

Ethnic Politics: Elections, Conflict and Change

POLS 016

Prof. Mark Schneider

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W 1:15-4 pm

Office Hours: Mondays 4-5:30 or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In media discourse and much social science research, the pervasiveness of ethnic diversity and ethnic politics is viewed as a danger to order and democracy. At the same time, activists and policy-makers debate the best policies for cultivating the empowerment of marginal groups, on the one hand, and inter-ethnic cooperation on the other. With the goal of bringing insight to the discussion of ethnic politics, this course introduces students to the key concepts, questions, and debates in the sub-field of comparative ethnic politics in political science, with an emphasis on case studies in developing countries.

The class will proceed as follows. In Part I, we discuss key approaches to conceptualizing and measuring ethnicity. In Part II, we will discuss explanations for why ethnic identities take the form that they do and how they change over time. In Part III, we will discuss important question in ethnic politics—ranging from why voters vote along ethnic lines to the conditions under which ethnic diversity leads to violence. In Part IV, we will discuss government institutions and policies aimed to reduce ethnic conflict and encourage inter-ethnic cooperation and the representation of marginalized ethnic groups.

The goals of the course are as follows. First, the course is designed to encourage students to think critically about the course's overarching questions. The reading assignments are not particularly heavy, but students will be expected to have reflected carefully on all readings and on the broad themes they introduce. Second, the structure of the course is designed to push students to think precisely and specifically about key questions in ethnic politics that are consequential to understanding the world and the plausibility of policy solutions to specific problems. Third, students will learn to connect theory to cases through presentations that cover a course theme. By the end of the course, students will not only develop a vocabulary for understanding the forms that ethnic politics—for better or worse—can take, but will be prepared to engage in nuanced debates about and whether to address these issues in public policy.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your final grade will be based on the following components:

20% - Class Participation. Since this is a seminar course, attendance is obligatory. An active role in discussions and in-class activities by everyone enrolled in the course is expected, as is the completion of the required readings before the session for which they are assigned. Each student is permitted one unexcused absence (i.e. without a written note from a doctor or a dean).

15% - Case Study Presentations. I will ask each student to complete one presentation on a case that applies to the course theme of that particular session—starting with session 6. The presentation should last 10-12 minutes. I will ask you to propose a country by email before the second class. We will go over guidelines on presentations and finalize the country elections in the second class. All students should discuss the presentation with me no later than one week before the presentation. A 2-page proposal including the research question, theory to explore, and evidence used for the case study will be due the Friday before our meeting.

5% - Response Papers. You will write one 4-5-page response paper (double-spaced) based on the readings for a particular class session before the midterm (sessions 2 to 7). The response paper should not be a summary of readings. Instead, you will carefully explain the argument or concepts introduced in required readings, assess the relationship between theory and measurement, and contrast conceptual and methodological approaches across readings. I will ask students to sign up for class sessions on first come first serve at the second class meeting. Note: that you must pick a different class session for the response paper and presentation.

25% - Take-Home Mid-Term. Students will be required to write a take-home midterm consisting of a short answer section and longer essay (7-8 pages) section. The essay prompts will be announced at the end of the 6th class. You will choose one essay prompt among two options. The essay will be due by email and in hard copy at the beginning of the 7th session.

35% - Take-Home Final. There will be a take-home essay final exam (8-10 pages) that focuses on the broad themes of the course with a focus on the material covered after the midterm. You will be asked to address one of two essay prompts. Final exam essay prompts will be handed out at the final class meeting and due at 5pm on the day of the scheduled final exam, which is set by the registrar.

READINGS

All the readings are available online and can be downloaded at the course's page at <https://courseworks.columbia.edu> or at the web pages linked from the syllabus. This course requires you to carefully read all assigned readings before class. Generally, 4 articles or book chapters are assigned each week. Make sure you not only understand the basic argument, but give yourself time to think critically about the readings before class so you will be prepared to participate in discussion. I encourage you to complete the reading worksheet linked below for each reading. Recommended readings are a resource for those making presentations and are not required.

The following has been ordered for purchase at the book store and is available on course reserve:

Posner, Daniel. 2005. *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*. Cambridge University Press.

Critical Reading

Here is some advice on critical reading and creating reading worksheets from Professor Kanchan Chandra at NYU. I suggest going through the worksheet (included at the end of the syllabus) for assigned readings: <http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/politics/faculty/chandra/ethnicpolitics2.pdf>

COURSE SCHEDULE

PART I: WHAT ARE ETHNIC IDENTITIES AND HOW SHOULD WE THINK ABOUT THEM?

Week 1: Introduction (1/25)

What Is ethnic identity and how does it differ from other kinds of identities? What kinds of questions does this prompt about politics?

Weber, Eugene. 1976. *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France 1870-1914*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Introduction (xi-xv) and Chapter 29, "Cultures and Civilization" (pp. 485-496).

Coates, T. N. 2015. "The Case for Reparations," *Atlantic Monthly*.

Tavernise, Sabrina. "Iraq Power Shift Widens a Gulf Between Sects." *New York Times* (2/18/2006).

Benjamin Denison and Jasmin Mujanović "Syria isn't Bosnia. And no, the problem isn't 'ancient hatreds.'" *The Washington Post, Monkey Cage* (11/17/2015).

Week 2: What Do We Mean by Ethnic Identities? Primordialism vs. Constructivism (2/1)

Are ethnic identities static or do they change over time? We will discuss the broad debate on this question between primordialists and constructivists.

Clifford Geertz, 1973. "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States" in *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books: 255-269.

Barth, Frederik, ed. 1998. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. Chicago, IL: Waveland Press. 9-38.

Stephen Van Evera, "Primordialism Lives!" APSA-CP, vol. 12, no. 1 (Winter 2001), pp. 20-22.

Waters, Mary 1999. *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapter 3.

Week 3: Conceptualizing and Measuring Ethnic Groups (2/8)

In this session we consider how to conceptualize and measure ethnic groups given a range of problems discussed in the previous week.

Chandra, Kanchan. 2006. What is Ethnic Identity and Does It Matter? *Annual Review of Political Science*.

Get a Sense of the Measurement Strategies in:

Posner, Daniel. 2004. "Measuring Ethnic Fractionalization in Africa." *American Journal of Political Science* 48 (4): 849-863.

Fearon, James D. 2003. "Ethnic and Cultural Diversity by Country." *Journal of Economic Growth* 8, 2 (June): 195-222.

Laitin, David, and Daniel Posner. 2001. "The Implications of Constructivism for Constructing Ethnic Fractionalization Indices." *APSA-CP* 12, 1 (Winter): 13-17.

Wilkinson, Steven I. 2001. "Constructivist Assumptions and Ethnic Violence." *APSA-CP* 12, 1 (Winter): 17-20.

ASSIGNMENT: COMPLETE THE CRITICAL READING WORKSHEET ON CHANDRA. BRING IT TO CLASS **WITHOUT YOUR NAME ON IT** FOR AN ACTIVITY.

Week 4: Colonial Institutions and Identity Construction (2/15)

How did colonial institutions and policies shape identity construction?

Posner, Daniel. 2005. *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*. Cambridge Press. Chapters 2 and 3 [skim chapter 1].

Cohn, Bernard. 1987. "The Census, Social Structure and Objectification in South Asia." In *An Anthropologist Among Historians*. New York: Oxford University Press, Chapter 10.

Mamdani, Mahmood. *When Victims Become Killers*, Chapter 3.

Further Reading:

Benedict Andersen, "Census, Map, Museum" in *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983).

Dirks, Nicholas. 2001 "The Ethnographic State" in *Castes of Mind. Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*. Princeton University Press.

Week 5: Do Short-Term Political Incentives Explain Identity Salience and Change? (2/22)

How does electoral politics (and the pursuit of state patronage) shape identity construction?

Posner, Daniel. 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.

Bates, Robert. 1974. "Ethnic Competition and Modernization in Contemporary Africa." *Comparative Political Studies* 6(4) 457-477.

Laitin, David. 1998. "A Theory of Political Identities." In *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations of the Near-Abroad*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Read pp. 3-35.

Further Reading:

Posner, Daniel. *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*. Cambridge Press. Chapter 4 [skim]

Week 6: What Explains the Political Salience and Mobilization of Ethnic Identities? (2/29)

Under what conditions does ethnic mobilization work?

Marx, Anthony. 1998. *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of the United States, South Africa, and Brazil*. Introduction.

Barany, Zoltan. 2002. "Ethnic Mobilization without Prerequisites: The East European Gypsies." *World Politics* 54 (3) 277-302.

Varshney, Ashutosh. 2003. "Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Rationality." *Perspectives on Politics*, 1(1) 85-99.

PART 3: ETHNIC POLITICS AND DEMOCRACY

Week 7: Why Do Ethnic Parties Emerge (and do they threaten democracy)? (3/14)

When should we expect to see successful ethnic parties and what does this mean for democratic consolidation and democratic quality?

Horowitz, Donald. 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press: Chap. 7 (pp 291-311).

Chandra, Kanchan. 2005. "Ethnic Parties and Democratic Stability." *Perspectives on Politics* 3 (2): 235-252.

Chandra, Kanchan. 2004. *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed: Patronage and Ethnic Head Counts in India*. New York: Cambridge University Press, Chapters 1-2.

IN-CLASS DEBATE: ARE ETHNIC PARTIES GOOD OR BAD FOR DEMOCRATIC QUALITY?

Further Reading:

Madrid, Raul. 2008. "The Rise of Ethno-Populism in Latin America." *World Politics*, 60(3) 475-508.

Van Cott, Donna. 2005. *From Movements to Parties in Latin America: The Evolution of Ethnic Politics*.

Week 8: Ethnic Voting: Why Do Voters (Sometimes) Prefer to Vote for a Co-Ethnic Politician? (3/21)

What are voters' motivations for ethnic voting and how do we determine if identity is the central motivation for one's vote?

Chandra, Kanchan. "Counting Heads." In Herbert Kitschelt and Steven Wilkinson (Eds). *Patrons, Clients, and Policies*. New York: Cambridge University Press: chapter 4.

Vaishnav, Milan. Forthcoming. *By Hook or by Crook*, selection.

Lindberg, Staffan, and Minion K. C. Morrison. 2008. "Are African Voters Really Ethnic or Clientelistic? Survey Evidence from Ghana." *Political Science Quarterly*, 123 (1) 95–122.

Ferree, Karen. "Explaining South Africa's Racial Census." *Journal of Politics*, 68(4) 803-15.

Week 9: How Does Ethnic Diversity Affect Public Goods Provision? (3/28)

We will discuss ethnic favoritism and the effect of ethnic diversity of public and private provision of state benefits.

Easterly, William and Ross Levine. 1997. "Africa's Growth Tragedy: Policies and ethnic divisions." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 112(4) 1203-1250. [skim]

Miguel, Edward. 2004. "Tribe or Nation? Nation Building and Public Goods in Kenya versus Tanzania." *World Politics* 56 (April), 327-64.

Habyarimana, James et al. 2007. "Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision?" *American Political Science Review* 101, 4 (November): 709-725.

Lieberman, Evan. "Ethnic Politics, Risk, and Policy-Making: A Cross-National Statistical Analysis of Government Responses to HIV/AIDS," *Comparative Political Studies*, 40 (12) (2007) 1407-32.

Further Reading:

Schneider, Mark. 2015. "Do Local Leaders Prioritize the Poor?" *India Business Line* (12/15/2015).

Hopkins, Daniel. 2009. "The Diversity Discount: When Increasing Ethnic and Racial Diversity Prevents Tax Increases." *Journal of Politics*. 71: 160-177.

Franck, Raphael., and Ilia Rainer. 2012. "Does the Leader's Ethnicity Matter? Ethnic favoritism, education, and health in sub-Saharan Africa." *American Political Science Review*, 106 (2) 294-325.

PART 3: ETHNIC CONFLICT AND ETHNIC CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Week 10: Ethnic Violence 1: Ethnic Riots and Electoral Politics (4/4)

What are the causes of ethnic riots? We will apply a range of approaches to understanding Hindu-Muslim riots in India.

Brass, Paul. 2004. "Development of an Institutionalised Riot System in Meerut City, 1961 to 1982." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 4839-4848.

Wilkinson, Steven. 2004. *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Communal Riots in India*. Chapters 1-2.

Varshney, Ashutosh. 2001 "Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society." *World Politics*, April 2001, 362-98.

Fearon, James and David Laitin. 2000. "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity." *International Organization*.

Week 11: Ethnic Violence 2: Does Ethnic Diversity Lead to Civil War? (4/11)

Are contexts of ethnic diversity prone to ethnic violence? What are the mechanisms of ethnic civil wars and does this differ from non-ethnic civil wars?

Case: Iraq, Syria and ISIS

Guest Speaker: Costantino Pischetta (University of Miami).

Cederman, L, Eric Wimmer, and Brian Min, B. 2010. "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis." *World Politics* 62(1) 87-119.

Fearon, James and David Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review*, 97(1) 75-90.

Philip Roessler, "The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa," *World Politics* 2011.

International Crisis Group. 2013. "Make or Break: Iraq's Sunnis and the State."

Further Reading:

*International Crisis Group Report. 2014. "Iraq's Jihadi Jack-in-the-Box."

Snyder, Jack and Robert Jervis. 1999. "Civil War and the Security Dilemma." in Barbara F. Walter and Jack Snyder, eds., *Civil Wars, Insecurity and Intervention*. Columbia University Press.

Kaufman, Stuart. "Spiraling to Ethnic War: Elites, Masses, and Moscow in Moldova's Civil War." *International Security*, 1996.

Week 12: The Logic of Genocide (4/18)

How can we explain the brutal strategy of mass killing? We will discuss this through an extended discussion of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994.

Kalyvas, Stathis. 1999. "Wanton and Senseless? The logic of massacres in Algeria." *Rationality and Society*, 11(3) 243-285.

Browning, Christopher. *Ordinary Men*, Preface, Chaps 1-2 [skim].

Strauss, Scott. "Origins and Aftermaths: The dynamics of genocide in Rwanda and their post-crime implications." In Simon Chesterman, Béatrice Pouligny, and Albrecht Schnabel, eds., *Mass Crimes and Post-Conflict Peace-Building* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press).

Omar Shahbudin McDoom. "The Psychology of Threat in Intergroup Conflict: Emotions, Rationality, and Opportunity in the Rwandan Genocide," *International Security*, 2012

Week 13: Managing Ethnic Conflict: Institutions (4/25)

Can institutions create incentives for interethnic cooperation and peace?

Lijphart, Arend. 2004. "Constitutional Design for Divided Societies." *Journal of Democracy* 15, 2 (April): 96-109.

Reilly, Benjamin. 2002. "Electoral Systems for Divided Societies." *Journal of Democracy*, 156-170.

Bermeo, Nancy. 2002. "The Import of Institutions: A New Look at Federalism." *Journal of Democracy*, 13, 2 (April): 96-110.

Philip Roeder and Donald Rothchild, *Sustainable Peace: Power and Democracy after Civil War*, chaps. 1 and 2.

IN-CLASS DEBATE: WHAT INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES CAN HELP STABILIZE IRAQ?

Further Reading:

Elkins, Zachary, and John Sides. 2007. "Can Institutions Build Unity in Multiethnic States?" *American Political Science Review*, 101 (4) 693-708.

**Week 14: Addressing Ethnic Inequality: Ethnic Quotas, and Affirmative Action
(MAKEUP, TBD)**

We will discuss economic and social discrimination of marginal groups in the U.S. and beyond and conclude the course.

Bertrand, Marianne and Sendhil Mullainathan. 2004. "Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal: A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination." *The American Economic Review*, 94 (4)

Chauchard, Simon. 2014. "Can the Experience of Political Power by a Member of a Stigmatized Group Change the Nature of Day-to-day Interpersonal Relations? Evidence from Rural India." *APSR*, 108 (2): 403-422.

THE TAKE-HOME EXAM WILL BE ANNOUNCED AT THE END OF CLASS.

Reading Skills:

As you manage the reading for this and other graduate courses, you are likely to find, if you have not already, that there is no correlation between effort and outcome. It is entirely possible to spend several hours reading something without “getting it.” And it is equally possible to spend less than a half-hour reading something else and getting to the heart of the argument. You will have to devise for yourselves ways to read efficiently. These are some devices that may help:

1. Figure out what the heart of an argument is before you read deeply: skim, read the abstracts, the jacket blurbs, often short reviews published elsewhere. When you know where the center of gravity is, you read more efficiently.
2. Read actively: do not simply soak up the reading for what the author wants to tell you, but approach it with questions, and try to answer them for yourself as you make your way through.
3. Use other peoples’ skills: you do not have to do all the work yourself. It is not “cheating” if you talk through the argument with someone else before or after you delve in, or look at reviews for explication, or form reading groups where you can discuss the argument with each other.
4. Write in order to read. The response papers for this class and the (non-graded) worksheet attached should help.
5. Use diagrams if necessary: often, the structure of an argument can be most clearly expressed if you “draw” it, using arrows and lines, than by trying to understand it in words.
6. Organize your notes in a way that makes retention and information retrieval possible: you could use index cards, annotated bibliographies, database programmes like Filemaker Pro etc. These rules may be obvious to some and not to others. Basically do whatever works for you. But be self-conscious about the reading process as a skill that has to be learned and not necessarily as an ability that either comes naturally or does not.

Reading Worksheet

For each book, chapter, or article assigned in this course, you should fill out the following (non-graded) worksheet. Many of these points can be addressed in a sentence or two (e.g. Questions 1 and 2; in some cases answers will not need even to be full sentences (e.g., Question 3); and in some cases the answers may overlap. These worksheets should be retained: they will be useful for future reference.

1. State the central question that the reading addresses.
2. State the central argument(s) defended in the paper in response to this question.
3. What type of reasoning or evidence is used to support these arguments? If it is an analytical paper, what is the logic that undergirds the argument? If an empirical paper, what type of data is employed? Are there other data sources that you think might be more appropriate?
4. Do you find the claims of the reading convincing? What do you see as the main gaps that need to be filled?
5. Why (if at all) is the reading interesting?
6. Do you agree with the main claims? What are your hesitations? (This may simply involve restatement of previous points.)
7. Identify one or two implicit premises or background assumptions in the paper that you think are especially controversial or objectionable.
8. In light of your answers to the previous questions, write an abstract for the article of no more than 100 words. (Feel free to repeat formulations given in response to earlier questions.)
9. When you have done this for individual readings, take some time to think about the various readings you have been assigned in relation to each other. See if you can write or imagine a summary table for all the readings taken together which compares and contrasts them.