

## **Civil Wars in Theory and Practice**

Department of Politics  
University of Virginia

PLIR 8500/5500  
M 7:00-9:30 p.m., Gibson Hall 241

Professor Jonah Schulhofer-Wohl  
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This course delves into the dynamics of civil wars. It draws on literature in political science and other fields in the social sciences to understand how civil wars are conducted. We begin at the level of the armed actors. We analyze the structure of government armed forces and rebel groups, their tactical effectiveness, the recruitment of fighters, violence against civilians, military engagements between armed rivals, and the role of resources (including external support), ideology, and ethnic and religious identities in shaping their actions. We study violence from the perspective of the armed organization and the interactions of opposing and allied armed organizations, examining what leads to success in warfighting and the causes of ethnic cleansing and genocide. We then move to the level of individual, studying who participates in armed organizations, the factors that shape continued participation and sacrifice, and the process by which individuals become accustomed to using violence. The final week of the course applies what students have learned, by examining closely the history of an entire war. By the end of the semester, students will be familiar with the methodological approaches and findings of established and emerging new social scientific research on conflict and able to apply these to understand specific cases of civil war and thematic topics of interest across wars.

### **Requirements**

Grades will be determined on the basis of:

1. In-class participation (10%). Attendance at every class meeting, for the full length of the class, is required and expected. Class participation is not an attendance grade, but instead reflects active participation during class, including asking questions and grappling with arguments, concepts and evidence. Active participation also means completing the required reading prior to the class meeting.

The rubric for participation scores for each class session is as follows: 2 points for participation that is active and thoughtful (i.e., makes an original comment or ask a pertinent question about the course material); 1 point for brief participation (i.e., answers a short question); 0 points for no participation or if absent. In order to receive full credit for participation, students need to earn at

least 24 points, which is the equivalent of earning 2 participation points approximately every other class session. If you were unable to participate in the discussion and would like to pose a question or make a comment, please do so within 24 hours of the end of the class in the “Discussions” section of the Collab website; comments and questions posted there within the specified time frame will be counted in the calculation of your class participation grade as well. If you are not present in class, you are unable to participate and, as a result, will receive no participation credit for that class. I will drop your two lowest class participation grades in the calculation of your final grade in the course.

2. Critical review paper and presentation (together 30%). One 15-20 minute oral presentation based on a written (5 pp.) critical review of one of the assigned readings for weeks 3-14.

3. Research proposal for the final paper (10%). 7-10 pp. **Due by 5 p.m. on Friday, March 2.** The assignment and instructions for the proposal and the final paper will be distributed by February 2 (one month in advance).

4. Final research paper (50%). 25-30 pp. for graduate students, 20 pp. for undergraduate students. **Due by 5 p.m. on Monday, May 14.**

Hand in papers by uploading them to your File Drop folder on the Collab website. Papers must be written in a 12 pt font, double-spaced, with margins of no more than 1.25 inches on the sides and no more than 1 inch on the top and bottom.

## Reading

Each week of the course schedule lists a set of required readings. Undergraduate required reading is indicated by an asterisk. The following books, on order at the UVa bookstore, are required (denoted with an asterisk) or recommended. All other readings are posted in an e-reserve on the class’s Collab website under “Resources.”

\* Arjona, Ana M. 2016. *Rebelocracy: Social Order in Civil War*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Balcells, Laia. 2017. *Rivalry and Revenge: The Politics of Violence during Civil War*.

\* Baczko, Adam, Gilles Dorronsoro, and Arthur Quesnay. 2018. *Civil War in Syria: Mobilization and Competing Social Orders*. New York: Cambridge University Press. [Ebrary](#)

\* Browning, Christopher R. 1992. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. New York: HarperCollins. **CL**

Christia, Fotini. 2012. *Alliance Formation in Civil Wars*. Cambridge: Cambridge University

Press.

- \* Cohen, Dara Kay. 2016. *Rape during Civil War*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- \* Gebru Tareke. 2009. *The Ethiopian Revolution: War in the Horn of Africa*. New Haven: Yale University Press. [Ebrary](#), **CL**
- \* Grossman, Dave. 1996. *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. **CL**
- \* Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- \* Marlantes, Karl. 2011. *What it is Like to Go to War*. New York: Grove Press. **CL**
- \* Phillips, Christopher. 2016. *The Battle for Syria: International Rivalry in the New Middle East*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Sinno, Abdulkader H. 2008. *Organizations at War in Afghanistan and Beyond*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. [Ebrary](#), **CL**
- \* Steele, Abbey. 2016. *Democracy and Displacement in Colombia's Civil War*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press
- \* Viterna, Jocelyn. 2016. *Women in War: The Micro Processes of Mobilization in El Salvador*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wood, Elisabeth J. 2003. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. **CL**

\* = required

**CL** = on course reserve at Clemons Library

**Ebrary** = available electronically, UVa Library

## Expectations and Course Policies

### Attendance, Reading, and Participation

This course requires that you manage your time well, keep track of the assigned readings and, most importantly, attend and participate actively in every class session. The course schedule lists required readings, which must be completed before the date listed. Plan your schedule around the class meeting, including avoidable conflicts, such as doctor's appointments or interviews. There are no "excused absences" per se; however, as noted above, your lowest two participation grades will be dropped. If you will be absent for a total of two full weeks or more over the course of the semester due to non-emergency and/or avoidable reasons (including vacations, travel or training), you may be ineligible to take this course. Please let me know in the first week of the course if you have planned an extended absence.

### Late/missed assignments

Deadlines listed in the syllabus are firm, in the interest of fairness to all students. Extensions for assignments and/or makeup exams will not be granted except in cases of serious illness, family emergency or religious observance (see below). Papers will lose one third of a letter grade for each 24 hours or portion thereof that they are handed in late (i.e. an A- becomes a B+, etc.).

### Academic integrity

Please familiarize yourself with the University's honor code: <http://honor.virginia.edu/>: If at any point during the semester you are unsure about whether you are in compliance with it, contact me as soon as possible, i.e. before you begin an assignment or while you are working on it, rather than when or after you hand it in.

Plagiarism and cheating are unacceptable and will be pursued to the full extent of the University's policies. Providing proper citations in your writing is necessary and expected. If you have any questions about what constitutes a correct citation, it is your responsibility to seek guidance prior to submitting the assignment. *In all writing, you must put any words that are not your own between quotation marks.* You must also attribute any ideas that are not your own to the source from which you derived them. For further information on academic integrity at UVa, please consult <https://honor.virginia.edu/plagiarism-supplement>.

### Grading

Students are encouraged to consult with me during office hours about questions on an assignment before handing it in. In the event of a low grade on an assignment, you will not be allowed to rewrite or to resubmit the assignment for an improved grade except in rare – and extraordinary – circumstances. If you have faced an extraordinary circumstance that resulted in a lower grade on an assignment and would like the opportunity to resubmit that assignment, you must contact me within one week of receiving your assignment grade. If you believe that there was an error in the calculation of a grade, you may submit a re-grading request. All such requests must be submitted

to me in writing, along with a memo explaining where you believe an error was made. If you elect to have an assignment re-graded, please be aware that this may result in a lower final grade on the assignment.

### Religious observance

Students may ask for reasonable and timely accommodations for religious observances. Please review the syllabus closely to determine if religious obligations will present scheduling conflicts with any of the assignments. Students must inform me of any such conflicts within the first two weeks of the semester.

### Accommodations

In compliance with University policy, I will provide appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Please provide your accommodations paperwork to me as soon as you have it available, within the first two weeks of the semester. For further information, please consult the SDAC [Student Disability Access Center](#).

### Laptops and other electronic devices

Surfing the web, checking your email or social media, and sending messages during class distract you and your fellow students. If you choose to take notes on your computer during class, please disconnect your wireless access. Please also refrain from using cell phones and other mobile devices except in case of emergency. Violations of this policy may result in a reduction in your class participation grade or in a ban of laptop use in class. Note that [research](#) has found that students absorb class material better when taking notes by hand than when using a computer.

### Communication

Email should generally be used for brief questions only. So that I'm sure to receive your email, write the course number in brackets at the beginning of the subject line of your message, i.e. [PLIR 8500]. I will respond to emails within 24 hours. Should you need to contact me regarding an urgent matter, please make a note of this in the subject line. In-person discussion is far preferable to email, so you should plan to attend office hours for any questions relating to course content or assignments (see below).

### Office hours

I encourage you to come to my office hours with any questions or comments. I hold weekly office hours on Tuesdays from 4:00-6:00 p.m. You may stop by during this time without an appointment, but I encourage you to schedule one in advance online, at <https://calendly.com/schulhofer-wohl/15min>. Please cancel your reserved time if you cannot come so that it can be made available to another student.

Writing in this course

Being able to write effectively is essential to your success in this course and to your future career. For all course assignments, you should avail yourself of the resources of UVa's [Writing Center](#) to receive help with and feedback on your writing. I also recommend taking a look at the Guidelines for Writing, which I've posted to the class Collab website, [two short lectures on writing and research](#) that Professor Deborah Boucoyannis and I gave in spring 2014, and the websites of the Writing Programs at the [University of Chicago](#) and [Dartmouth College](#).

Extra credit

Many events relevant to this course will take place over the course of the semester, both in the Department of Politics and on Grounds. To encourage you to attend, you can earn one point on your final course grade for attending a talk or workshop and emailing me a 250-word reaction/critique of the speaker's talk. You may earn up to three points total by submitting these essays. If you intend to take advantage of this opportunity, please send all reactions no later than 12 p.m. on Monday, April 30.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Jan. 22 (Week 1): Introduction

Overview of the course. Defining civil war. Levels of analysis in the study of civil war.

For class discussion, pick one civil war from the Sambanis and Schulhofer-Wohl list. Familiarize yourself with the war by reading the coding notes about it. Most are available in the Civil War Coding Notes document, replication folder for Doyle and Sambanis 2006, Making War and Building Peace (if you've selected a more recent war that is not in these notes, contact me and I'll send you the relevant pages from the new Coding Notes). Also skim a few news articles and/or overviews of the war. The war list and coding notes document are available on Collab under Resources.

- \* O'Brien, Tim. *The Things They Carried*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. "How to Tell a True War Story," pp.67-80.
- Sambanis, Nicholas. 2004. "What is Civil War? Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48(6): 814-858.
- \* Kalyvas, Stathis. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 1, "Concepts," pp.16-31.
- \* Tilly, Charles. 2003. *The Politics of Collective Violence*. New York: Cambridge University Press. "Mechanisms, Processes and Explanations," pp.20-2; "Violent Rituals", pp.81- 101.
- \* Armitage, David. 2017. *Civil Wars: A History in Ideas*. New York: Knopf. Introduction, "Confronting Civil War," pp.3-30.

### Jan 29. (Week 2): Types of Civil Wars

- \* King, Charles. 2001. "The Myth of Ethnic Warfare: Understanding Conflict in the Post-Cold War World," *Foreign Affairs* 80(6): 165- 170.
- Fearon, James. 2006. "Ethnic Mobilization and Ethnic Violence," *Oxford Handbook of Political Economy*, eds. Barry Weingast and Donald Wittman, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sambanis, Nicholas. 2007. "What is an Ethnic War? Organization and Interests in Ethnic Insurgency." Working paper, Yale University.
- \* Mueller, John. 2000. "The Banality of 'Ethnic War.'" *International Security* 25(1): 42-70.
- \* Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2001. "'New' and 'Old' Civil Wars: A Valid Distinction?" *World Politics* 54(1): 99-118.
- \* Walter, Barbara F. 2017. "The New New Civil Wars." *Annual Review of Political Science* 20: 469-86.
- Kalyvas, Stathis N. and Matthew Adam Kocher. 2007. "Ethnic Cleavages and Irregular War: Iraq and Vietnam." *Politics & Society* 35(2):183-223.

U.S. Department of the Army [Petraeus, David H., James F. Amos, and John A. Nagl]. 2006. *Counterinsurgency* (U.S. Army Field Manual No. 3-24). Washington, DC: Department of the Army. Introduction and Ch. 1.

\* Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2008. Review Symposium on FM 3-24. *Perspectives on Politics* 6(2):351-3.

\* Biddle, Stephen. 2006. "Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon." *Foreign Affairs*, March/April.

**Feb. 5 (Week 3): Armed Groups and Non-Combatants 1: Recruitment & Informal Participation**

Petersen, Roger D. 2001. *Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons from Eastern Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Introduction and Ch. 1, pp.1-79.

Wood, Elisabeth J. 2003. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

\* Wood, Ch. 1.

\* Guichaoua, Yvan. 2010. "Process of Violent Political Mobilization: An Overview of Contemporary Debates and CRISE findings." Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, Oxford University.

\* Viterna, Jocelyn. 2016. *Women in War: The Micro Processes of Mobilization in El Salvador*. New York: Oxford University Press.

\* Baczko, Dorronsoro, and Quesnay, *Civil War in Syria*, Introduction, Chs. 2-3 (Ch 1 optional).

**Feb 12 (Week 4): Armed Force Structures and Consequences**

\* Gutiérrez Sanín, Francisco. 2008. "Telling the Difference: Guerrillas and Paramilitaries in the Colombian War." *Politics & Society* 36(1):3-34.

U.S. Dept. of the Army. 1994. *Organization of the United States Army*. Pamphlet 10-1. (skim).

\* Cohen, Dara Kay. 2016. *Rape in Civil War*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Staniland, Paul. 2014. *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Ch. 1.

Sinno, Abdulkader H. 2008. *Organizations at War in Afghanistan and Beyond*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Chs. 1-4 ([Ebrary](#)).

\* Hoover Green, Amelia. 2016. "The Commander's Dilemma: Creating and Controlling Armed Group Violence." *Journal of Peace Research* 53(5):619-32.

Gutiérrez Sanín, Francisco and Elizabeth Jean Wood. 2014. "Ideology in Civil War: Instrumental Adoption and Beyond." *Journal of Peace Research* 51(2):213-226.

Stanton, Jessica A. 2015. "Regulating Militias: Governments, Militias, and Civilian Targeting in Civil War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.

Johnston, Patrick. 2008. "The Geography of Insurgent Organization and its Consequences for Civil Wars: Evidence from Liberia and Sierra Leone." *Security Studies* 17(1):107-137.

\* Baczko, Dorronsoro, and Quesnay, *Civil War in Syria*, Chs. 4-6.



**Feb 19 (Week 5): Armed Groups and Non-Combatants 2: Military Competition**

\* Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, Chs. 6-7.

Kalyvas, Stathis N. and Matthew Adam Kocher. 2009. "The Dynamics of Violence in Vietnam: Analysis of the hamlet Evaluation System (HES)." *J. of Peace Research* 46(3):335-55

Downes, Alexander B. 2007. "Draining the Sea by Filling the Graves: Investigating the Effectiveness of Indiscriminate Violence as a Counterinsurgency Strategy." *Civil Wars* 9(4):420-44.

Lyll, Jason. 2009. "Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks? Evidence from Chechnya." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(3): 331-362.

**Feb 26 (Week 6): Armed Groups and Non-Combatants 3: Political Competition**

\* Steele, *Democracy and Displacement in Colombia's Civil War*.

Balcells, *Rivalry and Revenge: The Politics of Violence during Civil War*.

\* Balcells, Ch. 1.

LeBas, Adrienne. 2006. "Polarization as Craft: Party Formation and State Violence in Zimbabwe." *Comparative Politics* 38(4):419-38.

\* Hage, Ghassan. 1996. "Nationalist Anxiety or the Fear of Losing Your Other." *Australian Journal of Anthropology* 7(2):121-40.

Khalaf, Samir. 2002. *Civil and Uncivil Violence: A History of the Internationalization of Communal Conflict*. New York: Columbia University Press. Ch. 2, "The Radicalization of Communal Loyalties."

\* Baczko, Dorronsoro, and Quesnay, *Civil War in Syria*, Chs. 8-9, 13.

**Mar. 5 (Week 7): Spring Break – No Class****Mar. 12 (Week 8): Governing**

\* Arjona, *Rebelocracy: Social Order in the Colombian Civil War*.

Stewart, Megan A. 2017. "Civil War as State-Making: Strategic Governance in Civil War." *International Organization*.

Taber, Robert. 1965. *War of the Flea: A Study of Guerrilla Warfare Theory and Practise*. New York: L. Stuart. Chapters 1-4, especially "The Guerrilla as Missionary."

**Mar. 19 (Week 9): Warfighting: Violence, Coercion, and Paths to Victory or Defeat**

\* Biddle, Stephen. 2007. "Explaining Military Outcomes." In Brooks, Risa A. and Elizabeth A. Stanley. *Creating Military Power: The Sources of Military Effectiveness*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp.207-227.

\* Schelling, Thomas C. *Arms and Influence*. Ch. 1, "The Diplomacy of Violence," pp.1-34.

- \* Pillar, Paul R. 1983. *Negotiating Peace: War Termination as a Bargaining Process*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Introduction, Ch. 1, Appendix A, and Ch. 5.
- Ramsay, Kristopher W. 2008. "Settling It on the Field: Battlefield Events and War Termination." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52(6): 850-879.
- \* Toft, Monica Duffy and Yuri M. Zhukov. 2015. "Islamists and Nationalists: Rebel Motivation and Counterinsurgency in Russia's North Caucasus." *American Political Science Review* 109(2): 222-38.
- Katagiri, Nori. 2013. "Suicidal Armies: Why Do Rebels Fight Like an Army and Keep Losing?" *Comparative Strategy* 32(4): 354-77.

### **Mar. 26 (Week 10):** Quagmire

- \* Schulhofer-Wohl, Jonah. *Quagmire in Civil Wars*. Book ms, University of Virginia.
- Phillips, Christopher. 2016. *The Battle for Syria: International Rivalry in the New Middle East*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- \* Phillips, Introduction, Chs. 6-7, 9-10.
- \* Baczko, Dorronsoro, and Quesnay, *Civil War in Syria*, Ch. 7.

### **April 2 (Week 11):** Alignments and Alliances

- \* Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, Ch. 11.
- \* Schulhofer-Wohl, Jonah. "The Politics of On-Side Fighting: Mortal Alignments in Syria's Civil War." Ms, University of Virginia.
- \* Walt, Stephen M. 1987. *The Origins of Alliances*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Selections.
- \* Christia, Fotini. 2012. *Alliance Formation in Civil Wars*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chs. 2-3.
- Christia, Fotini. 2008. "Following the Money: Muslim versus Muslim in Bosnia's Civil War." *Comparative Politics* 40(4):461-80.
- Bennett, D. Scott. 1997. "Testing Alternative Models of Alliance Duration, 1816-1984." *American Journal of Political Science* 41(3):846-878.
- Weitsman, Patricia A. 2003. "Alliance Cohesion and Coalition Warfare: The Central Powers and Triple Entente." *Security Studies* 12(3):79-113.

### **Apr. 9 (Week 12):** Working Session – Research for Final Papers

### **Apr. 16 (Week 13):** The Individual and Violence

- \* Marlantes, Karl. 2011. *What it is Like to Go to War*. New York: Grove Press.
- \* Grossman, Dave. 1996. *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

**Apr. 23 (Week 14):** The Individual as Group Member – Participation, and Management

- \* Sambanis, Nicholas, Schulhofer-Wohl, Jonah, and Moses Shayo. 2012. “Parochialism as a Central Challenge in Counterinsurgency.” *Science* 336(6038): 805-8. **Read supplemental online material first**, then article.
- Hardin, Russell. 2002. “The Crippled Epistemology of Extremism.” In Albert Breton, Gianluigi Galeotti, Pierre Salmon, and Ronald Wintrobe, eds. *Political Extremism and Rationality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- \* Browning, Christopher R. 1992. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. New York: HarperCollins.
- \* Goldhagen, Daniel Jonah. 1996. *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*, pp.1-24.
- Shapiro, Jacob N. and David A. Siegel. 2012. “Moral Hazard, Discipline, and the Management of Terrorist Organizations.” *World Politics* 64(1):39-78.

**Apr. 30 (Week 15):** Applying Theory

- \* Gebru Tareke. 2009. *The Ethiopian Revolution: War in the Horn of Africa*. New Haven: Yale University Press.