

GOV 388L: Political Violence, Spring 2026, 39055
Department of Government, University of Texas at Austin

1 Instructor Information

Professor Michael Findley
Email: mikefindley@utexas.edu
Zoom link: [\[Link here\]](#)
Office Location: See Canvas

Office Hours: See Canvas
Office hours signup: [\[Link here\]](#)
Class Meetings: Tuesdays, 12:30–3:30 p.m.
Class Location: BAT 1.104

2 Course Overview, Format, and Objectives

This graduate seminar addresses the theoretical and empirical study of political violence that occurs primarily within states, often with a transnational dimension. We survey leading research from political science alongside important innovations from related disciplines, including geography, economics, and sociology, and we examine political violence using a wide range of theoretical and empirical approaches common in the scholarly literature. I selected materials for their analytical value and contribution to academic debate. I expect you to engage critically with arguments and evidence across competing frameworks for explanatory and analytical purposes, rather than to adopt any particular ideological, political, or normative position.

I organized the course around the identification and evaluation of *mechanisms* — understood as either causal processes that transmit effects or structural conditions that shape how violence is experienced across contexts — that generate, shape, and sustain political violence, war-to-peace transitions, and long-term legacies of violence. Rather than treating individual conflicts or literatures in isolation, we emphasize how violence emerges from underlying motivations and constraints, becomes organized and strategically deployed, and produces downstream political and social consequences through identifiable causal and structural mechanisms.

Across the semester, we examine how mechanisms related to identity and grievance activation, information asymmetries and commitment failure, organizational capacity and control, coercive technologies and targeting constraints, external intervention, and post-conflict legacies fit together as part of an integrated process. In particular, we cover the causes and consequences of violence, the processes by which violence escalates, diffuses, and deescalates, and how different forms of violence vary in their logic and effects as a function of underlying structural conditions. Throughout, we distinguish political violence from political behavior more generally, while also exploring the conditions under which violence substitutes for, complements, or transforms nonviolent political action.

The course emphasizes analytical skills foundational to scholarly and civic life, including evaluating competing explanations, assessing evidence, and reasoning carefully about policy tradeoffs under uncertainty. Students are expected to distinguish clearly between analytical explanation and normative or political advocacy. Performance in the course is evaluated on the quality of reasoning, use of evidence, and engagement with competing explanations, rather than agreement with particular conclusions.

By the end of the course, students should be able to (a) identify and distinguish key causal and structural mechanisms underlying political violence; (b) critically evaluate theoretical and empirical claims using appropriate evidence and analytical reasoning; (c) situate specific conflicts and research contributions within a broader causal process from pre-war to post-conflict; and (d) design and articulate an original research project that engages mechanisms, evidence, and scope conditions.

3 Requirements

3.1 Required Readings

Most readings will be from journal articles. Please note that I may alter the readings from time to time including adding, dropping, and reorganizing. I will give you advance notice when this is to take place. You should plan to read carefully and thoroughly each week and come prepared to discuss the readings. I have attempted to include a broad range of scholarly perspectives, methods, and substantive approaches. If you have suggestions for how to improve diversity in the readings, please do not hesitate to let me know and I will do what I can to incorporate.

3.2 Case Presentation

You need to present early in the semester on an episode of violence or on a state or non-state actor that poses a political violence threat. This will get you learning about other conflicts and groups quickly and will create a common frame for discussion. We will do the presentations in weeks 3–8. In addition to a 10-minute presentation, you should prepare a one-page fact sheet that you turn in on Canvas and that you email to everyone in class (through Canvas). Please choose one of the following events or groups and be prepared to present on it. Other events or groups are possible but need to be approved by me ahead of time. The presentation is worth 10% of your grade.

You can sign up for the presentation on the same Google Sheet, separate sheet [Link here]. You need to submit your completed fact sheet on Canvas 48 hours prior to the class session.

- Events
 - The Tunisian Immolation (17 December 2010)
 - Texas Bell Tower Sniper (1 August 1966)
 - Hiroshima (6 August 1945)
 - The killing of Steve Biko (August-September 1977)
 - Srebrenica (July 1995)
 - Naroda Patiya Massacre (2002)
 - Mississippi Civil Rights Workers Murders (21–22 June 1964)
 - Waterboarding of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (or others)
 - Massacre of Tutsis at Mugonero Church/Mission (1994)

- 2021 Taliban takeover in Afghanistan
 - Israel– Hamas war (Since Oct 7, 2023)
 - Sudan: outbreak of SAF–RSF war (15 April 2023)
 - Myanmar: Operation 1027 offensive launched (27 October 2023)
 - Haiti: Port-au-Prince gang offensive and prison breaks (Feb–Mar 2024)
 - Ethiopia: Amhara escalation and federal state of emergency (4 August 2023)
 - Mozambique: Palma attack, Cabo Delgado (24 March–5 April 2021)
- Groups
 - Islamic State
 - Boko Haram
 - Sinaloa Cartel
 - Lord’s Resistance Army
 - FARC
 - African National Congress
 - The Weather Underground
 - The Janjaweed
 - Tigray rebels
 - M23 & CPCA-A64 in DRC
 - Hamas
 - Rapid Support Forces (RSF) – Sudan
 - People’s Defence Force (PDF) – Myanmar
 - Viv Ansanm / G9-aligned gang coalition – Haiti
 - Fano militia – Ethiopia (Amhara)
 - Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) – Nigeria

3.3 Participation / Agendas

Attendance and participation are worth 25% of your grade (15% for agendas and leading discussion; 10% for class engagement). Each of you is expected to participate actively in weekly discussions. We should have lively, engaging discussions that explore both the current state of knowledge on the topics and creative theoretical and empirical frontiers. To accomplish this, you need to attend class very well prepared. I expect each of you to participate *at minimum* once during every session, but on average you should be speaking substantially more than that. If you are not comfortable speaking in class, please talk with me before the second week of class so that we can help you become more comfortable or work out other arrangements.

Second, each of you will work together with others in the class to prepare at least two detailed agendas for guiding class discussions. Based on those agendas, you will then co-lead class discussions, beginning in the third week of the semester. The agenda-setters should

take the lead in guiding a stimulating discussion, and everyone else in the class should engage fully.

You can sign up for agendas and other assignments on the linked Google Sheet [Link here]. You need to submit your completed agenda on Canvas at least 48 hours prior to the class session.

As you prepare agendas and discussion, be explicit about whether the paper's mechanism claims operate primarily as *causal processes* (how an effect is transmitted) or as *structural conditions* (what moderates how violence is experienced across settings, units, or time).

1. What is the research question?
2. What is the dependent variable?
3. What is the independent variable?
4. What are the causal and structural mechanisms?
5. What are the components of the research design?
6. What are the findings?

Additionally, and more importantly, you should evaluate each reading critically. This does not imply that you should focus only on identifying shortcomings; rather, you should analyze what the author(s) did right, wrong, better, worse, or differently. You should seek to learn how to build on the strengths of others while avoiding their weaknesses. As such, you should consider the following questions, along with others of your own:

1. What do you like most about the article? Least?
2. Are the stated findings surprising or interesting?
3. Do you believe the findings for the specific context(s)? Why or why not?
4. Do you believe the findings apply to other contexts? Why or why not?
5. To which cases (or sets of cases) do the results apply best and worst?
6. Beyond identifying problems, what would you do to fix those problems? Be practical and concrete. What would you need to be convinced?
7. Which literatures do these findings affect most, and how?

From my perspective, the most important step you can take when reading an article is to consider how you would have done the research differently, if at all. As a final step, I encourage you to think *creatively* about how the research could be improved. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of learning to follow convention where needed, while also developing the ability to critically break out of traditional ways of thinking—in the right ways and at the right times. Thus, additional questions to consider include:

1. Which question should have been asked?
2. Which theoretical ideas should have been considered? Are the theoretical ideas stale?
3. What novel methodological approaches could have been employed?
4. Is there a better way to ensure the paper speaks directly to a key theoretical or policy debate?
5. How could the paper be framed more effectively to capture readers' attention?

3.4 Research Paper

The seminar paper is worth 55% of your grade and constitutes the primary requirement for the course. The default expectation is that each student will complete an individual research paper. In some cases, coauthored papers may be permitted in pairs, but only with prior approval.

A portion of most class periods will be devoted to discussion and decision-making about the projects. We will discuss the paper in stages—introduction, theory, research design, empirics, conclusion, etc.—and you will turn in the different parts of the paper in stages. You will submit a proposal (due: February 3), an introduction (due: February 17), a theory/argument section (due: March 3), and a research design section (due: March 31). The proposal and introduction are worth 5% each, and the theory/argument and research design sections are worth 10% each.

The final paper will integrate these components, substantially revising earlier sections and adding a literature review and a discussion of the empirical results (due: April 27). The final paper is worth 25% of the course grade. Each time you turn in a section of the paper, you should include the previous section(s) in the submission. For example, when you turn in the theory/argument section, you should also include the introduction.

The final product should be a paper suitable for professional presentation and, potentially, publication. You may find it useful to consult Gary King’s essay “Publication, Publication,” available on his website, as a general guide to framing and positioning academic research. An example of a published paper that emerged from a course like this is the following, which I coauthored with Tze Kwang Teo during my second year in graduate school:

- Findley, Michael, and Tze Kwang Teo. 2006. “Rethinking Third Party Interventions into Civil Wars: An Actor-Centric Approach.” *Journal of Politics* 68(4): 828–837.

You need to submit your completed sections and final paper on Canvas.

3.5 Peer Reviews

You need to conduct two peer reviews during the semester and these combined will be worth 10% of your grade. After you turn in the theory/argument and research design sections of the paper, you need to plan to peer review another student’s section. And each time you should change whose work you review. Each peer review should be maximum one page and should provide constructive criticism. Note that reviews should not comment on aspects such as formatting, provide vague platitudes, etc. Instead, the review should provide substantively meaningful commentary for the author. Return the peer review to the author directly by email **and** post to Canvas.

You can sign up for the peer reviews on the linked Google Sheet [[Link here](#)].

3.6 Due Dates

Assignment	Date	Format/Time	% of Grade
Case Presentation (10%)			
Sign up	Jan 20	[Link here]	Req.
Fact Sheet	Weeks 3–8	Canvas	5%
Presentation	Weeks 3–8	Class	5%
Lead 2 Discussions (15%)			
Sign up	Jan 27	[Link here]	Req.
Lead discussion 1	Weeks 3–14, Sign up	Canvas, class	7.5%
Lead discussion 2	Weeks 3–14, Sign up	Canvas, class	7.5%
Research Paper (55%)			
Proposal	Feb 3	Canvas	5%
Introduction	Feb 17	Canvas	5%
Theory/Argument	Mar 3	Canvas	10%
Res. Design	Mar 31	Canvas	10%
Full Paper	Apr 27	Canvas	25%
Peer Reviews (10%)			
Sign up	Feb 3	[Link here]	Req.
Theory/Arg Peer Review	Mar 7	Canvas & Email	5%
Res Design Peer Review	Apr 4	Canvas & Email	5%
Class Engagement (10%)			
Engagement in class	Each class session	Class	10%

3.7 Assignment of Course Grades

Final course grades will include plus and minus distinctions (e.g., A-, B+, B-), in accordance with university grading policies.

4 University and Course Policies

4.1 Prerequisites

There are no formal prerequisites for this course. Students are expected to have prior graduate-level exposure to political science research design, causal inference, and basic familiarity with scholarly reading and discussion.

4.2 Online Resources

The syllabus, grades, assignment instructions, paper milestones, and selected course materials will be posted on Canvas. For some class sessions, brief lecture outlines or guiding notes may be posted in advance to support discussion and note taking. These materials are intended as

aids rather than substitutes for active participation, careful listening, and independent note taking during class.

4.3 Academic Integrity

UT students should seek to be fully honest in their dealings with others. They should complete their own work and be evaluated based upon that work. They should avoid academic dishonesty and misconduct in all its forms, including plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, cheating, and other academic misconduct. Students are expected not only to be honest but also to assist other students in fulfilling their commitment to be honest.

While students should make a general commitment to proper academic conduct, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite sources, especially in the age of the internet, as well as deal with the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. Please know that as your professor I will notice instances of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism or other forms of misconduct on course assignments.

Writing submitted for credit at UT must consist of the student's own ideas presented in sentences and paragraphs of his or her own construction. The work of other writers or speakers may be included when appropriate (as in a research paper or book review), but such material must support the student's own work (not substitute for it) and must be clearly identified by appropriate introduction and punctuation and by footnoting or other standard referencing.

The substitution of another person's work for the student's own or the inclusion of another person's work without adequate acknowledgment (whether done intentionally or not) is known as plagiarism. It is a violation of academic, ethical, and legal standards and can result in a failing grade not only for the paper but also for the course in which the paper is written. In extreme cases, it can justify expulsion from the University. Because of the seriousness of the possible consequences, students who wonder if their papers are within these guidelines should visit a writing lab or consult a faculty member who specializes in the teaching of writing or who specializes in the subject discussed in the paper. Useful books to consult on the topic include the current *Harbrace College Handbook*, the *MLA Handbook*, and James D. Lester's *Writing Research Papers*.

Please also see the University Honor Code site for more information at: [\[Link here\]](#).

4.4 Generative AI

The University encourages all students to engage with AI responsibly and to recognize the important limitations of using generative AI for learning. The University offers specific guidance for responsible adoption of AI for learning and the limitations of using generative AI for learning that all students should review regularly. In this course, students are 100% responsible for all academic work they produce. The use of generative artificial intelligence tools (or Large Language Models [LLMs]) such as CoPilot, UT Spark or ChatGPT in this class is permitted for students who wish to use them, provided the content generated by AI is properly cited according to the citation policies in this syllabus. If you are considering the use of generative AI but are unsure if your use is aligned with course policy, or the extent to which they may be utilized responsibly, please ask.

4.5 Classroom Civility

This course depends on an environment that supports respectful, focused, and engaged discussion. Behaviors that disrupt class, such as arriving late, packing up bags before the end of class, using cell phones, or engaging in unrelated activities during class, detract from the learning experience for everyone.

Browsing the internet, checking messages or email, and playing games on laptops during class are inappropriate because they interfere with attention and participation. Taking notes on a laptop is, of course, appropriate. In calculating attendance and participation grades, I will take into account whether students are engaged in discussion and lecture or are distracted by unrelated activities.

The exchange of diverse viewpoints is central to the goals of the course, and disagreement is both expected and encouraged. However, incivility toward others is not acceptable. Students should not demean, dismiss, or target others based on their viewpoints. Questions about expectations for classroom conduct are always welcome and should be directed to me.

4.6 Sharing of Course Materials

Course materials used in this class (including handouts, videos, assessments, and other instructional materials) are provided for enrolled students only and may not be shared publicly online or with individuals outside the course without my explicit written permission. Unauthorized sharing can undermine academic integrity and may be referred to the Office of the Dean of Students in accordance with university policy.

4.7 Class Recordings

Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

4.8 Access

The university is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive learning environment for students with disabilities consistent with university policy and federal and state law. Please let me know if you experience any barriers to learning so I can work with you to ensure you have equal opportunity to participate fully in this course. If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations please contact Disability and Access (D&A). Please refer to D&A's website for contact and more information. If you are already registered with D&A, please deliver your accommodation letter to me as early as possible in the semester so we can discuss your approved accommodations and needs in this course.

4.9 Religious Holidays

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence for a religious holy day as far in advance as possible of the date of observance. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given

an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence. For questions regarding religious accommodations, please contact the Office of the Dean of Students.

4.10 Security and Emergencies

Please familiarize yourself with important safety information available to you on the Security and Emergency Management website: [\[Link here\]](#).

4.11 Sensitive Content

This is a course on war and violence. As such, course materials, discussions, and assignments will necessarily engage with sensitive subject matter, including topics such as violence, kidnapping and abduction, sexual assault, abuse, racism, ethnic discrimination, religious discrimination, and sexism. Much of this material may be emotionally and intellectually challenging, and some content may be particularly sensitive.

I will provide advance notice when readings, discussions, or assignments involve physical or emotional harm or other potentially disturbing material. Where appropriate, content warnings will also be indicated on the course schedule next to readings or activities that involve hate, harm, or violence. At the same time, because this is a course centered on political violence, students should expect that many class sessions will involve difficult material.

Because I am not a mental health professional, I may not be aware of all the ways course material could affect individual students. If you would like me to be aware of particular circumstances, please visit with me in office hours or provide an accommodations letter, and I will do my best to adjust where possible. To the full extent feasible, I will provide alternative readings, assignments, or discussion options to support student learning.

More generally, I aim to create space for thoughtful, respectful, and meaningful discussion of difficult topics throughout the semester, while balancing the weightiness of the subject matter with clear expectations and, when possible, advance notice of especially sensitive material. Students with concerns related to these topics are encouraged to consult the UT Counseling and Mental Health Center ([\[Link here\]](#)) or another appropriate support resource. (Some material adapted from University of Michigan inclusive teaching resources.)

4.12 Caregiving Responsibilities

I am not aware of a specific university policy governing children or other dependents in the classroom. The following guidelines are intended to support students with caregiving responsibilities while maintaining a productive learning environment for everyone (adapted from Melissa Cheyney's syllabus). Specifically: (a) students caring for infants, including breastfeeding parents, are welcome to attend class with their child as often as necessary; (b) unforeseen disruptions in caregiving responsibilities may occasionally require a student to miss class, in which case such absences will be excused and I will work with you to ensure you can keep up with course material, with comparable flexibility available for other serious, unavoidable circumstances that affect students' ability to attend class; (c) while this is not intended as a long-term childcare solution, occasionally bringing a child to class to cover gaps in care is acceptable; (d) all students are expected to help create a respectful and

welcoming environment that recognizes a range of caregiving and personal responsibilities; (e) when children are present in class, students should sit near the door so that if a child needs attention and is disrupting learning for others, the student may step out briefly, and I will work with you to ensure you remain caught up; and (f) while I maintain the same academic expectations for all students regardless of caregiving status, I am happy to problem-solve with you to support your progress in balancing coursework with caregiving responsibilities.

5 Tentative Course and Reading Schedule

Core Mechanisms in the Study of Political Violence

Rather than treating each week as a standalone topic, the course highlights recurring causal mechanisms that connect micro-level motivations and constraints to meso-level organization and interaction, and ultimately to macro-level patterns of violence and post-conflict legacies. The table below provides a shared vocabulary for locating readings, cases, and student projects within a common causal space. Readings may speak to multiple mechanism families; this overlap is an intended feature of the framework.

Mechanism family (fine-tuned)	Core questions (2–3)
Conceptualization and measurement as <i>filters</i> on what violence is observed and explained	What counts as political violence? What becomes visible or invisible under different measurement choices? How do definitions constrain what mechanisms can be tested?
Grievance activation and identity-based threat perception as <i>motives</i> that condition mobilization	Why might actors view violence as justified or necessary? How are identities politicized and grievances activated across contexts?
Information asymmetries and commitment failure <i>under shifting power</i> that make bargaining collapse	Why does bargaining fail even when violence is costly? What information is private, noisy, or strategically misrepresented?
Organizational capacity and internal enforcement as <i>constraints</i> that enable sustained violence and control	How do armed groups solve collective action problems? What sustains discipline and compliance over time?
Territorial control and governance as <i>mechanisms of civilian compliance</i> that shape collaboration and resistance	How do armed actors establish and maintain control? Why do civilians collaborate, resist, or hedge under contested authority?
Violence technologies as <i>constraints on feasible tactics</i> that shift targeting, selectivity, and repertoires	How is violence applied in practice? Against whom, and with what degree of selectivity?
External intervention as <i>incentive and credibility shocks</i> that reweight local strategies and enforcement	How do outside actors alter local incentives and credibility? Why do similar interventions produce divergent effects?
War termination as <i>commitment and coordination</i> under fragmentation, spoilers, and institutional design	Why do some conflicts end while others persist? How do spoilers and fragmentation constrain feasible settlements?
Post-conflict legacies as <i>path dependence and feedback</i> shaping institutions, behavior, and future risk	How does violence reshape political behavior and institutions? How do legacies condition future conflict risk?

5.1 January 13: Concepts, Measurement, and Scope

Mechanism focus: conceptualization and measurement as filters on what violence is observed and explained.

Research Papers: Discuss research question.

• Required

- Farmer, Paul. 1996. “On Suffering and Structural Violence.” *Daedalus* 125(1): 261–283.
- Kalyvas, Stathis. 2003. “The Ontology of ‘Political Violence’: Action and Identity in Civil Wars.” *Perspectives on Politics* 1: 475–494.
- Sambanis, Nicholas, and Jonah Schulhofer-Wohl. 2019. “Sovereignty Rupture as a Central Concept in Quantitative Measures of Civil War.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63(6): 1542–1578.

- Shesterinina, Anastasia. 2022. “Civil War as a Social Process: Actors and Dynamics from Pre- to Post-War.” *European Journal of International Relations*.

- **Recommended**

- Sambanis, Nicholas. 2004. “What is Civil War: Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48(6): 814–858.
- Brosché, Johan, Desirée Nilsson & Ralph Sundberg (2023) “Conceptualizing Civil War Complexity.” *Security Studies* 32(1): 1–29.

5.2 January 20: Violence and Political Order

Mechanism focus: political order and institutional capacity as constraints that shape violence patterns, repertoires, and state responses.

Research Papers: Discuss research question.

No presentations

- **Required**

- Blattman, Christopher, and Edward Miguel. 2010. “Civil War.” *Journal of Economic Literature* 48(1): 3–57.
- Walter, Barbara F. 2017. “The New New Civil Wars.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 20: 469–486.
- Gutierrez-Sanin, Francisco, and Elisabeth Jean Wood. 2017. “What Should We Mean by ‘Pattern of Political Violence’? Repertoire, Targeting, Frequency, and Technique.” *Perspectives on Politics* 15(1): 20–41.
- Sanchez de la Sierra, Raul. 2019. “On the Origins of the State: Stationary Bandits and Taxation in Eastern Congo.” *Journal of Political Economy* 128(1): 32–74.

- **Recommended**

- Tilly, Charles. 1985. “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime.” In Peter Evans et al. (Eds.) *Bringing the State Back In*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Davenport, Christian. 2007. “State Repression and Political Order.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 10: 1–23.
- Kalyvas, Stathis. 2019. “The Landscape of Political Violence.” In Erica Chenoweth, Richard English, Andreas Gofas, and Stathis N. Kalyvas (Eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Terrorism*.
- Staniland, Paul. 2012. “States, Insurgents, and Wartime Political Order.” *Perspectives on Politics* 10(2): 243–264.

- Findley, Michael G., and Joseph K. Young. 2012. “Terrorism and Civil War: A Spatial and Temporal Approach to a Conceptual Problem.” *Perspectives on Politics* 10(2): 285–305.
- Huff, Connor, and Joshua D. Kertzer. 2018. “How the public defines terrorism.” *American Journal of Political Science* 62(1): 55–71.
- Cederman, Lars-Erik, and Manuel Vogt. 2017. “Dynamics and Logics of Civil War.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61(9): 1992–2016.
- Nisbett, Richard E. 2002. “The Anticreativity Letters: Advice from a Senior Tempter to a Junior Tempter.” Unpublished Manuscript: University of Michigan.
- Arjona, Ana. 2016. *Rebelocracy: Social Order in the Colombian Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

5.3 January 27: Measurement, History, and the Long View on Violence

Mechanism focus: measurement regimes and historical baselines as filters that shape what violence is observed and how it appears to change over time.

Research Papers: Discuss writing introduction.

Presentation 1

• Required

- Davies, Shawn, Pettersen, Therese, Margareta Sollenberg, and Magnus Öberg. 2025. “Organized violence 1989–2024, and the challenges of identifying civilian victims.” *Journal of Peace Research* 62(4): 1223–1240.
- Eck, Kristine. 2012. “In Data We Trust? A Comparison of UCDP GED and ACLED Conflict Events Datasets.” *Cooperation and Conflict* 47(1): 124–141.
- Weidmann, Nils B. 2016. “A Closer Look at Reporting Bias in Conflict Event Data.” *American Journal of Political Science* 60(1): 206–218.
- Watch the movie *Ghosts of Rwanda* [Link here]. Note: Viewer discretion advised. see *Sensitive Content* section above.

• Recommended

- Bowles, Samuel, and Jung-Kyoo Choi. 2010. “The Co-evolution of Love and Hate.” The University of Siena Economics Working Paper No. 401. [Link here]
- Ehrenreich, Barbara. 1997. *Blood Rites: Origins and History of the Passions of War*. New York: Henry Holt. [Link here]
- Kalyvas, Stathis, and Lisa Balcells. 2010. “International System and Technologies of Rebellion: How the End of the Cold War Shaped Internal Conflict.” *American Political Science Review* 104(3): 415–429.
- Herbst, Jeffrey. 1990. “War and the State in Africa.” *International Security* 14(4): 117–139.

- Mukherjee, Shivaji. 2018. “Colonial Origins of Maoist Insurgency in India: Historical Institutions and Civil War.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 62(10): 2232–2274.
- Shesterinina, Anastasia. 2019. “Ethics, Empathy, and Fear in Research on Violent Conflict.” *Journal of Peace Research* 56(2): 190–202.
- Tilly, Charles. 2003. *The Politics of Collective Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 & 2.
- Loehle, Craig. 1990. “A Guide to Increased Creativity in Research—Inspiration or Perspiration?” *Bioscience* 40(2): 123–129.
- Yanagizawa-Drott, David. 2014. “Propaganda and Conflict: Evidence from the Rwandan Genocide.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

5.4 February 3: Preferences, Grievances, and Identity

Mechanism focus: grievance activation and identity-based threat perception as motives that condition mobilization and willingness to use violence.

Research Papers: 1-page proposal due on Feb 3 by 5 pm; Discuss writing introduction.

Presentation 2

• Required

- Fearon, James, and David Laitin. 2000. “Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity.” *International Organization* 54(4): 845–877.
- Müller-Crepon, Carl. 2024. “Building Tribes: How Administrative Units Shaped Ethnic Groups in Africa.” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Harris, Adam S., Daniel L. Nielson, Lily Medina, Clara Bicahlo Maia Correia, Michael G. Findley, Jeremy M. Weinstein, James Habyarimana, Macartan Humphreys, and Daniel N. Posner. 2018. “Experimental Evidence from Uganda, South Africa, and the United States on Ethnic Identification and Ethnic Deception.” Unpublished Manuscript: University of Texas at Austin.
- Parkinson, Sarah E. 2021. “Practical Ideology in Militant Organizations.” *World Politics* 73(1): 52–81.
- Moscana, Jacob, Nathan Nunn, and James A. Robinson. 2020. “Segmentary Lineage Organization and Conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa.” *Econometrica* 88(5): 1999–2036. (Skim)

• Recommended

- Shelef, Nadav, and Ethan vanderWilden. 2024. “Re-evaluating the Impact of Collective Victimhood on Conflict Attitudes: Results from a Natural Experiment, a Survey Experiment, and Panel Study Using Israel’s Holocaust Memorial Day.” *American Journal of Political Science*.

- Cederman, Lars-Erik, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min. 2010. “Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis.” *American Political Science Review* 62(1): 87–119.
- Lewis, Janet I. 2017. “How Does Ethnic Rebellion Start?” *Comparative Political Studies* 50(10): 1420–1450.
- Larson, Jennifer M. 2017. “Networks and Interethnic Cooperation.” *Journal of Politics* 79(2): 546–559.
- Fearon, James, and David Laitin. 1996. “Explaining Interethnic Cooperation.” *American Political Science Review* 90(4): 715–735.
- Chandra, Kanchan, and Omar Garcia-Ponce. 2019. “Why Ethnic Subaltern-Led Parties Crowd Out Armed Organizations: Explaining Maoist Violence in India.” *World Politics* 71(2): 367–416.
- Bhavnani, Ravi, Michael G. Findley, and James H. Kuklinski. 2009. “Rumor Dynamics in Ethnic Violence.” *Journal of Politics* 71(3): 876–892.
- Lyall, Jason. 2010. “Are Co-Ethnics More Effective Counter-Insurgents? Evidence from the Second Chechen War.” *American Political Science Review* 104(1): 1–20.
- Campbell, Susanna P. 2017. “Ethics of Research in Conflict Environments.” *Journal of Global Security Studies* 2(1): 89–101.
- Depetris-Chauvin, Emilio, Ruben Durante, and Filipe Campante. 2020. “Building Nations through Shared Experiences: Evidence from African Football.” *American Economic Review* 110(5): 1572–1602.
- Harris, Adam S., and Michael G. Findley. 2013. “Is Ethnicity Identifiable? Evidence from an Experiment in South Africa.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.
- Varian, Hal. 1997. “How to Build an Economic Model in Your Spare Time.” In Michael Szenberg (Ed.) *Passion and Craft: Economists at Work*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

5.5 February 10: Information, Uncertainty, and Commitment Problems

Mechanism focus: information asymmetries and commitment failure under shifting power that make bargaining collapse.

Research Papers: Discuss and refine research ideas; Discuss writing introduction.

Presentation 3

• Required

- Fearon, James. 1995. “Rationalist Explanations for War.” *International Organization* 49(3): 379–414.
- Powell, Robert. 2006. “War as a Commitment Problem.” *International Organization* 60(1): 169–203.

- Epstein, Joshua. 2002. “Modeling Civil Violence: An Agent-Based Computational Approach.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 99(3): 7243–7250.
- Uzonyi, Gary. 2021. “An Informational Theory of Genocide and Politicide During Civil War.” *Comparative Political Studies*.

- **Recommended**

- Ostrom, Elinor. 1997. “A Behavioral Approach to the Rational Choice Theory of Collective Action: Presidential Address.” *American Political Science Review* 92(1): 1–22.
- Lichbach, Mark Irving. 2009. “Internal Wars over the State: Rational Choice Institutionalism and Contentious Politics.” In Manus I. Midlarsky (Ed.) *Handbook of War Studies III: The Intrastate Dimension*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Park, Sunhee. 2015. “Power and Civil War Termination Bargaining.” *International Studies Quarterly* 59(1): 172–183.
- Findley, Michael G. 2013. “Bargaining and the Interdependent Stages of Civil War Resolution.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 57(5): 905–932.
- Finkel, Evgeny, Scott Gehlbach, and Tricia D. Olsen. 2015. “Does Reform Prevent Rebellion? Evidence From Russia’s Emancipation of the Serfs.” *Comparative Political Studies* 48(8): 984–1019.

5.6 February 17: Structural Causes and Opportunity (Onset and Feasibility)

Mechanism focus: feasibility, opportunity, and structural constraints that condition when violence becomes viable.

Research Papers: Introduction due on Feb 17 by 5 pm; Discuss and refine research ideas; Discuss theory/argument section.

Presentation 4

- **Required**

- Fearon, James, and David Laitin. 2003. “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War.” *American Political Science Review* 97(1): 75–90.
- Cederman, Lars-Erik, Nils Weidmann and Kristian Gleditsch. 2011. “Horizontal Inequalities and Ethnonationalist Civil War: A Global Comparison.” *American Political Science Review* 105(3): 478–495.
- Nielsen, Richard A., Michael G. Findley, Zachary S. Davis, Tara Candland, and Daniel L. Nielson. 2011. “Foreign Aid Shocks as a Cause of Violent Armed Conflict.” *American Journal of Political Science* 55(2): 219–232.

- Berman, Nicolas, Mathieu Couttenier, Dominic Rohner, and Mathias Thoenig. 2017. “This Mine is Mine! How Minerals Fuel Conflicts in Africa.” *American Economic Review* 107: 1564–1610.

• **Recommended**

- Collier, Paul, and Anke Hoeffler. 2004. “Greed and Grievance in Civil War.” *Oxford Economic Papers* 56(4): 563–595.
- Guarnieri, Eleonora. 2025. “Cultural Distance and Ethnic Civil Conflict.” *American Economic Review*
- Meierrieks, Daniel, and Dirk Auer. 2024. “Bribes and Bombs: The Effect of Corruption on Terrorism.”
- McGuirk, Eoin, and Marshall Burke. 2020. “The Economic Origins of Conflict in Africa.” *Journal of Political Economy* 128(10): 3940–3997.
- Nunn, Nathan, and Nancy Qian. 2014. “US Food Aid and Civil Conflict.” *American Economic Review* 104(6): 1630–1666.
- Lowes, Sara, and Eduardo Montero. 2021. “Concessions, Violence, and Indirect Rule: Evidence from the Congo Free State.” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 136(4): 2047–2091.
- Denly, Michael, Michael G. Findley, Andrew Stravers, and James Walsh. 2020. “Natural Resources and Civil Conflict: Evidence from a New, Georeferenced Dataset.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.
- Mach, Katharine J., et al. 2019. “Climate as a Risk Factor for Armed Conflict.” *Nature* 571(7764): 197–197.
- Lyall, Jason, Graeme Blair, and Kosuke Imai. 2013. “Explaining Support for Combatants during Wartime: Survey Experiment in Afghanistan.” *American Political Science Review* 107(4): 679–705.
- Dixon, Jeffrey. 2009. “What Causes Civil Wars? Integrating Quantitative Research Findings.” *International Studies Review* 11: 707–735.
- Sambanis, Nicholas. 2004. “Using Case Studies to Expand Economic Models of Civil War.” *Perspectives on Politics* 2(2): 259–279.
- Hegre, Havard, and Nicholas Sambanis. 2006. “Sensitivity Analysis of Empirical Results on Civil War Onset.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50(4): 508–535.
- Roessler, Philip. 2011. “The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa.” *World Politics* 63(2): 300–346.
- Humphreys, Macartan. 2005. “Natural Resources, Conflict, and Conflict Resolution: Uncovering the Mechanisms.” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49(4): 508–537.
- Asal, Victor, Michael G. Findley, James A. Piazza, and James Igoe Walsh. 2016. “Political Exclusion, Oil, and Ethnic Armed Conflict.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 60(8): 1343–1367.
- Fergusson, Leopoldo, Pablo Querubin, Nelson A. Ruiz, and Juan F. Vargas. 2021. “The Real Winner’s Curse.” *American Journal of Political Science* 65(1): 52–68.

5.7 February 24: Organization, Control, and Strategic Violence (Dynamics and Resolution)

Mechanism focus: organizational capacity, internal enforcement, and territorial control that structure violence and constrain feasible exits.

Research Papers: Discuss theory/argument section.

Presentation 5

• Required

- Sweet, Rachel. 2021. “Concealing Conflict Markets: How Rebels and Firms Use State Institutions to Launder Wartime Trade.” *International Organization*.
- Walter, Barbara, and Andrew Kydd. 2002. “Sabotaging the Peace: The Politics of Extremist Violence.” *International Organization* 56(2): 263–296.
- Daly, Sarah Zukerman. 2022. “A Farewell to Arms? Election Results and Lasting Peace after Civil War.” *International Security* 46(3): 163–204.
- Blattman, Christopher, et al. 2025. “Gang Rule.” *The Review of Economic Studies*.

• Recommended

- Jo, Hyeran, and Catarina Thomas. 2014. “Legitimacy and Compliance with International Law: Access to Detainees in Civil Conflict.” *British Journal of Political Science* 44(2): 323–355.
- De Bruin, Erica, Gabriella Levy, Livia Schubiger, and Michael Weintraub. 2025. “Out-Competing Rivals: Armed Group Governance and Civilian Attitudes in Colombia.” *American Political Science Review*.
- Duffy Toft, Monica. 2010. “Ending Civil Wars: A Case for Rebel Victory?” *International Security* 34(4): 7–36.
- Zur, Judith. 1994. “The Psychological Impact of Impunity.” *Anthropology Today* 10(3): 12–17.
- Cunningham, David E. 2006. “Veto Players and Civil War Duration.” *American Journal of Political Science* 50(4): 875–892.
- Regan, Patrick. 2002. “Third-Party Interventions and the Duration of Intrastate Conflicts.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46(1): 55–73.
- Findley, Michael G., and Peter J. Rudloff. 2012. “Combatant Fragmentation and the Dynamics of Civil Wars.” *British Journal of Political Science* 42(4): 879–901.
- Zhukov, Yuri. 2016. “Taking away the guns: Forcible disarmament and rebellion.” *Journal of Peace Research* 53(2): 242–258.
- Gates, Scott, Benjamin A. T. Graham, Yonatan Lupu, Havard Strand, and Kaare W. Strom. 2016. “Power Sharing, Protection, and Peace.” *Journal of Politics* 78(2): 512–526.

- Christia, Fotini. 2012. *Alliance Formation in Civil Wars*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ch, Rafael, Jacob Shapiro, Abbey Steele, and Juan F. Vargas. 2018. “Endogenous Taxation in Ongoing Internal Conflict: The Case of Colombia.” *American Political Science Review* 112(4): 996–1015.
- Aronson, Jacob, Michael G. Findley, Kyosuke Kikuta, Ran Tao, Jean-Claude Thill, and James Igoe Walsh. 2020. “Territorial Control, Consolidation, and Rebel Violence Against Civilians.” Unpublished Manuscript: University of Texas at Austin.
- Blattman, Christopher, and Jeannie Annan. 2016. “Can Employment Reduce Lawlessness and Rebellion? A Field Experiment with High-Risk Men in a Fragile State.” *American Political Science Review* 110(1): 1–17.
- Weintraub, Michael. 2016. “Do All Good Things Go Together? Development Assistance and Insurgent Violence in Civil War.” *Journal of Politics* 78(4): 989–1002.
- Sexton, Renard. 2016. “Aid as a Tool against Insurgency: Evidence from Contested and Controlled Territory in Afghanistan.” *American Political Science Review* 110(4): 731–749.
- Dube, Oeindrila, and Suresh Naidu. 2015. “Bases, Bullets, and Ballots: the Effect of US Military Aid on Political Conflict in Colombia.” *Journal of Politics* 77(1): 249–267.
- Findley, Michael G., and Josiah Marineau. 2015. “Lootable resources and third-party intervention into civil wars.” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 32(5): 465–486.
- Findley, Michael G., and Joseph K. Young. 2015. “Terrorism, Spoiling, and the Resolution of Civil Wars.” *Journal of Politics* 77(4): 1115–1128.
- Findley, Michael G., and Tze Kwang Teo. 2006. “Rethinking Third Party Interventions into Civil Wars: An Actor-Centric Approach.” *Journal of Politics* 68(4): 828–837.
- Findley, Michael G., James A. Piazza, and Joseph K. Young. 2012. “Games Rivals Play: Terrorism in International Rivalries.” *Journal of Politics* 74(1): 235–248.
- Condra, Luke, James D. Long, Andrew C. Shaver, and Austin L. Wright. 2017. “The Logic of Insurgent Electoral Violence.” *American Economic Review*.
- Kydd, Andrew, and Barbara F. Walter. 2006. “The Strategies of Terrorism.” *International Security* 31(1): 49–80.
- Liu, Howard, et al. 2025. “Economic Subversion in Civil Wars: Evidence from the Colombian Armed Conflict.” *International Studies Quarterly*.

5.8 March 3: External Actors and Intervention (International Engagement, Peace Operations)

Mechanism focus: external intervention as incentive and credibility shocks that reweight local strategies and enforcement.

Research Papers: Theory/argument due on Mar 3 by 5 pm; Theory/arg peer review due on Mar 7; Discuss research design section.

Presentation 6

• **Required**

- Walter, Barbara F. 1998. “The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement.” *International Organization* 51(3): 335–364.
- Mailhot, Cameron. 2024. “How UN Peacekeeping Missions Enforce Peace Agreements.” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Autesserre, Severine. 2015. “Trouble in Peaceland.” *Foreign Policy*. October.
- Lake, Milli. 2017. “Building the Rule of War: Postconflict Institutions and the Micro-Dynamics of Conflict in Eastern DR Congo.” *International Organization* 71(2): 281–315.
- Nomikos, William George. 2021. “Peacekeeping and the Enforcement of Inter-group Cooperation: Evidence from Mali.” *The Journal of Politics*.

• **Recommended**

- Hultman, Lisa, Jacob Kathman, and Megan Shannon. 2013. “United Nations Peacekeeping and Civilian Protection in Civil War.” *American Journal of Political Science* 57(4): 875–891.
- Moscona, Jacob. 2025. “The Management of Aid and Conflict in Africa.” *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*.
- Rohner, Dominic. 2024. “Mediation, Military, and Money: The Promises and Pitfalls of Outside Interventions to End Armed Conflicts.” *Journal of Economic Literature*.
- Callen, Michael, Miguel Fajardo-Steinhäuser, Michael G. Findley, and Tarek Ghani. 2024. “Can Digital Aid Deliver in Humanitarian Crises?” *Management Science*.
- Huang, Reyko. 2016. “Rebel Diplomacy in Civil War.” *International Security* 40(4): 89–126.
- Gilligan, Michael J., and Ernest J. Sergenti. 2008. “Do UN Interventions Cause Peace? Using Matching to Improve Causal Inference.” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 3(2): 89–122.
- Lyall, Jason, Yang-Yang Zhou, and Kosuke Imai. Forthcoming. “Can Economic Assistance Shape Combatant Support in Wartime? Experimental Evidence from Afghanistan.” *American Political Science Review*.
- Hinkkainen Elliott, Kaisa, Sara M.T. Polo, and Liana Eustacia Reyes. 2021. “Making Peace or Preventing It? UN Peacekeeping, Terrorism, and Civil War Negotiations.” *International Studies Quarterly* 65(1): 29–42.
- Lischer, Sarah. 2003. “Collateral Damage: Humanitarian Assistance as a Cause of Conflict.” *International Security* 28(1): 79–109.

- Doyle, Michael, and Nicholas Sambanis. 2000. “International Peacebuilding: A Theoretical and Quantitative Analysis.” *American Political Science Review* 94(4): 779–801.
- Doyle, Michael, and Nicholas Sambanis. 2006. *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Fearon, James, Macartan Humphreys, and Jeremy Weinstein. 2009. “Can Development Aid Contribute to Social Cohesion after Civil War? Evidence from a Field Experiment in Post-Conflict Liberia.” *American Economic Review, Papers and Proceedings* 99(2): 287–291.
- Narang, Neil. 2014. “Assisting Uncertainty: How Humanitarian Aid Can Inadvertently Prolong Civil Wars.” *International Studies Quarterly* Early View.
- Findley, Michael G., Daniel Strandow, Joseph K. Young, and Olgahan Cat. 2022. “Aiding War: Foreign Aid and the Intensity of Violent Armed Conflict.” Unpublished Manuscript: University of Texas at Austin.
- Downs, George, and Stephen Stedman. 2002. “Evaluation Issues in Peace Implementation.” In Stephen Stedman, Donald Rothchild, and Elizabeth Cousens (Ed.) *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Hartzell, Caroline, and Matthew Hoddie. 2003. “Institutionalizing Peace: Power Sharing and Post-Civil War Conflict Management.” *American Journal of Political Science* 47(2): 318–332.
- Fortna, Page. 2004. “Does Peacekeeping Keep Peace? International Intervention and the Duration of Peace After Civil War.” *International Studies Quarterly* 48(2): 269–292.
- Campbell, Susanna P., Michael G. Findley, and Kyosuke Kikuta. 2017. “An Ontology of Peace: Landscapes of Conflict and Cooperation with Application to Colombia.” *International Studies Review* 19(1): 92–113.
- Walter, Barbara F. 2002. *Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Avdeenko, Alexanddra, and Michael J. Gilligan. 2015. “International Interventions to Build Social Capital: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Sudan.” *American Political Science Review* 109(3): 427–449.
- Jo, Hyeran. 2015. *Compliant Rebels: Rebel Groups and International Law in World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Findley, Michael G. 2018. “Does Foreign Aid Build Peace?” *Annual Review of Political Science* 21: 359–384.

5.9 March 10: Mobilization, Participation, and Recruitment (Microfoundations within Organization/Control)

Mechanism focus: recruitment, participation, and intra-organization incentives that sustain or undermine collective violence.

Research Papers: Discuss research design section.

- **Required**

- Humphreys, Macartan, and Jeremy Weinstein. 2008. “Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil Wars.” *American Journal of Political Science* 52(2): 436–455.
- Marchais, Gauthier, Christian Mastaki Mugaruka, Raul Sanchez de la Sierra, and David Qihang Wu. 2022. “The Pro-Social Determinants of Violent Collective Action: Evidence from Participation in Militias in Eastern Congo.” *Journal of Political Economy*.
- Viterna, Jocelyn S. 2006. “Pulled, Pushed, Persuaded: Explaining Women’s Mobilization into the Salvadoran Guerrilla Army.” *American Journal of Sociology* 112(1): 1–45.
- Shesterinina, Anastasia. 2016. “Collective Threat Framing and Mobilization in Civil War.” *American Political Science Review* 110(3): 411–427.

- **Recommended**

- Weinstein, Jeremy. 2007. *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pgs. 1–60.
- Thomas, Jakana L., and Kanisha D. Bond. 2015. “Women’s Participation in Violent Political Organizations.” *American Political Science Review* 109(3): 488–506.
- Bahney, Benjamin, Rahda Iyengar, Patrick Johnston, Danielle Jung, Jacob Shapiro, and Howard Shatz. 2013. “Insurgent Compensation: Evidence from Iraq.” *American Economic Review* 103(3): 518–522.
- Pearlman, Wendy. “Mobilizing From Scratch: Large-Scale Collective Action Without Preexisting Organization in the Syrian Uprising.” *Comparative Political Studies* 54(10): 1786–1817.
- Parkinson, Sarah. 2013. “Organizing Rebellion: Rethinking High-Risk Mobilization and Social Networks in War.” *American Political Science Review* 107(3): 418–432.
- Blair, Christopher W., Erica Chenoweth, Michael C. Horowitz, Evan Perkoski, and Philip B.K. Potter. 2020. “Honor Among Thieves: Understanding Rhetorical and Material Cooperation Among Violent Nonstate Actors.” *International Organization* 1–40.
- Gallagher-Cunningham, Kathleen. 2013. “Actor Fragmentation and Civil War Bargaining: How Internal Divisions Generate Civil Conflict.” *American Journal of Political Science* 57(3): 659–672.
- Beber, Bernd, and Christopher Blattman. 2011. “The Logic of Child Soldiering and Coercion.” *International Organization*.

- Kalyvas, Stathis, and Matthew Kocher. 2007. “How ‘Free’ is Free Riding in Civil Wars? Violence, Insurgency and the Collective Action Problem.” *World Politics* 59(2): 177–216.
- Varshney, Ashutosh. 2002. *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- McLauchlin, Theodore. 2015. “Desertion and Collective Action in Civil Wars.” *International Studies Quarterly* 59(4): 669–679.
- Kuran, Timur. 1991. “Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989.” *World Politics* 44(1): 7–48.
- Baradaran, Shima, Michael G. Findley, Daniel L. Nielson, and J.C. Sharman. 2014. “Funding Terror.” *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 162(3): 477–536.
- Findley, Michael G., and Scott Edwards. 2007. “Accounting for the Unaccounted: Weak-Actor Social Structure in Asymmetric Wars.” *International Studies Quarterly* 51: 538–606.
- Hall, Andrew B., Connor Huff, and Shiro Kuriwaki. 2019. “Wealth, Slaveownership, and Fighting for the Confederacy: An Empirical Study of the American Civil War.” *American Political Science Review* 113(3): 658–673.
- Thurber, Ches. 2019. “Social Ties and the Strategy of Civil Resistance.” *International Studies Quarterly*.

5.10 March 17: Spring Break – No Class

5.11 March 24: Violence Technologies I — State Violence, Repression, and Counterinsurgency

Mechanism focus: violence technologies as constraints on feasible state tactics that shift targeting and civilian behavior.

Research Papers: Discuss research design section.

• Required

- Lyall, Jason. 2009. “Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks? Evidence from Chechnya.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(3): 331–362.
- Carey, Sabine C., and Neil J. Mitchell. 2017. “Progovernment Militias.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 20: 127–147.
- Huff, Connor, Eric Min, and Robert Schub. 2025. “Racial Inequality in War.” *American Political Science Review*.
- Berman, Eli, Jacob Shapiro, and Joseph Felter. 2011. “Can Hearts and Minds Be Bought? The Economics of Counterinsurgency in Iraq.” *Journal of Political Economy* 119(4): 766–819.

• **Recommended**

- Benmelech, Efraim, Claude Berrebi, and Esteban F. Klor. 2015. “Counter-Suicide-Terrorism: Evidence from House Demolitions.” *Journal of Politics* 77(1): 27–43.
- Sun, Jessica S. 2024. “Strategic State Violence and Migration in Conflict.” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Johnston, Patrick. 2012. “Does Decapitation Work? Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Targeting in Counterinsurgency Campaigns.” *International Security* 36(4): 47–79.
- Davenport, Christian, and Alan Stam. 2012. “Rwandan Political Violence in Space and Time.” Unpublished Manuscript. Notre Dame.
- Blair, Robert A., Sabrina A. Karim, and Benjamin S. Morse. 2019. “Establishing the Rule of Law in Weak and War-Torn States: Evidence from a Field Experiment with the Liberian National Police.” *American Political Science Review* 113(3): 641–657.
- Davenport, Christian, Sarah A. Soule, and David A. Armstrong. 2011. “Protesting While Black? The Differential Policing of American Activism, 1960 to 1990.” *American Sociological Review* 76(1): 152–178.
- Rozenas, Arturas, and Yuri M. Zhukov. 2019. “Mass Repression and Political Loyalty: Evidence from Stalin’s ‘Terror by Hunger.’” *American Political Science Review* 1–15.
- Eck, Kristine. 2018. “The Origins of Policing Institutions: Legacies of Colonial Insurgency.” *Journal of Peace Research* 55(2): 147–160.
- Day, Christopher R., and William S. Reno. 2014. “In Harm’s Way: African Counter-Insurgency and Patronage Politics.” *Civil Wars* 16(2): 105–126.
- Thomas, Jakana. 2014. “Rewarding Bad Behavior: How Governments Respond to Terrorism in Civil War.” *American Journal of Political Science* 58(4): 804–818.
- Findley, Michael G. 2018. “Does Foreign Aid Build Peace?” *Annual Review of Political Science* 21: 359–384.
- Findley, Michael G., and Joseph K. Young. 2007. “Fighting Fire with Fire? How (Not) to Neutralize an Insurgency.” *Civil Wars* 9(4): 378–401.
- Ramakrishna, Kumar. 2002. “‘Bribing the Reds to Give Up’: Rewards Policy in the Malayan Emergency.” *War in History* 9: 332–353.
- Duffy Toft, Monica, and Yuri M. Zhukov. 2015. “Islamists and Nationalists: Rebel Motivation and Counterinsurgency in Russia’s North Caucasus.” *American Political Science Review* 109(2): 222–238.
- Goldhagen, Daniel. 1996. *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. New York: Alfred Knopf. Pg. 203–262.
- Straus, Scott. 2004. “How Many Perpetrators Were There in the Rwandan Genocide: An Estimate.” *Journal of Genocide Research* 6(1): 85–98.

5.12 March 31: Violence Technologies II — Nonviolence, Civilian Agency, and Civilian Targeting

Mechanism focus: violence technologies and repertoires as constraints on feasible tactics that shift targeting and civilian agency.

Research Papers: Research design due on Mar 31 by 5 pm; Res design peer review due on Apr 4; Discuss empirical analysis.

• Required

- Stephan, Maria, and Erica Chenoweth. 2008. “Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict.” *International Security* 33(1): 7–44.
- Manekin, Devorah, and Tamar Mitts. 2021. “Effective for Whom? Ethnic Identity and Nonviolent Resistance.” *American Political Science Review* 1–20.
- Kalyvas, Stathis. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schubiger, Livia Isabella. 2020. “State Violence and Wartime Civilian Agency: Evidence from Peru.” *The Journal of Politics*.

• Recommended

- Balcells, Laia. 2010. “Rivalry and Revenge: Violence against Civilians in Conventional Civil War.” *International Studies Quarterly* 54(2): 291–313.
- Ruipérez Núñez, Alberto. 2025. “Exposure to Confederate Monuments: The Political Effect of Non-Intervention.” *British Journal of Political Science*.
- Gohdes, Anita R., and Zachary C. Steinert-Threlkeld. 2025. “Civilian Behavior on Social Media during Civil War.” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Stewart, Megan, and Yu-Ming Liou. 2017. “Do Good Borders Make Good Rebels? Territorial Control and Civilian Casualties.” *Journal of Politics* 79(1): 284–301.
- Gallagher-Cunningham, Kathleen. 2013. “Understanding Strategic Choice: The Determinants of Civil War and Nonviolent Campaign in Self-Determination Disputes.” *Journal of Peace Research* 50(3): 291–304.
- Humphreys, Macartan, and Jeremy Weinstein. 2006. “Handling and Manhandling Civilians in Civil War.” *American Political Science Review* 100(3): 429–447.
- Schock, Kurt. 2003. “Nonviolent Action and Its Misconceptions: Insights for Social Scientists.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 36(4): 705–712.
- Blair, Graeme, C. Christine Fair, Neil Malhotra, and Jacob N. Shapiro. 2013. “Poverty and Support for Militant Politics: Evidence from Pakistan.” *American Journal of Political Science* 57(1): 30–48.
- Steinert-Threlkeld, Zachary. 2017. “Spontaneous Collective Action: Peripheral Mobilization During the Arab Spring.” *American Political Science Review* 111(2): 379–403.

- Gallagher Cunningham, Kathleen, Marianne Dahl, and Anne Fruge. 2017. “Strategies of Resistance: Diversification and Diffusion.” *American Journal of Political Science* 61(3): 591–605.
- Wood, Reed. 2010. “Rebel Capability and Strategic Violence Against Civilians.” *Journal of Peace Research* 47(5): 601–614.
- Valentino, Ben, Paul Huth, and Sarah Croco. 2006. “Covenants Without the Sword: International Law and the Protection of Civilians in Times of War.” *World Politics* 58(3): 339–377.
- Kaplan, Oliver. 2017. *Resisting War: How Communities Protect Themselves*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kydd, Andrew, and Barbara F. Walter. 2006. “The Strategies of Terrorism.” *International Security* 31(1): 49–80.

5.13 April 7: Sexual Violence

Mechanism focus: organizational incentives, norms, and enforcement that generate variation in sexual violence and its consequences.

Research Papers: Discuss progress of empirical analysis.

• Required

- Wood, Elisabeth. 2006. “Variation in Sexual Violence During War.” *Politics and Society* 34(3): 307–341.
- Cohen, Dara. 2013. “Female Combatants and the Perpetration of Violence: Wartime Rape in Sierra Leone.” *World Politics* 65(3): 383–415.
- Beber, Bernd, Michael J. Gilligan, Jenny Guardado, and Sabrina Karim. 2016. “Peacekeeping, Compliance with International Norms, and Transactional Sex in Monrovia, Liberia.” *International Organization* 71(1): 1–30.
- Guarnieri, Eleonora, and Marta Tur-Prats. 2023. “Cultural Distance and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

• Recommended

- Tschantret, Joshua. 2018. “Cleansing the caliphate: Insurgent violence against sexual minorities.” *International Studies Quarterly* 62(2): 260–273.
- Lindsey, Dylan, and Carlo Koos. 2024. “Legacies of Wartime Sexual Violence: Survivors’ Psychological Harms and Mobilization.” *American Political Science Review*.
- Cohen, Dara K., Connor Huff, and Robert Schub. 2021. “At war and at home: the consequences of US women combat casualties.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65(4): 647–671.

- Chu, Tiffany S., and Jessica Maves Braithwaite. Forthcoming. “The Effect of Sexual Violence on Negotiated Outcomes in Civil Conflicts.” *Conflict Management and Peace Science*.
- Cohen, Dara Kay, and Ragnhild Nordas. “Do States Delegate Shameful Violence to Militias? Patterns of Sexual Violence in Recent Armed Conflicts.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59(5): 877–898.
- McDermott, Rose. 2015. “Sex and Death: Gender Differences in Aggression and Motivations for Violence.” *International Organization* 69(3): 753–775.
- Cohen, Dara Kay. 2013. “Explaining Rape during Civil War: Cross-National Evidence.” *American Political Science Review* 107(3): 461–477.
- Hudson, Valerie, Mary Caprioli, Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Rose McDermott, and Chad Emmett. 2008/9. “The Heart of the Matter: The Security of Women and the Security of States.” *International Security* 33(3): 7–45.
- Caprioli, Mary. 2005. “Primed for Violence: The Role of Gender Equality in Predicting Internal Conflict.” *International Studies Quarterly* 49(2): 161–178.
- Garcia-Jimeno, Camilo, Angel Iglesias, and Pinar Yildirim. 2022. “Information Networks and Collective Action: Evidence from the Women’s Temperance Crusade.” *American Economic Review* 112(1): 41–80.
- Viterna, Jocelyn. 2013. *Women in War: The Micro-processes of Mobilization in El Salvador*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

5.14 April 14: Legacies and Consequences of Violence

Mechanism focus: post-conflict legacies as path dependence and feedback shaping institutions, behavior, and future risk.

Research Papers: Discuss presentations.

• Required

- Blattman, Christopher. 2009. “From Violence to Voting: War and Political Participation in Uganda.” *American Political Science Review* 103(2): 231–247.
- Sexton, Renard, Rachel Wellhausen, and Michael G. Findley. “How Government Reactions to Violence Worsen Social Welfare: Evidence from Peru.” *American Journal of Political Science* 63(2): 353–367.
- Charnysh, Volha, and Evgeny Finkel. 2017. “The Death Camp Eldorado: Political and Economic Effects of Mass Violence.” *American Political Science Review* 111(4): 801–818.
- Blattman, Christopher, Julian C. C. Jamison, and Margaret Sheridan. 2017. “Reducing Crime and Violence: Experimental Evidence from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in Liberia.” *American Economic Review* 107(4): 1165–1206.
- Vásquez-Cortés, Mateo. 2024. “Peer Effects and Recidivism: Wartime Connections and Criminality among Colombian Ex-Combatants.” *American Political Science Review*.

- **Recommended**

- Hultman, Lisa, and Salma Mousa. 2025. “From Ceasefire to Cohesion: An Integrated Review of Peacemaking and Peacebuilding.” *Economic Policy*.
- Schwartz, Rachel A. 2020. “Civil War, Institutional Change, and the Criminalization of the State: Evidence from Guatemala.” *Studies in Comparative International Development* 55(3): 381–401.
- Esposito, Elena, and Austin L. Wright. 2025. “Public Policies for Peace.” *Economic Policy*.
- Shair-Rosenfield, Sarah, and Reed Wood. 2017. “Governing Well after War: How Improving Female Representation Prolongs Post-conflict Peace.” *Journal of Politics* 79(3): 995–1009.
- Lin, Erin. 2021. “How War Changes Land: Soil Fertility, Unexploded Bombs, and the Underdevelopment of Cambodia.” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Martin, Philip A. 2021. “Commander-community ties after civil war.” *Journal of Peace Research* 58(4): 778–793.
- Phayal, Anup, Prabin B. Khadka, and Clayton L. Thyne. 2015. “What Makes an Ex-Combatant Happy? A Micro-analysis of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration in South Sudan.” *International Studies Quarterly* 59(4): 654–668.
- Kim, Sang Ki. 2017. “Third-Party Intervention in Civil Wars and the Prospects for Postwar Development.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61(3): 615–642.
- Ghobarah, Hazem, Paul Huth, and Bruce Russett. 2003. “Civil Wars Kill and Maim People—Long After the Shooting Stops.” *American Political Science Review* 97(2): 189–202.
- Salehyan, Idean. 2008. “The Externalities of Civil Strife: Refugees as a Source of International Conflict.” *American Journal of Political Science* 52(4): 787–801.

5.15 April 21: Presentations / Integration

Mechanism focus: integration across the pipeline (upstream mechanisms → downstream outcomes) using student paper topics and presentations.

Research Papers: Discuss overall paper and how all parts fit together.

5.16 April 27: Final Paper Due

Research Papers: Final draft should be publishable in a top journal, or at least fully presentable in front of an audience of the leading scholars on the question of interest.