PS 711-002: Civil Conflict

Course Time: W 3:00-5:30pm  
Location: Chemistry-Physics Bldg; Room 183-CP  
Course Website: http://www.uky.edu/~clthyn2/PS711.htm  
Instructor: Dr. Clayton Thyne  
Office Hours: TTh 1:00-3:00pm  
Email: clayton.thyne@uky.edu  
Phone: 859-257-6958

Learning Objectives

The purpose of this course is the systematic theoretical and empirical study of civil conflict. The readings are focused on the most recent empirical work in this area, though a handful of the more traditional and case-oriented research will arise throughout the course. A major component of this course is the production of a research paper, which will apply and extend the topics into an original piece of research.

Required Texts (Available at UK Bookstore)


Class Format

The students will play a key role in leading the class. Each reading/chapter will be assigned to a student in the week prior to class. The student will be expected to email me a written summary of his/her assigned chapter/article by the time class begins (1 page max). I will make copies of these summaries available to all of the students to help you prepare for the comprehensive exam. The student will also be responsible for leading the discussion for the article, so s/he should come to class prepared to pose at least 5 critical questions for class discussion.

Grading

Research Paper (75%)
Choose a research question on civil conflict for which a significant difference of opinion exists, and research this based on either the historical evidence of two or more cases, or else on the basis of existing statistical data sets. The final product should take the form of a conference paper or journal article. The paper should be about 25-30 pages in length, contain a review of the relevant
literature, and be written in the professional style of the American Political Science Association. You may use whatever methodology you feel is most appropriate to the issue and which you feel qualified to implement. I will not be impressed by incompetent quantitative analysis, nor will I penalize competent historical or case-study approaches.

The paper will be due in several stages:

*Friday, February 8th* (by 3:00 p.m. in my mailbox):
Research design, 5-7 pages identifying your research question, a brief description of the literature relevant to your question, the method of analysis you intend to employ, and any data or historical sources you will use to evaluate your hypotheses.

*Friday, March 21st* (by 3:00 p.m. in my mailbox):
First draft, at least 15 pages in length with initial drafts of all of the front-end elements in the paper (i.e., the research question, literature review, and theory should be well-developed). This should include a good start on your empirical tests.

*Friday, April 18th* (by 3:00pm; 1 hard copy in my mailbox and email me a draft):
Second draft, with all required elements of the paper, should be distributed to instructor and all other students in class. Students should read each other’s papers and come prepared with at least three written questions per paper for class on May 3rd.

*Wednesday, April 23rd*:
Presentation of paper in class. Each presentation should last 10-15 minutes, leaving 5-10 minutes for questions. Faculty & graduate students in the department will be invited to attend these presentations.

*Monday, April 28th: Final paper due (by 5:00pm in my mailbox):*
You should address questions and comments raised during in-class presentations when preparing your final paper. The paper is due in multiple stages so that I and other students in the class will have an opportunity to give you some feedback along the way. The paper will be given a final grade when I read the final draft, but I will take into consideration the quality of the research design, first draft, second draft, and in-class presentation when determining the final paper grade

Class Participation and Attendance (25%)
The quality of a graduate level seminar depends to a large extent on the efforts of the students. I expect that you will come to class each week prepared to discuss the required readings. While you are reading the assigned course material, I encourage you to consider the following questions:

- a) What is the research question?
- b) What is the researcher’s theoretical argument?
- c) What methods/approach does the author use to try to answer the question?
- d) Is this approach suitable for the question or theory?
- e) If the author provides empirical tests, are the operational measures of the concepts appropriate?
f) What are the most significant research findings & how do these relate to other course readings?
g) To what degree do you think the researcher has answered his/her research questions?

Course Schedule

01/09/08: Syllabus review, course expectations

01/16/08: What is civil war? Why should we care?

01/23/08: The Onset of Civil Conflicts: Individual and Group-level Approaches

01/30/08: The Onset of Civil Conflicts: Ethnicity and Civil Conflict


02/06/08: The Onset of Civil Conflicts: The Greed/Grievance Debate

02/13/08: The Onset of Civil Conflicts: Political Opportunity

02/20/08: The Onset of Civil Conflicts: International Dimensions


**02/27/08: The Duration of Civil Conflicts**


**03/05/08: Bringing an End to Civil Conflicts**


03/12/08: No class—Spring break

03/19/08: Committing to Peace

03/21/08: First draft of papers due.

03/26/08: No class—ISA conference

04/02/08: Building Peace

04/09/08: Post-war Agreements and Civil War Recurrence


04/16/08: Coup d’états
04/23/08: Research presentations

04/28/08: Final paper due