

POL 415: The Scientific Study of Civil Wars

FALL 2023

Syllabus Version 2 (August 29)

Description of Course

What conditions are sufficiently 'dire or inspiring' to make someone take up arms and risk his (or her) life as part of a rebel group? By the end of this advanced undergraduate-level course, you will be able to answer this question just like the leading academic minds in the field of international relations. This class will provide you with extensive exposure to the quantitative study of civil wars around the world. We will start off by determining what constitutes a civil war and how this form of conflict is different from (or comprises) events such as international war, protests, riots, coups, genocide, and terrorism. We will then examine what factors that influence the onset, duration, termination, and recurrence of civil wars. Also, we will discuss some international dimensions of civil wars: the spread of conflicts across borders, refugee flows, and interventions.

While this course is focused on large-N cross-national quantitative studies of civil wars, we will frequently discuss real-world examples of civil wars, and you will be expected to write about a civil war that is of interest to you (more on this later in the syllabus).

Course Prerequisites

This course has two prerequisites: **SBS 200** (Introduction to Statistics for the Social Sciences) and **POL 202** (International Relations).

Location and Times

R. P. Harvill Building, Room 452
Mon/Wed 12:30–1:45

Instructor Information

Alex Bruens
Pronouns: they/them
Email: bruens@arizona.edu
Office hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays 11am–12pm
Office location: Social Sciences 301
If necessary, please email to schedule alternative office hours.

Course Format and Teaching Methods

This course will be a combination of lecture and discussions, including in-class small group activities. Occasional pop quizzes will be given in class in addition to the midterm exam. You will be expected to write a series of short papers, culminating in a larger writing project at the end of the semester.

Course Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes

- Compare and contrast the validity of general theories and key findings to specific cases of civil wars.
- Learn to critique existing literature and posit own opinions and theories based in personal and course knowledge.
- Present and discuss readings, opinions, and reactions to literature in small- and large-group settings.
- Apply information from course readings to self-chosen civil war and responsibly make connections between general theories and the chosen civil war.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of others' viewpoints and interpretations of course readings on civil wars.

Grading Policy

A breakdown of final grade calculations is as follows:

Attendance and Participation = 20%

Midterm Exam = 20%

Short Papers = 30%

Final Paper = 30%

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:

<https://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/grades-and-grading-system#incomplete>

<https://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/grades-and-grading-system#Withdrawal>

Honors Credit

Students wishing to take this course for Honors Credit should email me at the start of the semester to set up an appointment to discuss the terms of the contract and to sign the Honors Course Contract Request Form. The form is available at:

<https://frankehonors.arizona.edu/academics/honors-contracts>

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.

Please contact me prior to turning in late work. If you expect to not be able to turn in an assignment on a due date, please see with me before the due date to discuss options for reasonable accommodation.

Attendance and Participation

Your attendance and participation grade will be determined by a number of in-class activities and discussion questions, your presence in class, and your willingness to participate in class discussion. **You are expected to write (at least) two questions each class, based on the readings.** These will count for your attendance and we will discuss these questions as a group. Questions can be about something you didn't understand in an article, something related that you want to know more about, or the theme of the day's assigned readings. **Questions must be submitted by 11:59pm the day before class (either Sunday or Tuesday).**

Note: You are required to submit discussion questions for 20 days and there are 30 class periods – which means you are able to skip discussion questions for a few classes. I highly recommend writing questions for every class, or at least coming to class with questions in mind if you decide not to turn in questions. These two questions should be thoughtful and inquisitive. Please do not write yes or no questions.

Participating in discussion and attending lectures and other course events are vital to the learning process. As such, attendance is required at all meetings of this course. Students who miss class due to illness or emergency are required to bring documentation from their healthcare provider or other relevant, professional third parties. Failure to submit third-party documentation will result in unexcused absences.

Assignments

Short Papers

You are expected to write three short (3-4 pages, double-spaced) papers about a specific civil war that is of interest to you. You **MUST** select a civil war that has terminated (one that has ended and restarted again is acceptable). 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 10 percent of your final grade. Late assignments will be accepted, but at a penalty of one letter grade for each day it is late.** Papers are considered late even if they are submitted less than one minute after the deadline. We will discuss these papers in greater detail as their due dates approach, but an overview is as follows:

Paper #1: you'll answer a series of questions describing the civil war you'll be researching this semester. You will have to summarize the course of events, identify the actors involved, and highlight any of the causes of the conflict. Please feel free to get in touch if you want assistance in choosing a conflict. **DUE THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7 at 11:59PM**

Paper #2: after having read some of the academic literature on the various phases of civil wars, you will have to provide an assessment of the causes of your chosen civil war and how it ended. **DUE THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5 at 11:59PM**

Paper #3: after having read some of the academic literature on effects of civil wars, you

will have to discuss some of the repercussions of the civil war you chose (e.g. genocide, regime change, spillover). **DUE THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24 at 11:59PM**

Final Paper

This exercise is aimed at encouraging you to think about the scientific process behind studying a phenomenon like civil war. Provided you make a solid effort in writing all three short papers, the final paper should be an easy task to complete. This is a longer paper (approx. 10 pages, double-spaced) critiquing the readings of the semester, making reference to the civil war that has been the subject of your short papers. Good papers will compare and contrast what general arguments and findings have been identified in the literature, and discuss these with respect to the civil war you chose.

This paper is worth 30 percent of your final grade. A penalty of one letter grade will be assessed for each day that your paper is late. Papers turned in one week or more after the original due date will not be accepted.

Exam

You will have one midterm exam (OCTOBER 11). The exam will draw on information from the readings and from lectures, and will be a mixture of multiple choice, matching, fill-in-the-blank, and short answer questions.

The midterm exam is worth 20 percent of your final grade. Make-up exams will only be given in exceptional circumstances with appropriate documentation of absence.

Additional Syllabus Policies

Other university policies on the topics listed below can be found at this link: <https://catalog.arizona.edu/syllabus-policies>

- Absence and Class Participation Policies
- Threatening Behavior Policy
- Accessibility and Accommodation Policy
- Code of Academic Integrity
- Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy
- Subject to Change Statement

Additional Resources

- Campus Pantry: <https://campuspantry.arizona.edu>
- Campus Health: <https://www.health.arizona.edu>
- Counseling and Psych Services (CAPS): <https://health.arizona.edu/counseling-psych-service>
- The Dean of Students Office's Student Assistance Program: <https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/support/student-assistance>
- Survivor Advocacy Program: <https://survivoradvocacy.arizona.edu/>

Classroom Behavior

To foster a positive learning environment, students may not text, chat, make phone calls, play games, read the newspaper or surf the web during lecture and discussion. Students are asked to refrain from disruptive conversations with people sitting around them during lecture. Students observed engaging in disruptive activity will be asked to cease this behavior. Students who continue to disrupt the class will be asked to leave lecture or discussion and may be reported to the Dean of Students.

Student Code of Academic Integrity

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 link above, under “Additional Syllabus Policies”, for the full code of conduct.

I take academic integrity violations very seriously. Plagiarism and cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. The first such incidence will be met with a failing grade (zero points) for the assignment, and any subsequent violation will result in a failing grade for the course. Any violation of academic integrity will be reported immediately to the dean’s office, and they reserve the right to administer additional sanctions on top of my rules. The University Libraries have some excellent tips for avoiding plagiarism available at: <http://www.library.arizona.edu/help/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html>.

The instructor holds the copyright to their lectures and course materials, including student notes or summaries that substantially reflect them. Student notes and course recordings are for individual use or for shared use on an individual basis. 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 the instructor’s copyright 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.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

The instructor does not use artificial intelligence (AI)/large language model (LLM) tools in the creation of course content or teaching materials.

In this course any and all uses of generative artificial intelligence (AI)/large language model tools such as ChatGPT, Dall-e, Google Bard, Microsoft Bing, etc. (not exhaustive list) will be considered a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity (above), specifically the prohibition against submitting work that is not your own. This applies to all assessments in the course, including any written assignments, discussions, quizzes, exams, etc. This course policy is driven by the learning goals and desired learning outcomes for the course: critical thinking, discussion, and interpretation of research. AI/LLMs are unable to foster these learning outcomes in their current form.

The following actions are prohibited:

- entering all or any part of an assignment statement or test questions as part of a

- prompt to a large language model AI tool;
- incorporating any part of an AI-written response in an assignment;
 - using AI to summarize or contextualize reading assignments or source materials; and
 - submitting your own work for this class to a large language model AI tool for iteration or improvement.

Confidentiality of Student Records

<https://registrar.arizona.edu/privacy-ferpa/about-ferpa>

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.

Safety on Campus and in the Classroom

For a list of emergency procedures for all types of incidents, please visit the website of the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT): <https://cirt.arizona.edu/case-emergency/overview>

Also watch the video available at https://arizona.sabacloud.com/Saba/Web_spf/NA7P1PRD161/common/learningeventdetail/crtfy0000000000003560

Preferred Name and Pronouns

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to correct instructors on your preferred gender pronoun. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly in class or via email (instructor email). If you wish to change your preferred name or pronoun in the UAccess system, please use the following guidelines:

Preferred name: University of Arizona students may choose to identify themselves within the University community using a preferred first name that differs from their official/legal name. A student's preferred name will appear instead of the person's official/legal first name in select University-related systems and documents, provided that the name is not being used for the purpose of misrepresentation. Students are able to update their preferred names in UAccess.

Pronouns: Students may designate pronouns they use to identify themselves. Instructors and staff are encouraged to use pronouns for people that they use for themselves as a sign of respect and inclusion. Students are able to update and edit their pronouns in UAccess.

More information on updating your preferred name and pronouns is available on the Office of the Registrar site at <https://www.registrar.arizona.edu/records-enrollment/personal-information/updating-personal-information>.

Course Materials

All assigned articles and book chapters will be made available to students on the course D2L website. **It is expected that you will have read the assigned article prior to each class, will have filled out the reading guide to the best of your ability, and come up with discussion questions.** Course lectures will incorporate ideas and material from the articles, and your participation grade will benefit greatly from being familiar with the material prior to coming to class. No textbooks are required for this course, but there are a number of excellent books about civil war. A few are listed below, but feel free to ask me for recommendations if you are particularly interested in a specific subject.

Recommended books (not required to obtain, and most available through the university library!)

Mason, T. David and Sara Mitchell, eds. 2016. *What Do We Know about Civil Wars?* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

Paul Collier et al. 2003. *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy.* Washington, DC: The World Bank and Oxford University Press.

Stathis N. Kalyvas. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Jeremy Weinstein. 2007. *Inside Rebellion.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Barbara Walter. 2009. *Reputation and Civil War: Why Separatist Conflicts Are So Violent.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

David Cunningham. 2011. *Barriers to Peace in Civil War.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

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

Course Schedule

August 21: Greetings and introductions

No assigned readings

August 23: Defining civil war

Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler. 2007. "Civil War." In *Handbook of Defense Economics*, Vol. 2, ed. Todd Sandler and Keith Hartley. p. 711-740. Oxford: Elsevier, North-Holland.

August 28: "Types" of civil war

Halvard Buhaug. 2006. "Relative Capability and Rebel Objective in Civil War." *Journal of Peace Research*. 43(6):691-708.

August 30: Civil war onset I

Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler. 2004. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." *Oxford Economic Papers* 56(4):563-595.

September 4: NO CLASS (Labor Day)

September 6: Civil war onset II

James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 97(1):75-90.

SHORT PAPER #1 DUE AT 11:59 PM ON SEPT. 7

September 11: Civil war onset III

Havard Hegre and Nicholas Sambanis. 2006. "Sensitivity Analysis of Empirical Results on Civil War Onset." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50(4):508-535.

September 13: Civil war duration I

Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler, and Mans Soderbom. 2004. "On the Duration of Civil War." *Journal of Peace Research* 41(3): 253-273.

September 18: Civil war duration II

David Cunningham. 2006. "Veto Players and Civil War Duration." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(4):875-892.

September 20: Civil war severity I

Bethany Lacina. 2006. "Explaining the Severity of Civil Wars." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50(2):276-289.

September 25: Civil war severity II

Benjamin Valentino, Paul Huth, and Dylan Balch-Lindsay. 2004. "Draining the Sea: Mass Killing and Guerrilla Warfare." *International Organization* 58(Spring):365-407.

September 27: Noncombatant (civilian) agency in civil war

Corinna Jentsch and Juan Masullo. 2022. "Violent or non-violent action? Wartime civilian resistance in Colombia and Mozambique." *Political Geography* 99.

October 2: Civil war termination I

Karl R. DeRouen, Jr. and David Sobek. 2004. "The Dynamics of Civil War Duration and Outcome." *Journal of Peace Research* 41(3): 303-320.

October 4: Civil war termination II

Barbara Walter. 1997. "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement." *International Organization* 51(3):335-364.

SHORT PAPER #2 DUE AT 11:59 PM ON OCT. 5

October 9: MIDTERM REVIEW

October 11: MIDTERM EXAM

October 16: International dimensions of civil war I

Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, Idean Salehyan, and Kenneth Schultz. 2008. "Fighting at Home, Fighting Abroad: How Civil Wars Lead to International Disputes." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52(4).

October 18: International dimensions of civil war II

Idean Salehyan and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. 2006. "Refugees and the Spread of Civil War." *International Organization* 60(2):335-366.

October 23: Civil war recurrence I

J. Michael Quinn, T. David Mason, and Mehmet Gurses. 2007. "Sustaining the Peace: Determinants of Civil War Recurrence." *International Interactions* 33 (2): 167-193.

October 25: Civil war recurrence II

Barbara F. Walter. 2004. "Does conflict beget conflict? Explaining recurring civil war." *Journal of peace research* 41(3).

October 30: Interventions I

Virginia Page Fortna. 2004. "Does Peacekeeping Keep Peace?: International Intervention and the Duration of Peace after Civil War." *International Studies Quarterly* 48:269-292.

November 1: Interventions II

Hultman, Lisa, Jacob Kathman, and Megan Shannon. 2013. "United Nations peacekeeping and civilian protection in civil war." *American Journal of Political Science* 57(4).

November 6: Interventions III

Theodora-Ismene Gizelis and Kristin E. Kosek. 2005. "Why humanitarian interventions succeed or fail: The role of local participation." *Cooperation and Conflict* 40(4).

November 8: Who Rebels?

Weinstein, Jeremy M. 2005. "Resources and the Information Problem in Rebel Recruitment." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49(4): 598-624.

November 13: Rebel governance in civil wars

Stewart, Megan A. 2018. "Civil war as state-making: Strategic governance in civil war." *International Organization* 72(1).

November 15: Regime types and civil war

Havard Hegre et al. 2001. "Toward a Democratic Civil Peace?: Democracy, Political Change, and Civil War, 1816-1992." *American Political Science Review* 95(1):33-48.

November 20: Ethnicity and civil war

Nicholas Sambanis. 2001. "Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45(3): 259-282.

November 22: NO CLASS (Natural resources and civil war I)

Note: we won't be meeting due to thanksgiving break, please post in D2L Discussion Board

Paiva Lujala, Nils Petter Gleditsch, and Elisabeth Gilmore. 2005. "A Diamond Curse? Civil War and a Lootable Resource." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49(4): 538-562.

SHORT PAPER #3 DUE AT 11:59 PM ON NOV. 23

November 27: Natural Resources and civil war II

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

November 29: Civil war legacies

Elisabeth Jean Wood. 2008. "The Social Processes of Civil War: The Wartime Transformation of Social Networks." *Annual Review of Political Science* 11: 539-561.

December 4: Civil war forecasting

Havard Hegre et al. "Can We Predict Armed Conflict? How the First 9 Years of Published Forecasts Stand Up to Reality" *International Studies Quarterly* 65(3): 660-668.

December 6: Review Day

December 11 & 13: No Class (Finals Week)

We will not have a final exam; please use the final paper to demonstrate your culmination of knowledge about civil wars throughout the semester – applied to your chosen conflict.

FINAL PAPERS DUE MONDAY, DEC. 18 AT NOON.