

CRIM.3800 – 201
Special Topics: Civil Wars

Spring 2023

Mon. & Wed.: 2:00 – 3:15 p.m.

Instructor

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Course Website: Blackboard
Office: HSSB 435
Office Hours: Mon. & Wed., 12:00 – 1:30 PM

Description

Civil wars, insurgency, terrorism, mass killing, and other forms of intrastate armed conflict are among the most common types and deadliest forms of violence on the planet. Indeed, since the end of World War II in 1945, conflict within countries has become more common than the international wars that are fought between them. Such conflicts destroy local economies and infrastructure, undermine public health, and generate widespread despair, anger, and radicalization. Civil conflicts also have significant implications for national security. Terrorists find safe haven in failing states ravaged by civil war, refugees flee conflict zones for neighboring states, and the underground traffic in illicit substances and persons proliferates.

Upon successfully completing this course, you will be familiar with the causes and consequences of some of the most important forms of political violence. More importantly, you will be able to apply this knowledge to real-world scenarios, including historical cases, current events, and the prospects for political violence in the future. Finally, you will develop skills that are useful regardless of your post-college career choices. Such skills include thinking analytically and critically, and presenting logically sound arguments in written form.

Learning Objectives

On completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Understand civil wars, insurgencies, and political violence since 1945;
- Evaluate these phenomena and their impact on national and international security;
- Analyze competing theories and explanations of civil war;
- Understand the tactics employed by participants in political violence;

- Demonstrate knowledge of how episodes of political violence end; and,
- Assess the likelihood of civil wars in the future.

Required Readings & Course Material

There is one textbook that is required for this course. Students should purchase this book and read the relevant sections as assigned every week. We will also read a number of pieces consisting of journal articles and webpages. These can be found in the Blackboard system. Assigned readings are listed on the course calendar below.

- T. David Mason and Sara McLaughlin Mitchell (eds.). *What Do We Know about Civil Wars?* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. ISBN: 978-1-4422-4225-8.

Optional Resources

A number of blogs and websites are also useful to our area of study. These include:

- “Political Violence at a Glance.” <http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/>
- “START Center.” <http://www.start.umd.edu/>
- “UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia.” <http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/database/>

COVID Policies

Students are expected to attend class regularly, as regular attendance is one of the most important contributors to student success. However, students may occasionally need to miss class due to illness, emergency, or caring for a sick family member. In such cases, you are responsible for notifying me of your absences and working with me to arrange to make up any missed work. I will be accommodating to students who are experiencing pandemic-related challenges, but you must communicate your requests with me regularly and with as much advance-notice as possible.

If you test positive, are exposed, and/or are required to quarantine, **do not attend class!** Doing so will not count against your grade.

Also, if you feel sick (COVID or not), **do not attend class!** Even if you are only experiencing a cold, your fellow students and I would be more comfortable if you recuperate at home. Doing so will not count against your grade.

Likewise, if I should need to miss class, I will communicate with you via email as soon as possible with instructions.

If the University returns to remote learning, or if the professor must quarantine, necessary adjustments to this syllabus will be made.

Students may wear masks and other PPE if they so choose.

Student Mental Health and Well-being

We are a campus that cares about the mental health and well-being of all individuals in our campus community, particularly during this uncertain time. If you or someone you know are experiencing mental health challenges at UMass Lowell, please contact Counseling Services, who are offering remote counseling via telehealth for all enrolled, eligible UMass Lowell students who are currently residing in Massachusetts or New Hampshire. I am available to talk with you about stresses related to your work in my class.

Link to Counseling Services: <https://www.uml.edu/student-services/counseling/>

Disability Services

If you have a documented disability that will require classroom accommodations, please notify me as soon as possible, so that we might make appropriate arrangements. Please speak to me during office hours or send me an email, as I respect, and want to protect, your privacy. Visit the Student Disability Services webpage for further information.

Link to Student Disability Services:<https://www.uml.edu/student-services/Disability/>

Academic Integrity Policy

All students are advised that there is a University policy regarding academic integrity. It is the students' responsibility to familiarize themselves with these policies. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work.

Link to UMass Lowell policy: <https://www.uml.edu/catalog/undergraduate/policies/academic-policies/academic-integrity.aspx>

Students should follow accepted ethical and moral standards in their academic work. Academic misconduct, including plagiarism or cheating, will result in a zero on the assignment in question.

University Privacy Statement

UMass Lowell recognizes the importance of mutual trust between students and faculty. Neither faculty nor students may record video or audio of a course or private conversation without all parties' consent. Massachusetts is a two-party consent state, which means it is illegal to record someone without their permission. Recordings of classroom lectures are the intellectual property of the instructor. Instructors have the right to prohibit audio and video recording of their lectures, unless the requesting student is registered with Disabilities Services and recording of class sessions is an approved accommodation. In addition, sharing of or selling recordings of classroom activity, discussions or lectures with any other person or medium without permission of the instructor is prohibited.

Health & Safety

The safety and health of the UMass Lowell community is our shared priority. In seeking to provide the fullest academic and campus life experience possible, UMass Lowell will rely on all members of our community to act responsibly. For the latest updates on UMass Lowell's COVID policies, please visit www.uml.edu/coronavirus.

UMass Lowell has implemented reasonable health and safety protocols in accordance with national and state public health guidelines. These standards apply to anyone who is physically present on campus or participating in a UMass Lowell-sponsored activity.

- *Daily Symptom Checker:* All campus community members should use the daily symptom checker (www.uml.edu/alert/coronavirus/COVID-19-symptom-review.aspx) every day prior to leaving your home, apartment or room.
- *Vaccination:* COVID-19 vaccination is required for all students (with rare and approved exceptions). Please visit Mass. Vaccine Finder (vaxfinder.mass.gov) to find vaccine locations.
- *Face Coverings:* The university no longer maintains a mask mandate. However, you are free to wear a mask as you choose.

Classroom Courtesy

Classroom courtesy is an essential component of creating an effective learning environment. All students have the right to learn without unnecessary distractions, and to do so without awkward confrontations with their fellow students. It is your responsibility to be on time and stay for the entire class. In circumstances where you need to leave early, tell the professor beforehand. If you are unavoidably late, please enter the classroom with as minimum a disruption as possible. Repeated disruptions of class will lead to a reduction in your final grade.

Most importantly, class discussions of issues relating to politics, security strategies, and criminology can lead to strong feelings and heated debate. Because this is a college classroom, all discussion must be respectful and scholarly.

Scholarly Comments:

- are respectful of diverse opinions and open to follow up questions and/or disagreement
- are related to class and/or the course material
- focus on advancing the discussion about issues related to the course and/or course material rather than personal beliefs, and
- are delivered in normal tones and a non-aggressive manner.

Unacceptable Comments:

- are personal in nature. This includes attacks on a person's appearance, demeanor, or political beliefs.

- include interrupting the instructor or other students. Raise your hand and wait to be recognized.
- often use the discussion to argue for political positions and/or beliefs. If political discussions arise, they must be discussed in a scholarly way (see above).
- may include using raised tones, yelling, engaging in arguments with other students and being threatening in any manner.
- include ignoring the instructor's authority to maintain the integrity of the classroom environment.

Mobile Device Policy

Please refrain from texting, emailing, and other activities that will distract from your ability to interact with others or learn the material. Please silence your devices.

Late Assignment Policy

Late submissions will only be tolerated in exceptional cases (such as a medical or family emergency). Without proper documentation, assignments that are submitted late will receive an automatic 10 percent reduction per day. Assignments submitted more than 5 days after the deadline will not be accepted and will receive a zero.

Inclement Weather, Class Cancelations, and Remote Learning

If, for any reason, a class is unable to meet as regularly scheduled, the instructor will make adjustments to the class schedule.

Assignments

The class contains a total of 200 possible points. There are four major components to the class. The point breakdown for each is listed below:

1. Attendance and Professionalism (20 points total);
2. Reflection Papers (4 points each; 40 points total);
3. Two Exams (45 points each; 90 points total); and,
4. One paper (50 points).

Deadlines

The table below shows each assignment's window of availability and its due date. All assignments are due at 11:59 PM of their respective due dates.

Assignment	Assignment Window	Due Date
Week 2 Reflection	Jan. 24 – Jan. 29	Sunday, Jan. 29
Week 3 Reflection	Jan. 30 – Feb. 5	Sunday, Feb. 5
Week 4 Reflection	Feb. 6 – Feb. 12	Sunday, Feb. 12
Week 5 Reflection	Feb. 13 – Feb. 19	Sunday, Feb. 19
Week 6 Reflection	Feb. 21 – Feb. 26	Sunday, Feb. 26
Week 7 Reflection	Feb. 27 – Mar. 4	Sunday, Mar. 4
Midterm Exam	Mar. 13 – Mar. 19	Sunday, Mar. 19
Week 9 Reflection	Mar. 20 – Mar. 26	Sunday, Mar. 26
Week 10 Reflection	Mar. 27 – Apr. 2	Sunday, Apr. 2
Week 11 Reflection	Apr. 3 – Apr. 10	Monday, Apr. 10
Week 12 Reflection	Apr. 11 – Apr. 16	Sunday, Apr. 16
Paper	Until Due Date	Sunday, Apr. 23
Final Exam	Finals Week	Finals Week

1 – Attendance and Professionalism (20 points total)

Attendance:

I will regularly take roll and then post your attendance record in Blackboard. Your attendance grade will be based upon the proportion of times you attend out of the total number of time that I take the roll. You have two “free” absences before they will impact your grade.

Professionalism:

Although lectures comprise most of this class, it is my intention to also emphasize discussion. To maximize this part of your grade, it is highly recommended that you come to class prepared (e.g., having done the assigned readings) and be willing to participate in discussions. Students are therefore expected to engage with the lectures by asking questions, responding to prompts, providing thoughtful analysis, etc.

My hope is that the classroom will have an atmosphere in which ideas and opinions will be welcomed and addressed. As such, please note that you will be graded on a number of criteria beyond simple participation, under the rubric of “professionalism,” and you are expected to act in a professional manner.

Other ways to lose points include but are not limited to: being a disruption to others (e.g., side conversations with friends, reading for other classes, texting, browsing the internet), leaving class early without my explicit prior approval, repeatedly failing to answer a question if called upon, and not participating in classroom discussions and exercises in a productive manner.

Please note that leaving class before it is dismissed and then not returning is extremely rude. Perhaps most importantly, it is highly disrespectful to the learning environment of your fellow students. If you engage in this behavior, you will be marked as absent for the day. If you must leave class early, please obtain my explicit prior approval. If you become sick and must leave early, please email me afterwards.

2 – Two exams (1 midterm; 1 final; 45 points each; 90 points total)

There will be two exams in this class: a midterm and a final. These exams will pose a mix of multiple choice and written questions. Neither exam is cumulative.

Both exams will be administered in Blackboard. You will have a five day window in which to take these exams. For the midterm, you will have two hours to complete the exam. For the final, you will have three hours.

“Make up” exams are available only for legitimate family and medical related emergencies, and school-sanctioned events in which the student is a direct participant. Students seeking a “make up” exam must provide documentation and must contact me as far in advance of the exam as possible. I will then set a time for you to take the exam. Please note that although “make up” exams will test the same material as the standard exams, the questions themselves may be altered.

3 – Reflection Papers (4 points each; 40 points total)

During ten weeks of the semester, I will provide a prompt in Blackboard. Each student will need to write a 350 word reflection paper that responds to these questions by 11:59 PM on Sunday. These reflection papers are to be based on a critical understanding of the readings. The Reflection Papers are to be free of unsupported opinion and are, instead, to be focused on objective analysis of the issues posed in the prompts. Reflection papers should be double spaced, with one inch margins. A cover page is not necessary.

If the university returns to remote learning, these reflection papers will be replaced with discussion boards designed to help facilitate classroom discussion.

5 – One essay (50 points)

All students are to submit a **2500 word essay on the date specified on the deadline table**. Please ensure that you keep to within +/-10% of the specified word limits. Essays that do not keep to within these limits will be penalized. To make sure your essay respects the word-count, use the “review” tab in Microsoft Office and click on “word count,” make sure to un-tick “Include, textboxes, footnotes...”. A word count should appear at the end of your essay.

Instructions:

1. Your paper is to cover a case of civil conflict, a rebel group, or an episode of political violence from the perspective of the theories discussed in the class. A list of acceptable cases can be found in the addendum at the end of this document. You must select a case from this list.
2. Your paper is to apply one or more of the theories, themes, or concepts that we cover in class to the case you have selected. You should discuss how these concepts explain the origins of the conflict or organization, how it was fought, and how it was resolved (or is likely to be resolved if it is still ongoing). Alternatively, you may also write about how course theories, themes, or concepts *fail* to explain your case.
3. The paper should not simply summarize the case you are writing about. The aim here is for you to apply a social-scientific perspective to the topic of your choice, and to examine your cases analytically, rather than descriptively. You should therefore think about how theory can explain the overall pattern of events in your case. Papers that merely summarize will be severely penalized.

Formatting guidelines

The format of the paper should adhere to the following principles:

- Include a bibliography that starts on a new page. These cannot be included in the word count.
- Late submissions will only be tolerated in exceptional cases (such as a medical or family emergency). Unless you have sought permission from the professor, essays that are submitted late will receive an automatic 10 point reduction per day. Essays submitted more than five days (the threshold at which the penalty would result in a 50% grade reduction) after the deadline will not be accepted and will receive a zero.

- The aim of the essay is to gain practice at building an argument and to learn how to recognize good research. As such, students must provide attribution throughout their paper for each fact, assertion, or argument. Attribution is given with in-text, parenthetical citations and a bibliography. All quotations should be cited, of course, but overly-extensive use of quotes to inflate your word-count will result in a lower grade.
- You must use at least **seven** scholarly sources (journal articles, academic books, government reports, etc.). The aim of the exercise is to gain practice at original research and to learn how to recognize a good source on which to base an argument. As such, questionable websites and encyclopedias are not permitted for use as references. Generally, questionable websites include anything with a “.com” or a “.org” top level domain. Citing or giving attribution to Wikipedia is expressly forbidden. News articles can be cited, but your paper should rely mostly on academic sources. Over-reliance on news sources will result in a lower grade.
- All citations must use parenthetical citations, in APA format.
- A full bibliography must also be included at the end of the essay, listing all sources in alphabetical order. The bibliography must be excluded from the word count. References to journal articles and anything else on the internet should include the links from which they were obtained. References are checked to confirm their validity.
- Plagiarism, which is defined as claiming the work of others as your own, is totally unacceptable. As well, using the language of another source with only a few word changes is a form of plagiarism, even if you provide a properly cited reference. Attempting to artificially construct a paper by pasting together the words of others, with little or no original writing of your own, is simply another form of plagiarism and will be treated as such. The aim here is for you to generate your own research.
- Evidence that AI software has been used to generate your essay, in-whole or in-part, will result in a failing grade on the assignment and a report filed for academic dishonesty. Although AI is new, there are already methods available to detect its use. These methods will be used.

Paper grading criteria

Papers are graded on the following criteria (with points out of 50 in parentheses):

- 1. Argument (5):** Stated in introduction? Convincing? Original?
- 2. Analysis (15):** Critical discussion/evaluation of facts? Conclusions logical?
- 3. Coherence & Structure (7.5):** Line of argumentation? Contradictions? Terms used consistently? Logical Structure?
- 4. Research (15):** Enough relevant sources? Quality of sources? Primary sources? Attribution given in text to all facts?
- 5. Language and form (7.5):** Grammar/punctuation? Page numbers? Paragraphs? Referencing? Bibliography?

Each one of these criteria will then be graded according to whether it has (with percentages for each category):

- **No issues** (-0 %);
- **Minor issues** (-10 %);
- **Moderate issues** (-30 %);
- **Major issues** (-50 %);
- **Severe issues** (-70 %);
- **Significant issues** (-100 %).

Final Course Grades

Grades are assigned according to the following scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	93–100%
A-	90–92.9%
B+	87–89.9%
B	83–86.9%
B-	80–82.9%
C+	77–79.9%
C	73–76.9%
C-	70–72.0%
D+	67–69.9%
D	64–66.9%
F	0–63.9%

Course Calendar & Assigned Readings

The following calendar is only a guide. Dates and topics are subject to change. Any changes will be announced in-class well ahead of time. It is your responsibility to keep up to date with any schedule alterations.

Readings marked “**Text**” are found in the textbook(s).

Readings marked “**Bb**” are to be found in the Blackboard Learn system.

Readings marked “**Web**” are found on the internet.

Week 1, January 18: Course introduction

- No readings.

Week 2, January 23: SNOW DAY.

Week 2, January 25: NO CLASS (professor at conference)

- Watch lecture by Barbara Walter (skip Q&A at end of video): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R19Q1JQ_99U

Week 3, January 30: Definitions / Types of civil conflict

Textbook, Chapter 1.

Week 3, February 1: Historical Trends

- Barbara Walter. 2017. “The New New Civil Wars.” *Annual Review of Political Science*. **Bb**

Week 4, February 6: What causes conflict I (Motive)?

- Textbook, Chapter 2.

Week 4, February 8: What causes conflict II (Organization)?

- Colin J. Beck. “The contribution of social movement theory to understanding terrorism.” *Sociology Compass*. **Bb**

Week 5, February 13: What causes conflict III (Opportunity)?

- James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war." *American Political Science Review*. Bb

Week 5, February 15: Ethnic conflict (part 1)

- Textbook, Chapter 3.

Week 6, February 20: PRESIDENT'S DAY. (NO CLASS).

Week 6, February 21: MONDAY CLASS SCHEDULE. Ethnic conflict (part 2)

- Rogers Brubaker and David D. Laitin. 1998. "Ethnic and nationalist violence." *Annual Review of Sociology*. Bb

Week 6, February 22: State capacity and regime type (part 1)

- Textbook, chapter 4.

Week 7, February 27: State capacity and regime type (part 2)

- Hanne Fjelde, et al. 2021. "Which Institutions Matter? Re-Considering the Democratic Civil Peace." *International Studies Quarterly*.

Week 7, March 1: The environment, natural resources, and conflict (part 1)

- Textbook, chapter 13.

Spring Break: March 5 – March 12

Week 8, March 13: The international dimensions of civil conflict (part 1)

- Textbook, Chapter 5.

Week 8, March 15: The international dimensions of civil conflict (part 2)

- Alex Braithwaite and Sangmi Jeong. "Diffusion in International Politics." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. **Bb**

Week 9, March 20: Third party intervention

- Textbook, chapter 6.

Week 9, March 22: Insurgency and asymmetric conflict

- Stathis N. Kalyvas and Laia Balcells. 2010. "International system and technologies of rebellion: How the end of the Cold War shaped internal conflict." *American Political Science Review*. **Bb**

Week 10, March 27: Counter-insurgency

- Daniel Byman. 2016. "Death solves all problems: The authoritarian model of counterinsurgency." *Journal of Strategic Studies* 39(1). **Bb**

Week 10, March 29: Mass killing and civilian victimization

- Benjamin Valentino, et al. 2004. "'Draining the sea': mass killing and guerrilla warfare." *International Organization American Political Science Review*. **Bb**

Week 11, April 3: War duration and termination

- Barbara F. Walter. 1997. "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement." *International Organization*. **Bb**

Week 11, April 5: Negotiated settlement & civil war recurrence

- Textbook, chapter 7 & 8.

Week 12, April 10: Peacekeeping

- Textbook, chapter 9.

Week 12, April 12: Transitional justice

- Textbook, chapter 11.

Week 13, April 19: Applicability to the United States (part 1)

- Daniel Byman. 2021. “White Supremacy, Terrorism, and the Failure of Reconstruction in the United States.” *International Security*. **Bb.**

Week 14, April 24: Applicability to the United States (part 2)

- Rebecca Best. 2022. “Why Isn’t There a Domestic War on Terror in the US?” <https://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2022/05/25/why-isnt-there-a-domestic-war-on-terror-in-the-us/> **WEB.**

Week 14, April 26: The Future / Flex Day

- Tanisha M. Fazal and Paul Poast. 2019. “War is not over.” *Foreign Affairs*. **BB**
- If we have a class cancelation, this session will be used to make it up.

FINAL EXAM: Exam given online during Finals Week.

Addendum

This appendix contains a list of conflicts, groups, and episodes of political violence that are appropriate topics for your research paper. These cases are contemporary: most were ongoing or erupted after 1989.

1. Abu Sayyaf Group (Philippines; 1991–present)
2. Afghanistan (Taliban v. Northern Alliance) (1994–2001)
3. Algeria (1991–2002)
4. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Mahgreb (2003–present)
5. Al-Shabaab (2007–present)
6. Angola (1975–2002)
7. Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) (1991–1994)
8. Boko Haram (Nigeria) (2009–present)
9. Bosnia (1991–1995)
10. Burundi (1993–2005)
11. Chechnya (1st, 1994–1996; or 2nd, 1998–2009)
12. Colombia (FARC) (1964–2015)
13. Croatia (1991–1995)
14. Darfur (2003–present)
15. DRC War (1st, 1997; or 2nd, 1998–2003)
16. East Timor (1975–1999)
17. Ethiopia (1975–1991)
18. Ethiopia (Tigray War; 2020–present)
19. EZLN (Zapatistas) (1994)
20. Fatah (1959–present)
21. Georgia (Abkhazia / South Ossetia) (1992–1993)
22. Guatemala (1966–1996)
23. Hamas (1987–present)
24. Hezbollah (1983–present)
25. Intifada (Israel/Palestine) (1st, 1987–1993; or 2nd, 2000–2005)
26. Ivory Coast (Cote d'Ivoire) (2002–2007)
27. Kashmir (1989–present)
28. Kosovo (1998–1999)
29. Kurdish insurgency in Turkey (1984–present)
30. Kurdish and/or Shia uprising in Iraq (1991)
31. Lebanon (1979–1991)
32. Liberia (1st or 2nd) (1989–1996; 1998–2003)
33. Moro insurgency (Philippines; 1969–present)
34. Myanmar (Rohingya War) (2018–present)
35. Nepal (1996–2006)
36. Peru (Shining Path) (1980–2000)
37. Rwanda (1991–1994)
38. Sierra Leone (1991–2002)
39. Sri Lanka (LTTE) (1983–2009)
40. Somalia (internationalized period; 1991–1995)
41. Sudan (2nd; SPLA) (1985–2005)
42. Uganda (Lord's Resistance Army) (1987–present)

A couple good places to begin your research include the following websites:

1. UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia: <http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/database/>
2. START Terrorist Groups: <http://apps.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/BrowseBy.aspx?category=perpetrator>

This syllabus is a guideline and is subject to change.

UPDATED: January 29, 2023