COURSE OVERVIEW

This course provides a general overview on the origins, dynamics, and outcomes of civil war and counterinsurgency. It aims to provide a theoretical and empirical foundation for understanding these forms of conflict, the logic of their violence, and the determinants of their duration and outcomes. An additional objective of the course is to consider questions of definition, empirical strategy, and methodology relevant to conducting rigorous research on these topics.

The course is organized in three parts. The first reviews the general concept of civil war and provides an overview of various theoretical approaches to understanding it. We will consider arguments concerning identity and ethnic conflict, the political economy of violence, and rationalist explanations of war. The second part of the course examines the dynamics of insurgency and counterinsurgency, including recruitment and rebel alliances, combatant strategies, and third-party intervention. The final section considers the outcomes and aftermaths of civil war, including conflict duration and recurrence, the challenges of peacekeeping and state building, and the future prevalence of armed conflict in the international system.

PREREQUISITES

This course is open to advanced undergraduate and graduate students only. Previous training in international relations, security studies, and/or comparative politics is required. In addition, familiarity with quantitative methods is strongly recommended, as many of the assigned readings employ statistics and/or formal methods.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

The course will be managed via Quercus (https://q.utoronto.ca/). To access Quercus, you must have an active University of Toronto email address. It is expected that students will set their email and Quercus accounts to receive notifications for all course announcements. Students are also required to register for a University of Toronto Zoom account (https://utoronto.zoom.us) prior to the first week of classes. Only authenticated users can join Zoom meetings—please follow the instructions to ensure that your account is authenticated. Students will also need stable internet access, a working webcam, and microphone capabilities on their computers to participate in discussions. Students are expected to review and be in compliance with the University’s requirements for online learning (https://www.viceprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/tech-requirements-online-learning).

MODES OF INSTRUCTION

Seminar meetings: In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated disruptions, seminars will meet synchronously and online during the regularly scheduled course times for all meetings. We
will use Zoom for all class meetings.

Office hours: Weekly office hours will be held synchronously and online via Zoom during the times noted above. Office hours will be held as one-on-one private meetings. Weekly sign-ups will be organized via the course Quercus calendar.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

The course will be run as a discussion-based seminar and students will be expected to have completed all required readings prior to class. Course assignments seek to foster learning, engagement, and original thinking. To those ends, assessment in the course will be based on the following criteria:

Engagement and participation in seminar discussions (15%): student-led discussion is critical to the success of a seminar course. To those ends, students will be assessed on their attendance (5%), their level of engagement (5%), and their degree of preparation for class discussions (5%).

Paper proposal (20%): a 5 page, double-spaced research paper proposal that provides the foundation for a major research paper. The proposal should clearly define a research question, identify the relevant literature, advance a preliminary theoretical argument, derive hypotheses, overview a rigorous research design, specify variables and their measurement, and articulate a realistic plan for the project. Proposals will be due at the beginning of class on Week 5 (14 October).

Presentation (15%): a pre-recorded, 10 minute video presentation that overviews the major research paper’s main findings and contributions. It can take the form of a mock policy briefing for government or an academic conference presentation. Students will be assessed both on their own presentation (10%) as well as the constructive feedback they provide for others (5%). Presentations will be due at the beginning of class on Week 9 (18 November).

Research paper (50%): a 20 page, double-spaced paper that builds off the paper proposal and presentation to address a major question in the study of civil war and counterinsurgency. The paper should be written in the form of a first draft of a paper intended for publication, meaning it should include a research question, a clear thesis statement, a brief literature review, a theoretical argument, and an empirical test of the theory. The research papers will be due before the beginning of class on Week 12 (9 December).

POLICIES

Late assignments: Late assignments will be subject to a late penalty of 5% per day (including weekends) of the total marks for the assignment. Assignments submitted five calendar days beyond the due date will be assigned a grade of zero. Assignments handed in after the work has been returned to the class cannot be marked for credit.

Extensions on assignments: Extensions on assignments will not be granted, excepting only extraordinary personal circumstances. If you find yourself in such a circumstance, you must formally apply for an extension by sending a written request to me via email as soon as possible. Note that I will not grant extensions requested after a deadline has already past. Your request must include the following information:
- Information identifying which assignment you need an extension for
- An explanation of the extraordinary personal circumstances that necessitate an extension
- Any documentation you have to legitimate the request
- A new proposed due date
I will consider your request and write you back with a new due date. If you are granted an extension, it is final and is non-negotiable.

Academic honesty and Turnitin.com: Plagiarism is a major academic offense and will be treated accordingly. Students are required to familiarize themselves with and conform to the University of Toronto’s policies on Academic Integrity. In addition, students should consult Margaret Proctor’s guide on “How Not to Plagiarize.” 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.

Accessibility: The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accessibility accommodations of any kind, please contact Accessibility Services at accessibility.services@utoronto.ca as soon as possible, and well in advance of assignment deadlines.

Communication and email: Students are strongly encouraged to ask questions and voice concerns during seminar discussions or during office hours. If email is strictly required, you must use your U of T email address in all correspondence. I will aim to respond to emails within 24 hours during weekdays. But please keep in mind the inefficiency of email communication—it is often much easier and more helpful to have a discussion during office hours.

READINGS AND SCHEDULE
All required readings are available at the following link: https://q.utoronto.ca/. Students do not need to purchase any books or materials for this class.

PART I: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Week 1 (16 September): Organizational Session and Preview of the Course
No readings.

Week 2 (23 September): Concepts and Measurement

Additional Recommended Readings


**Week 3 (30 September): Identity and Ethnic Conflict**


**Additional Recommended Readings**


**Week 4 (7 October): The Political Economy of Violence**


**Additional Recommended Readings**


Angrist, Joshua; Adriana Kugler. 2008. “Rural Windfall or a New Resource Curse? Coca, Income,


**Week 5 (14 October): The Bargaining Model of War**


**Additional Recommended Readings**


**PART II: DYNAMICS OF INSURGENCY AND COUNTERINSURGENCY**

**Week 6 (21 October): Recruitment, Rebel Alliances, and Fragmentation**


**Additional Recommended Readings**


**Week 7 (28 October): Insurgent Violence**


**Additional Recommended Readings**


**Week 8 (4 November): Counterinsurgent Strategies**


**Additional Recommended Readings**


**Week 9 (18 November): Third-Party Intervention**


**Additional Recommended Readings**


**PART III: OUTCOMES, AFTERMATHS, AND FORECASTS**

**Week 10 (25 November): Conflict Duration, Termination, and Recurrence**


**Additional Recommended Readings**


**Week 11 (2 December): The Challenges of Peacekeeping and State Building**


**Additional Recommended Readings**


**Week 12 (9 December): The “Decline” of War and Forecasting the Future**


**Additional Recommended Readings**

