflict and Sexual Violence  
\*\*Midterm Course Evaluations and Participation Grades\*\***

- ❖ Elisabeth J. Wood, "Variation in Sexual Violence during War," *Politics & Society* 34:3 (2006), 307-41.
- ❖ Dara Kay Cohen, "Female Combatants and the Perpetration of Violence: Wartime Rape in the Sierra Leone Civil," *World Politics* 65:3 (2013): 383-415.
- ❖ Charli R. Carpenter, "Recognizing Gender-Based Violence Against Civilian Men and Boys in Conflict Situations," *Security Dialogue* 37:1 (2006), 83-103.

**Wednesday March 2 Terrorism**

- ❖ Robert Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review* 97:3 (2003), 343-61.
- ❖ Audrey Kurth Cronin, "How al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups," *International Security* Summer (2006), 7-48.
- ❖ Philip H. Gordon, "Can the War on Terror be Won?" *Foreign Affairs* 86:6 (2007): 53-66.
- ❖ Audrey Kurth Cronin, "ISIS is Not a Terrorist Group: Why Counterterrorism Won't Stop the Latest Jihadist Thread," *Foreign Affairs* March/April 2015.

**Tuesday March 8 \*\*Policy Brief Drafts Due by 1:15 PM on Moodle\*\***

**Wednesday March 9 Civil War and Interstate War**

- ❖ Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 56:4 (2004), 563-95.
- ❖ John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2001), 334-359.
- ❖ Jack S. Levy, "Domestic Politics and War," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18:4 (1988): 653-73.

**Wednesday March 16 No Class – Spring Break**

**Wednesday March 23 Peacemaking and Peacekeeping**

- ❖ Lakhdar Brahimi and Salman Ahmed, "In Pursuit of Sustainable Peace: The Seven Deadly Sins of Mediation," NYU Center for International Cooperation, May 2008.
- ❖ George Downs and Stephen John Stedman, "Evaluation Issues in Peace Implementation," in Stephen John Stedman, Donald Rothchild, and Elizabeth M. Cousens (eds.), *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 43-69.
- ❖ Virginia Page Fortna, *Does Peacekeeping Work? Shaping Belligerent's Choices after Civil War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 76-103.

**Wednesday March 30 Transitional Justice and Recovering from Violence**

- ❖ Tricia Olsen, Leigh Payne, and Andrew Reiter, *Transitional Justice in Balance: Comparing Processes, Weighing Efficacy* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2010), 9-28.
- ❖ Phil Clark, "Gacaca: Rwanda's Experiment in Community-Based Justice for Genocide Crimes Comes to a Close," *Foreign Policy Digest*, April 2010.
- ❖ Erin Daly, "Truth Skepticism: An Inquiry into the Value of Truth in Times of Transition," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 2:1 (2008): 23-41.
- ❖ Philip Gourevitch, "The Life After" *The New Yorker*, May 4, 2009.

**Tuesday April 5 \*\*Second Review Due by 1:15 PM on Moodle\*\***

**Wednesday April 6**

**State Repression and Police Violence**

- ❖ David T. Mason and Dale A. Crane, “The Political Economy of Death Squads: Toward a Theory of the Impact of State-Sanctioned Terror,” *International Studies Quarterly* 33:2 (1989), 175-98.
- ❖ John Wihbey and Leighton Walter Kille, “Excessive or Reasonable Force by Police? Research on Law Enforcement and Racial Conflict,” *Journalist’s Resource*, October 29, 2015

**Course Wrap-Up: Is Peace Near?**

- ❖ Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined* (New York, NY: Viking Press, 2011), 671-695.
- ❖ Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Action* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011), 30-61.

**Wednesday April 13**

**Final Presentations**

**Wednesday April 20**

**Final Presentations**

**Friday April 29**

**\*\*Final Policy Briefs Due by 1:15 PM on Moodle\*\***