Course Overview

In this course, we will examine ethnicity and its effects on politics. We will engage the concept of ethnicity, how it structures politics and sparks conflict, and what political tools exist to manage these conflicts. In the first part of the course, we explore various definitions of ethnicity. Then we will study the many manifestations of political conflict that can be attributed to ethnic divisions within a society, ranging from discrimination to genocide. Finally, we will evaluate possible mechanisms for managing ethnic conflict. In all three segments of the course, we will draw material from around the world, in particular Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America; in your written assignments and in class discussions, however, I encourage you to bring in expertise, examples, and experiences from any part of the world.

Ethnicity is a crucial dividing line in nearly every society. Its political relevance is evident. Studying ethnic conflict brings together many fields of inquiry within and outside political science: comparative politics, international relations, sociology, economics, religion, and psychology, among others. Though we approach the topic from a political standpoint, we will incorporate these alternative viewpoints and methods whenever possible.

Course Expectations and Requirements

Response Papers

1. Attendance is required, and unexcused absences will adversely affect the participation grade. But attendance is only one component of successful participation. The course follows a seminar/lecture format, and much of the course will be spent discussing the readings and relevant current events. Your primary responsibilities will be to come to class on time and be prepared to engage in discussion and ask questions about the material. If you miss more than 4 classes without proper University documentation, your course grade will be lowered by 1/2 letter grade per absence.

2. Reading the required assignments, typically about 50 pages per session. Your written work for the course needs to demonstrate familiarity with and understanding of the literature by making references to the readings. In addition to the academic literature, you should follow current events regarding ethnic conflict. When appropriate, we will discuss current events during class.

3. If class participation is lacking, I reserve the right to administer quizzes, either announced or unannounced, on the readings. If given, quizzes will be incorporated into your participation grade.
4. You will complete two short papers (4-5 pages). More detailed instructions for each assignment will be distributed during class, at least one week prior to the due date. Written assignments are due, in hard copy form, at the beginning of the class session listed in the syllabus. Late assignments will be penalized 1/2 letter grade for each 24 hour delay.

5. There will be an in-class final exam on Monday 8 December from 2:45-4:45pm. You will receive a set of study questions covering the course material during the final class session. The exam essay questions will be drawn from this list and there will be several short answer questions as well.

Evaluation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Papers (2)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam (cumulative)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. If I suspect academic dishonesty or plagiarism, I will submit formal reports to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. For reference, the University’s clear statement on plagiarism and academic dishonesty is available at this link: http://supolicies.syr.edu/ethics/academic-integrity.htm.

Required Books


The remaining readings are available via Blackboard, as designated in the syllabus.

Meeting and Assignment Schedule

1. Introduction & Overview (Monday, 25 August)

Part I. Understanding Ethnicity

2. What is ethnicity? (Wednesday, 27 August)

*Assignment Due: Short Essay*

How do you define ethnicity? Please write one or two paragraphs on how you conceive of ethnicity. What constitutes an ethnic group? What criteria distinguishes ethnicity from other politically salient characteristics? Please do not do any research to complete this assignment; it should comprise only your own thoughts and ideas.
3. Ethnicity (Friday, 29 August)

Required Readings

*EGC* parts of Ch. 1 “Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict” (pp. 3-12 & pp. 41-54)

Labor Day (1 September)—No Classes

4. Theories of Ethnicity—Primordialism (Wednesday, 3 September)

Required Readings

*EGC* parts of Ch. 2 “A Family Resemblance” (pp. 55-64 & pp. 74-92)


- Clifford Geertz “Primordial Ties” (pp. 40-45)
- Jack Eller and Reed Coughlan “The Poverty of Primordialism” (pp. 45-51)
- Steven Grosby “The Inexpungeable Tie of Primordiality” (pp. 51-56)
- Pierre van den Berghe “Does Race Matter?” (pp. 57-62)

5. Theories of Ethnicity—Constructivism (Friday, 5 September)

Required Readings


- Max Weber “Ethnic Groups” (pp. 35-40)
- Walker Connor “Beyond Reason: The Nature of the Ethnonational Bond” (pp. 69-74)
- Paul R. Brass “Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Identity Formation” (pp. 85-90)
- Michael Hechter “Ethnicity and Rational Choice Theory” (pp. 90-98)
- Anthony D. Smith “Chosen Peoples” (pp. 189-197)


6. Is Ethnicity a Constant, or Can it Change? (Monday, 8 September)

Required Readings

*EGC* part of Ch. 2 “A Family Resemblance” (pp. 64-74)


- See U.S. State Department Background Note for a good overview of Nigeria [http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2836.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2836.htm)
7. Which ethnicities matter? (Wednesday, 10 September)

Required Readings

- Ch. 1 “Individuals and Groups” (pp. 3-25)
- Ch. 2 “Group Power” (pp. 26-45)

Part II. Ethnic Conflict and Its Many Forms

8. Theories of Ethnic Violence—Preliminaries from Psychology (Friday, 12 September)

Required Readings


9. Theories of Ethnic Violence (Monday, 15 September)

Required Readings

EGC Ch. 3 “Conflict Theory and Conflict Motives” (pp. 95-140)


10. 1994 Rwanda Genocide I—The Banality of Evil? (Wednesday, 17 September)

Required Readings

Gourevitch, Philip. 1999. We Wish To Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda. New York: Picador, pp. 4-74.


11. 1994 Rwanda Genocide II (Friday, 19 September)

Required Readings

Gourevitch, pp. 75-131.
In-Class Film, Part 1: The Ghosts of Rwanda

12. 1994 Rwanda Genocide III (Monday, 22 September)

Required Readings

Gourevitch, pp. 132-184.

In-Class Film, Part 2: The Ghosts of Rwanda

13. 1994 Rwanda Genocide IV (Wednesday, 24 September)

Required Readings

Gourevitch, pp. 185-274
Percival, Valerie and Thomas Homer-Dixon. 1995. “Getting Rwanda Wrong.” Saturday Night 110.7 (September): 47-49. [Blackboard]

14. 1994 Rwanda Genocide V (Friday, 26 September)

Required Readings

Gourevitch, pp. 275-320

15. 1994 Rwanda Genocide VI (Monday, 29 September)

Required Readings

Gourevitch, pp. 321-353

Further (optional) Readings

16. Ethnic Cleansing in Darfur, Sudan (Wednesday, 1 October)

Required Readings


17. Sources of Conflict: Group Comparison (Friday, 3 October)

Required Readings

EGC part of Ch. 1 “Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict” (pp. 21-36)

EGC Ch. 4 “Group Comparison and the Sources of Conflict” (pp. 141-184)

18. Peer Editing (Monday, 6 October)

Paper 1 draft due

First Paper Due 10/8

19. Sources of Conflict: Group Entitlement (Wednesday, 8 October)

EGC Ch. 5 “Group Entitlement and the Sources of Conflict” (pp. 185-228)

20. Micro-Level Economic Effects of Ethnic Divisions (Friday, 10 October)

Required Readings


Optional Readings

21. Macro-Level Economic Effects of Ethnic Divisions (Monday, 13 October)

Required Readings


22. Mid-Term Exam (Wednesday, 15 October)

23. Ethnicity and Political Competition (Friday, 17 October)

Required Readings

EGC Ch. 7 “Ethnic Parties and Party Systems” (pp. 291-332)

Optional Readings

EGC Ch. 8 “Competition and Change in Ethnic Party Systems” (pp. 333-364)
EGC Ch. 9 “Multiethnic Coalitions” (pp. 365-395)

24. Political Competition and Ethnic Conflict (Monday, 20 October)

Required Readings

EGC Ch. 10 “Multiethnic Alliances and Parties” (pp. 396-440)

25. Ethnic Violence and the Electoral Process (Wednesday, 22 October)

Required Readings


• Ch. 1 “The Electoral Incentives for Ethnic Violence” (pp. 1-18)
• Ch. 5 “The Electoral Incentives for Hindu-Muslim Violence.” (pp. 137-171)

26. Ethnic Patronage Politics (Friday, 24 October)

Required Readings


27. Globalization and Ethnic Conflict (Monday, 27 October)

Required Readings

- Ch. 5 “Backlash Against Markets” (pp. 127-146)
- Ch. 6 “Backlash Against Democracy” (pp. 147-162)
- Ch. 7 “Backlash Against Market-Dominated Minorities” (pp. 163-176)

Part III. Managing Ethnic Conflict

28. Electoral and Institutional Reforms (Wednesday, 29 October)

Required Readings

*EGC* Ch. 14 “Ethnic Policy: The Constraints and Opportunities” (pp. 563-600)

29. Lijphart v. Horowitz: Consociational v. Incentive-based Approaches (Friday, 31 October)

Required Readings

*EGC* Ch. 15 “Structural Techniques to Reduce Ethnic Conflict” (pp. 601-652)


30. Designing Democracy (Monday, 3 November)

Required Readings

- Ch. 5 “Electoral Systems for a Divided Society” (pp. 163-203)
- Ch. 6 “Designs for Democracy” (pp. 204-238)

31. Democracy and Fair Representation in America (Wednesday, 5 November)

Required Readings


Optional Readings


(Friday, 7 November)

Required Readings


*After Becker and Friedman, read:*


33. Overcoming Discrimination and Inequality: Preferential Policies  
(Monday, 10 November)

Required Readings

*EGC* Ch. 16 “Preferential Policies to Reduce Ethnic Conflict” (pp. 653-680).

Optional Readings


34. Is Democracy Good for Ethnic Conflict? (Wednesday, 12 November)

Required Readings


• Ch. 8 “Democracy and Ethnic Violence” (pp. 236-241)
35. Nations, States, and Nation-States (Friday, 14 November)

Required Readings


36. Secessionism and Irredentism (Monday, 17 November)

Required Readings


EGC Ch. 6 “The Logic of Secessions and Irredentas” (pp. 229-88)

37. Separatism as a Policy Tool (Wednesday, 19 November)

Required Readings


38. International Intervention (Friday, 21 November)

Required Readings

*EGC* Ch. 13 ”The Effects of Intervention and the Art of Prevention” (pp. 526-562)

*Review Gourevitch, esp. 177+

39. International Community as Honest Broker (Monday, 24 November)

Required Readings


Thanksgiving Break (26-28 November)—No Classes

40. Responding to Atrocities: the International Criminal Court
   (Monday, 1 December)

Required Readings

Search for other recent news on the Darfur/Sudan ICC case

41. Peer Editing (Wednesday, 3 December)

Paper 2 draft due

Second Paper Due 12/5

42. (Friday, 5 December)

Wrap-Up & Discussion of Papers

Final Exam: Monday, 8 December from 2:45-4:45pm

Last updated: August 24, 2008.