

PSC 330: Political Violence

Spring 2015

Course Location: 408 Belk

Instructor: Dr. Sievert

Office Location: 347 Stillwell

Course Time: TR:9:30-10:45

E-mail: jmsievert@email.wcu.edu

Office Hours: TR 11:00am -12:00pm, or by apt.

Introduction

This course examines theories of violent political upheaval, and it assesses the empirical record of these theoretical approaches. Civil war and revolution have become the primary forms of mass organized violence in the international system. We seek to understand why these events occur, what the consequences are wrought by them, and how the international community might respond. We will also explore explanations of phenomena associated with severe political violence and tactics used by governments and rebel groups including genocide, child soldiering, terrorism, and rape as a tactic of war. We will seek to understand a rationale for extreme violence and atrocious behaviors that are common during periods of political instability.

In order to explore these themes the course will be divided into three sections; the first exploring the causes, actors, and issues associated with civil war, and why this has become more common in modern times than interstate war. Second, the course will provide explanations and strategic logic of using genocide and mass killing as a tactic of war, usually by state leaders or governments. Third, we will examine other atrocious tactics used most often by rebel groups such as child soldiering, rape, and terrorism. Throughout the semester we will focus on evaluating the social scientific theories that explain the decisions to use these tactics, and will examine the empirical evidence to weigh support for these theories.

Given that this is an upper level course, I expect classes to be interactive. As such, I will ask open ended questions and I expect participation from students. I also expect that students come prepared to class to ask their own questions about the assigned readings, and to engage in a thoughtful examination of the reading.

This is a class about the concerted use of violence by states and non-state actors against civilians, rebels, and military personnel. As such will be read and watch material that will be uncomfortable for some or all of you. If at any time material in the course makes you personally uncomfortable, beyond a general level to be expected by the topic, please come and speak with me as soon as possible. Alternate readings or assignments will be provided for individual students if a particular topic is too intense.

Violence is offensive. This course is about violence. You may be offended during this course.

Course Requirements

1. **Exams (25% Each, 50% Total)** There will be two exams in this course, a midterm exam, and a cumulative final exam. Exams will be a combination of multiple choice

and written answers (short answer or short essay). The dates of exams are not negotiable. That is there will be no excused absences from exams (expect documented university approved travel). In the event of a truly extraordinary circumstance, such as a hospitalization or death in the immediate family, a makeup exam will be considered on a case by case basis by the discretion of the instructor and must be arranged prior to the exam. A note from the student health center is not verifiable documentation and will not be accepted.

The midterm exam will be held in class on **Tuesday March 17** (yes, right after Spring break) and the final exam will be held during finals week, **Wednesday May 6, from 12:00pm to 2:30pm.**

2. **Papers (17.5% each, 35% total)** Twice during the course of the semester, at the time of your choosing, you will write two, three- to four-page papers on the assigned reading for that week. Readings in this course are often controversial and your job is to critically assess the reading and either agree or disagree with the author's overarching argument. You should include your opinion of the issue at hand, supported with evidence, and your opinion must not be a simple restatement of the arguments made by the author. Your paper grade will reflect your understanding of the topic and how convincingly you have made your argument. More detailed guidelines of the paper can be found on the last page of this syllabus as well as on the course Blackboard site.

During the first week of class you will sign up for two weeks where you will write your papers. On the days that you write your paper you will be expected to start and significantly contribute to the discussion. This will not require any additional work on your part, you will just introduce whatever article or chapter you evaluate in your paper and introduce your argument. One paper must be completed before spring break, and one must be completed after we return.

3. **Participation (15%)** Interaction and discussion is key to the success of this course. I will assign participation grades for each student based on performance. Much of the participation grades will be based on your activity during in-class assignments as well as on the days in which you hand in your paper, but will include general engagement and participation in the course. While attendance is not mandatory (I will not take it every day), however you will lose participation points if you are absent in the lectures and in-class assignment days.

What does good participation look like?

- (a) Paying full attention to your fellow students and instructor when they are speaking, and asking meaningful questions to one another.
- (b) Actively participating in group activities in class.
- (c) Volunteering to speak up during discussions, asking and answering questions.

What does poor participation look like?

- (a) Completing homework for other courses during our class time.
- (b) Looking at your phone and/or laptop while other students or the instructor are speaking.
- (c) Leaving the classroom for extended periods of time.
- (d) Not volunteering to speak in class on a daily basis.

Course Materials

There are a number of required books and articles required for the course.

- Brown, Michael E. , Owen r. Cote Jr., Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller, Eds. (2010), “Contending with Terrorism: Roots, Strategies, and Responses”. The MIT Press: Cambridge, MA.

This text is available for rental through the WCU bookstore. Readings on the course schedule will be denoted with “Brown et al.”

- Regan, Patrick M. (2009) “Sixteen Million One”. Paradigm Publishers: Boulder, CO. This text is required and can be purchased through the WCU bookstore on online from a number of retailers. Readings will be denoted with “Regan”
- Valentino, Benjamin A. (2004), “Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the 20th Century”. Cornell University Press: Ithaca, NY. This text is required and can be purchased through the WCU bookstore on online from a number of retailers. Readings will be denoted with “Valentino”.
- There are various articles also listed on the course schedule. They can be found on the Blackboard site, and will be denoted with ** on the course schedule.

Grading and Quality Point System

A+	97-100	Excellent	4.0
A	94-96	Excellent	4.0
A-	90-93		3.67
B+	87-89		3.33
B	84-86	Good	3.0
B-	80-83		2.67
C+	77-79		2.33
C	74-76	Satisfactory	2.0
C-	70-73		1.67
D+	67-69		1.33
D	64-66	Poor	1.0
D-	60-63		.67
F	0-59	Failure	0

Tentative Course Schedule

Readings are to be completed prior to class on the day they are listed.

Week	Dates	Topic	Readings
1	January 13 January 15	Course Introduction Civil War	Syllabus Regan, Ch. 1
2	January 20 January 22	Causes of Civil War Causes of Civil War	Regan, Ch. 2 & 3 Regan Ch. 4, 5, 6
3	January 27 January 29	Who Fights in Civil Wars? Who Fights in Civil Wars?	Regan, Ch. 7 & 8 Regan, Ch. 9 & 10
4	February 3 February 5	The World and Civil War What Do We Know About Civil War?	Regan, Ch. 11, 12, 13 In-Class Assignment
5	February 10 February 12	Genocide and Mass Killing Perpetrators of Genocide	Valentino, Ch.1 Valentino, Ch. 2
6	February 17 February 19	The Strategy of Mass Killing Ethnic Mass Killings	Valentino, Ch. 3 Valentino, Ch. 4
7	February 24 February 26	No Class, Advising Day Preventing Genocide	Feil “Preventing Genocide”**
8	March 3 March 5	Humanitarian Intervention What Do We Know About Genocide	Kuperman “The Moral Hazard of Intervention” ** In-Class Assignment
9	March 10 March 12	Spring Break Spring Break	
10	March 17 March 19	Mid-Term Exam Can We Justify Torture?	“A Nasty Business”**
11	March 24 March 26 March 26	Atrocious Tactics Atrocious Tactics Child Soldiers	Wood, “Variations in Sexual Violence in War”** Cohen, “Explaining Rape During Civil War”** Andvid and Gates “Recruiting Children for Armed Conflict”**
12	March 31 April 2	Child Soldiers No Class	Achvarina and Reich “No Place to Hide”**
13	April 7 April 9	Terrorism No Class	Brown et al. p. 57-89
14	April 14 April 16	Terrorism	Brown et al. p.93-124 In-Class Assignment
15	April 21 April 23	Terrorism “Scream Bloody Murder”	Brown et al. p. 125-170
16	April 28 April 30	“Scream Bloody Murder” Wrap-Up	In-Class Assignment
	May 6	Final Exam	12:00-2:30 pm

Course Policies

I respect your opinions, questions, problems, and time. I ask for the same in return. Therefore...

Attendance and Late Policy

Course attendance is expected. Students should be in class, prepared and on time. Discussion and participation is the key to success in this course, and as such if you are not in class you cannot benefit from discussion. Additionally, your voice and opinion matters. If you're not in class you can't be heard.

Late Assignments

I am particular about deadlines. I will accept late work up to 48 hours after an assignment is due, but 10 points will be deducted from your assignment grade for each day that it is late. The 48 hours begins at the end of class on the day the assignment was due. After that 48 hour period (this includes weekends) I will not accept your late assignment and you will receive a zero.

I understand that circumstances arise outside of our class, and in the event that there is a truly extraordinary circumstance that prevents you from completing an assignment I may consider an extension on a case by case basis. However, in order to be considered for an extension you must contact me **BEFORE** the assignment is due. Do not approach me after the due date and ask for an extension because I will not grant you one. It is important that you stay in contact with me, and if there is a situation that is affecting your course performance, please come and talk to me as soon as possible.

Communication

It is important to stay in contact with your fellow students and your instructor. I will hold regular office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays and can also be reached Monday through Friday via email. Please come see me, or email me, with any questions or concerns you have as they arise. The semester moves along very quickly, and it is always best to come to me as soon as possible. Do not wait until the end of the semester to let me know if you have questions or problems.

Classroom Technology Policy

As you can probably tell by now this class is much more of a seminar than a lecture. As such your time in class should be devoted to discussion, debate, and listening. Cellphones are a distraction to class and disrespectful to your fellow classmates and your professor. I will deduct participation points if I see cellphones in use during class time.

Laptops, while may indeed be useful for taking notes, they have proved to be too much of a distraction for students using them, and especially for students sitting nearby. Therefore, laptops are not to be used during class time, except in the event of in-class assignments where you may find them useful for research.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Western Carolina University is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. Students who require

reasonable accommodations must identify themselves as having a disability and/or medical condition and provide current diagnostic documentation to Disability Services. All information is confidential. Please contact the Office of Disability Services for more information at (828) 227-3886.

Academic Integrity Policy

“I will practice personal and academic integrity”, WCU Community Creed.

Western Carolina University strives to achieve the highest standards of scholarship and integrity. Any violation of the Academic Integrity Policy is a serious offense because it threatens the quality of scholarship and undermines the integrity of the community. Any violation of the Academic Integrity Policy is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct (see dsce.wcu.edu for more information).

Violation of the Academic Integrity Policy include:

Cheating: Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.

Plagiarism: Representing the words or ideas of someone else as one’s own in any academic exercise.

Fabrication: Creating and/or falsifying information or citation in any academic exercise.

Facilitation: Helping or attempting to help someone to commit a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy in any academic exercise (e.g. allowing another to copy information during an examination).

As a faculty member I reserve the right to determine the appropriate sanctions for violations of the Academic Integrity Policy, including a final grade of “F” in the course. Students will be notified, in writing, of any Academic Integrity Policy allegation and have the right to respond to the allegation. The full text of the WCU Academic Integrity Policy, Process, and the Faculty Reporting Form can be found online at academicintegrity.wcu.edu.

Blackboard and Email

I expect that you check Blackboard and your WCU email account on a regular basis. I will send out class announcements via email and post on Blackboard and it is not acceptable to tell me that you were not aware of an announcement because you did not check your email.

Please check the syllabus for important information about due dates, course policies, and any other information regarding the course. If the answer can be found in the syllabus or on Blackboard expect a reply directing you to those locations.

Email communication with me is strongly encouraged, but remember this is a professional environment. As such, please do not address emails as “Hi Jackie!”, “Wats Up?”, “Hey There!”, or any variation (yes these all really happen). “Dr.Sievert”, “Professor Sievert”, “Dr. J”, or any other respectful salutation is acceptable. If you have a question, please ask!

Student Support Services

Student Support Services provides support to students who are either first-generation, low-income or those who have disclosed a disability with: academic advising, mentoring, one-on-one tutorial support, and workshops focused on career, financial aid and graduate school preparation. You may contact SSS at (828) 227-7127 or email sssprogram@wcu.edu for more information. SSS is located in the Killian Annex, room 138.

Red Zone Campaign

Western Carolina University supports its campus community members in their right to healthy, happy, consensual relationships and is dedicated to developing a culture of respect and non-violence. Early in the first and second year at college, students enter the “Red Zone”, where they are more at-risk for unwanted sexual experiences on college campuses. And, according to NCHA 2013 data, 16.0% of WCU men and women indicated being in an emotionally, physically, or sexually abusive relationship in the past 12 months. As a result, the Red Zone Campaign encourages and empowers students, faculty, and staff to develop an open dialogue on the dangers of sexual violence and to speak up when they see violent behavior occurring.

If you notice red flags in yours or a friend’s relationship, are experiencing violence or have in the past, you have a number of resources available to you:

- Counseling and Psychological Services (828.227.7469 or counselingcenter.wcu.edu)
- REACH of Macon County services in Jackson County (828.586.8969 or www.reachofmaconcounty.org)

To report a crime, please contact University Police at 828.227.8911 (Emergency line).

For more information, please visit redzone.wcu.edu.

Writing and Learning Commons (WaLC)

The Writing and Learning Commons (WaLC), located in BELK 207, provides free small-group course tutoring, one-on-one writing tutoring and academic skills consultations, and online writing and learning resources for all students. All tutoring sessions take place in the WaLC or in designated classrooms on campus. To schedule tutoring appointments, log in to TutorTrac from the WaLC homepage (<http://walc.wcu.edu>) or call 828-227-2274. Distance students and students taking classes at Biltmore Park are encouraged to use Smarthinking and the WaLC’s online resources. Students may also take advantage of writing tutoring offered at the Biltmore Park campus on certain days of the week; call 828-227-2274 or log in to TutorTrac and select “Biltmore Park Writing Tutoring” for availabilities.

One Last Thing...

This class is as much yours as it is mine. Meaning that what we spend time, what we focus discussions on, are largely up to you. I have goals and expectations of what we will cover this semester, however if there is a particular interest in a topic that you feel we should spend more time on, we will.

Paper Guidelines

You will write two, three- to four page (MAX) papers on the readings this semester. The readings are often controversial, and your job is to assess the issue and make an argument for why you either agree or disagree with the author. focus on the strengths and/or weaknesses of the author's argument. You should include your own opinion of the issue, and your opinion must not be a restatement of the author's arguments. Your grade will reflect your understanding of the topic and how convincingly you make your arguments. You should not spend significant time summarizing the author's argument. Any summary should only be made when they are critical to the points you wish to contend.

Although it is not required to do outside research, if you wish to show outstanding effort that will improve your grade, I would recommend doing library research. This will include finding and referencing other sources. Academic journals and books are valued much more highly than newspapers and web sources. Your references should appear both in the text and in a bibliography at the end of the document; the bibliography will not count toward the page requirement. If you choose to do outside research, the sources should be used to complement the argument you make or to contradict the argument made by one or more of the authors.

For evaluation purposes keep track of the following:

- You will choose the day on which to write your papers in the first week of the semesters. You will choose one week before the midterm and one week after. If you need to “switch” days with someone as the semester goes that, this fine, however, you must find someone to take your place, and you must get the “switch” approved by the instructor. Do not skip your chosen day and try to write one at a different time, this is will not be permitted, and the paper will not be accepted.
- I will allow one, **and only one** re-write per student, to earn back half of the points you were deducted, only if the paper was turned in on time. Therefore, you should take these papers seriously. Look over the syllabus and find a topic that you believe would be interesting to think deeply about. Care should be taken to make sure that the paper is polished and well written. Proofread your papers, or find a friend to do that for you, auto-correct and spell check are not your friends.
- A hard, not electronic, copy of the paper is to be handed in to me at the start of class. I will not accept emailed or late papers.
- These formatting requirements must be strictly abided by:
 - 12 pt. Times New Roman font; double-spaced, 1 in margins; page numbers on each page.
 - In-text references must include the author's last name and the year that the source was published. If you a referring a specific piece of text from a source, such as a verbatim quote, you should also include the page number in your reference. This information should be contained within parentheses or as a footnote (no endnotes please).

- There should be a title page, which will not count toward your four-page requirement.
- If you use outside sources, there must be a bibliography at the end of the paper. Using any of the major bibliography style formats will be acceptable.

If you are unsure of how to correctly cite sources, please visit Hunter Library or the Writing and Learning Commons. Here is a link to basic citation rules: <http://www.wcu.edu/academics/campus-academic-resources/writing-and-learning-commons-walc/writing-support/research-and-documentation/citation-rules.asp>. Attributing work to the author is the core of academic integrity, and not knowing how to properly cite sources is not an excuse for plagiarism.