

PLSC 20927
Individuals, Communities, and Conflict:
The Microfoundations of Political Violence

Quarter: Spring 2022

Time: MW 10:30-11:50

Room: Regenstein Library 122A

Student Office Hours: Tuesdays 3-4 (Zoom link [here](#) and on Canvas) and by appointment

Instructor: Madeleine Stevens

Email: mistevens@uchicago.edu

Course Description

When we think about political violence in political science, we often think in broad categories and abstract numbers: the number of people killed in a terrorist attack, the range of groups participating in a civil war, whether an event was a protest or a riot. In this seminar, we will zoom in to consider political violence as it relates to individuals and communities, exploring the “micro-level” factors that contribute to or inhibit violence.

So much political science research is focused on dehumanizing numbers, but behind them lie both great human suffering and some of the core questions dogging humanity: Why do we take up arms? How do we resist? When do we hurt, collude, and betray? What leads us to participate in a nonviolent protest movement versus join a rebel organization, and are violent and nonviolent forms of political participation mutually exclusive? How do legacies of violent acts impact our communities and our political participation after the weapons are thrown down?

Over the course of this quarter, we will consider how and when people choose to participate in acts of political violence, if they can choose, as well as how the experience of political violence shapes individuals and their immediate communities. We will examine the positions of both “perpetrators” and “victims,” as well as the ways these categories often blend into one another.

Learning Objectives

This course will help students:

- Develop reading strategies for political science texts.
- Assess political science materials’ quality from both a research and an ethical standpoint.
- Build an understanding of the micro-level political violence subfield.
- Construct an academic review paper on a subtopic of their choice.
- Practice public speaking and leadership skills in an academic setting.

Required Materials

All readings will be provided as PDFs on Canvas or as e-books through the library.

Course Requirements

Participation (30%): As this is a seminar course, it is key to come to class ready to discuss the readings in depth. However, I understand that speaking up in class is not everyone's strong suit. To that end I have split the participation grade into two categories:

Class Participation (15%): Ideal class participation involves asking and making substantive questions and comments in a concise and thoughtful way. The quality of comments matters more than their frequency, and a collegial atmosphere is key. I will rein in those who monopolize the class or talk over their fellow students. Please plan to come to every class. If you must miss a class, please let me know in advance.

Canvas Participation (15%): Students will make a weekly Canvas discussion post for **six** of the nine weeks of the course. You are not expected to post for the first week or for the week of your presentation, and you get one free pass for any of the remaining seven weeks. The post is your opportunity to provide reactions to that week's readings – what did you find confusing? What did you find (un)convincing? You may also pose a discussion question to the class and outline your answer. Please keep your responses to a paragraph or two and post them by **2pm** the day before class (Sunday/Tuesday).

Presentation & Discussion Leadership (20%): Each student will sign up to present a reading once during the course. Your job is to read the book chapter or article in great depth, and both introduce it and contextualize it for your peers. What is the author's overall argument? What research are they responding to/building on/questioning? The presentation aspect should be quick and concise – no longer than 5 minutes. After your presentation, you will pose one to two discussion questions of your choice and take the lead answering clarifying questions from the class.

Final Project (50%): At the end of the quarter, you will write a 10- to 12-page critical literature review on a subtopic of political violence that interests you. It will be in the style of a political science review essay, so pay particular attention to the format of the first two readings for Week 1 and take a look at the Powner chapter under "Final Paper Info & Resources" on Canvas. Additional examples can be found in the Annual Review of Political Science.

The paper will be due the Wednesday of finals week, and must have one-inch margins, be double spaced, and be in a reasonable 12-point font. Citations should be in Chicago Style footnotes, with a complete Works Cited section at the end. I recommend learning to use a citation manager like [Zotero](#) or [Mendeley](#) to aid you in this.

While the final product is this paper, there are a few additional assignments meant to help you get there:

Topic Meeting (5%): By the end of Week 5 you must meet with me to discuss the topic you wish to write your final paper on. Meeting time slots will be announced by Week 4.

Sample Bibliography (10%): By the end of Week 6 you must email me a list of the works you intend to engage with. You may add or subtract works as you write the paper. The purpose of this assignment is to make sure you have considered your topic before the last minute. Please include a minimum of **ten** academic sources. **All articles must be from peer**

reviewed journals and all books must be from academic presses. Please contact me if you have questions about what constitutes an acceptable source. **Note: Assigned readings do not count toward this minimum.**

Outline Meeting (5%): By the end of Week 8 you must meet with me to discuss how you intend to structure your paper. You may submit a written outline if you like, but it isn't required. Meeting time slots will be announced by Week 7.

Final Paper (30%): Please turn your paper in **by 11:59pm on Wednesday, June 1st, 2022.** I will not accept late papers without prior approval of an extension, so please reach out to me as soon as you know you need one and we will work something out. ***If you are graduating this quarter, let me know ASAP so I can ensure that you have your grade in time for graduation!***

Final Grading Scale

	+		-
A		92.5-100	89.5-92.4
B	86.5-89.4	82.5-86.4	79.5-82.4
C	76.5-79.4	72.5-76.4	69.5-72.4
D	66.5-69.4	62.5-66.4	59.5-62.4

Course Policies

Email Policy

If you need to get in touch with me, please email me at mistevens@uchicago.edu. I will respond to all student emails within 48 hours. Please keep this in mind if you have an urgent request and try not to email last minute. I will frequently respond in fewer than 48 hours, but emails sent after working hours or on the weekend will face longer response times. If I do not reply to your email within 48 hours, please feel free to email me again.

Electronic Etiquette

Students may use laptops and tablets in class to access readings and notes but may not use cell phones. If access to laptops and tablets impedes rather than facilitates your participation, this will impact your participation grade.

Academic Integrity

This is the University of Chicago's Academic Integrity statement:

"It is contrary to justice, to academic integrity, and to the spirit of intellectual inquiry to submit the statements or ideas of work of others as one's own. To do so is plagiarism or cheating, offenses punishable under the University's disciplinary system. Because these offenses undercut the distinctive moral and intellectual character of the University, we take them very seriously. Proper acknowledgment of another's ideas, whether by direct quotation or paraphrase, is expected. In particular, if any written or electronic source is consulted and material is used from that source, directly or indirectly, the source should be identified by

author, title, and page number, or by website and date accessed. Any doubts about what constitutes "use" should be addressed to the instructor."

Academic misconduct will result in an F for the course. Alleged misconduct will be reported to the relevant College authorities.

Disability Notice

Any student who feels they may need an accommodation due to the impact of a disability should contact [Student Disability Services](#) to discuss your specific needs. If you currently have an accommodation, please let me know as soon as possible by sending me a copy of your Accommodation Determination Letter from Student Disability Services.

Pass/Fail and Incompletes

Please inform me **by the end of Week 3** if you would like to take the course pass/fail. After this deadline, you must either take it for a grade or withdraw.

I discourage you from taking an incomplete (opting to finish the final paper during another quarter) because it is easy to let them drag on. However, I know that these are particularly difficult times so I will be understanding should you desire to take one. To do so, you must inform me before the final paper deadline and fill out a form with your College advisor.

What to Call Me

Please call me Madeleine (Maa-deh-lyn).

Important Resources

How to Read and Write Academic Material

Two useful resources (also posted as PDFs on Canvas):

Professor Amelia Hoover Green's "[Reading and Writing in College](#)"

Professor Timothy Burke's "[How to Read in College](#)"

One particularly on academic literature reviews:

Powner, Leanne C. *A Political Science Student's Practical Guide*. Los Angeles: Sage/CQ Pres, 2015.

Chapter 3: Doing Pre-Research. (PDF on Canvas)

Citation Management Software

I strongly recommend that you download and learn to use a citation manager. It will make your life much easier come finals. The two most popular are [Zotero](#) and [Mendeley](#). Both are free (though some Mendeley features are paid). I personally use Zotero, but it is a matter of preference. See [this](#) webpage from our library for more information on how to choose a citation manager.

Political Violence Reading List

Professor Paul Staniland has created an extensive reading list on civil war and political violence organized by topic. This will likely be of interest to you as you work on choosing a final paper topic. You can find it [here](#), but it is also posted as a PDF on Canvas.

Mental Health Resources

Reading and discussing work on political violence can be challenging to more than our intellects. This is particularly true when an intense war with a great deal of violence against civilians is dominating the news, as it is now with the war in Ukraine. Our individual experiences with violence, whether political, criminal, or interpersonal, can also add a layer of emotional difficulty to this type of academic work.

I have assigned several readings about the psychological impact of political violence research on researchers themselves (often referred to as “secondary” or “secondhand” trauma) for this course to help you understand and explore your own reactions, but you may justifiably feel the need for more support. I encourage you to practice patience with yourselves as you engage with this material and take breaks from the readings if you find yourself growing upset. I also encourage you to reach out to Student Counseling Services for further support if needed.

You can learn more about how to access Student Counseling Service resources [here](#), on the UChicago Student Wellness mental health page.

Course Schedule and Readings

Week 1: What is political violence and what are the ethics of researching it?

Monday, March 28th: Introduction to the course

There is no mandatory reading for this session. However, I encourage you to explore the following resources:

Hoover Green, Amelia. “Reading and Writing in College,” September 2021.

<https://www.ameliahoovergreen.com/uploads/9/3/0/9/93091546/writing-guide.pdf>.

Burke, Timothy. “How to Read in College.” *Easily Distracted* (blog). Accessed March 10, 2022.

<https://blogs.swarthmore.edu/burke/permanent-features-advice-on-academia/how-to-read-in-college/>.

Wednesday, March 30th

What is political violence?

Balcells, Laia, and Patricia Justino. “Bridging Micro and Macro Approaches on Civil Wars and Political Violence: Issues, Challenges, and the Way Forward.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58, no. 8 (December 2014): 1343–59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002714547905>.

Kalyvas, Stathis N. “The Landscape of Political Violence.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Terrorism*, 10–33. edited by Erica Chenoweth, Richard English, Andreas Gofas, and Stathis N. Kalyvas. Oxford University Press, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198732914.013.1>.

Ethics

Fujii, Lee Ann. “Research Ethics 101: Dilemmas and Responsibilities.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 45, no. 04 (October 2012): 717–23. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096512000819>.

Shesterinina, Anastasia. “Ethics, Empathy, and Fear in Research on Violent Conflict.” *Journal of Peace Research* 56, no. 2 (March 2019): 190–202. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343318783246>.

Week 2: Foundations of the subfield

Monday, April 4th

Kalyvas, Stathis N. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. **Chapter 7: A Theory of Selective Violence (173-209)**.

Kalyvas, Stathis, and Matthew Kocher. "How 'Free' Is Free Riding in Civil Wars? Violence, Insurgency, and the Collective Action Problem." *World Politics* 59 (January 2007): 177–216.

Wednesday, April 6th

Wood, Elisabeth Jean. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. **Chapter 8: Explaining Insurgent Collective Action (226-256)**.

Petersen, Roger Dale. *Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons from Eastern Europe*. Studies in Rationality and Social Change. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006. **Chapter 1, particularly pages 1-27**.

Week 3: Why we fight – the foundations of violent mobilization

Monday, April 11th

Shesterinina, Anastasia. *Mobilizing in Uncertainty: Collective Identities and War in Abkhazia*. Ithaca, [New York]: Cornell University Press, 2021. **Chapter 2: A Sociohistorical Approach to Mobilization (47-67)**.

Viterna, Jocelyn. *Women in War: The Micro-Processes of Mobilization in El Salvador*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. **Chapter 3 (40-62)**.

Oppenheim, Ben, Abbey Steele, Juan F. Vargas, and Michael Weintraub. "True Believers, Deserters, and Traitors: Who Leaves Insurgent Groups and Why." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59, no. 5 (August 2015): 794–823. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002715576750>.

Wednesday, April 13th

Parkinson, Sarah Elizabeth. "Organizing Rebellion: Rethinking High-Risk Mobilization and Social Networks in War." *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 03 (August 2013): 418–32. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055413000208>.

Eck, Kristine. "Coercion in Rebel Recruitment." *Security Studies* 23, no. 2 (April 3, 2014): 364–98. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2014.905368>.

Week 4: How we resist – the foundations of nonviolent mobilization

Monday, April 18th

Kaplan, Oliver Ross. *Resisting War: How Communities Protect Themselves*. Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017. **Chapter 2: A Theory of Civilian Decision-Making in Civil War (33-61)**.

Pearlman, Wendy. "Emotions and the Microfoundations of the Arab Uprisings." *Perspectives on Politics* Vol. 11, no. 2 (June 2013): 387–409. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592713001072>.

Chenoweth, Erica, and Maria J. Stephan. *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. Paperback edition. Columbia Studies in Terrorism and Irregular Warfare. New York Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2013. **Chapter 1: The Success of Nonviolent Resistance Campaigns (3-29)**.

Wednesday, April 20th

Finkel, Evgeny. *Ordinary Jews: Choice and Survival during the Holocaust*. Princeton ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017. **Chapter 6: Evasion (126-158)**.

Manekin, Devorah, and Tamar Mitts. "Effective for Whom? Ethnic Identity and Nonviolent Resistance." *American Political Science Review* 116, no. 1 (February 2022): 161–80. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055421000940>.

Week 5: Why we hurt – the foundations of mass violence

Monday, April 25th

Fujii, Lee Ann. *Killing Neighbors: Webs of Violence in Rwanda*. E-book Edition. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011. **Chapter 7: Conclusion (180-189)**.

Straus, Scott. *Making and Unmaking Nations: War, Leadership, and Genocide in Modern Africa*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015. **Chapter 2: Escalation and Restraint (34-53) AND Chapter 3: A Theory of Genocide (54-86)**.

Fujii, Lee Ann. "The Puzzle of Extra-Lethal Violence." *Perspectives on Politics* 11, no. 2 (June 2013): 410–26. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592713001060>.

Wednesday, April 27th

Wood, Elisabeth Jean. "Armed Groups and Sexual Violence: When Is Wartime Rape Rare?" *Politics & Society* 37, no. 1 (March 2009): 131–61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329208329755>.

Cohen, Dara Kay. *Rape during Civil War*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016. **Chapter 1: The Logic of Wartime Rape (17-55)**.

Meet with me about your paper topic.

Week 6: Why we betray – collusion and collaboration

Monday, May 2nd

Kalyvas, Stathis N. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. **Chapter 10: Intimacy (330-363)**.

Staniland, Paul. "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Insurgent Fratricide, Ethnic Defection, and the Rise of Pro-State Paramilitaries." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56, no. 1 (February 2012): 16–40. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002711429681>.

Wednesday, May 4th

Finkel, Evgeny. *Ordinary Jews: Choice and Survival during the Holocaust*. Princeton ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017. **Chapter 4: Cooperation and Collaboration (69-97)**.

Janssens, Joren F. “It’s Not Gossip, It’s True’: Denunciation and Social Control during the Guatemalan Armed Conflict (1970–85).” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 53, no. 1 (February 2021): 107–32. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022216X20001029>.

Sample bibliography due.

Week 7: “Lone wolves” and “bad apples”? Radicalization and Policing

Monday, May 9th: Radicalization and “Lone Wolf” Terrorism

Belew, Kathleen. *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018. **Chapter 9: The Bombing of Oklahoma City (209-234)**.

Berntzen, Lars Erik, and Sveinung Sandberg. “The Collective Nature of Lone Wolf Terrorism: Anders Behring Breivik and the Anti-Islamic Social Movement.” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 5 (October 20, 2014): 759–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2013.767245>.

Mitts, Tamar. “From Isolation to Radicalization: Anti-Muslim Hostility and Support for ISIS in the West.” *American Political Science Review* 113, no. 1 (February 2019): 173–94. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055418000618>.

Wednesday, May 11th: Policing and Political Violence

Eck, Kristine, Courtenay R. Conrad, and Charles Crabtree. “Policing and Political Violence.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65, no. 10 (November 2021): 1641–56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220027211013083>.

Castle, Taimi. “‘Cops and the Klan’: Police Disavowal of Risk and Minimization of Threat from the Far-Right.” *Critical Criminology* 29, no. 2 (June 2021): 215–35. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-020-09493-6>.

Soss, Joe, and Vesla Weaver. “Police Are Our Government: Politics, Political Science, and the Policing of Race–Class Subjugated Communities.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 20, no. 1 (May 11, 2017): 565–91. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-060415-093825>.

Week 8: Legacies of political violence

Monday, May 16th

Cronin-Furman, Kate, and Roxani Krystalli. “The Things They Carry: Victims’ Documentation of Forced Disappearance in Colombia and Sri Lanka.” *European Journal of International Relations* 27, no. 1 (March 2021): 79–101. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066120946479>.

Gilligan, Michael J., Benjamin J. Pasquale, and Cyrus Samii. “Civil War and Social Cohesion: Lab-in-the-Field Evidence from Nepal: Civil War and Social Cohesion.” *American Journal of Political Science* 58, no. 3 (July 2014): 604–19. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12067>.

Bass, Gary Jonathan. *Stay the Hand of Vengeance: The Politics of War Crimes Tribunals*. 3. printing, and First paperback printing, with A new afterword, 2002. Princeton Studies in International History and Politics. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2002. **Chapter 8: Epilogue (284-310)**.

Wednesday, May 18th

Daly, Sarah Zukerman. "Voting for Victors: Why Violent Actors Win Postwar Elections." *World Politics* 71, no. 04 (October 2019): 747–805. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887119000091>.

Lupu, Noam, and Leonid Peisakhin. "The Legacy of Political Violence across Generations." *American Journal of Political Science* 61, no. 4 (October 2017): 836–51. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12327>.

Meet with me about your paper outline

Week 9: Revisiting Researcher Impacts

Monday, May 23rd: Trauma and Secondhand Trauma as Researchers, Revisited

Robins, James. "Can Historians Be Traumatized by History?" *The New Republic*, February 16, 2021. <https://newrepublic.com/article/161127/can-historians-traumatized-history>.

Williamson, Emma, Alison Gregory, Hilary Abrahams, Nadia Aghtaie, Sarah-Jane Walker, and Marianne Hester. "Secondary Trauma: Emotional Safety in Sensitive Research." *Journal of Academic Ethics* 18, no. 1 (March 2020): 55–70. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-019-09348-y>.

Loyle, Cyanne E., and Alicia Simoni. "Researching Under Fire: Political Science and Researcher Trauma." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50, no. 01 (January 2017): 141–45. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096516002328>.

Wednesday, May 25th: Research Ethics Revisited & Course Conclusion

Cronin-Furman, Kate, and Milli Lake. "Ethics Abroad: Fieldwork in Fragile and Violent Contexts." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51, no. 03 (July 2018): 607–14. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096518000379>.

Hoover Green, Amelia, and Dara Kay Cohen. "Centering Human Subjects: The Ethics of 'Desk Research' on Political Violence." *Journal of Global Security Studies* 6, no. 2 (March 1, 2021): 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogaa029>.

Subotić, Jelena. "Ethics of Archival Research on Political Violence." *Journal of Peace Research* 58, no. 3 (May 2021): 342–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343319898735>.

FINAL PAPER DUE BY WEDNESDAY JUNE 1ST, 11:59PM.