POL 429/2429Y:  
DEMOCRACY AND ETHNIC CONFLICT 
Mondays 12:00-2:00 pm (TG 24) 

Instructor: Prof. Jacques Bertrand  
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Office hours: Mondays 2:00-3:00 pm

Course objective and description 
This course aims at exploring various facets of how democracy contributes to intensifying or reducing ethnic conflict. Many studies have suggested that democratic institutions in their early stage fuel ethnic violence. Yet, only democratic institutions can provide the kind of institutional channels that allow conflicts to be resolved through negotiation and compromise. We discuss the debates and theoretical propositions that arise from empirical studies on these issues.

Format 
This seminar is reading and discussion intensive. All students are expected to have covered the required readings for each session, and to participate actively in the weekly discussions. The recommended readings listed complement the required readings, and are for your interest.

Requirements and Evaluation 
1. First assignment, ‘Conflict monitor’, 30%. Due: October 6
   Write a paper on a particular conflict, and provide a brief overview of the current state of the conflict, and the main actors and processes involved in attempting to resolve it. Along with your regional group, provide a regional briefing to the class. Essays to be submitted through Turnitin. Undergraduate: 8-10 pages; graduate: 10-12 pages.

2. Second assignment, Research paper, 50%. Due: December 1
   Compare two conflicts and assess the degree to which democratic instruments (or their absence) have contributed to intensifying the conflict, or reducing it. Essays to be submitted through Turnitin.
Undergraduate students: 10-12 pages / Graduate students: 15-20 pages.

3. Participation: 20%. Class attendance; weekly 5-10 minute presentations; participation in class discussions.

**Penalty for late submissions: 2% per day; no extensions; medical reasons require proper documentation are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Readings

The following book is required and available at the bookstore.


Other readings and books are indicated as follow:

- @ - Available on Blackboard
- ® - Available on reserve (Robarts Library)
- $ - Available at the bookstore

Turnitin

We are using a university wide service called Turnitin. Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com website.

Blackboard

We are using Blackboard in this course. You will need your UTORid and password.

Logon at http://portal.utoronto.ca

For help and information, please contact: blackboard@utoronto.ca

Do not direct your Blackboard specific questions to the instructor. We are unable to provide support for the web-based software. There are special services that you should
consult. You should access the course regularly to check for announcements, broadcasts, etc...

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**Week 1 - Introduction to the course**

**No readings**

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**Week 2 - Ethnic and National Identity**

What is ethnic identity? How does it differ from the concept of the “nation”? How fixed or malleable are these identities? Under what conditions to they change?

**Required**


@ Smith, Anthony D. Chap. 5 “Supra- or Super Nationalism?” (pp. 116-146) in *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*. Polity Press.

**Recommended**

@ Connor, W. (1978). “A nation is a nation, is a state, is an ethnic group is a...”. *Ethnic and racial studies*, 1(4), 377-400.

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**Week 3 - Democracy in the context of ethnic diversity**

The literature on democracy has often ignored ethnic identity. What are the challenges of building democratic institutions in a society with a high degree of ethnic diversity? What is the importance of having a “cultural core”, or a “nation” in order to build stable democratic institutions?

**Required**


**Recommended**


**Week 4 - Citizenship and identity politics**

What does it mean for ethno-cultural minorities to organize a democratic polity around liberal principles? Are individual rights and recognition/protection of minority rights compatible?

**Required**


**Recommended**


**Week 5 – Democratic transitions and conflict**

Democratic transitions have often associated with a rise of ethnic violence. What are the conditions leading to violence? When do transitions reduce ethnic violence and conflict?

**Required**


**Recommended**


**Week 6 - Consociationalism and its critics**

Arend Lijphart began a very long debate about the merits of consociational democracy as an institutional mechanism for peaceful ethnic relations. What is consociational democracy? What are its characteristics? On what basis do some scholars disagree with Lijphart?

**Required**


**Recommended**


**Week 7 - Autonomy and secessionism**

Autonomy has often been prescribed as institutional solution to ethnic conflict. Critics argue that it encourages secession. What are the conditions under which autonomy might lead to more stable democracy?

**Required**


**Recommended**


Week 8 - Accommodating national claims

The idea of accommodating more than one nation within a single state is controversial. What are the implications of accommodating such claims? Why have states resisted claims to nationhood? Cases in Asia offer a wide range of fascinating examples that we will discuss.

Required


Recommended


Week 9 - Democracy, Societal Actors, and Ethnic Peace

A vibrant civil society is associated with a well functioning democracy. Some argue that civic engagement can reduce the incidence of ethnic conflict. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this argument?

Required

@ Chandra, K. (2001). “Civic Life or Economic Interdependence?” Commonwealth and Comparative Politics. 39:1. Pp. 110-8


**Recommended**


**Week 10 - Parties, Elections and Democracy**

Political parties are a core institution of electoral democracy. Are political parties organized along ethnic lines inherently unstable for democracy?

**Required**


@ Posner, D. N. (2007). Regime change and ethnic cleavages in Africa. Comparative Political Studies, 40(11), 1302-1327.


@ Wilkinson, S. I. 2006. “Chapter 1” Votes and violence: Electoral competition and ethnic riots in India. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

**Recommended**


**Week 11 - Wrap-up**

What have we learned about the relationship between ethnic and national identity, and democracy? What have we missed?