

Civil War and Violence in Africa

Stanford University
Political Science 146S
Winter 2008

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Class Meetings: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:15-3:05 pm
Location: 540-108

Office Hours: Mondays, 3:30-5:00 pm, Department of Political Science, 100 Encina West*

*Note that 100 Encina West is where I will hold office hours. My regular office is in the Center for International Security and Cooperation, Encina Hall C205-3.

Course Description

This course provides an analytical approach to the study of civil wars in post-independent sub-Saharan Africa. The course divides into four parts. The first provides a broad overview of the challenges that Africa confronts. In doing so, it highlights some areas that will not be covered in much detail in the remainder of the course, such as religion, disease, and underdevelopment. The second part of the course investigates the causes of civil wars: what conditions permit civil war? Why do dissidents or governments choose violence instead of peaceful means of resolving disputes? Is civil war politics by other means or a means of wealth acquisition? The third explores the processes of civil war: why do people join insurgencies? And why do some conflicts become more violent than others? We will conclude the course by examining mechanisms for resolving conflicts. We will explore why the international community intervenes to stop genocide in some wars but not others; what takes it so long to act, if it acts at all; how the prospect of military intervention affects the military strategies of combatant parties in civil wars; and whether outsiders help or hinder the resolution of civil wars.

The course has two main goals. The first is to familiarize you with the politics of contemporary African civil wars. Unfamiliar observers frequently make hasty conclusions about the origins and nature of these conflicts. We will evaluate and critique these arguments. We will also identify and evaluate political scientists' competing explanations of the underpinnings of African civil wars. The course's focus will be on particular problems and topics. We *will not* focus in depth on any particular country or civil war, though special attention will be paid to wars in Darfur, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone. Over the course of the quarter, you will be expected to do outside reading to familiarize yourself with another war. You will use your knowledge about this civil war,

as well as the concepts and theories about which we learn in the course, to write a research paper. Thus, you will be the class' expert on that particular war. The second goal of the course is to develop analytical tools that can be used outside this course. I will teach and emphasize critical reading, writing, and research skills, with special emphasis placed on argumentation and evidence. Rather than pursuing a *descriptive* understanding of civil wars in Africa, we will pursue an *analytical, explanatory, and methodological* understanding of particular aspects of them using these tools. The ability to make logical arguments and cast doubt on alternatives based on evidence will serve you well in almost any social science course; indeed, it is the bread and butter of social science and, if you master these skills, you will likely do very well in your other social science courses.

Course Requirements

Students are required to complete all of the following required assignments in order to have the opportunity to receive a passing grade in this course. The relative weight of each assignment is as follows:

Participation – 10%
Presentation – 10%
Mid-Term Exam – 30%
Research Paper – 50%

What are these assignments? *Participation* in the seminar discussions is necessary and fundamental for learning. Your participation must be observable, which means that you must speak at least occasionally in class or to me in my office hours. You are required to do *all the assigned reading*. Students who earn the highest marks for participation will cite and expand on the readings in their remarks. I will occasionally call on people. Be prepared to respond to questions about the readings. I will not interrogate you about particular details, but I will expect familiarity with central themes and your willingness to engage them.

Each student will give one *presentation* on the reading assigned for the day of his or her presentation. The presentation should be between five and ten minutes. Each presenter will also be responsible for bringing handouts with relevant information. The handouts should be one or two pages long. *No handout should be longer than two pages!* The handout should include a brief summary of the author's main argument, the research question, the dependent variable, the independent variable, the evidence that the author marshals—or does not marshal—in support of his/her argument, and the author's treatment of counterarguments. If you have problems identifying these key elements of the readings, see me in office hours *before* your presentation. Your grade for the presentation component will depend both on the effectiveness of your verbal presentation and on the quality of your handout.

The *mid-term exam* will be in essay format. It will be administered in class.

The *research paper* should discuss varying approaches or theories that purport to explain a problem or question, what kind of evidence would support and cast doubt on each theory, and a case study of an African civil war in which you evaluate the competing theories based on evidence you have found in your research. A good strategy might be for you, sometime relatively early in the term, to select the case you will study and the theories you will test. Think through the theory's predictions and observable implications and then write a rough research design. Each student must arrange an appointment to meet with me during the week of February 25th-29th to show me his or her research design and to discuss how to complete the project. You can then use the remaining weeks in the term to conduct the research and write-up the paper.

The research paper should be 15-20 pages, use a 12 point font, and be double-spaced, with 1.25" margins. It should include a title page with your name, contact information, the date, an abstract of 150 words, and a word count. Include page numbers, preferably at the bottom of each page. The text should include footnotes and relevant citations and a full bibliography of the sources you included. Please note that late papers will be penalized one letter grade per day (A→B→C→D→F). Papers should be delivered to me in hard copy. Any electronic submissions will automatically be docked 1/3 of a letter grade.

Grading

Letter grades will be assigned on the following scale:

A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	86-89
B	83-85
B-	80-82
C+	76-79
C	73-75
C-	70-72
D+	66-69
D	63-65
D-	60-62
F	0-59

Absences, Extensions, and Incompletes

Any unforeseen absence on the midterm requires contacting me and bringing a doctor's report. A makeup test will be arranged as soon as possible. There are no extensions or incompletes in this course.

Honor Code

The Honor Code applies to all work you do for this course. If you have any questions about citing sources or plagiarism, please consult with me.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities should (1) register with the Disabilities Resource Center [563 Salvatierra Walk, Stanford, CA 94305; (2) inform me during the first week of the existence of the disability (discretion assured).

Required Texts

Barnett, Michael. *Eyewitness to a Genocide: The United Nations in Rwanda*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Berkeley, Bill. *The Graves are not Yet Full: Race, Tribe, and Power in the Heart of Africa*. New York: Basic Books.

French, Howard W. 2004. *A Continent for the Taking: The Tragedy and Hope of Africa*. New York: Vintage Books.

Jones, Bruce D. 2001. *Peacemaking in Rwanda: The Dynamics of Failure*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Weinstein, Jeremy M. 2006. *Inside Rebellion*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

The above texts are available at the Stanford Bookstore.

Other assigned readings from articles and book chapters will be posted on the Coursework website or put on reserve in the library.

PART I: OVERVIEW AND CAUSES OF CIVIL WAR

Week 1: Introduction

January 9: Introduction: Syllabus, Course Overview, and Methodology

Week 2: Africa's Challenges and Possibilities

January 14 : *Challenges to Africa: Military Coups & Regime (In)stability, Corruption, Ethnic Politics, Disease, and Colonial Legacies. Do They Cause Civil War? What Other Effects Do They Have?*

Howard French. 2004. *A Continent for the Taking: The Tragedy and Hope of Africa*, Introduction and ch. 1-3, pp. xiii-68.

January 16: *The Strange Case of Zaire & (Dis)Incentives for Democratization & Reform*

French, *A Continent for the Taking*, ch. 6, 7,8, 10, pp. 111-169, 189-228.

Week 3: African States, Boundaries, and Africa's Place in the International System

January 21: No class - *Martin Luther King, Jr. Day*

January 23: *Where Did African States Come From? How Were Boundaries Created? What Effects Have These Factors Had on War in Africa?*

Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg. 1982. Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood. 35 (1):1-24.

Jeffrey Herbst. 1989. The Creation and Maintenance of National Boundaries in Africa. *International Organization* 43 (4): 673-92.

Week 4: Causes of Civil War

What Creates Incentives for Adversaries to Go to War? Ethnic Hatreds? Resources? Insecurity? Geography? Opportunistic Leaders? Under What Conditions Do Adversaries Act (or Not Act) on These Incentives?

January 28 *Symbolic Politics and Emotions*

Stuart Kaufman. 2006. Symbolic Politics or Rational Choice: Testing Theories of Extreme Ethnic Violence. *International Security* 30(4): 45-86.

David Keen. 2002. "Since I am a Dog, Beware My Fangs": Beyond a 'Rational Violence' Framework in the Sierra Leonean War. London School of Economics Crisis States Program Working Paper No. 14.

**Recommended:*

Arman Grigorian and Stuart Kaufman. 2007. Hate Narratives and Ethnic Conflict. *International Security* 31(4): 180-191.

January 30 *Rationalist Explanations: Fear and Greed in Civil Wars*

Barry Posen. 1993. The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict. *Survival* 35: 27-47. This article can also be found in *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*, edited by Michael E. Brown. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, (1993) 103-24.

Paul Collier. 2000. Doing Well Out of War. In *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*, edited by Mats Berdal and David M. Malone. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

**Recommended:*

Steven R. David. 1997. Internal Wars: Causes and Cures. *World Politics* 49 (4):552-76.

James Fearon and David Laitin. 2003. Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War. *American Political Science Review* 97(1): 75-90.

Week 5: Case Studies

Do the case studies provide support for any of the theoretical frameworks we have learned about? All of them? How would we know?

February 4 *Liberia*

Berkeley, *The Graves Are Not Yet Full*, pp. 1-61.

February 6 *Sudan*

Berkeley, *The Graves Are Not Yet Full*, pp. 195-243

Week 6: Case Studies, continued.

February 11 *Darfur*

David Hoile. 2005. *Darfur in Perspective*. London: European Sudanese Public Affairs Council, pp. 1-31. Available online at

Samantha Power. 2004. Dying in Darfur. *The New Yorker*.

February 13 Midterm Examination (cumulatively includes all the material covered thus far)

PART II: PROCESSES OF WAR

Week 7: Recruitment

February 18 No Class – *Presidents' Day*

February 20 *Why Do People Join Insurgent Movements? Do They Have a Choice?*

Jeremy M. Weinstein. 2006. Recruitment. In *Inside Rebellion*, ch. 3.

Christopher Blattman and Jeannie Annan. 2007. On the Nature and Causes of LRA Abduction: What the Abductees Say.

**Recommended*

Sarah Kenyon Lischer. 2003. Collateral Damage: Humanitarian Assistance as a Cause of Conflict. *International Security* 28 (1): 79-109.

Week 8: Violence & Genocide in Civil War

*Make an appointment to meet me this week to discuss your research design of your term paper. I will circulate a sign up sheet in class on Monday, February 25th.

February 25 *Why Does Violence against Civilians Vary in Intensity and Timing? Why Do Some Abstain While Others Prey?*

Jeremy M. Weinstein. 2006. Violence. In *Inside Rebellion*, ch. 6.

Stathis N. Kalyvas. 1999. Wanton and Senseless? The Logic of Massacres in Algeria. *Rationality and Society* 11(3): 243-286.

February 27 *Civil War and Genocide in Rwanda*

Bruce D. Jones. 2001. *Peacemaking in Rwanda*, pp. 1-47.

PART III: CIVIL WAR TERMINATION AND INTERVENTION

Week 9: Civil War Termination and Spoilers

March 3 *Why Are Civil Wars So Difficult to End? Under What Conditions Can They End?*

Barbara Walter. 1997. The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement. *International Organization* 51 (3): 335-64.

Charles King. 2001. The Benefits of Ethnic War: Understanding Eurasia's Unrecognized States. *World Politics* 53(4): 524–52.

March 5 *What Barriers Present a Challenge to Civil War Termination?*

Stephen John Stedman. 1997. Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes. *International Security* 22(2): 5-53.

Patrick Johnston. 2007. Negotiated Settlements and Government Strategy in Civil Wars: Evidence from Darfur. *Civil Wars* 9 (4): 359-377.

Week 10: Humanitarian Intervention

Can Humanitarian Intervention Prevent Atrocities or Stop Ongoing Civil Wars? Why Doesn't the International Community Intervene More Often? Does Humanitarian Intervention Unintentionally Cause or Exacerbate Mass Violence?

March 10 Michael Barnett. 2002. *Eyewitness to a Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, selected chapters.

March 12 Barnett, *Eyewitness to a Genocide*, selected chapters.

Alan J. Kuperman. 2005. Suicidal Rebellions and the Moral Hazard of Humanitarian Intervention. *Ethnopolitics* 4 (2): 149-73.

**Recommended:*

Alan J. Kuperman. 2000. Rwanda in Retrospect. *Foreign Affairs* 79 (1): 94-118.

March 21 Final papers due promptly by 11:30 AM (the end of the designated final exam period for this class).