

## Understanding Civil Wars: Theory and Policy Implications

IRGN 401  
Spring 2008, Room 1328  
Mondays and Wednesdays 11:00-12:20

Professor Barbara Walter  
Office: Robinson 1321, 822-0775  
Office hours: Mondays 1:00-3:00

**Themes:** Why do civil wars break out in some countries but not others? Why do some conflicts last longer than others? Why are some of these wars resolved in negotiated peace settlements, while others are fought until one side is defeated? And what does it take to bring long-term peace?

This course examines current explanations for why civil wars break out, why they are then so difficult to resolve, and the effect outside intervention has on them. The course has two goals. The first is to introduce students to the major theories in the study of civil war. The second is to engage students in current policy debates regarding how the international community can best respond to these conflicts. Special attention will be given to recent and ongoing civil wars, particularly Indonesia, Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

**Requirements:** Students are required to complete all assigned reading, actively participate in class discussions, and choose between one of the two following writing assignments:

- (1) three 5-page papers on topics that will be given to the students one week before they are due,
- (2) *or* one 20-25 page research paper on a topic of the student's choosing.

Ph.D. students are required to write an article-length paper approx. 30-35 pages.

Student performance will be evaluated as follows: class participation 25%; paper(s) 75%.

**Please consider whether the materials for this class need to be printed or whether a digital version is sufficient. If you need a printed version, please use the two-sided option in the computer lab to save paper and printing costs. All assignments submitted for this course should be printed double-sided.**

**Readings:** Required readings are listed below. The four required books can be purchased at the UCSD bookstore. The remaining readings can be obtained from the URL addresses listed below or on e-reserves.

Please note that not all the readings on this syllabus are listed because their arguments are correct or convincing; indeed, you might find some quite foolish. They are listed as examples of ideas that have been influential in both academic and policymaking circles. Read each article and chapter critically with the goal of reaching your own conclusions about the topic. Keeping the following questions in mind when reading should help focus your attention on the big picture: What is the argument the author is trying to make and why might this be important? What are

the strengths and weaknesses of the argument? What are some possible counter-arguments that could be made? What does this tell us about conflicts we read about in the paper every day?

**Books required for purchase:**

- Philip Gourevitch, We wish to inform you that tomorrow you will be killed with your families. (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1998.)
- Robert Kaplan, Balkan Ghosts. (New York: Vintage Press, 1994).
- Barbara F. Walter, Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).
- Fiona Terry. Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action. Cornell University Press, 2002.

**Prerequisites:** IP/Core 410.

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**Course Outline and Readings**

**Week 1. Monday March 31: Introduction**

- Overview of the course and the major puzzles surrounding civil wars.

**Wednesday April 2: Trends in Civil War**

- Human Security Report 2005: War and Peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). pp. 1-61, and 145-158. The report can be downloaded at:  
<http://www.humansecurityreport.info/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=28&Itemid=63>

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**THEME 1: THE CAUSES OF CIVIL WARS: Frameworks for Analysis**

**Week 2. Monday April 7: Ethnicity and Nationalism**

*Are Ethnic Conflicts Really about Ethnicity?*

- Robert Kaplan. 1994. Balkan Ghosts. (New York: Vintage Press), Part 1, pp. xv – 76. Feel free to read the whole book if you like.
- Simiyu Barasa. “Kenya’s War of Words,” New York Times. February 12, 2008.  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/12/opinion/12barasa.html>
- Andrew Rosenbaum. “An Ethnic War That Still Rages.” New York Times. October 14, 2003.

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9E02E6D6103FF937A25753C1A9659C8B63>

### **Wednesday April 9: Explanations Based on Grievances**

- Charles Tilly, “Does Modernization Breed Revolution?” Comparative Politics, Vol. 5, No. 3 (April 1973). Can be downloaded at: <http://www.jstor.org/view/00104159/ap020021/02a00060/0>
- Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis, “Why are there so many civil wars in Africa? Understanding and Preventing Violent Conflict,” Journal of African Economies, Vol. 9, No. 3, 2000. Download at: <http://jae.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/9/3/244>

### **Week 3: Monday April 14. Explanations Based on Opportunity**

#### **I: Resources and Group Organization**

- Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler and Dominic Rohner, “Beyond Greed and Grievance: Feasibility and Civil War,” Unpublished paper, World Bank August 7, 2006 version. Can be downloaded at: <http://www.csaee.ox.ac.uk/workingpapers/pdfs/2006-10text.pdf>
- James Fearon and David Laitin. 2003. “Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War,” American Political Science Review. Vol. 97, no. 1, pp. 75-90. <http://www.jstor.org/view/00030554/sp030009/04x0770p/0>

### **Wednesday April 16: Case Studies**

- Michael L. Ross. 2004. “How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War? Evidence from Thirteen Cases,” International Organization. Vol. 58, no. 1, pp. 35-68.
- Michael Ross. 2003. “Resources and Rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia.” <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/ross/ResourcesRebellion.pdf>

### **Week 4: Monday April 21. 1<sup>st</sup> Paper Due**

- Discussion on paper theme.

### **Wednesday April 23. Explanations Based on Opportunity**

#### **II: State Weakness/Failure**

- Jeffrey Herbst. 2000. States and Power in Africa. (Princeton: Princeton University Press) pp 58 -136. On e-reserve.

### **Week 5: Monday April 28: Strategic Explanations: Information**

- James Fearon. "Rationalist Explanations for War." International Organization. Vol. 49, No. 3. (Summer 1995) pp. 379-414.  
<http://www.jstor.org/view/00208183/dm980291/98p0180t/0>
- Rui de Figueredo and Barry Weingast. 1999. "The Rationality of Fear: Political Opportunism and Ethnic Conflict," in Barbara F. Walter and Jack Snyder, eds. Civil War, Insecurity and Intervention. (New York: Columbia University Press), pp. 261-302. On e-reserves.

### **Wednesday April 30: Strategic Explanations: Commitment Problems**

- Barbara F. Walter. "Bargaining Theories of Civil War." Unpublished Paper. Will be posted on First Class.
- James Fearon. 1998. "Commitment Problems and the Spread of Ethnic Conflict," in The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict, David Lake and Donald Rothchild, eds. (Princeton: Princeton University Press) pp. 107-126. On e-reserves.

### **Week 6. Monday May 5: Case for discussion: Rwanda.**

- Philip Gourevitch. 1998. We wish to inform you that tomorrow you will be killed with your families. (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux)

### **Wednesday May 7: Explaining the Dogs that Didn't Bite**

- Sergey Khrychikov and Hugh Miall, "Conflict Prevention in Estonia: The Role of the Electoral System," Security Dialogue, Vol. 33, No. 2 June 2002, pp. 193-208.  
<http://sdi.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/33/2/193>
  - Daniel N. Posner, "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," American Political Science Review, Vol. 98, No. 4, November 2004. pp. 529-545.  
<http://repositories.cdlib.org/postprints/555/>
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## **THEME 2: EXPLAINING THE DURATION AND RESOLUTION OF CIVIL WARS**

### **Week 7. Monday May 12: Why are some civil wars so difficult to end?**

- Barbara F. Walter. 2002. Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars. (Princeton: Princeton University Press), pp. 1-43, and 70-91.

### **Wednesday May 14: 2<sup>nd</sup> Paper Due.**

- David L. Philipps. Power-Sharing in Iraq. Council on Foreign Relations Special Report. April 2005.  
[http://www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/Iraq\\_CSR.pdf](http://www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/Iraq_CSR.pdf)
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## **THEME 3: THINKING ABOUT POST-CONFLICT RECOVERY**

### **Week 8: Monday May 19. Successes and Failures in External Intervention**

- Lise Morje Howard. UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars. Cambridge University Press. 2008. Pages TBD.
- Lee Feinstein. Darfur and Beyond: What is Needed to Prevent Mass Atrocities.  
<http://www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/Darfur%20and%20Beyond.pdf>

### **Wednesday May 21: The Paradox of Humanitarian Intervention**

- Fiona Terry. Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action. Cornell University Press, 2002. Pp. 1-82, 216-245

### **Week 9. Monday May 26:**

- No Class. Memorial Day.

### **Wednesday May 28. Class Cancelled due to travel.**

### **Week 10. Monday June 2: What makes settlements last?**

- Page Fortna, Peacekeeping and the Peacekept: Maintaining Peace After Civil War. Unpublished Manuscript. 2007. All available pages. On e-reserve.

**Wednesday June 6: Dinner and Class at Professor Walter's house.**

- Policy Interventions: Given what we know about civil wars, what can the international community do to reduce the incidence of war, and what is the likelihood that something will be done?

6:30 pm. 12982 Via Latina, Del Mar.

**Week 11. Monday June 9. Final paper due by 11 am in R2D2.**