Welcome to Research on Conflict and Human Rights! In this course, I intend to focus on cutting edge research in conflict and human rights. As such, we will touch on several different areas of conflict - Civil War, Terrorism, State Repression and Protest as well as talking about Peace and what it means relative to conflict. Under each heading, there are Readings that are required and in some cases those that are indicated as “Supplementary”. You won’t be held accountable for the supplementary readings in class. They tend to be earlier (chronologically) and perhaps provide some historical context that may be missing or insufficiently fleshed out by the required readings. The supplementary readings would be good to read if you plan to answer the comprehensive exam question for this course. The course is broadly organized around a positivist epistemological focus and most, if not all, articles we will read adopt a quantitative or mixed-methods research approach. This is not to say that these are the only valid options for studying conflict; they are not. However, other approaches and perspectives are well-represented by my colleagues. Further, as a quantitative scholar myself, I find this approach most compelling.

The articles you’re reading come from a few main sources - many are from the past five years of *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Journal of Peace Research* or *Conflict Management and Peace Science*. These three journals are not only among the highest impact journals in International Relations, they are also places where people studying conflict, particularly with quantitative and/or formal methods, often publish. I have also taken articles from the *International Studies Quarterly* - the primary journal of the International Studies Association and one of the most highly regarded general IR journals. I also looked through *World Politics* and *International Organization*, but those journals publish conflict-related research less often. There are also a few articles from *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science* and *Journal of Politics* - the “big three” general journals in Political Science. This is not to say that these are the only journals that matter, far from it, but these are journals that routinely publish high quality conflict research.
Assessment

Your final grades will be based on the following components

- Class Participation: 10%
- Discussion Leadership: \(5\% \times 3 = 15\%\)
- Reading Summaries: \(3\% \times 10 = 30\%\)
- Final Paper or Analytical Essays: 45%

Class Participation

I expect everyone will come to class prepared to discuss all required readings for that week. I expect your contributions to be some mix of summarizing the key points of the articles, identifying strengths and weaknesses of the design and implementation in the article, identifying areas for future research and asking questions about aspects of the article you didn’t understand. I will give an estimate of the current participation grade on 2/22. Your final participation grade may be modified (either upward or downward) to reflect any changes from the mid-term estimate.

Discussion Leadership

You will all have to sign up to help lead three discussion. You will be partnered with at least one and maybe two other class participant(s) to help lead discussion. I expect that you will meet (or at least correspond) before the course to ensure that you are on the same page about how the discussion will proceed. The goal of leading the discussion is not to lecture to the class or to summarize the articles, but to draw on the important themes and identify questions that are worth discussing as a class. Do the theories being proposed make sense? Are ways of measuring the main concepts defensible? What, if any, are the common themes among the articles? You should have your own answers to these questions, but your classmates will also have their own perspectives. Because I will not be involved in your discussion as a leadership team, I will ask each of you to tell me about the contributions of your fellow presenters. My own assessment and the peer assessments of contribution will inform the grade.

Reading Summaries

Each week, you will have to submit a reading summary. This is not intended to be a book (article) report where you rehash all of the details of the article. Instead, I want to know

1. What are the main themes in the readings (two or three)?
2. What are the most interesting findings from the readings?
3. What, if anything, did you find surprising or counterintuitive in the readings?
4. If you could ask the authors of the articles three questions, what would they be?
5. What are three questions that you think would be most fruitful to discuss in class?

There will be an assignment for each summary in the "Assignments" tab in OWL. You can submit your assignment there. Rather than submitting them in a document, you will just submit them in the text box in the assignment. The reading assignments are due at 9AM on the day before the class. I will drop the lowest grade, meaning you could skip one reading summary. Reading summaries will not be accepted late.

**Final Paper/Analytic Essays**

Depending on your interest and abilities, you can choose to do *either* a final paper or three analytical essays.

**Analytical Essays** The analytical essays will give you an opportunity engage the readings in a less structured way than the reading summaries. These papers should keep summary of the readings to a minimum and instead focus on articulating a coherent response to issues, arguments and ideas raised in the readings. You may choose to highlight how common themes are addressed throughout the readings; you might take issue with the central argument of certain authors; you might pose questions that deal with core issues of the readings or you might criticize one author based on the arguments of another and/or your own analysis. These papers will be graded on how well you interact with and develop your response to the readings. The papers should be 7-8 (double-spaced) pages long, not longer. The three papers will be as follows:

1. Civil Wars and State Repression (covering 1/21, 2/1, 2/8 and 2/15) - due 2/29 at 9AM.
2. Terrorism, violent and non-violent political action (covering 2/29, 3/7, 3/14 and 3/21) - due 4/4 at 9AM.

**Final Paper** You could also do a final paper. This could take two different forms.

1. A replication and extension project. Because most of the articles we are reading are quite recent, you will find that nearly all of them have replication data available. You can take an article that you liked (or didn’t like) and extend it in some way. In doing so, you should either use the article’s existing theory or pose a modification or alternative of your own. You should develop novel hypotheses and test them with the replication data, possibly augmented with additional variables you collect. I would think of this as a “research note” and as such, this should not be (much) over 4,000 words.

2. An original research paper that covers the same themes as the ones discussed here. This should be an empirical paper - it should have a theory, hypotheses, empirical evidence (either qualitative or quantitative) and an evaluation of the
extent to which the evidence corroborates the hypotheses. I suggest this for
people who intend to be IR scholars writing in this area. Most journals have
been increasingly stingy with word counts over time, so you should aim
for 7500 words in a paper like this.

The final paper will be due on 4/18 at 9AM - the same time as the last Analytical
Essay.

Course Policies

Academic Offences:

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to familiarize themselves
with the definition of a scholastic offence here: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/
academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

Late penalty:

Reading Summaries may not be turned in late. Participation and Discussion Leadership
must also be completed in class on the agreed date and thus no procedures exist for
making up these aspects of your grade. The analytical essays and final paper will be
penalized at a rate of 5% per day up to one week after which they will not be accepted
for grading.

Extensions:

Generally, extensions are not given. However, when there are genuine and unavoidable
family or medical circumstances an extension may be granted at the discretion of the
professor.
Outline

1/11 Introduction

1/18 Country Features - Democracy and Economics


Supplementary Readings


1/25 Civil War 1


2/1 Civil War 2


Supplementary Readings


Fearing, James D. and David D. Laitin (Feb. 2003). “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War”. In: American Political Science Review 97.01, pp. 75–90. ISSN: 1537-5943. DOI: 10.1017/s0003055403000534.


2/8 State Repression and Human Rights 1


2/15 State Repression and Human Rights 2


Supplementary Readings


2/22 Reading Week

2/29 Terrorism 1


3/7 Terrorism 2


Huddy, Leonie et al. (May 2021). “Anger, Anxiety, and Selective Exposure to Terrorist Violence”. In: Journal of Conflict Resolution 65.10, pp. 1764–1790. ISSN: 1552-8766. DOI: 10.1177/00220027211014937


Supplementary Readings


3/14 Non-violent Protest


Supplementary Readings


3/21 Violent Protest


Supplementary Readings

3/28 Transitional Justice


Supplementary Readings


4/4 Peace

