

IR/PSC 276/276W: The Politics of Insurgency

Prof. Bethany Lacina
Tuesdays, 2-4:40pm

This seminar deals with the logic of asymmetric conflicts between states and non-state actors. We will examine theories of how non-state actors can win conflicts against governments and what these theories imply about the decision to rebel. The class then turns to insurgents' problems of recruitment, factionalism, and civilian control.

Instructor

Professor Lacina
Email: blacina@ur.rochester.edu
Office hours: Thursdays 1-3, Harkness 334

Course Requirements

The requirements for the W sections and non-W sections of this course **are the same**. Any student can choose to be in the W section.

60% of the grade is based on attendance and participation in class. The following weeks of the course are each worth 6% of your final grade: 1/28, 2/4, 2/11, 2/18, 2/25, 3/18, 3/25, 4/1, 4/8, 4/15,

The remaining 40% of the grade will be based on a final project requiring an original research paper.

Course Materials

Please purchase the following books through the campus bookstore or elsewhere:

- Autesserre, S. (2010) *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding*. Cambridge University Press.
- Popkin, S. (1979) *The Rational Peasant*. University of California Press.
- Rable, G.C. (2007) *But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction*. University of Georgia Press.
- Van Inwegen, P. (2011) *Understanding Revolution*. Lynne Rienner.

The following books can be accessed electronically through the library:

- Berman, E. (2009) *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism*. MIT Press.
- Metelit, C. (2009) *Inside Insurgency*. NYU Press.

All other course materials are available through links in the syllabus.

Academic honesty

Academic honesty: Students and faculty at the University must agree to adhere to high standards of academic honesty in all of the work that we do. As freshmen, students read and sign an academic honesty policy statement to indicate that they understand the general principles upon which our work is based. The College Board on Academic Honesty website gives further information on our policies and procedures: www.rochester.edu/college/honesty.

In this course the following additional requirements are in effect: You are encouraged to discuss course readings and assignments with your fellow students. However, all written work must be done independently and not in collaboration with another. In order to make appropriate help available for your essays, I encourage you to consult with me and with the College Writing Center. The term research paper will require citations and “Works Cited” following an assigned format. Cases of plagiarism will be referred to the Academic Honesty Board.

Attendance

This is a seminar course. Student preparation and participation is vital to the success of the source. Unexcused absences or extreme tardiness will result in no credit for that session’s attendance and participation grade.

If you need to miss a class because of a religious holiday, school function, funeral, or other extraordinary circumstances please email me in advance of class. If you are too ill to attend class, please provide me with a note from the Student Health Center stating that your illness prevented you from attending class; this note must be provided within 72 hours of the missed class. Students who follow the above procedure to obtain an excused absence may make-up any in-class assignments as take home assignments, which will be due by 5 pm on the Wednesday immediately following the class that the student has missed.

A student with two excused absences who needs to miss another class should contact me directly to discuss their situation.

Late work

Barring extraordinary circumstances, late work will be marked down a third of a grade (e.g., A to A-) for each 24 hour period after it is due. Thus, if an assignment is turned in any time during the first 24 hours after it is due, it is penalized a third of a grade. Any assignment not turned in within a week of the due date will automatically receive a zero.

When submitting work by email, include the assignment as an attachment AND paste the text of your work into the body of the email. If you do not include the text of the assignment in the body of your email and your attachment is missing, corrupted, or unreadable, your work will be considered late.

Incomplete notations

No incomplete notations are allowed in this class.

Class schedule

Jan 21: Introduction to the course

Jan 28: How do insurgents defeat governments?

Reading for the week (132 pages):

Van Inwegen, Understanding Revolution. Chapters 1, 4-7. (119 pages)

Ibrahim, A. (2004) "Conceptualisation of guerrilla warfare." *Small Wars and Insurgencies*. (13 pages) <https://doi.org/10.1080/0959231042000275597>

Feb 4: Successful insurgency case study: US Reconstruction

Reading for the week (155 pages):

Rable, G.C. *But There Was No Peace*. Chapters 1-3, 5-7, 9-10 and Epilogue.

Feb 11: Successful insurgency case study: French Indochina/South Vietnam

Reading for the week (221 pages):

Popkin, S. (1979) *The Rational Peasant*. Chapters 1, 3-6.

Feb 18: Recruitment

Reading for the week (147 pages):

Berman, E. *Radical, Religious, and Violent*. Pp. 29-110 (81 pages)

Weinstein, J. (2006) *Inside Rebellion*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 2-3. (66 pages) https://www.dropbox.com/s/r869m93mwj8na6i/Weinstein_InsideRebellion_chp2and3.pdf?dl=0

Feb 25: Recruitment case study: Sierra Leone

Reading for the week (61 pages):

Hoffman, D. (2007) "The Meaning of a Militia: Understanding the Civil Defence Forces of Sierra Leone." *African Affairs*. (25 pages) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4496486>

Humphreys, M. and J. Weinstein. (2004) "What the Fighters Say: A Survey of Ex-Combatants in Sierra Leone, June-August 2003." Columbia University and UNAMSIL. Pp. 2-17. (16 pages) https://www.dropbox.com/s/kpf440ukh45lzx0/HumphreysWeinstein_pp1to17.pdf?dl=0

Richards, P. and J. Vincent. (2008) "Sierra Leone: Marginalization of the RUF." In *From Soldiers to Politicians*, ed. J. de Zeeuw. Lynne Rienner. (20 pages) https://www.dropbox.com/s/0uuw1602h5vt5gx/RichardsVincent_SierraLeone.pdf?dl=0

Mar 4: Individual meetings with instructor. No class meeting.

One page draft of paper topic (due at meeting with instructor): 5% of final grade.

Mar 11: Spring break

Mar 18: Internal control

Reading for the week (122 pages):

Berman, E. *Radical, Religious, and Violent*. Pp. 121-155. (35 pages)

Staniland, P. 2012. "Organizing Insurgency: Networks, Resources, and Rebellion in South Asia." *International Security*. (36 pages) https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a.00091

Weinstein, J. *Inside Rebellion*. Chapter 4. (33 pages) https://www.dropbox.com/s/uot2n45fq4wmnzh/Weinstein_InsideRebellion_Ch4.pdf?dl=0

Koehler, Kevin, Dorothy Ohl, and Holger Albrecht. 2016. "From disaffection to desertion: How networks facilitate military insubordination in civil conflict." *Comparative Politics* <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/an5z2cubi6tdmg1oyhdof/DisaffectiontoDesertion.pdf?dl=0>

Mar 25: Factionalism

Reading for the week (161 pages):

Driscoll, Jesse. (2015) *Warlords and Coalition Politics in Post-Soviet States*. Chapters 1, 3, 4. (106 pages) https://www.dropbox.com/s/q26m72l4na7i8gu/Driscoll_Chps1_3_4.pdf?dl=0

Johnston, Patrick. (2007) "Negotiated Settlements and Government Strategy in Civil War: Evidence from Darfur." *Civil Wars*. (20 pages) <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13698240701699466>

Gilbert, Danielle. (2024). "Partners in Crime: Comparative Advantage and Kidnapping Cooperation." *Comparative Political Studies*. <http://doi.org/10.1177/00104140241302726> (35 pages)

Apr 1: Factionalism case study: Democratic Republic of Congo

Reading for the week (168 pages):

Autesserre, S. *The Trouble with the Congo*. Pages 1-14 and chapters 2, 4, 5.

Apr 8: Maintaining civilian support

Reading for the week (106 pages):

Kalyvas, S. (2006) *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 5. (35 pages) https://www.dropbox.com/s/fvn1dzubd1bhf8j/Kalyvas_Logicofviolence_chp5.pdf?dl=0

Metelit, C. *Inside Insurgency*. Chapters 1-2. (31 pages)

Wood, E. (2001) "The Emotional Benefits of Insurgency in El Salvador," in Jeff Goodwin et al., eds., *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*. University of Chicago Press. (15 pages) https://www.dropbox.com/s/gibczxve8ffkch/Wood_EmotionalBenefitsInsurgency.pdf?dl=0

Apr 15: Case studies on civilian support: Sudan, Colombia, Turkey

Reading for the week (131 pages):

Metelit, C. *Inside Insurgency*. Chapters 3-5.

Apr 22: Paper writing workshop (final class meeting)

Draft of paper due by 5 pm on MONDAY, April 21. The draft must be at least 5 pages of your own writing and use at least 3 sources.

After drafts are handed in, each student will be assigned to read one other student's paper in preparation for class.

The rough draft and participation in the workshop together account for 5% of the final course grade.

Apr 29: Final paper due

Final paper due by email at 5pm: 30% of final grade

Final project

The capstone of the course will be a paper in which you explain the differences between two or three non-state armed groups in terms of their organization, tactics, recruitment, relationship with civilians, or their political/diplomatic strategies. You will propose an explanation for these differences such as divergence in background conditions, government decisions, leadership decisions, or the international environment. The final paper must document the differences between the groups that the paper purports to explain; propose an explanation for the differences between the groups; present evidence in favor of that explanation; and address competing explanations for the differences between the groups. Examples of successful paper topics from previous years are:

- Why did one rebel group in Darfur sign a 2006 peace agreement while another did not?
- Why did the African National Congress in South Africa rely more heavily on attacks on economic targets than the Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland?
- Why has one insurgent organization in eastern DRC targeted UN peacekeepers while another organization in the same conflict has not?
- Why did the Shining Path of Peru conduct most of its recruitment in rural areas while the Tupamaros of Uruguay favored urban recruitment grounds?

Your question should be specific. Do not write an essay on, e.g., why one group "succeeded" while another "failed." That is too complicated a question for the scope of this assignment.

The components of your final project are:

- One-page final paper proposal (5% of course grade)

Due at your meeting with me during the week of March 4. The proposal should include at least a paragraph explaining your chosen topic and how it meets the requirements of the assignment. There should be a bibliography of any sources cited. This assignment will be graded full credit/half credit/no credit. Students must meet ALL the requirements to receive full credit.

- Final paper draft (5% of course grade)

Due by email before 5pm on Monday, April 21. The draft must be at least 5 pages of your own writing and use at least 3 sources. There should be a bibliography of sources cited. This assignment will be graded full credit/half credit/no credit. Students must meet ALL the requirements to receive full credit.

- Final paper (30% of course grade)

The final paper for the course is due by email before 5pm on April 29. This paper should be 20-25 pages in length not including the bibliography and using 12 point font, 1 inch margins, double-spacing, and in-text (“author-date”) citations. The grading rubric for the paper will be distributed in class.

Resources for finding non-state armed groups to compare in the final paper:

- Van Inwegen, P. (2011) *Understanding Revolution*. Lynne Rienner. Appendix.
- Uppsala Conflict Data Project (<http://ucdp.uu.se>)
- Global Terrorism Database (<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>)