This course is designed to introduce students to the study of violent political conflict. We will examine the how, why, and when of internal conflict, ranging from civil war to ethnic conflict, party violence, and religious riots. The course will focus on the key empirical and normative questions raised by violent political conflict and examine the answers provided by existing literature. What are the causes of civil war? Why do people participate in riots? Why do parties engage in electoral violence? Is ethnic conflict inevitable? What are the psychological and social effects of violence? How does violence differ from other political strategies? The second half of the course will feature in-depth case studies of particular conflicts in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Assignments and Grading:

Participation: 15%
As a discussion-based course, active participation is a crucial component of the grade. This includes regular attendance in class and contribution to class discussion. The reading load is not heavy but some of the readings are hard. Think about the key questions the reading is addressing and the answers that it provides. Then assess whether you find the answers compelling. Come prepared to discuss the readings.

In addition, we will dedicate the first 5-10 minutes of each class to a discussion of current events related to violent political conflict. You will be asked and expected to contribute to these discussions. Read the news and come prepared to talk about current events you find interesting.

Movie response: 5%
Two movies will be shown in class. You are required to provide a 2-page (double-spaced) response to these movies and how they relate to the concepts studied in class.

Quizzes: 20%
There will be six 15-minute in-class quizzes which will test your understanding of the material covered in class. If you have done the readings and paid attention in class, you will be fine. The quiz with the lowest grade will be dropped, so only 5 quizzes will count towards your final grade.

Research Presentation: 25%
As part of a 4-person group, you will be assigned one civil war or violent event and asked to prepare a 15-minute presentation to the class. In the presentation, you will need to outline
the causes of the conflict. Who were the actors involved? Why was violence used? Are there competing accounts of the cause or function of the violence? What other strategies were available? Why did people take part? Was the violence organized? Could or should external forces have acted to prevent it?

*Policy Paper: 35%*

This 10-page final assignment will be in the form of a policy paper. You will be asked to choose among various violent groups (for example, Boko Haram, the Afghan Taliban, ISIS, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Abu Sayaf Group, FARC) and will be asked to provide: 1) an overview of the group and its objectives; 2) the group’s recruitment policy and the nature of its members; 3) how and when it utilizes violence; and 4) policies to limit the groups’ effectiveness. You will be expected to relate the topics we covered in the course to analyzing the group.

**Accommodations:**
Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please go here [http://www.albany.edu/disability/current.shtml](http://www.albany.edu/disability/current.shtml) and arrange for an academic accommodation letter to be sent to me. If you wish to discuss academic accommodations for this course, please also inform me as soon as possible.

**Plagiarism:**
Please familiarize yourself with the description in the undergraduate bulletin [http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html](http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html). If you are involved in plagiarism the penalty will be failure in the course and you will be reported to judicial affairs. If you are not sure if something violates standards: ask. If you are not sure whether to cite or not to cite: cite. Every student is expected to go through the following tutorial: [http://library.albany.edu/usered/plagiarism/index.html](http://library.albany.edu/usered/plagiarism/index.html)

**Late Policy:**
For every day that an assignment is late, you will be penalized one letter grade. For example, if you turn in an A- paper 1 day late, you will receive a B+. There will be no extra credit to make up for late or missing assignments.

**Class attendance:**
You will be expected to attend class. Each student is permitted to miss two days of class per term with no questions asked and no penalties or reductions in his or her class participation grade. Any classes missed beyond those two will be taken into account in determining your class participation grade, regardless of the reason.

**Re-grading of materials:**
You may request re-grading of materials. If you wish to make such a request, contact the professor for a copy of the re-grading policy. You will be asked to provide a written explanation of why you wish to have the assignment re-graded.
Course Schedule

August 28  Overview of course, readings, assignments, and introductions
          No assigned readings

August 30  Concepts and Definitions
          Blattman, Christopher and Edward Miguel. 2010. “Civil War.” *Journal of
          Economic Literature* 48(1): 3–57

Sept 4   NO CLASS: LABOR DAY

Sept 6   Studying Violence and Civil War

Sept 11  Causes of Civil War I
          Southeast Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Introduction, chapter 1
          and chapter 7.

Sept 13  Causes of Civil War II: Poverty

Sept 18  Causes of Civil War III: Ideology
          Sanín, Francisco Gutiérrez, and Elisabeth Jean Wood. 2014. “Ideology in
          Civil War: Instrumental Adoption and Beyond.” *Journal of Peace Research* 51(2):
          213-226.

Sept 20  Who Participates? (I)
          Chapter 2.

Sept 25  Who Participates? (II)

Sept 27  Ethnic Violence I
          Handbook of Comparative Politics*, edited by Carles Boix and Susan Stokes.
          Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Oct 2    Ethnic Violence II
Oct 4  Ethnic Violence III

Oct 9  Religious Violence I

Oct 11 Religious Violence II

Oct 16 Political Violence

Oct 18 In-class Movie: The Killing Fields

Oct 23 Genocide and Mass Participation

Oct 25 Violence against Civilians: Sexual Violence

Oct 30 Terrorism

Nov 1 Non-Violent Resistance I

Nov 6 Non-Violence Resistance II

Nov 8 International Law: Just War

Nov 13 Case Study I: Party Violence in Karachi, Pakistan
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov 20</td>
<td>In-class Movie: The Act of Killing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 22</td>
<td>NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING</td>
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<td>Dec 4</td>
<td>Student Presentations I</td>
<td>No assigned readings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 6</td>
<td>Student Presentations II</td>
<td>No assigned readings</td>
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<td>Dec 11</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>No assigned readings</td>
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