

Washington University
Department of Political Science

Ethnic Conflict: Causes and Remedies

LS32 372

Fall 2014

Seigle Hall L002, TuTh 10-11:30am

Professor Sunita Parikh
Office Hours: Wed 11-12 or by appt.

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Teaching Assistant: Dino Hadzic

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This class is an introduction and survey to study of ethnic conflict. We will read classic and contemporary scholarly and other works to understand how social scientists have explained political conflict that is considered to have an ethnic component. We will begin by examining theories of ethnicity and theories of conflict from different perspectives. We will then move on to consider explanations of specific examples of ethnic conflict, and we will conclude by reviewing efforts to build political institutions that are designed to contain or reduce ethnic conflict. We will read case-study material from Asia, Africa, and Europe.

Requirements: There will be two in-class exams, a group project (with time provided in class for group collaboration), and an individually written 7-8 page paper on a relevant topic. Class lectures frequently include material that is not in the readings, so you need to come to class! Your grade will be calculated as follows:

Exams: 25% each

Group project and individual paper: 20% each

Attendance and class participation: 10%

All readings are required. Please complete the readings for the specified date before we discuss them in class. All readings will be available on Blackboard.

There is no final exam for this class.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

26 August: Introductory class

28 August – 18 September: What is (and isn't) ethnicity?

Readings: Identity formation and boundary maintenance (Barth)
Ethnicity and nationalism (Connor, Anderson)

Rationalist approaches to ethnicity (Chandra, Hardin)
Ethnic identity and conflict (Laitin, Horowitz)

23 September: EXAM #1

25 September – 17 October: What makes a conflict ethnic?

Readings: Institutional building through conflict (Tilly)
How identity shapes collective action (Goodwin et al., Posner,
DiFiguerido & Weingast, Parikh, Brass)
Ethnic and non-ethnic civil wars (Sambanis)
Case studies: Yugoslavia, India, Zambia, early modern Europe

21 October: EXAM #2

23 October – 6 November: Explaining ethnic conflict, from Large-N to case studies

Readings: Cross-national studies of ethnic conflict (Cederman et al.)
Commitment problems and ethnic conflict (Fearon)
Immigration and ethnic conflict (Claassen)
Ethnic conflict in electoral politics (Chandra, Wilkinson)
Case studies: Yugoslavia, India, South Africa

GROUP PROJECT DAYS: 4, 11, & 18 November

8 November – 4 December: Designing institutions to contain ethnic conflict

Readings: Intra-ethnic conflict issues (Christia, Andreas)
Consociationalism (Lijphardt)
Federalism (Brancati, Hug)
Power-sharing (Hartzell & Hoddie)
Case studies: Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia

20 November: NO CLASS MEETING

22 November: THANKSGIVING BREAK