

# **Ethnic Politics: Elections, Conflict and Change**

## Political Studies 111

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211 Bernard Hall  
T TH 2:45-4pm

Office Hours: T TH 4-5:30

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

In public discourse and much social science research, the pervasiveness of ethnic diversity and ethnic identity politics is viewed as a danger to order, democracy, and development. The divisions of race, religion, and nativism pose serious challenges around the world and at home. 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 countries in developing countries.

The class will proceed as follows. First, we discuss key approaches to conceptualizing and measuring ethnicity. This will emphasize the constructivist approach, which suggests even some of the most hardened identities were shaped by context, history, and institutions. Next, we move onto discuss explanations for why ethnic identities take the form that they do and how they change over time. We will see that history, particularly colonial rule, had powerful effects on modern ethnic politics and ethnic conflict. Third, we will discuss important questions in ethnic politics—ranging from why voters vote along ethnic lines to the conditions under which ethnic diversity leads to violence and can create challenges for public goods provision. We will end the class with a critical discussion of government institutions and policies aimed to reduce ethnic conflict, encourage inter-ethnic cooperation, and mandate representation of marginalized 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. This boils down to understanding how we go to the current state of ethnic politics and conflict and how this can change. 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 these topics.

**Goals/Objectives of the Course (intended outcomes):**

1. Students will come to understand major debates underlying comparative politics.
2. Students will engage in effective written expression.
3. Students will learn about the politics of different cultures across the globe.
4. Students will learn to analyze complex political phenomena through careful engagement with theory and evidence

**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). There will be a grade penalty for unexcused absences beyond this. As a rule of thumb, each student should participate in class at least once per class.

**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 week. The presentation should last 10 minutes. 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 1-page proposal including the research question, argument to explore you're your preliminary sense of available evidence used for the case study will be due before our meeting. I will be happy to help you with all of this of course.

**5% - Response Paper.** You will write one 3-4-page response paper (double-spaced) based on the readings for a particular week before the midterm (Weeks 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

## Classroom Etiquette

To make sure that we have a hospitable learning environment, I ask students to follow three simple rules:

- 1) Arrive on time
- 2) Turn your cell phones off when you enter the class room
- 3) Unless you are speaking in groups about readings, close your laptops in class. This will help everyone focus on class discussion.
- 4) Respect your classmates. Debate is welcome but disagree respectfully by engaging ideas rather getting personal.
- 5) Coffee/beverages are fine but food is not permitted in class since it can distract your classmates.

### \*\*\*Warning on Plagiarism and Cheating\*\*\*

As goes without saying, it will not be possible to pass this course if I find any evidence of plagiarism/cheating of any kind for any assignment. At minimum, this will result in a zero for that assignment and will be referred to the Dean without exceptions. If you do the work each week, and think a lot about the material, you'll do fine.

## 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 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.

Chauchard, Simon. 2017. *Why Representation Matters: The Meaning of Ethnic Quotas in Rural India*.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

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

#### **Session 1: Introduction (1/16)**

#### **Session 2: Why Does Ethnic Identity Matter Today? Race in America I (1/18)**

Coates, T. N. 2015. "The Case for Reparations," *Atlantic Monthly*. Available at: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. Chapter 1. *Racism without Racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in America*. Rowman & Littlefield. Chapter 1.

Watch at Home: *13th*

#### **Session 3: Why Does Ethnic Identity Matter Today? Race in America II (1/23)**

Hochschild, Arlie. 2016. *Strangers in Their Own Land*. Chapter 9.

Coates, T.N. 2017. *We Were Eight Years in Power*. One World Publishers, Epilogue.

#### **Session 4: What Do We Mean by Ethnic Identities? Primordialism (1/25)**

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.

Van Evera, Stephen. 2001. "Primordialism Lives!" *APSA-CP*, 12 (1) (Winter Issue) 20-22.

#### **Session 5: What Do We Mean by the Construction of Ethnic Identities? (1/30)**

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

Waters, Mary. 1990. *Ethnic Options*. Chapters 2.

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

#### **Session 6: Conceptualizing and Measuring Ethnic Groups (2/1)**

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

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

*Sakai Activity*: In pairs, develop a definition of an ethnic group and list all the groups that fit your definition for the state of California.

### **Session 7: Ethnic Diversity and Its Measurement (2/6)**

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

Goldstein, Dana. 2016. "America, This is Your Future." Politico  
<available at: <https://www.politico.com/agenda/story/2016/11/political-future-of-america-generations-diversity-tensions-000235>>.

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

## PART II: HOW DO ETHNIC IDENTITIES CHANGE?

### **Session 8: Colonial Institutions and Identity Construction (2/8)**

Posner, Daniel. 2005. *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*. Cambridge Press. Chapters 2 and 3.

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

### **Session 9: Colonial Institutions and Identity Construction: The Census (2/13)**

Cohn, Bernard. 1987. "The Census, Social Structure and Objectification in South Asia." In *An Anthropologist Among Historians*. New York: Oxford University Press, Chapter 10 (focus on pp231 onwards on the colonial census in India).

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

### **Session 10: Do Short-Term Political Incentives Explain Identity Salience and Change? (2/15)**

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.

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

### **Session 11: When are Ethnic Minorities Likely to Assimilate? (2/20)**

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.

“Hispanic Immigrants are Assimilating Just as Quickly as Earlier Groups.” *Washington Post*. Available at: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2013/01/28/hispanic-immigrants-are-assimilating-just-as-quickly-as-earlier-groups/?utm\\_term=.d3860b69dc4c](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2013/01/28/hispanic-immigrants-are-assimilating-just-as-quickly-as-earlier-groups/?utm_term=.d3860b69dc4c).

Giry, Stéphanie. 2006. “France and Its Muslims.” *Foreign Affairs*, 85(5) 87-104.

### **Session 12: Racial Domination and Race Relations in Comparative Perspective (2/22)**

Marx, Anthony. *Making Race and Nation*, chapters 1, 6, 7.

### **Session 13: Does Ethnic Diversity Lead to Civil War? (2/27)**

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

Habyarimana, James, et al. 2008. "Is Ethnic Conflict Inevitable-Parting Ways over Nationalism and Separatism." *Foreign Affairs*.

### **Session 14: Ethnicity and Civil War (3/2) [FRIDAY GUEST LECTURE, TIME TBA]**

Guest Lecture: Prof. Costantino Pischedda (University of Miami)

Cederman, Lars-Erik, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min. 2010. "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New data and analysis." *World Politics*, 62(1) 87-119.

Pischedda, Costantino. 2015. “A Provocative Article Says the Islamic State is a Mystery. Here’s why that’s wrong.” *Monkey Cage, Washington Post*. Available at: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/08/27/the-islamic-state-is-no-mystery/?utm\\_term=.25e7fae1890d](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/08/27/the-islamic-state-is-no-mystery/?utm_term=.25e7fae1890d)

## PART III: ETHNIC POLITICS AND DEMOCRACY

### **Session 15: Why Do Ethnic Parties Emerge (and Are They Dangerous for Democracy)? (3/6)**

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.

## IN-CLASS DEBATE: ARE ETHNIC PARTIES GOOD OR BAD FOR DEMOCRACY?

**Session 16: Ethnic Voting: Why Do Voters (Sometimes) Prefer to Vote for a Co-Ethnic Politician? (3/8)**

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

Vaishnav, Milan. Forthcoming. *By Hook or by Crook*, Chapter 5.

**Session 17: Ethnic Riots as an Electoral Strategy (3/20)**

Wilkinson, Steven I. 2002. "Putting Gujarat in perspective." *Economic and Political Weekly*: 1579-1583.

Brass, Paul. 1997. *Theft of an Idol*. Chapter 4.

Watch in Class: *My Name is Ram*

*Recommended:* Beber, Bernd, Philip Roessler, and Alexandra Scacco. 2014. "Intergroup Violence and Political Attitudes: Evidence from a Dividing Sudan." *The Journal of Politics*, 76 (3) 649-665.

**Session 18: Ethnic Populism and Anti-Immigrant Sentiments in Europe? (3/22)**

Mudde, Cas. 2004. "The Populist Zeitgeist." *Government and Opposition*, 39(4) 542-563.

**Session 19: How Does Ethnic Diversity Affect Public Goods Provision? (3/27)**

Alesina, Alberto, and Edward Glaeser. 2004. *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference*. New York: Oxford University Press: Chapter 6.

Tesler, Michael. 2012. "The Spillover of Racialization into Healthcare: How President Obama polarized public opinion by racial attitudes and race." *American Journal of Political Science*, 56(3), 690-704.

**Session 20: Can Policy Reduce Ethnic Favoritism in Public Goods Provision? (3/29)**

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

PART IV: POLICY AND POLITICAL REMEDIES

**Session 21: Managing Ethnic Conflict I: Consociationalism and Its Critics (4/3)**

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

Dekmejian, Richard Hrair. 1978. "Consociational Democracy in Crisis: the case of Lebanon." *Comparative Politics* 10(2): 251-265.

We will develop a consociational design to address Shi'a-Sunni conflict in Iraq in class

### **Session 22: Managing Ethnic Conflict II: Ethno-Federalism (4/5)**

Roeder, Philip G. 2009. "Ethno-Federalism and the Mismanagement of Conflicting Nationalisms." *Regional & Federal Studies* 19(2) 203-219

Ahuja, Amit, and Ashutosh Varshney. 2005. "Antecedent Nationhood, Subsequent Statehood: Explaining the relative success of Indian federalism." *Sustainable Peace: Power and democracy after civil wars*.

Biden, Joe and Leslie H. Gelb. 2006. "Unity Through Autonomy." *New York Times*  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/01/opinion/01biden.html>

*Recommended:*

Brancati, Dawn. 2006. "Decentralization: Fueling the fire or dampening the flames of ethnic conflict and secessionism?." *International Organization*, 60 (3) 651-685.

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

### **Session 23: Addressing Ethnic Inequality in India and the U.S.: The Problem (4/10)**

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. 2017. *Why Representation Matters: The Meaning of Ethnic Quotas in Rural India*. Chapter 2.

### **Session 24: Addressing Ethnic Inequality: Quotas and Descriptive Representation in Elective Office (4/12)**

Chauchard, Simon. 2014. "Can descriptive representation change beliefs about a stigmatized group? Evidence from rural India." *American Political Science Review*, 108 (2) 403-422.

Jensenius, Francesca R. 2017. *Social Justice Through Inclusion: The consequences of electoral quotas in India*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 4.

### **Session 25: Policies of Positive Discrimination: Affirmative Action (4/17)**

Chen, Anthony and Lisa Stulberg. 2013. "Racial Inequality and Race-Conscious Affirmative Action in College Admissions: A Historical Perspective on Contemporary Prospects and Future Possibilities," in Fredrick Harris and Robert Lieberman (eds.), *Beyond Discrimination* (pp. 105-134).

Parikh, Sunita. 2001. "Affirmative Action, Caste and Party Politics in Contemporary India." *Color lines: Affirmative action, immigration, and civil rights options for America*: 297-312.

*Recommended*: Weisskopf, Thomas E. "Consequences of Affirmative Action in US Higher Education: A Review of Recent Empirical Studies." *Economic and Political Weekly* (2001): 4719-4734.

### **Session 26: Addressing Ethnic Inequality: Political Mobilization in the U.S. and India (4/19)**

Browning, Rufus P., Dale Rogers Marshall, and David H. Tabb. 1984. *Protest is Not Enough: The struggle of blacks and Hispanics for equality in urban politics*. University of California Press.

Jeffrey, Craig, Patricia Jeffery, and Roger Jeffery. 2008. "Dalit Revolution? New politicians in Uttar Pradesh, India." *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 67 (4)1365-1396.

### **Session 27: Can Discriminatory Attitudes be Changed? (4/24)**

Sigelman, Lee, and Susan Welch. 1993. "The Contact Hypothesis Revisited: Black-white interaction and positive racial attitudes." *Social Forces*, 71(3) 781-795.

### **Session 28: Upward Mobility Among Marginalized Groups (4/26)**

Readings TBA

### **Session 29: Course Conclusion (5/1)**

## 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); 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.