Course Description

This course blends theoretical, empirical, and conceptual work on civil conflict with detailed studies of cases. It will assess research on civil war "onset," mobilization, violence, civilian agency, and resolution, while linking these broader literatures to conflicts in the Middle East and South Asia. The course will emphasize theoretical innovations grounded in detailed empirical knowledge, including primary texts, ethnographies, films, and other forms of cultural production.

Research on civil war has exploded beyond our ability to cover in a quarter and we have had to exclude a lot of important work. You are responsible for both deeper and broader study of specific topics for your research paper. The required readings are, at very best, a crude starting point. There will likely be some changes in the syllabus as the quarter goes along, and we will be sure to communicate them to you.

Course Requirements

Participation in class discussion is essential for a successful seminar. Students are expected to have carefully done all of the required reading and to be prepared to discuss it in detail. We realize that some weeks there is a heavy reading load, but the works assigned are important and worth your time. Participation will account for 20% of your grade.

Two short papers will be assigned. In week 4 we will assign a paper due in week 5 and in week 8 we will assign a paper due in week 9. The first paper topic will identify an important claim from our readings in the previous weeks and ask you to critically assess it in light of our reading and discussions. This is not an opportunity for you to do a literature review or summary of readings, but instead to advance an argument. The second paper will ask you to explore a particular case of a phenomenon under study. Each paper will account for 10% of your grade. We will provide the topic at the end of class and the paper will be due in hard copy at the beginning of the next class meeting.

Research paper of no more than 30 pages total (doubled-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins) due at the end of the quarter. It can be emailed to us or (preferably) emailed to both Staniland and Wedeen by 5 pm CST on the Thursday of finals week. This paper should address a major question in the study of civil war with a literature review, theoretical argument, and empirical evaluation of the theory relative to its competitors. This empirical evaluation can include a case.
or comparative case studies, quantitative analysis, or a mix of methods. Students can use this opportunity to lay the groundwork for a publishable article, develop research for a thesis, or “try out” a possible dissertation topic. The reason for requiring this paper is to force you to experience some of the transition from being a consumer and critic of research to becoming a producer who has to grapple with a different set of challenges. Please note that this is a hard space limit: the entire paper must not be more than 30 pages. We shall reduce your grade for excess.

The paper will account for 60% of your grade. You must confirm your topic with each of us, in person or over email, before our Week 7 class meeting. Late papers will not be accepted.

**Electronic Etiquette**

We request that students not use their cell phones during class for any reason. This will allow more focused discussion and intellectual exchange. Laptops should only be used if this will facilitate bringing readings to class.

We aim to be responsive to email from students. However, please do not expect an answer to your question any sooner than 48 hours after it is sent. Last-minute email questions and requests are bad for everyone involved. We prefer that students use office hours rather than email for asking substantive questions.

**Books to Purchase**


Book chapters that are not part of the required books will be posted in the Library Course Reserves section of the Chalk site and are marked with an asterisk. Journal articles can be found through the University of Chicago library, unless the URL is specified on the syllabus. If you are having trouble accessing a reading, please let me know ASAP.

The required readings are intentionally eclectic, with a mix of new and old work from a wide variety of perspectives. We encourage you to read as widely as possible during this course, from
economics to fiction to journalism, in order to generate new insights and puzzles. Creativity is hard to cultivate within strict disciplinary confines.

**Academic Integrity**

This is the University of Chicago’s Academic Integrity statement:

“It is contrary to justice, to academic integrity, and to the spirit of intellectual inquiry to submit the statements or ideas of work of others as one's own. To do so is plagiarism or cheating, offenses punishable under the University's disciplinary system. Because these offenses undercut the distinctive moral and intellectual character of the University, we take them very seriously. Proper acknowledgment of another's ideas, whether by direct quotation or paraphrase, is expected. In particular, if any written or electronic source is consulted and material is used from that source, directly or indirectly, the source should be identified by author, title, and page number, or by website and date accessed. Any doubts about what constitutes "use" should be addressed to the instructor.”

If you have questions, ask us and/or consult Charles Lipson’s *Doing Honest Work in College* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

**1. Concepts and Data**


**2. Onset**

Roessler, *Ethnic Politics and State Power*, all [skim Appendices].


### 3. Mobilization


Finkel, *Ordinary Jews*, all [skim Appendices].


### 4. Insurgent Organization

*Paper topic #1 handed out.*


Cohen, *Rape During Civil War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), all.


5. Counterinsurgency

Long, The Soul of Armies, all.


6. Alignment and Alliance


7. Violence against Civilians


Jessica Stanton, Violence and Restraint in Civil War, chapters 1-2.

Scott Straus, Making and Unmaking Nations, chapters 1-4.


**8. Ecologies of Violence**

Lisa Wedeen, *Authoritarian Apprehensions: Ideology, Judgment, and Mourning in Syria*

**FILMS:**
Abou naddara, *Trajectory of an Unknown Soldier* (four part shorts, approximately 2 minutes each)
Ziad Kalthum, *The Eternal Sergeant* (documentary film)
Usama Muhammad, *Silvered Water* (documentary film)

**9. How do Wars End?**

*Paper topic #2 handed out.*

Debos, *Living by the Gun in Chad*, all.


**10. Legacies and Aftermaths**


Autesserre, *Peaceland*, Introduction, Chapters 1-5, Conclusion, Appendix.
