This course delves into the dynamics of civil wars. It draws on literature in political science, economics, sociology, anthropology, and psychology to understand how civil wars are conducted. We start at the level of the armed actors, considering the structure of government armed forces and rebel groups, their tactical effectiveness, and the role of resources (including external support), ideology, and ethnic and religious identities in shaping their actions. This foundation lets us move on to consider the use of violence in civil war. We study violence from the perspective of the armed organization, as a strategic tool employed purposefully and as a phenomenon that is jointly produced through interactions with civilians. Next, the course explores the interactions of opposing and allied armed organizations. What drives alliance formation? How stable are alliances? How do organizations respond to the actions of their enemies? Finally, we shift the level of analysis to the individual. We study who participates in armed organizations, and the process by which these individuals become accustomed to using violence. The final three weeks of the course apply what students have learned, by examining in-depth: the trajectory of a single armed group; the history of an entire war; and the life of a combatant as described in autobiographical memoirs.

Requirements

Grades will be determined on the basis of in-class participation (10%), one 15-20 minute oral presentation based on a written (5 pp.) critical review of one of the assigned readings for the week (30%), a research proposal (7-10 pp.) for the final paper due at the beginning of the 7th week of classes (10%), and a final research paper (25-30 pp.; 50%).

Undergraduate students will be graded based on in-class participation (10%), one 15-20 minute oral presentation based on a written (5 pp.) critical review of one of the assigned readings for the week (15%), a research proposal (7-10 pp.) for the final paper due at the beginning of the 9th week of classes (30%), and a final research paper (20 pp.; 45%).

For all students, papers should be written in a 12 pt font, double-spaced, with margins of no more than 1.25 inches on the sides and no more than 1 inch on the top and bottom.

Readings

For each week, the syllabus lists a set of required readings. Optional readings, if any, are indicated as such. Most readings are posted in an e-reserve on the class’s Collab website under “Resources.” In addition, the following books, available at the UVa bookstore, are required:


* Students are required to read at least one of these memoirs for Week 14.

**Jan. 15 (Week 1): Introduction**

Overview of the course. What is a civil war? How do the forms of civil war (e.g. insurgencies, coups, splits in the military, urban, rural) differ? What questions do we have about how civil wars are fought? Discussion of levels of analysis in the study of civil wars.


For class discussion, pick one civil war from Sambanis’ (2004) list (available by downloading the dataset and related files through [http://jcr.sagepub.com/content/48/6/814.abstract](http://jcr.sagepub.com/content/48/6/814.abstract)). Familiarize yourself with the war by reading the coding notes about it (available in Civil War Coding Notes document in the replication folder for Doyle and Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace*, [http://pantheon.yale.edu/~ns237/intlpeacebuilding.html](http://pantheon.yale.edu/~ns237/intlpeacebuilding.html)) and skimming a few news articles.

**Recommended**


Jan. 22 (Week 2): The Structure of Armed Forces


Jan. 29 (Week 3): The Consequences of Armed Force Structure in Civil Wars: Part 1


Feb. 5 (Week 4): The Consequences of Armed Force Structure in Civil Wars: Part 2


Feb. 12 (Week 5): Violence in Civil Wars Part 1: Civilians as Target


Feb. 19 (Week 6): Violence in Civil Wars Part 2: Warfare

Feb. 26 (Week 7): Types of Civil Wars

March 5 (Week 8): Alliances

Spring Break

March 19 (Week 9): Recruitment

March 26 (Week 10): The Individual as a Member of the Group
April 2 (Week 11): The Individual and Violence


April 9 (Week 12): Applying Theory: The Group


April 16 (Week 13): Applying Theory: The War


April 23 (Week 14): Applying Theory: The Combatant


April 30 (Week 15)

TBD