

**UMBC UGC New Course Request: POLI 490 (proposed number): Political Violence**

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**COURSE INFORMATION:**

Course Number(s)	POLI 490
Formal Title	Political Violence
Transcript Title (≤24c)	POLVIOL
Recommended Course Preparation	Poli 385, Poli 388
Prerequisite	None
Credits	3
Repeatable?	No
Max. Total Credits	3
Grading Method(s)	x <input type="checkbox"/> Reg (A-F)

**PROPOSED CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

This course examines the causes, character, and consequences of political violence—as opposed to interstate war. We will ask why political violence occurs in one location and at a particular time. What structural conditions make political violence likely? How do agents contribute to violence? What are the patterns of political violence? How problems of collective action are resolved in the conduct of violence? How do competing groups and states respond? What conditions make peace likely?

**RATIONALE FOR NEW COURSE:**

Violence has always been a means of political struggle. Since mid-twentieth century, we have seen a shift in the nature of violence used for political purposes from conflict between states to conflict within and across states. Manifested in the rise of terrorism, insurgency, ethnic cleansing, civil war, and revolutions, this change has altered the way we organize as societies to both defend against and perpetrate violence, the character and methods of governance, and the functioning of the international system. This is the world we live in now.

Not surprisingly, the study of political violence is today one of the most exciting fields of academic scholarship. Scholars have used a plethora of approaches and methodologies to study the problem of political violence and these have direct impact on the kinds of policies we adopt to end the fighting.

The course fits into the department's and UMBC's growing focus on international and timely topics. Because the instructor is based on UMBC's political science program at Shady Grove, the course will be offered there primarily, though I have no objection to teaching it on main campus. I hope to include this course in the two-year rotation we have down here in Shady Grove. I am going to seek a Writing Intensive designation for the course. We need more WI courses given that our students need more writing in their curriculum.

This course is offered at the 400 level because it investigates a very specific topic using different theories, methodological approaches, and cases. It requires the students to be able to focus on the ontology of the problem rather than the substance of the problem itself.

**ATTACH COURSE OUTLINE (mandatory):**

POLI 490 (proposed number): Political Violence  
Department of Political Science

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Office Hours: xxxxx; by appointment

Class Location: xxxx

Class Day and Time: xxxxxx

**Course Overview**

Violence has always been a means of political struggle. Since mid-twentieth century, we have seen a shift in the nature of violence used for political purposes from conflict between states to conflict within and across states. Manifested in the rise of terrorism, insurgency, ethnic cleansing, civil war, and revolutions, this change has altered the way we organize as societies to both defend against and perpetrate violence, the character and methods of governance, and the functioning of the international system.

This course examines the causes, character, and consequences of political violence—as opposed to interstate war. The course will investigate the phenomenon by comparing across cases. We will ask why political violence occurs in one location and at a particular time but not in another venue or at another moment. What structural causes make political violence likely? What agents are necessary for violence to occur? How problems of collective action are resolved in the conduct of violence? How competing groups and often the state (which may itself be in the control of a competing group) respond to political violence? Further, we will ask questions about differences in nature of political violence itself: are there different kinds of political violence and do they have different consequences in deaths and destruction as well as governance and reconstruction? Under what conditions can peace be achieved?

We will consider various theoretical and empirical perspectives to the study of political violence. Students taking this course can expect to gain historical knowledge of political violence, how the social scientific study of political violence has developed over time, and what strategies there may be for dealing with political violence.

**Grade Breakdown**

Weekly summaries of readings (14 or 15, one-page): 40 percent

Paper Proposal (2 pages): 10 percent

Paper Outline (5 pages): 10 percent

Paper Draft (full drafts only): Extra Credit 5 percent

Final Paper (25 pages): 30 percent

Final Presentation: 10 percent.

**Assignments**

Weekly summaries

1. Your summary should include ALL the readings for the week (Mondays and Wednesdays). Most weeks we will have at least two sets of readings spread over the Monday and Wednesday class periods.
2. The summary must be ONE-page (no more and no less), single-spaced, 1" margin, 12-point Times New Roman, and in Microsoft Word.
3. Each summary must go through a peer review process before submission to me. I will identify your peer reviewer to you in class. Please exchange email addresses with the reviewer. We will change peer reviewers at least two times through the semester, so please stay alert. Please follow these guidelines before submission:
  - a. Every Sunday (in the weeks when readings are assigned) by 12 midnight, please send your completed summary in the required format to your peer reviewer by email. If you don't send a summary or send incomplete summaries for review I will deduct penalty points from you. Reviewers report delays and incompleteness to me in confidence by email together with your final summary submission.
  - b. Every Monday by 12 midnight, the peer reviewer will get back to author comments on the summary. If the reviewer does not get back on time or does not provide reasonable suggestions for improvement, I will deduct penalty points from the reviewer. Authors report delays and negligent reviews to me in confidence by email together with your final summary submission.
  - c. Every Tuesday by 12 midnight, students will submit to me the final summary by email. When you submit to me, please include in your email a self-grade, a grade for peer you reviewed (this information is confidential and comes only to me), and information about whether the peer review you received was substantive and on time. **PLEASE MAKE SURE TO INCLUDE THE NAME OF THE STUDENT YOU HAVE REVIEWED.**

Term Paper (see data rubric below)

Each student is required to write a 25-page paper as the final work for this course. You write the paper in increments and end in a final.

Topic

Students should pick one case of political violence not in the syllabus on which they will write their papers. The case can be historical (e.g. the Russian pogroms against the Jews in the 18<sup>th</sup> century) or contemporary (e.g. sectarian conflict in Iraq). Students must propose a topic to the instructor by Week 6 of the course. Use email. The email must cover a) name of case, b) dates, c) conflicting parties, d) known causes of conflict, e) expected theoretical perspective to be used (more on this in class).

Proposal

Based on the feedback from the instructor, each student will write a two-page paper proposal that should include in a) name of case, b) dates, c) conflicting parties, d) known causes of conflict, e) expected theoretical perspective to be used, f) why other theoretical perspectives are not valid, g) review of existing literature on the conflict. The proposal is due in Week 7 of the semester.

Outline

Students are required to submit a detailed outline of the final paper, broken down by sections (introduction, literature review, argument, evidence, and conclusion) and sub-sections. The outline should be at least 5 pages long. No penalty for longer outlines. Outlines are due in Week 10.

Draft

Students may submit a full draft of the papers for review and extra credit, but the paper must be complete (no half-done papers). Those who submit full drafts will be eligible for extra credit at the discretion of the instructor.

Presentation

In the last two weeks of class, students will make 5-10 minute presentations of their conflicts based on the work they have done.

## Final

25 pages. Due in the finals week.

## Due Dates

Summaries due midnight before class day each week there is class.

Week 6: Topic due

Week 7: Proposal due

Week 10: Outline due

Week 13: Draft due

Finals week: paper due

## Course Materials and Technology

Book excerpts, articles, and publicly available video as provided in the schedule. All written articles are available through UMBC Library's e-reserves and by using the research port. Please buy the following books. Used copies are inexpensive on Amazon.

- Charles Tilly, *The Vendee: A Sociological Analysis of the Counterrevolution of 1793* (John Wiley & Sons, 1964).  
Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).  
Marguerite Feitlowitz, *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).  
Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press, 2003).  
Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* (New York: Picador, 1999).  
Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (New York: Vintage, 2007).

## Schedule

### Week 1

#### **Violence in history**

Elizabeth Kolbert, "Peace In Our Time," *New Yorker* (October 3, 2011) Vol. 87 Issue 30, pp. 75-78.

David Reynolds, *John Brown, Abolitionist: The Man Who Killed Slavery, Sparked the Civil War, and Seeded Civil Rights* (New York: Vintage, 2005). Chapter 7: Pottawattamie.

### Week 2

#### **Understanding political violence as a category**

Jack Hirshleifer, "Theorizing about conflict," in Hartley and Sandler, eds., *Handbook of Defense Economics* (New York: Elsevier, 1995) Chapter 7. <http://www.econ.ucla.edu/workingpapers/wp727.pdf>

Stathis Kalyvas, "The Ontology of Political Violence," *Perspectives on Politics* 1:3 (2003), pp 475-494.

### Week 3

#### **Types of political violence**

Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Chapter 1 and 2: Varieties of Violence; Politics of Violence. Ch 1: <http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/samples/cam034/2002074067.pdf>

### Week 4

#### **Ethnic Conflict**

Barry Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival* 35(1) [Spring 1993]: 27-47. <http://www.sais-jhu.edu/cmtoolkit/pdfs/posen-1993.pdf>

James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 1 (Feb., 2003), pp. 75-90. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3118222>.  
Nicholas Sambanis, "Do Ethnic and Non-Ethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes? A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry (Part 1)," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45 (3): 259-82 (June 2001).

Week 5

### **Economic Theory**

Ted Robert Gurr, "A Causal Model of Civil Strife: Comparative Analyses Using New Indices," *American Political Science Review* 62:4 (1968), pp. 1104-1124.  
Paul Collier and Anke Hoefler, "On the Incidence of Civil War in Africa," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46:1 (2002), pp 13-28.  
Michael Ross, "How Does Natural Resource Wealth Influence Civil War?" *International Organization* 58 (2004), pp. 35-67.

Week 6

### **Microeconomic Theory**

Stathis Kalyas, "Wanton and Senseless? The Logic of Massacres in Algeria," *Rationality and Society* 11:3 (1999), pp. 243-285.  
Robert Bates, Avner Greif, and Smita Singh, "Organizing Violence," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46:5 (2002), pp. 599-628.  
Joshua Epstein, "Modeling Civil Violence: An Agent-Based Computational Approach," *Proceedings from the National Academy of Sciences* 9:3 (2002), pp. 7243-50.  
Scott Gates, "Recruitment and Allegiance: The Microfoundations of Rebellion," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46:1 (2002), pp. 111-130.

Week 7

### **Psychological Theory**

Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined* (New York: Viking, 2011). Chapters 8, 9, 10.

Week 8

### **The Vendee, 1793**

Charles Tilly, *The Vendee: A Sociological Analysis of the Counterrevolution of 1793* (John Wiley & Sons, 1964).

Week 9

### **The Greek Civil War**

Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

### **Argentina, 1976-1983**

Marguerite Feitlowitz, *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Week 10

### **Hindu-Muslim Rioting in India, 1947-2000**

Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press, 2003).

Week 11

### **Rwanda, 1993**

Peter Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* (New York: Picador, 1999).

Week 12

**Al-Qaeda, 1996-2011**

Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (New York: Vintage, 2007).

Week 13

**Making Peace**

Robert Axelrod, "An Evolutionary Approach to Norms," *The American Political Science Review*, 80 (December 1986): 1095-1111. [http://www.artisresearch.com/articles/Axelrod\\_An\\_Evolutionary\\_Approach.pdf](http://www.artisresearch.com/articles/Axelrod_An_Evolutionary_Approach.pdf)

Edward Luttwak, "Give War a Chance," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 1999.

Barbara Walter, "Civil War and Conflict Resolution," in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth Simmons, eds. *Handbook of International Relations* (New York: Sage Publications, 2011).

Week 14 and 15

**Student presentations of research projects.**

## **Data Rubric for Term Paper**

### **Primary Data**

Name of Conflict

Location

Dates

Primary parties

Secondary parties

Primary issue

Secondary issues

### **Impact**

Deaths

Other Casualties

Property Loss (if available)

Other Direct Effects

Did the perpetrators succeed in their goal?

### **Type of Violence**

Intensity: e.g. riots, ethnic cleansing

Perpetrator (group/individuals): e.g. government, political party, ethnic group

Victim group/individuals)

### **Analytical Details**

What were the nature of the prior relations between the fighting groups?

Are the stated reasons for violence correct? Any hidden motives? Competing accounts?

Was the use of force just?

How organized was the violence?

How did the leaders recruit fighters?

Could external actors have prevented or stopped the violence? How?