

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

**Prof. Bethany Lacina**  
**Thursdays, 2-4:40pm**  
**LeChase 160**

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

## **Instructor**

Professor Lacina  
Email: blacina@ur.rochester.edu  
Office: Harkness 322  
Office hours: Fridays 11-1 or by appointment

## **Course Requirements**

The requirements for the W sections and non-W sections of this course are the same. 60% of the grade is based on attendance and participation in class. The remaining 40% of the grade will be based on a final project requiring an original research paper.

## **Course Materials**

The following books have been ordered through the campus bookstore (look for PSC 276). Other readings will be available through Blackboard.

- Autesserre, A. (2010) *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding*. Cambridge University Press.
- Berman, E. (2009) *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism*. MIT Press.
- Metelit, C. (2009) *Inside Insurgency*. NYU Press.
- Rable, G.C. (2007) *But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction*. University of Georgia Press.

## **Academic honesty**

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

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

## **Attendance**

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

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

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

## **Late work**

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

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

## Course evaluations and extra credit

I will award everyone in the class extra credit (an additional 2% added to the final score) if there is 100% participation in the on-line course evaluations.

## Class schedule

### September 1: Introduction to the course

### September 8: How do insurgents defeat governments?

Attendance and participation: 6% of final grade

*Reading for the week (165 pages):*

Rable, G.C. *But There Was No Peace*. Chapters 1-2, 5-10 and Epilogue.

### September 15: Investigating insurgency: A case study of the Islamic State

Attendance and participation: 6% of final grade

*Reading for the week (88 pages):*

Byman, D. (2016) "Understanding the Islamic State—A Review Essay." *International Security*. (39 pages)

Chivvis, C.S. (2016) "Countering the Islamic State in Libya." *Survival*. (18 pages)

Lundgren, M. (2016) "Mediation in Syria: Initiatives, Strategies, and Obstacles, 2011–2016." *Contemporary Security Policy*. (16 pages)

Wood, G. (2015) "What ISIS Really Wants." *The Atlantic*. (15 pages)

### September 22: No class

### September 29: Recruitment

Attendance and participation: 6% of final grade

*Reading for the week (147 pages):*

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

Weinstein, J. (2006) *Inside Rebellion*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 2-3. (66 pages)

### **October 6: Recruitment: A case study from Sierra Leone**

Attendance and participation: 6% of final grade

*Reading for the week (61 pages):*

Hoffman, D. (2007) "The Meaning of a Militia: Understanding the Civil Defence Forces of Sierra Leone." *African Affairs*. (25 pages)

Humphreys, M. and J. Weinstein. (2004) "What the Fighters Say: A Survey of Ex-Combatants in Sierra Leone, June-August 2003." Columbia University and UNAMSIL. Pp. 2-17. (16 pages)

Richards, P. and J. Vincent. (2008) "Sierra Leone: Marginalization of the RUF." In *From Soldiers to Politicians*, ed. J. de Zeeuw. Lynne Rienner. (20 pages)

### **October 13: Internal control**

Attendance and participation: 6% of final grade

*Reading for the week (121 pages):*

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

Cohen, D. 2013. "Explaining Rape during Civil War: Cross-National Evidence (1980–2009)." *American Political Science Review*. (17 pages)

Staniland, P. 2012. "Organizing Insurgency: Networks, Resources, and Rebellion in South Asia." *International Security*. (36 pages)

Weinstein, J. *Inside Rebellion*. Chapter 4. (33 pages)

### **Week of October 20: Individual meetings with instructor. No class meeting.**

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

### **October 27: Factionalism**

Attendance and participation: 6% of final grade

*Reading for the week (152 pages):*

Driscoll, J. (2015) *Warlords and Coalition Politics in Post-Soviet States*. Chapters 1, 3, 4. (106 pages)

McLauchlin, T. and W. Pearlman (2012) "Out-Group Conflict, In-Group Unity?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. (26 pages)

Johnston, P. (2007) "Negotiated Settlements and Government Strategy in Civil War: Evidence from Darfur." *Civil Wars*. (20 pages)

### **November 3: Case study on factionalism**

Attendance and participation: 6% of final grade

*Reading for the week (168 pages):*

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

### **November 10: Maintaining civilian support**

Attendance and participation: 6% of final grade

*Reading for the week (106 pages):*

Kalyvas, S. (2006) *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 5. (35 pages)

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

Popkin, S. (1979) *The Rational Peasant*. University of California Press. Chapter 6. (25 pages)

Wood, E. (2001) "The Emotional Benefits of Insurgency in El Salvador," in Jeff Goodwin et al., eds., *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*. University of Chicago Press. (15 pages)

### **November 17: Case studies on maintaining civilian support: Sudan, Colombia, Turkey**

Attendance and participation: 6% of final grade

*Reading for the week (131 pages):*

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

### **November 24: Thanksgiving, no class**

### **December 1: Paper writing workshop**

Attendance and participation: 6% of final grade

Draft of paper due by 5 pm on 11/30. The draft must be at least 5-pages of your own writing and use at least 3 sources: 5% of final grade

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

### **December 8: Professor's research presentation**

Final paper due at the start of class: 30% of final grade

## **Final project**

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

- Why did one rebel group in Darfur sign a 2006 peace agreement while another did not?
- Why did the African National Congress in South Africa rely more heavily on attacks on economic targets than the Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland?
- Why was the Shining Path of Peru more resilient against government counter-insurgency than the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement of Peru?
- Why were the rebels who overthrew the Shah of Iran in 1979 able to maintain their rule of the country while the rebels who overthrew the government of Nicaragua in 1979 were not able to do so?

Keep two points in mind when choosing the groups that you intend to compare. First, be sure the comparison is non-trivial. That is, ensure there is no obvious but trivial explanation for the differences between the groups. An example of a trivial comparison would be the following: Why was the Taliban successful in capturing Kabul in 1996 but unable to retake the capital between 2001 and 2011? Were you to begin researching this question it would quickly become apparent that NATO was providing extensive military support to anti-Taliban forces between 2001 and 2011 but not in 1996. As a result, Kabul's defenses against outright capture in 2001-2011 were orders of magnitude larger than in 1996.

Second, be sure the proposed juxtaposition is of reasonably comparable groups. That is, the groups are sufficiently similar to warrant comparing them. An example of non-comparability would be to ask why the Taliban has been more politically successful since 2001 than Al Qaeda has been. The two groups have radically different goals. The Taliban's stated aim is to rule Afghanistan. Al Qaeda's stated aim is the establishment of a unified, theocratic political system controlling all majority Muslim areas. These goals are so different that comparing these groups in terms of political success to date difficult.

**The components of your final project are:**

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

Due at your meeting with me during the week of October 20. The proposal should include at least a paragraph explaining your chosen topic and how it meets the requirements of the assignment. There should be a bibliography of any sources cited. This assignment will be graded full credit/half credit/no credit. Students must meet ALL the requirements to receive full credit.

- Final paper draft (5% of course grade)

Due by email at 5 pm on 11/30. The draft must be at least 5-pages of your own writing and use at least 3 sources. There should be a bibliography of sources cited. This assignment will be graded full credit/half credit/no credit. Students must meet ALL the requirements to receive full credit.

- Final paper (30% of course grade)

The final paper for the course is due at the start of class on December 8. It may be submitted by email before class or in hardcopy at the final class meeting. This paper should be 20-25 pages in length not including the bibliography and using 12 point font, 1 inch margins, double-spacing, and in-text (“author-date”) citations. The grading rubric for the paper will be distributed in class.

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

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