

**Brown University
Graduate Seminar**

**POLS 2320
ETHNIC CONFLICT**

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What is ethnicity? What does it share with nationalism and in what respects is it different? Why do ethnic groups fight violently and kill wantonly, especially after living peacefully for a long time? Under what conditions do they manage their relations peacefully? When do they become nationalistic? Does ethnic conflict mark the politics of poor countries, or is it a wider phenomenon? Do people participate in ethnic insurgencies because of greed or grievance? Will ethnic groups disappear as modernity proceeds further? How should liberals look at nationalism? Is ethnicity, or ethnic conflict, best studied in a small-n, or a large-n, methodological frame?

These questions will guide our intellectual journey over the semester. Students will be introduced to the classic texts on ethnicity, nationalism and ethnic conflict, as also to the more important recent work. Over the last fifteen years or so, the subfield of ethnicity and ethnic conflict has grown enormously, generating novel insights and reaching new levels of sophistication. It has become a huge growth industry.

Students will write about 25 pages in all. This can be done in two ways:

Two papers. First paper (10 pages); second paper (15 pages). This option is recommended to those who are in their first year, or are taking this seminar to familiarize themselves with the literature in the subfield. The topic of the first paper will be announced in the sixth week. The paper will be due in the seventh week. Students will pick the topic of the second paper on their own. A 2-page proposal describing the topic, and the materials already read, will be due in class in the tenth week. It will be returned to students with the instructor's comments in the 11th week. The paper will be due Wednesday Dec. 14 by 5 pm, and should be emailed as an attachment to the instructor.

One longer paper of 25 pages. This option is recommended to those who wish to specialize in this subfield, are planning to write a dissertation on ethnic identity/conflict/relations, and/or have prior experience of working with professors on research projects, which could allow them access to datasets or primary materials. A 4-page paper proposal will be due in class in the 10th week. It will be returned with my comments in the 11th week. The paper will be due in the 14th week. The paper will be due Wednesday Dec. 14 by 5 pm, and should be emailed to the instructor.

Since this is a graduate seminar, student participation is a requirement. Each student will make one or two presentations (depending on the size of the class) of 15-20 minutes each. The text and materials for the presentation should be with all seminar participants and the instructor 24 hours ahead of the class. Participation will count for 20 per cent of the grade, and papers 80 per cent.

Between JSTOR and electronics reserves of the library, all journal articles will be available online. But depending on how many pages are assigned, books may only be available on physical reserves or may have to be purchased.

The following books have been ordered for purchase.

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Verso, 1991), ISBN: 0860915468
Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Cornell, 1983), ISBN: 0801492637
Habyarimana, James, Macartan Humphries, Daniel Posner, and Jeremy Weinstein 2010, *Coethnicity: Diversity and the Dilemmas of Collective Action*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 978-0871544193
Russell Hardin, *One for All* (Princeton, 1997), ISBN: 0691048258
Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (California, 2000), ISBN: 0520227069
Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (Oxford, 1996), ISBN: 0198290918
Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, 1994), ISBN: 0691037795
Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life*, (Yale, 2003), ISBN: 0300100132
David Laitin, *Hegemony and Culture* (Chicago, 1986), ISBN: 0226467902
Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge U Press, 2006), ISBN-13: 978-0521670043.
Daniel Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa* (Cambridge U Press, 2005), ISBN-13: 978-0521833981.

SYLLABUS

Week 1 (September 7). Introduction

Introducing the seminar; discussing the requirements.

Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life*, pp. 23-39.
Ashutosh Varshney, "Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict", in Carles Boix and Susan Stokes, eds, *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, Oxford University Press, 2007,

Week 2 (September 14). What is Ethnicity? What is Nationalism? How Did Nationalism Emerge? A heavy week of reading, but not dense, and mostly written in felicitous prose!

Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (EGIC), California, pp. 3-92, Chs. 1-2.

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, London: Verso, 1991 (also a Cornell University Press Publication), pp. 1-65, Chs. 1-4.

Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1983, pp. 1-61, Chs.1-5.

Note: Both Anderson and Gellner are recommended in entirety. No two books are more cited in the literature than these two, followed by Horowitz.

Week 3 (September 21). Instrumentalism versus Essentialism

Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism*, Princeton U Press, pp. 197-209 ("Beyond Reason"), 90-117 ("A Nation is a Nation...."). Read "Beyond Reason" first.

Russell Hardin, *One for All*, Princeton U Press, pp. 3-71.

Ashutosh Varshney, "Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict and Rationality", *Perspectives on Politics*, March 2003, 84-99.

Week 4 (September 28). Exploring Microfoundations Further: Ethnic Assertion and Violence

Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition", in *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, pp. 1-73, especially 25-73.

Roger Peterson, *Understanding Ethnic Violence* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 1-84, 254-271.

Week 5 (October 5). Constructivism

The volume of reading is large, but Colley's a historical narrative and is elegantly written. Her revisionist history will delight you – it has become a classic!

Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 1-145, 364-375.

David Laitin, *Hegemony and Culture*, 1-20, 97-169

Week 6 (October 12). Postmodernism

First paper topic announced.

Paul Brass, ed, *Riots and Pogroms* (NYU Press, 1996), pp. 1-55.

Paul Brass, *Theft of an Idol* (Princeton U Press, 1997), 1-31, 260-288, skim 204-259.

Ashutosh Varshney, "Postmodernism, Civic Engagement and Ethnic Conflict: A Passage to India", *Comparative Politics*, October 1997, pp. 1-20.

Recommended: Gyan Prakash, *After Colonialism*, (Princeton U Press 1995), pp. 3-20

Week 7 (October 19). Institutions Part I. Ethnic Diversity and Political Systems: Are liberal democracies unsuitable for multiethnic societies? Is consociationalism the answer?

First paper due in class.

Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies*, Yale, 1977, pp. 1-103.

Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, pp. 563-600, 601-652.

Donald Horowitz, *A Democratic South Africa*, California, 1991, pp. 163-203.

Recommended: Also see Kanchan Chandra, *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed* (Cambridge U Press, 2004), 1-

30, 287-296

Week 8 (October 26). Institutions Part II. Do people choose identities based on institutional realities?

David Laitin, *Identity in Formation* (Cornell U Press, 1998), 1-35, 158-198, 263-299.

Daniel Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa* (Cambridge U Press, 2005), 1-20, 21-25, 89-158.

Daniel Posner, "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference", *APSR*, November 2004, 98:4, 529-545.

Recommended: On the relationship between ethnicity and party choice, see Kanchan Chandra, *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed* (Cambridge U Press, 2004), 1-111, 287-296.

Week 9 (November 2). Ethnocommunal Riots

Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life* (Yale U Press, 2003) pp. 3-22, 23-39 (rehearse), 39-54, 219-278-281-300.

Steven Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence* (Cambridge U Press, 2004), pp. 1-62, 236-241.

James Fearon and David Laitin, "Explaining Interethnic Cooperation", *American Political Science Review*, December 1996, pp. 715-735.

Recommended: Alex Scacco, Nigerioan riots. To be assigned; Rogers Brubaker and David Laitin, "Ethnic and Nationalist Violence", in Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups* (Harvard U Press, 2004), pp. 88-115;

Week 10 (November 9). Ethnic Civil Wars

Final paper proposals due

Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War", *Oxford Economic Papers*, Vol. 26, 2004, pp. 563-595.

James Fearon and David Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War". *APSR*, Vol. 97, no. 1, February 2003, pp. 75-90.

Barry Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict", in Michael Brown, ed, *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*, Princeton U Press, pp. 103-124.

Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge U Press, 2006), pp. 1-31, 146-209, 388-392.

Recommended: For ideological (as opposed to ethnic) civil wars, see Elisabeth Jean Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador* (Cambridge U Press, 2003), 1-50, 87-120, 226-265; Nicholas Sambanis, 2001, "Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes?", *Journal of*

Conflict Resolution, 45:3, 259-282, June; Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "On the Economic Causes of Civil War", *Oxford Economic Papers*, Vol, 50, 1998, 563-73.

Week 11 (November 16). Can One Combine Liberalism and Commitment to one's Ethnic Group? Should one?

Paper proposals returned with comments

Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, pp. 1-48, skim 49-74, 75-106, 152-172, 193-5.

Week 12. (November 23). No class. Thanksgiving break begins at noon.

Week 13 (November 30) A Recent Award Winner: What Does it Show?

Habyarimana, James, Macartan Humphries, Daniel Posner, and Jeremy Weinstein 2010, *Coethnicity: Diversity and the Dilemmas of Collective Action*, pages to be assigned.

Week 14 (December 7). A Question of Method: Ethnography, Large-N, Surveys, Rational Choice

To focus critically on actual examples of work that one has read and pondered is one of the best ways to understand the methodological issues. An abstract consideration of methods tends not to be very helpful. Here is a recent debate that took place in the profession around Laitin's work, which you have read, and which raises all those methodological issues that one would like to investigate in the subfield of ethnicity. Very few pages, but dense materials. Go over slowly.

Symposium on David Laitin's work, *Qualitative Methodology*, spring 2006.

Final Papers due ELECTRONICALLY Wednesday December 14, 5 pm.
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