Course Description

Millions of people around the globe are confronted with violence on a daily basis. This can include violence such as civil wars, ethnic riots, suicide bombings, famines, and genocide. While these types of violent phenomena are ancient, only in recent decades have scholars devoted serious study and attention to analyzing political violence in its various forms. The goal of this seminar is to introduce students to this thriving field of study, to present key academic works on various aspects and forms of violence, to discuss the similarities and differences between various forms of political violence, and to analyze the theoretical and methodological approaches to studying violence. We will end by discussing the impact of violence on the societies and people that have experienced it and the ways to prevent and manage future violent conflicts.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes

As a result of completing this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the main theories that explain the emergence and the unfolding of various types of violence as well as the key concepts of the field;
- To write short response papers that critically evaluate the field’s main theories and arguments
- To be able to translate academic knowledge into writing for broader audiences
- To write an independently researched academic paper

Requirements and Class Policies

The class is a seminar. This means that the students are expected to attend the lectures and to read all the required materials. The class is structured around weekly meetings, in which the
instructor and the students critically evaluate and discuss the readings. Hence, students’ active participation in the discussions is required and class participation is a substantial part of the final grade. This is a writing-oriented class and the students will be required to conduct various research and writing assignments that culminate in the end-of-class final research paper. In addition, the students will be required to submit three short response papers.

Response Papers
During the semester the students will be required to submit three response papers. The papers should be about three pages long. The exact dates of the papers will be determined during the first lecture. The goal of each response paper is to critically evaluate the readings that have been assigned for the coming lecture and raise points and questions for the classroom discussion. In addition, the students who wrote the week’s response papers will serve as “discussion leaders” and will present a short summary of their paper at the beginning of the lecture. The response papers should be sent to me by **pre-class Friday 5pm (EST)**. The response papers will be graded and the feedback will help you to proceed with your final research paper.

Research Paper
The research paper provides you with the opportunity to pursue any analytical, theoretical, or historical question about political violence that interests you. A good paper both informs and persuades; to do this it must be logically organized, clearly argued, well researched, and well documented. Avoid writing a paper that merely restates the readings. You are expected to do some original thinking, research, and analysis in this paper. There are several excellent guides on the web that I encourage you to consult on how to go about writing an analytical research paper. Some good sites include:

- How to Research a Political Science Paper, by Peter Liberman: 
  http://qcpages.qc.edu/Political_Science/researching.html
- Writing Political Science Papers: Some Useful Guidelines, by Peter Liberman,:
  http://qcpages.qc.edu/Political_Science/tips.html
• Writing a Research Paper, by Sarah Hamid:
  http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/ResearchW/index.html
• An accurate summary of some things not to do, which (unfortunately) students commonly
do, can be found at Advice on How to Write a Bad Paper.

Paper proposals (about one page) which include the topic and at least five relevant sources are
due by Friday, March 2, 5PM; the paper outline and summary (two to three pages) are due by
Friday, April 6, 5PM. Remember, by that time you should also be in an advanced stage of
research. The paper drafts will be reviewed by your peers and discussed in class. The draft paper
is due by Thursday, April 26, 5PM. The final paper should be 18-20 pages, double spaced,
Times New Roman 12 font (not including bibliography), with one-inch margins. The final papers
are due by Wednesday, May 9, 5PM. Late submission of proposals, outlines, and papers (both
draft and final) will be penalized by a half of a letter grade for every day of the delay. The
paper topic should be approved by the instructor. The students are strongly encouraged to discuss
their ideas and progress with the instructor, and I do expect to meet every student at least twice
during the class. If you are unable to come to my office hours, I will be happy to schedule a
meeting at a different time.

Grading Criteria
Response Papers: 15%
Final Research Paper: 60%
Participation: 25%

Academic Conduct
I personally support the GW Code of Academic Integrity. It states: “Academic dishonesty is
defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the
work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication
of information.” For the remainder of the code, see: http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html

Special Needs and Support outside the Classroom
Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/

The University Counseling Center (UCC, 202-994-5300) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:

- Crisis and emergency mental health consultations
- Confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals
Course Outline and Schedule

Lecture 1. 01.22: Course Overview and Description

Lecture 2. 01.29. Studying Violence: Perspectives and Concepts

Lecture 3. 02.05. Ethnic Conflict

Lecture 4. 02.12. Riots and Pogroms
- Jeffrey Kopstein and Jason Wittenberg, “Deadly Communities: Local Political Milieus and the Persecution of Jews in Occupied Poland,” *Comparative Political Studies*, 2011, 44(2), pp. 259-283.
02.19. President’s Day. No Classes

Lecture 5. 02.26. Resistance, and Rebellion


**PAPER PROPOSALS ARE DUE BY THE END OF THE WEEK**

Lecture 6. 03.05. Terrorism


03.12. Spring Break. No Classes

Lecture 7. 03.19. Civil War 1

- Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, “Greed and Grievance in Civil War,” World Bank, 2001

**Lecture 8. 03.26. Civil War 2**

**Lecture 9. 04.02. Genocide and Mass Violence 1**

**PAPER OUTLINES ARE DUE BY THE END OF THE WEEK**

**Lecture 10. 04.09. Genocide and Mass Violence 2**


Lecture 11. 04.16. War and Peace 1


Lecture 12. 04.23. War and Peace 2


**PAPER DRAFTS ARE DUE BY 04/26, 5PM**
Lecture 13. 04.30. Peer Review of Paper Drafts

Lecture 14. 05.02. Designated Monday. New Directions in the Violence Research


**FINAL RESEARCH PAPERS ARE DUE WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 5PM**