Civil Wars

In this seminar we will study the mechanisms underlying the emergence of civil wars and distinct dynamics of violence in civil wars. Course readings will draw on a wide range of methodological approaches and cases. The principal requirement will be a research paper or proposal on a topic related to civil wars.

Thursday 10:00AM-12:00PM, Politics Department Rm 700.

Pre-requisites: Comparative Politics G53.1500.01 (PhD section)
Note: this course is intended for Politics Department PhD students. Others admitted only on permission of the instructor.

Office Hours: Wednesdays 4:30 - 6:30 (sign up on office door), Rm. 715, Politics Department, 726 Broadway, 998-8534

Requirements: Class members will be expected to participate actively in class. Over the course of the semester, each participant will write five reviews reviewing the week’s readings and raising questions for discussion. Rather than summarizing the reading, reviews should critically assess it, analyzing research design, method, and evidence presented and raising questions for class discussion. Reviews should be no more than two single-spaced pages. The review should be sent by email to the instructor and other class members by 7:00 a.m. Thursday. Late reviews will not be read.

The principal writing requirement is a research paper exploring some topic related to civil wars or a research proposal on a related topic. In either case, the topic must be approved by the instructor. Participants will submit ancillary materials throughout the term, including an initial statement of the puzzle or argument, a bibliography, an outline, and a first draft.

Course Materials:
Required books (available for purchase at the NYU Book Center):

1. September 4. Introduction

2. September 11. Case Study: El Salvador


4. September 25. Contrasting methods of analysis and methodological challenges in civil war research I


   Recommended:


5. October 2. Contrasting methods of analysis and methodological challenges in civil war research II


6. Week of October 9 (day and time to be determined). Forms, mechanism, and dynamics of violence


Recommended:


7. October 16. Ethnic violence


Recommended:


Ravi Bhavnani and David Backer. 2002. Localized Ethnic Conflict and genocide: Accounting for Differences in Rwanda and Burundi. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44(3) 283-306


8. October 23. Violence against collaborators


9. October 30. State violence


Recommended:


Recommended:

11. November 13. Patterns of Sexual Violence II

Readings to be announced. LaShawn Jefferson, Director of Women’s Rights Division of Human Rights Watch will speak to class participants.

12. November 20. Typology of Civil Wars


13. Week of November 27 (meeting date and time to be determined). Dynamics of violence: models


Recommended:

14. December 4. Conclusion: research presentations

Papers due: December 19, by email attachment. No late papers accepted unless approved beforehand by the instructor.