

# Violence in World Politics

SPB 3504 – 3 credits – 14 meetings – Wednesdays – 1 to 3pm – BA 202  
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The Seville Statement on Violence (1986) has scientifically debunked the belief that human beings are innately violent. With this in mind, the question of why human beings need to resort to “something out of their nature” – that is, war and other forms of collective violence – becomes crucial.

This course looks at five specific forms of violence in world politics: interstate war, civil war, genocide, communal violence, and terrorism. By the end of the semester, students shall be able to (1) critically evaluate cases of violence using the concepts discussed in class – ELO 2, ELO 4, ELO 3, (2) hypothesize the causes of violence – ELO 2, ELO 1, and (3) generate research agendas on explaining and/or understanding violence, as well as emancipating from them – ELO 3, ELO 4, ELO 2.

This is a laborious course, which combines various methods: group discussion, memo, presentation, peer-evaluation, book project (ELO 5, ELO 2, ELO 4, ELO 1), and lecture (ELO 2, ELO 1). Students will be graded based on their participation (20%), memo (30%), presentation (25%), and book project (25%).

## Participation

To ensure meaningful participation in class activities, students need to complete the readings and assignments prior to coming to class, comply to the university’s 75% attendance rule, as well as be respectful to others – by keeping an open mind, coming on time, and putting away gadgets.

## Memo

Throughout the semester, students submit 6 memos – due on weeks 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12. Each summarizes one compulsory reading from the corresponding week. The memo’s format is available on GoogleDrive.

## Presentation

Each student gives a 15-minute presentation on week 5, 7, 9, 11, or 13, on a case corresponding to the topic of the week. Presentation guidelines are available on GoogleDrive.



## Book Project

There is no final exam for this course. Instead, students submit a storybook that assesses one form of violence, argues about at least one of its cause, and offers at least one idea to emancipate from it. Guidelines for the book project are available on GoogleDrive.

## Respect.

No plagiarism.  
No cheating.  
No free-riding.  
No racism.  
No sexism.  
Penalties for late submission of assignments.

**01**

**Violence as Political Means**

**23 Aug**  
[group discussion, lecture]

*Why do we need to study violence? Why do we focus on interstate war, civil war, communal violence, genocide, and terrorism?*

[Syllabus; Seville Statement 1996; Tilly 2003, ch. 1; Kaldor 1999]

**02**

**Structures and Cultures of Violence**

**30 Aug**  
[memo, group discussion, lecture]

*How and how deep is violence embedded into our political and quotidian lives?*

[Galtung 1990; Butler 2009, Intro; Zizek 2010, Intro & ch. 1-2]

**03**

**Agencies of Violence**

*tbd.*  
[group discussion, lecture]

*Why do people choose to participate in violence? Do agencies matter?*

[Barnett 2000, ch. 1-3; Kalyvas 2003; Mamdani 2001, Intro & ch. 1-3]

**04**

**Interstate War**

**6 Sept**  
[memo, group discussion, lecture]

*What counts as interstate war? What are its causes? Is the level-of-analysis framework the best way to understand it?*

**13 Sept**  
[presentation]

[Levy & Thompson 2010, ch. 2-6]

**06**

**Civil War**

**20 Sept**  
[memo, group discussion, lecture]

*What is a useful way to conceptualize civil war? What do we know about its onset, duration, ending, and recurrence?*

**27 Sept**  
[presentation]

[Sambanis 2004; Collier & Hoeffler 2004; Kalyvas & Balcells 2010; DeRoun & Sobek 2004; Licklider 1995; Walter 2004]

**08**

**Communal Violence**

**18 Oct**  
[memo, group discussion, lecture]

*What do the primordialists, instrumentalists, constructivists, and institutionalists say about communal violence?*

**25 Oct**  
[presentation]

[Fearon & Laitin 1996; Posner 2004; Varshney 2001]

**10**

**Genocide**

**1 Nov**  
[memo, group discussion, lecture]

*Why is it so difficult to define genocide? What are the events leading to genocide? How reversible are they?*

**8 Nov**  
[presentation]

[Jones 2006, ch. 1; Shaw 2007, ch. 1-5; Rosenberg & Silina 2013; Smith 2013]



Students are given access to a GoogleDrive folder, which hosts readings, memo formats, presentation guidelines, and book project guidelines, as well as to an active web link where they can sign up for memos and presentations.

**14**

**Democracy in a Violent World**

**19 Nov**  
[group discussion]

*What have we learned? What next?*

[Hardt & Negri 2004; Keane 2004]

**12**

**Terrorism**

**15 Nov**  
[memo, group discussion, lecture]

*What do we know about terrorism and its terrors?*

[Crenshaw 2002; Hoffman 2006; Held 2008]

**13**

**22 Nov**

[presentation]

### Compulsory Readings

- Barnett, V. J. (2000). *Bystanders: Conscience and complicity during the Holocaust*. Connecticut: Praeger.
- Bauman, Z. (2002). The uniqueness and normality of the Holocaust. In Besteman, C. (ed.). *Violence: A reader*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Butler, J. (2009). *Frames of war: When is life grievable?* London: Verso.
- Collier, P. & Hoeffler, A. (2004). Greed and grievance in civil war. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 56, 563-595.
- Crenshaw, M. (2002). The causes of terrorism. In Besteman, C. (ed.). *Violence: A reader*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- De Rouen Jr., K.R. & Sobek, D. (2004). The dynamics of civil war duration and outcome. *Journal of Peace Research*, 41(3), 303-320.
- Fearon, J.D. & Laitin, D.D. (1996). Explaining interethnic cooperation. *American Political Science Review*, 90(4), 715-735.
- Galtung, J. (1990). Cultural violence. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167-191.
- Hardt, M. & Negri, A. (2004). *Multitude: War and democracy in the age of empire*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Held, V. (2008). *How terrorism is wrong: Morality and political violence*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hoffman, B. (2006). *Inside terrorism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Jones, A. (2006). *Genocide: A comprehensive introduction*. New York: Routledge.
- Kalyvas, S.N. (2003). The ontology of political violence: Action and Identity in Civil Wars. *Perspective on Politics*, 1(3), 475-494.
- Kalyvas, S.N. & Balcells, L. (2010). International system and technologies of rebellion: How the end of the cold war shaped internal conflict. *American Political Science Review*, 104(3), 415-429.
- Keane, J. (2004). *Violence and democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Levy, J. S. & Thompson, W.R. (2010). *Causes of war*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Licklider, R. (1998). Early returns: results of the first wave of statistical studies of civil war termination. *Civil Wars*, 1(3), 121-132.
- Mamdani, M. (2001). *When victims become killers: Colonialism, nativism, and genocide in Rwanda*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Posner, D.N. (2004). The political salience of cultural difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are allies in Zambia and adversaries in Malawi. *American Political Science Review*, 98(4), 529-545.
- Rosenberg, S.P. & Silina, E. (2013). Genocide by attrition: Silent and efficient. In Apsel, J. & Verdeja, E. (eds.). *Genocide matters: Ongoing issues and emerging perspectives*. New York: Routledge.
- Sambanis, N. (2010). What is civil war? Conceptual and empirical complexities of an operational definition. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 48(6), 814-858.
- Seville Statement. <http://www.culture-of-peace.info/brochure/pages10-11.html>
- Shaw, M. (2007). *What is genocide?* Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Smith, R. W. (2013). Genocide and the politics of rape: Historical and psychological perspectives. In Apsel, J. & Verdeja, E. (eds.). *Genocide matters: Ongoing issues and emerging perspectives*. New York: Routledge.
- Tilly, C. (2003). *The politics of collective action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Walter, B.F. (2004). Does conflict beget conflict? Explaining recurring civil war. *Journal of Peace Research*, 41(3), 371-388.
- Varshney, A. (2001). Ethnic conflict and civil society: India and beyond. *World Politics*, 53(3), 362-398.
- Zizek, S. (2008). *Violence: Six sideways reflections*. New York: Picador.

Rubrics	Participation
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• excellent, authentic contribution to class activities</li> <li>• full attendance and always on time</li> <li>• thoroughly attentive, mindful of others</li> </ul>
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good contribution to class activities</li> <li>• good attendance and mostly on time</li> <li>• attentive, mindful of others</li> </ul>
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fair contribution to class activities</li> <li>• fair attendance (at least 75%), rarely on time</li> <li>• fairly attentive, fairly mindful of others</li> </ul>
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poor contribution to class activities</li> <li>• poor attendance (less than 75%), rarely on time</li> <li>• not attentive, not mindful of others</li> </ul>

Presentation	Memo
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• excellent comprehension, well-elaborated explanation on the subject</li> <li>• excellent delivery, holds full attention of audience, effective time management</li> <li>• excellent engagement, significant contribution for audience's understanding on the subject</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• excellent comprehension of the reading</li> <li>• effective use of language</li> <li>• good comprehension of the reading</li> <li>• effective use of language</li> <li>• fair comprehension of the reading</li> <li>• ineffective use of language</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good comprehension, good explanation on the subject</li> <li>• good delivery, holds attention of half the audience, satisfactory time management</li> <li>• good engagement, raises audience's interest toward the subject</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poor comprehension of the reading</li> <li>• ineffective use of language</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fair comprehension, inadequate explanation on the subject</li> <li>• fair delivery, holds attention of few audience, leaves little time for discussion</li> <li>• fair engagement, raises interest but left several confusion to the audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• original, excellent comprehension of the topic</li> <li>• effective use of language</li> <li>• original, good comprehension of the topic</li> <li>• effective use of language</li> <li>• fair comprehension of the topic</li> <li>• ineffective use of language</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poor comprehension, poor explanation on the subject</li> <li>• poor delivery, very little attention from the audience, overtime</li> <li>• poor engagement, fails to increase the interest of the audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poor comprehension of the topic</li> <li>• ineffective use of language</li> </ul>

Book Project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• original, excellent comprehension of the topic</li> <li>• effective use of language</li> <li>• original, good comprehension of the topic</li> <li>• effective use of language</li> <li>• fair comprehension of the topic</li> <li>• ineffective use of language</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poor comprehension of the topic</li> <li>• ineffective use of language</li> </ul>