

Civil Wars and Counterinsurgency Course Description

POLS 5960-008

Dr. Tyler Pack

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TTh 2:00-3:20pm

Civil wars have overtaken international wars as the most common type of armed conflict in the world in the years following WWII, and particularly after the end of the Cold War. These conflicts have devastating human, environmental, economic, and political consequences for the affected country as well as countries around the world. This course on civil conflict and ethnic violence will focus on the causes and consequences of intrastate violence as well as the ability of political science research methods to identify and explain those causes and consequences.

In this course we will move back and forth between a “birds-eye” view of general theories of the causes, consequences, and possible resolution mechanisms for civil conflict and a closer look at cases of individual conflicts to see how those theories operate on the ground. You will also be introduced to the challenges of studying a phenomenon like civil war and the importance of considering the different actors and stakeholders in questions of conflict resolution. The cases we cover include Syria, Ethiopia, Yemen, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Afghanistan.

Throughout the course you will also gain experience with civil war research methods and data to understand civil war dynamics and explain them to a variety of audiences.