

War, peace, and political violence

BA History and Politics
Universidad Carlos III de Madrid

Fall 2024

Lecture: Thursday 14h30–16h

Seminar: Friday 14h30–16h

Room 14.1.02

franvillamil.github.io/wp-polvio/

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1 Description

This course covers a wide range of topics in conflict research, including inter-state wars, civil wars, and causes and dynamics of political violence. Its main goal is to provide students with the conceptual and theoretical tools to think analytically about conflicts and political violence. Some of the questions we will explore are: Why do countries fight each other? What explains the outbreak of civil wars? Why and how civilians are killed during wars? What are the long-term consequences of conflicts?

2 General requirements and materials

We meet twice a week. In the lectures, we will review the main debates in each topic. Each lecture has one reading assigned, usually a research article, that covers part or most of what we will talk about. Reading it is not mandatory, but recommended, either before or after the lecture. In each seminar, we will discuss a reading related to the lecture. These readings, which are **mandatory**, are shorter and lighter than the ones assigned to the lectures, and are meant to reflect or expand on the topic covered each week. In addition, we will have a group presentation in most seminar days that discusses something related to the reading or week topic. Slides and general information can be found at <https://franvillamil.github.io/wp-polvio/>. All readings will be uploaded to *Aula Global*.

3 Assessment and grading

- 10%: Participation in class
- 15%: Reading memos (up to 3)
- 15%: Group presentation
- 60%: Final exam

Participation (10%)

Everyone is expected to attend all sessions and be an active participant in the discussions, especially in the seminar sessions.

Reading memos (15%)

Students have to send **up to three reading memos** of the seminar readings. Reading memos are just a half-page text with ideas from the text to discuss in class (no need to write a summary). They must be sent by email **before class starts**.

Presentation (15%)

In groups of 3-4 people, students must give a 15-min group presentation during one of the presentations' days. Topics should be briefly discussed beforehand and both dates and topics will have handled on a first come, first served basis.

Final exam (60%) – Two options:

- A.** A final take-home exam. Questions will be handed out at least 24h before deadline. Its goal is to evaluate how well students understood the main concepts and ideas.
- B.** A book review of a relevant book, commenting some of the topics discussed in class (**max 2,500 words**). Some of the pre-approved options are:
 - P. Radden Keefe, *Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland*
 - A. Gopal, *No Good Men Among the Living: America, the Taliban, and the War Through Afghan Eyes*
 - W. Finnegan, *A Complicated War: The Harrowing of Mozambique*
 - S. Subramanian, *This Divided Island: Life, Death, and the Sri Lankan War*
 - V. Bevins, *The Jakarta Method: Washington's Anticommunist Crusade and the Mass Murder Program that Shaped Our World*
 - J. Warrick, *Black Flags: The Rise of ISIS*

(Another option is possible, but it needs to be **previously approved**)

4 Course outline

Week 1	Sept 12-13	<i>No class</i>
Week 2	Sept 19-20	Introduction
Week 3	Sept 26-27	IR basics and interstate war
Week 4	Oct 3-4	War throughout history
Week 5	Oct 10-11	Civil wars I
Week 6	Oct 17-18	Civil wars II
Week 7	Oct 24-25	Wartime violence
Week 8	Oct 31	Students' presentations (I)
Week 9	Nov 7-8	Non-state armed actors
Week 10	Nov 14-15	Terrorism
Week 11	Nov 21-22	Postwar politics and TJ
Week 12	Dec 28-29	Legacies of war
Week 13	Dec 5	Students' presentations (II)
Week 14	Dec 12-13	Wrap-up and presentations (III)

4.1 Introduction

Presentation. Course structure and organizational issues. Introduction: what is political violence and what are we going to talk about? *No readings*.

4.2 Basics of IR and interstate conflict

The three visions in IR, understanding cooperation and conflict at the international level. Why do countries go to war? Different explanations at different levels: issues, ecological factors, rationalist approaches. Democratic and capitalist peace.

Lecture

- Stephen M. Walt, '[International Relations: One World, Many Theories](#).' *Foreign Policy* 110: 29–32, 34–46, 1998.
- Jack S. Levy, 'Interstate war and peace.' In [Handbook of International Relations](#), 2013, pp. 581–606.

Seminar

- Amos Harel, '[Israel's Next War](#).' *Foreign Affairs*, 23/07/2024.
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4.3 War throughout history

How war has changed throughout history due to two main phenomena: the emergence of the modern state and the nation-state. State-building and war: origins of the state, role of international conflict in the creation of states. The development of nationalisms and its relationship with political violence.

Lecture

- Chapter 1 in Charles Tilly, *Coercion, capital, and European states, AD 990-1992*. Wiley-Blackwell, 1993: pp. 1–37.
- Andreas Wimmer and Brian Min, 'From empire to nation-state: Explaining wars in the modern world, 1816-2001.' *American Sociological Review* 71: 867–897, 2006.

Seminar

- John Reed, Guy Chazan & Roman Olearchyk, 'The birth of a new Ukraine: how Russia's war united a nation' *Financial Times*, 17/03/2022.
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4.4 Civil wars I

Basic concepts and types of civil wars. After 1990, there is a deep increase in the outbreak of civil wars. What used to be explained as popular revolutions, now is seen as a problem of anarchy, looting, and greed.

Lecture

- James Fearon & David Laitin, 'Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war.' *American Political Science Review* 97(1): 75–90, 2003.

Seminar

- Robert D Kaplan, 'The Coming Anarchy: How scarcity, crime, overpopulation, tribalism, and disease are rapidly destroying the social fabric of our planet.' *The Atlantic*, February 1994.
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4.5 Civil wars II

Understanding the role of grievances in the outbreak of civil wars. Modern grievance-based explanations highlight the role of political inequality (especially along ethnic lines) in increasing the risk of war onset. A new consensus includes both motivation and opportunity factors.

Lecture

- Chps 1 & 2 in Lars-Erik Cederman, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch & Halvard Buhaug, *Inequality, grievances, and civil war*. Cambridge UP, 2013: pp. 1–29.

Seminar

- Anand Gopal, 'The other Afghan women.' *The New Yorker*, 06/09/2021.
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4.6 Wartime violence

The repertoire of violence during wars. Types of violence and definitions. Focus on violence against civilians. Causes and dynamics. Ethnic violence and genocide.

Lecture

- Benjamin Valentino, 'Why we kill: The political science of political violence against civilians.' *Annual Review of Political Science* 17: 89–103, 2014.

Seminar

- Joshua Yaffa, 'The Hunt for Russian Collaborators in Ukraine.' *The New Yorker*, 06/02/2023.
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4.7 Non-state armed actors and civilians

What happens behind the fronts? Rebel governance and recruitment. How do armed groups control the civilian population? Wartime social processes.

Lecture

- Chapter 1 ('Introduction') in Ana Arjona, Nelson Kasfir & Zachariah Mampilly, *Rebel governance in civil war*. Cambridge UP, 2015: pp. 1–20.

Seminar

- Juan David Rojas, 'The Bukele Model and the Future of El Salvador.' *American Affairs*, Volume VIII, Number 2 (Summer 2024): 153–69.
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4.8 Terrorism

Despite its relevance, terrorism is usually misunderstood. Terrorist actions and terrorist groups. Dynamics and causes. Suicide terrorism.

Lecture

- Luis de la Calle & Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca, 'What we talk about when we talk about terrorism.' *Politics & Society* 39(3): 451–472, 2011.

Seminar

- David Remnick, Notes from underground: The life of Yahya Sinwar, the leader of Hamas in Gaza. *The New Yorker*, 12/08/2024.
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4.9 Postwar politics and TJ

Strategies to deal with conflict-ridden countries. Effects of power-sharing, regional autonomy, and secession. Postwar democratization. The emergence of international norms on accountability for human rights violations. Types of transitional justice policies, determinants and consequences.

Lecture

- Lars-Erik Cederman, Simon Hug, & Julian Wucherpfennig, *Sharing Power, Securing Peace?: Ethnic Inclusion and Civil War*. Cambridge UP, 2022, chapters 2 & 3.
- Kathryn Sikkink and Hun Joon Kim, 'The Justice Cascade: The Origins and Effectiveness of Prosecutions of Human Rights Violations.' *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 9: 269–285, 2013.

Seminar

- Masha Gessen, 'The Prosecution of Russian War Crimes in Ukraine.' *The New Yorker*, 01/08/2022.
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4.10 Legacies and consequences of war

Wars, especially wartime violence, transform countries and societies fundamentally. Consequences of civil wars on the civilian population. Long-term legacies on preferences.

Lecture

- Jacob Walden and Yuri M. Zhukov, 'Historical legacies of political violence.' In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, 2020.

Seminar

- Masha Gessen, 'In the shadow of the Holocaust.' *The New Yorker*, 09/12/2023.
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4.11 Wrap-up

Lecture

- Stathis Kalyvas (2019), 'The landscape of political violence.' *The Oxford Handbook of Terrorism*, chapter 2.