

IR/PSC 276/276W: The Politics of Insurgency

Prof. Bethany Lacina
Wednesdays, 2-4:40pm
Lattimore Room 431

This seminar deals with the logic of asymmetric conflicts between states and non-state actors. We will examine theories of how non-state actors can win conflicts against governments and what these theories imply about the decision to rebel. The class then turns to insurgents' problems of recruitment, factionalism, and civilian relations.

Instructor

Professor Lacina
Email: blacina@ur.rochester.edu
Office hours by appointment, Harkness 334

Course Requirements

The requirements for the W sections and non-W sections of this course **are the same**. Any student can choose to be in the W section. The course grade is based on:

- Participation, including attendance: 35%
- An oral presentation of out-of-class readings (Sept 23 or Sept 30) and supporting documents: 10%
- Verbal comments on oral presentations (Sept 23 or Sept 30): 5%
- Presentation of final research topic and supporting documents (Oct 21): 20%
- Final presentation and supporting documents (Dec 2 and on): 30%

Grading rubrics for each assignment will be distributed in class.

Course Materials

All other course materials are available through links in the syllabus or on Blackboard.

Academic honesty

Academic honesty: Students and faculty at the University must agree to adhere to high standards of academic honesty in all of the work that we do. As freshmen, students read and sign an academic honesty policy statement to indicate that they understand the general principles upon which our work is based. The College Board on Academic Honesty website gives further information on our policies and procedures: www.rochester.edu/college/honesty.

In this course the following additional requirements are in effect: You are encouraged to discuss course readings and assignments with your fellow students. However, all written work must be done independently and not in collaboration with another. In order to make appropriate help available for your essays, I encourage you to consult with me and with the College Writing Center. The term research paper will require citations and “Works Cited” following an assigned format. Cases of plagiarism will be referred to the Academic Honesty Board.

Attendance

This is a seminar course. Student preparation and participation is vital to the success of the source. Unexcused absences or extreme tardiness will result in no credit for that session’s attendance and participation grade.

If you need to miss a class because of a religious holiday, school function, funeral, or other extraordinary circumstances please email me in advance of class. If you are too ill to attend class, please alert me within 72 hours of the missed class. Students who follow the above procedure to obtain an excused absence may make-up the missed class by scheduling an appointment with me for a one-on-one discussion of the week’s readings.

A student with two excused absences who needs to miss another class should contact me directly to discuss their situation.

Late work

Barring extraordinary circumstances, late work will be marked down a third of a grade (e.g., A to A-) for each 24 hour period after it is due. Thus, if an assignment is turned in any time during the first 24 hours after it is due, it is penalized a third of a grade. Any assignment not turned in within a week of the due date will automatically receive a zero.

When submitting work by email, include the assignment as an attachment AND paste the text of your work into the body of the email. If you do not include the text of the assignment in the body of your email and your attachment is missing, corrupted, or unreadable, your work will be considered late.

Incomplete notations

No incomplete notations are allowed in this class.

Class schedule

Sept 2: No class

Sept 9: Introduction to the course

Sept 16: How do insurgents defeat governments?

Paul, Christopher et al. 2013. *Paths to Victory: Lessons from Modern Insurgencies*. RAND Corporation. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt5hhtb4>

Sept 23: Successful and unsuccessful insurgency: Oral presentations I

Paul, Christopher et al. 2013. *Paths to Victory: Lessons from Modern Insurgencies*. RAND Corporation. Selections assigned in previous class. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt5hhsjk>

Oral presentations due for group 1; discussant comments due for group 2.

Sept 30: Successful and unsuccessful insurgency: Oral presentations II

Paul, Christopher et al. 2013. *Paths to Victory: Lessons from Modern Insurgencies*. RAND Corporation. Selections assigned in previous class. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt5hhsjk>

Oral presentations due for group 2; discussant comments due for group 1.

Oct 7: Recruitment

Weinstein, J. 2007. *Inside Rebellion*. Cambridge University Press. https://rochester.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01ROCH_INST/1hkubbs/alma9934530793405216

Oct 14: Recruitment case study: Sierra Leone

Hoffman, D. (2007) "The Meaning of a Militia: Understanding the Civil Defence Forces of Sierra Leone." *African Affairs*. (25 pages) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4496486>

Humphreys, M. and J. Weinstein. (2004) "What the Fighters Say: A Survey of Ex-Combatants in Sierra Leone, June-August 2003." Columbia University and UNAMSIL. Pp. 2-17. (16 pages) Available on Blackboard.

Richards, P. and J. Vincent. (2008) "Sierra Leone: Marginalization of the RUF." In *From Soldiers to Politicians*, ed. J. de Zeeuw. Lynne Rienner. (20 pages) Available on Blackboard.

Oct 21: Presentation of paper topics

One page draft of paper topic: 5% of final grade.

Oct 28: Internal control

Berman, E. *Radical, Religious, and Violent*. MIT University Press. https://rochester.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01ROCH_INST/15j6ve8/alma9978132141205216

Nov 4: Factionalism

Emily Kalah Gade, Mohammed M. Hafez, and Michael Gabbay. 2019. "Fratricide in rebel movements: A network analysis of Syrian militant infighting." *Journal of Peace Research*. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0022343318806940>

Woldemariam, Michael. 2016. "Battlefield Outcomes and Rebel Cohesion: Lessons From the Eritrean Independence War." *Terrorism and Political Violence*. <http://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2014.886575>

Joo, Minnie M., and Bumba Mukherjee. 2021. "Rebel Command and Control, Time, and Rebel Group Splits." *International Interactions*. <http://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2021.1848823>

Nov 11: Maintaining civilian support

Kalyvas, S. (2006) *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 5. (35 pages) Available on Blackboard.

Metelit, C. 2009. *Inside Insurgency*. New York University Press. Chapters 1-2. (31 pages) https://rochester.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01ROCH_INST/1hkubbs/alma9978313184705216

Wood, E. (2001) "The Emotional Benefits of Insurgency in El Salvador," in Jeff Goodwin et al., eds., *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*. University of Chicago Press. (15 pages) Available on Blackboard.

Nov 18: Case studies on civilian support: Sudan, Colombia, Turkey

Metelit, C. 2009. *Inside Insurgency*. New York University Press. Chapters 3-5. https://rochester.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01ROCH_INST/1hkubbs/alma9978313184705216

Nov 25: No class, Thanksgiving break

Dec 2: Final paper presentations 1

Dec 9: Final paper presentations 2

Date TBD: Final paper presentations 3 during registrar-chosen final exam slot

Final project

The capstone of the course will be a project in which you explain the differences between two or three non-state armed groups in terms of their organization, tactics, recruitment, relationship with civilians, or their political/diplomatic strategies. You will propose an explanation for these differences such as divergence in background conditions, government decisions, leadership decisions, or the international environment. You will prepare both written work and a presentation that documents the differences between the groups that the paper project to explain; propose an explanation for the differences between the groups; present evidence in favor of that explanation; and address competing explanations for the differences between the groups.

Examples of successful topics from previous years are:

- Why did one rebel group in Darfur sign a 2006 peace agreement while another did not?
- Why did the African National Congress in South Africa rely more heavily on attacks on economic targets than the Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland?
- Why has one insurgent organization in eastern DRC targeted UN peacekeepers while another organization in the same conflict has not?
- Why did the Shining Path of Peru conduct most of its recruitment in rural areas while the Tupamaros of Uruguay favored urban recruitment grounds?

You will present your proposed research topic in class on October 21. Final presentations will be December 2 and 9 and during the registrar assigned final exam period. You must attend all presentation days.