

# CPO 4721: The Politics of Ethnic Conflict

University of Florida – Fall 2024

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**Office:** 010 Anderson

**Class:** MWF: Period 2 (8:30 AM – 9:20 AM)  
**Location:** FAC 0120  
**Office Hours:** Wednesdays, 12 – 2 pm  
**Office Hours Signup:**  
[https://calendly.com/prgupte/office\\_hours](https://calendly.com/prgupte/office_hours)

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## Course Description and Objectives

Ethnicity is at the center of politics in almost every country and poses to be a source of challenge to the states, both domestically and internationally. This is because ethnic identity is strongly felt, and behaviour based on ethnicity is normatively sanctioned. Ethnic conflict then, is a worldwide and recurrent phenomenon.

But is ethnicity truly the cause of all these conflicts? What is it about ethnic affiliations that make them conducive to severe conflict? Moreover, are only poorer countries victims of ethnic conflicts, or do rich countries experience them as well? Under what conditions do ethnic groups coexist peacefully?

These are some of the questions we will attempt to answer in the course of this semester. In the last three decades (or so), copious amount of research has been undertaken in the subfield of ethnicity. This course will introduce students to some of the major approaches and works on ethnicity and ethnic conflicts. By the end of this semester, students would have a basic understanding of the role played by ethnicity in politics.

## Course Requirements

Assignment	Points	Percent of Grade
Attendance	40	4
Participation	60	6
Theme reflections	400	40
Country-case study	300	20
Final Exam	300	30
Total	1000	100

- Attendance = 4%
  - Attendance is mandatory. I will take a roll call in every class. Excused absences must be consistent with university policies and require appropriate documentation. You are also allowed two unexcused absences.

- Absences are factored into participation grades. I understand that unforeseen events can arise and therefore missing a class will not harm your grade. However, a pattern of absences will result in a low participation score.
- Participation in class = 6%
  - This course relies on your active and consistent engagement with the material. Students are therefore expected to actively participate in all the class discussions. Students should arrive at class having read the material thoroughly and be ready with questions/critical comments about the readings.
  - Students who feel uncomfortable speaking in class should feel free to discuss with me how we can develop this skill, as public speaking is an important aspect of any career, academic or otherwise. More importantly, hearing from a broad variety of perspectives will be beneficial for everyone.
- Thematic review/reflections = 5% \* 8 = 40%
  - You have to submit a total of **EIGHT** reflection or review pieces this semester. Each response will be based on the readings from the “themes” in the syllabus such as Identity Formation, Macro Causes, Micro Causes, Ethnic Civil War and so on. These will be due after we have completed the discussion of the theme in the class.
  - In these review responses, you have to address the following questions: how do these readings inform the broader theme? What issues are missing or need to be discussed by scholars on this theme?
  - Your responses must have an argument, and you should not simply be summarizing the readings. The focus of your responses should be on critiquing the readings. Moreover, your criticisms need to be supported by valid evidence from the readings. Remember, this is not an opinion piece.
  - In terms of structure, the responses must be 2-3 paragraphs long. You can briefly summarize the readings but use most of your space critiquing and providing evidence for the same.
  - Word limit is **350-400 words**. Essays less than 350 words will result in lower score. Documents must be in Times New Roman, 12-font size and single-spaced.
- Country Case Study = 20%
  - Students will pick one case of ethnic conflict from the post-World War 2 period and write a short research essay on it. I have listed a few conflicts at the end of this syllabus as examples of what you can work on.
  - This assignment is divided into two parts:
    - First, describe the conflict. Include as much details as you can. What was the conflict about? Who were the major and/or minor players? What did each side want? How and when did the conflict start? What was the duration of the conflict? What is the current status of the conflict? Has the

conflict ended? If yes, how? Negotiations/ ceasefire agreement/ international intervention? If not, why not? (1000-1500 words)

- Second, discuss the scholarly literature regarding the conflict. Is the scholarly community divided over the causes of the conflict? If yes, what are the major themes or lines of argument? Have the scholarly discussions regarding the causes/unfolding of the conflict changed over the past years? If yes, why and how? Discuss/compare different strands of research. (1000-1500 words)
- Essays less than 1000 words will result in lower score. Documents must be in Times New Roman, 12-font size and single-spaced. Make sure to cite wherever necessary – any citation style is acceptable.
  - Choose your conflict: **September 16**  
Describe the conflict: **October 11**
  - Scholarly literature about the conflict: **November 15**
- Final (take home) exam = 30%
  - Three essay-type Q-n-As.
- Extra Credit Assignments = 2% x 2 = 4%
  - Throughout the semester, there are several talks and presentations by invited scholars hosted by Center for Latin American Studies, Center for African Studies, and Center for European Studies. I will also suggest documentaries, webinars and podcast episodes that you can watch/listen to in your own time.
  - You can earn bonus points by attending these events, watching/listening to documentaries and podcasts. You will have to submit 300 words report on what you learnt from it.
  - Each report you submit will be worth 2% (20 points) and you can submit a total of **TWO** such reports. This means that you can earn up to 4% in extra credit.

### Grading Scale

A	93-100%
A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	79-82%
C+	75-78%
C	72-74%
C-	69-71%
D+	66-68%
D	62-65%
D-	60-61%
E	Fewer than 60%

## Readings

There is no required book for this course. In an effort to reduce the associated costs of a university degree, I will post all articles, book chapters, and other assigned reading links to our Canvas site.

\*\* Please do not distribute these materials to people beyond this class. \*\*

## Course Policies

### Lecture Slides

I will post lecture slides on Canvas after each class meeting. The slides are meant as a guide and are in no way a substitute for lecture. My hope is that by providing slides you will not have to spend the entire class furiously note taking and can pay close attention to the lecture, ask questions, and participate deeply in class discussion. If, however, class participation or attendance wanes, I retain the right to end sharing lecture slides.

### Late or Make-up Assignments

NO late or make-up assignments will be accepted without prior approval. If an assignment is submitted late without prior approval, it will receive a 0. Generally, at least one week in advance notice is required for assignment or exam extension request.

Make-up quizzes will be given only in cases of university-approved reasons for absence.

In accordance with university attendance policy, acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to participate in class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays, and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) must be excused. Other reasons also may be approved. Please note that assignment deadlines for other courses will not be considered.

### Grade adjustments

I do not under any circumstances round or adjust grades. This policy is not an attempt to be harsh but to hold all students in equal standing.

### Contacting the Instructor

Students should use Canvas to contact me. Although you may email me at my UF email account, the university strongly encourages we communicate via Canvas to avoid the potential of violations of student confidentiality protected by FERPA.

I strongly encourage students to visit my office hours, available by [appointment](#), to discuss any questions, comments, or concerns regarding the course.

### Email/Messaging Hours

You may email or message me via Canvas at any time that is convenient to you. I will respond within one business day between the hours of 8am and 5pm. If you do not receive a reply from me after 48 hours, please resend your message. Although I may sometimes reply outside of these designated hours, responses cannot be guaranteed after 5pm on weekdays, on weekends, or

holidays. Please plan accordingly to have your questions answered in advance of assignment and exam deadlines.

### Academic Integrity

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Click here to read the Conduct Code. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

### Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

### Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action

instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

### Campus Resources

Health and Wellness U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.

University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.

In response to COVID-19, the following recommendations are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones:

- If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit [one.uf](http://one.uf) for screening / testing and vaccination opportunities.
- If you are sick, stay home. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 to be evaluated.
- Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work.

### Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420.  
General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.

On-Line Students Complaints: View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.

## Course Schedule\*

\*This course schedule may be subject to change as needed. At times during the semester, we may be ahead/behind schedule, and so readings may be adjusted, dropped, or added to as necessary. I will notify you of all changes via email, and an updated syllabus will be provided if any changes occur.

Readings should be completed **before** the date indicated on the syllabus. For instance, on August 26<sup>th</sup>, students should have read Yahya Sadowski's article "Ethnic Conflict" and Wolff's Chapter 1 **before** class starts, as it will form the basis of lecture/discussion.

### Week 1

August 23 (F) - Course Introduction

- Syllabus, assignments, readings.

### Week 2

August 26 (M) – What are "Ethnicity" and "Ethnic Politics?"

- Yahya Sadowski, "Ethnic Conflict," *Foreign Policy* Summer 1998, 12-23.
- Wolff. Chap 1. pp. 9-24.

August 28 (W) – What are "Ethnic Conflicts?"

- Werner Bergmann and Robert Crutchfield, "Introduction: Racial and Ethnic Conflict and Violence," *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 3, 2 (2009): 146-53.
- Wolff. Introduction

August 30 (F) – Identity Formation I

- Henry Hale, "Explaining Ethnicity," *Comparative Political Studies* 37, 4 (May 2004): 458-85.

### Week 3

September 2 (M) – **Holiday** (Labor Day)

September 4 (W) – Identity Formation II

- James Fearon and David Laitin, “Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity,” *International Organization* 54, 4: 845-77.

September 6 (F) – Identity Formation III

- Yashar, Deborah J. 1998. “Contesting Citizenship: Indigenous Movements and Democracy in Latin America.” *Comparative Politics* 31 (1): 23-42.

**Week 4**September 9 (M) – Identity Formation IV

- Giuliano, Elise. 2000. “Who Determines the Self in the Politics of Self-Determination? Identity and Preference Formation in Tatarstan’s Nationalist Mobilization.” *Comparative Politics* 32 (3): 295-316

Reflection response #1 on identity formation due

September 11 (W) – Macro Causes I

- Gurr, T. R. (1993). Why Minorities Rebel: A Global Analysis of Communal Mobilization and Conflict since 1945. *International Political Science Review*, 14(2), 161–201.

September 13 (F) – Macro Causes II

- Lars-Erik Cederman, Andreas Wimmer and Brian Min, “Why do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis,” *World Politics* 61, 1: 87-119.

**Week 5**September 16 (M) – Macro Causes III

- Barbara Harff, “No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust? Assessing Risks of Genocide and Political Mass Murder since 1945,” *American Political Science Review* 97:1 (2003), pp. 57-73.

September 18 (W) – Macro Causes IV

- Sandra Halperin, “The Spread of Ethnic Conflict in Europe: Some Comparative-Historical Reflections,” in David A. Lake & Donald Rothchild, Eds. *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict* (Princeton University Press, 1998) 151-184.

Reflection response #2 on macro causes due

September 20 (F) – Micro Causes I

- Ashutosh Varshney, “Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict and Rationality,” *Perspectives on Politics*, 1, 1: 85-99.



**Week 6****September 23 (M) – Micro Causes II**

- Stathis Kalyas, “The Ontology of ‘Political Violence’: Action and Identity in Civil Wars,” *Perspectives on Politics* 2003: 475-94.

**September 25 (W) – Micro Causes III**

- Donald Green and Rachel Seher, “What Role Does Prejudice Play in Ethnic Conflict?” *Annual Review of Political Science* 6 (2003), pp. 509-531.

**September 27 (F) – Micro Causes IV**

- Jens Rydgren, “The Power of the Past: A Contribution to a Cognitive Sociology of Ethnic Conflict,” *Sociological Theory* 25, 3 (2007): 225-44.

**Week 7****September 30 (M) – Micro Causes V**

- Robert White, “From Peaceful Protest to Guerilla War: Micromobilization of the Provisional Irish Republican Army,” *American Journal of Sociology* 94:6 (1989), 1277-1302.

**October 2 (W) – Micro Causes VI**

- Laia Balcells, Lesley-Ann Daniels, and Abel Escribá-Folch, “The determinants of low-intensity intergroup violence: The case of Northern Ireland,” *Journal of Peace Research* 53, 1 (2016): 33-48.

**Reflection response #3 on micro causes due**

**October 4 (F) – Institutions and Ethnic Politics I**

- Roeder, Philip & and Donald Rothchild, Chapter 2 from *Sustainable Peace: Power and Democracy After Civil Wars*.
- Arend Lijphart, “Constitutional Design for Divided Societies,” *Journal of Democracy*. 15, 2 (2004): 96-109.

**Week 8****October 7 (M) – Institutions and Ethnic Politics II**

- Cornell, Svante, “Autonomy as a Source of Conflict: Caucasian Conflicts in Comparative Perspective,” *World Politics* 54 (January 2002): 245-76.

**October 9 (W) – Institutions and Ethnic Politics III**

- Posner, Daniel, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics*, Chapter 1.
- Lieberman, Evan, and Prerna Singh. “The Institutional Origins of Ethnic Violence.” *Comparative Politics* 45.1 (2012b): 1–24.

October 11 (F) – Institutions and Ethnic Politics IV

- Bird, Karen. “Ethnic Quotas and Ethnic Representation Worldwide.” *International Political Science Review* 35.1 (2014): 12–26.

Reflection response #4 on institutions and ethnic politics due

**Week 9**October 14 (M) – Ethnic Riots I

- Wilkinson, chapter 1 from *Votes and Violence*.

October 16 (W) – Ethnic Riots II

- Scacco, Alexandra. "Introduction" in *Anatomy of a Riot: Why Ordinary People Participate in Ethnic Violence*. 2021.
- Paul Brass, “Development of an Institutionalized Riot System in Meerut City, 1961- 1982,” *Economic and Political Weekly* October 30, 2004.

October 18 (F) – Ethnic Riots III

- Panggabean, Rizal and Benjamin Smith, “Explaining Anti-Chinese Riots in Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century Indonesia,” *World Development* Vol. 39, No. 2 (2011), pp. 231–242.
- Risa Toha, “Political Competition and Ethnic Riots in Democratic Transition: A Lesson from Indonesia,” *British Journal of Political Science* 47 (2015): 631-51.

Reflection response #5 on ethnic riots due

**Week 10**October 21 (M) – Secession Conflicts I

- Barbara Walter, “Information, Uncertainty, and the Decision to Secede,” *International Organization* 60, 1 (2006): 105-35.

October 23 (W) – Secession Conflicts II

- Edward Aspinall, “The Construction of Grievance,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. Volume 51. Number. 6 December 2007. 950-972

October 25 (F) – Secession Conflicts III

- Monica Duffy Toft, “Indivisible Territory, geographic concentration, and ethnic war,” *Security Studies* 12, 2: 82-119.

**Week 11**October 28 (M) – Secession Conflicts IV

- Elise Giuliano, “Secessionism from the Bottom Up: Democratization, Nationalism, and Local Accountability in the Russian Transition,” *World Politics* 58 (2006): 276-310.

October 30 (W) – Secession Conflicts V

- Guibernau, M. (2006), National identity, devolution and secession in Canada, Britain and Spain. *Nations and Nationalism*, 12: 51-76.

Reflection response #6 on secession conflicts due

November 1 (F) – Ethnic Civil War I

- Nicholas Sambanis, 2001, “Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes?”, *Journal Conflict Resolution*, 45:3, 259-282

**Week 12**November 4 (M) – Ethnic Civil War II

- Barry Posen, “The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict,” *Survival* 35:1 (1993), pp. 27-47.

November 6 (W) – Ethnic Civil War III

- John Mueller, “The Banality of ‘Ethnic War’,” *International Security* 25:1 (200), pp.42-70.

November 8 (F) – Ethnic Civil War IV

- Montalvo, José G., and Marta Reynal-Querol. “Ethnic Polarization, Potential Conflict, and Civil Wars.” *American Economic Review* 95.3 (2012): 796–816.

**Week 13**November 11 (M) - **Holiday** (Veteran’s Day)November 13 (W) – Ethnic Civil War V

- James Fearon and David Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War”. *APSR*, Vol. 97, no. 1, February 2003, pp. 75-90.

Reflection response #7 on ethnic civil war due

November 15 (F) – Interethnic Cooperation I

- Ashutosh Varshney, “Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society: India and Beyond,” *World Politics* 53 (2001): 362-98.

**Week 14**November 18 (M) – Interethnic Cooperation II

- Saumitra Jha, “Trade, Institutions, and Ethnic Tolerance: Evidence from South Asia,” *American Political Science Review* 107, 4 (2013): 806-32.

November 20 (W) – Interethnic Cooperation III

- Kymlicka, Will. "Multicultural citizenship within multination states." *Ethnicities* 11.3 (2011): 281-302.

Reflection response #8 on interethnic cooperation due

November 22 (F)

- *TBD*

### **Week 15**

November 25 (M) – Thanksgiving break

November 27 (W) – Thanksgiving break

November 29 (F) – Thanksgiving break

### **Week 16**

December 2 (M)

- **Take-home final exam questions will be made available on Canvas.**

December 4 (W)

- *TBD*

### **List of Ethnic Conflicts:**

1. Rwanda genocide
2. Darfur genocide
3. Srebrenica genocide
4. Sinhalese versus Tamil (Sri Lanka)
5. Rohingya genocide
6. Ethnic conflicts among former-Soviet Union states
7. Shia versus Sunni vs Kurd conflict in Iraq
8. Northern Ireland conflict
9. Christians versus Muslims in Nigeria
10. Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan

### **List of some relevant journals:**

American Political Science Review  
 American Journal of Political Science  
 British Journal of Political Science  
 World Politics  
 Democratization

Perspectives on Politics  
 Nations and Nationalism  
 Ethnopolitics  
 Nationalities Papers