

**Political Science G8427**  
**Comparative Ethnic Politics**  
**(Fall 2012)**

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**When** Wednesday 6:10pm–8:00pm

## **About This Class**

This course introduces students to the study of ethnic politics in political science. It takes students through some of the main theoretical families used to understand the political dynamics of ethnic identification and ethnic competition. The latter half of the course focuses more explicitly on two broad components of the ethnic politics literature: the politics of public goods provisioning, and violence and conflict regulation.

## **About the Readings**

The ethnic politics literature is vast and stretches across multiple social science disciplines. There is no feasible way to cover — or even introduce — everything out there, so students should take the readings listed here as a starting point.

That being said, I have attempted to provide an introductory mix of classics along with some newer contributions to the field. I have also tried to introduce a number of broad issue areas, but make no claims to completeness. My goal is to get you functionally literate in some of the big ideas in the field of ethnic politics.

Books available for purchase at Book Culture are Horowitz (1985), Gellner (1983), Anderson (1991), Hardin (1995), Posner (2005), Habyarimana et al. (2009), and Salibi (1988).

## About Grading

Grading will be based on the following items:

- research paper (40%)
- research paper proposal (10%)
- article critique — theory (10%)
- article critique — empirical (10%)
- class participation (30%)

Students will complete an original research paper that can serve as the basis for a conference paper or publishable article. This paper should be empirical in nature and make an original contribution (even a modest one) to an existing body of research on ethnic politics. In order to give you the opportunity (and time) to devote yourselves to the paper, it will be due after the winter break. **The research paper is due at 9:00am on Tuesday, January 22 — the first day of spring term 2013.** You may turn it in earlier, of course. The papers may be up to 8500 words; you should indicate the word count on the title page. (I did not pick that number arbitrarily — it is the maximum length of a submission the the *AJPS*.)

Students will complete a research paper proposal (for the above-mentioned research paper) of approximately two pages in length. In it, you will briefly describe your research question, working hypotheses, and empirical strategy/sources of data. **The paper proposal is due no later than the week after Thanksgiving — that is, by the November 28 class session.** Early submissions are welcome.

Students will complete two critiques — of approximately two pages each — of articles of their choice from the reading list. In one, you will critique an article's theoretical argument,

irrespective of its empirics. In the other, you will critique an article's empirical methods on the grounds of how appropriate they are to test the theory/hypotheses posited. **Both critiques must be completed before Thanksgiving — that is, by the November 14 class session. You may only hand in one a week, so plan ahead.**

Class participation means exactly that: participation. You must be prepared to discuss the readings at every session. I expect everyone to contribute to the discussion. If you sit silently through class, it will count as if you did not come.

## Class Sessions

### Sept. 05: Introduction / What is ethnicity?

- Topic: Introduction — what we're doing this term. A couple of takes on what it means to talk about ethnicity. Note that, if you're planning on continuing with ethnic politics beyond this course, you'll probably want to read most (if not all) of the Horowitz book. It's a classic in the field and will be cited constantly in what you read.
- Readings:
  - Horowitz (1985, ch. 1, 2)
  - Chandra (2006)

### Sept. 12: Nationalism

- Topic: Introduction to nationalism. Nationalism is its own subfield, but it shares some conceptual links with ethnic politics with which you should be familiar. Again, if you plan to continue with ethnic politics into the future, you should read all of both Anderson and Gellner. They are cited all of the time and you should know about the ideas in them, regardless of whether you agree with what they're arguing.
- Readings:
  - Anderson (1991, ch. 1–6)
  - Gellner (1983, ch. 1–5)
  - Zubaida (2002)

### Sept. 19: History and Historiography

- Topic: History and Historiography. A lot of work on nationalism and ethnic politics makes use of historical events to trace out the origins of such-and-such a community

or the origins of conflict between groups  $X$  and  $Y$ . These readings argue caution about using history uncritically in understanding ethnic politics and building your own arguments. These concerns will be particularly central to you if you anticipate doing a lot of in-depth case work, regardless of whether you choose to use qualitative or quantitative methods.

- Readings:
  - Lustick (1996)
  - Salibi (1988)
  - Makdisi (1996)

## **Sept. 26: *-isms* 1**

- Topic: Introduction to some of the big *-isms*: essentialism, primordialism, instrumentalism, constructivism, and others. People sometimes want to know which *-ism* informs your work. The answer should probably be “all of them.” It’s useful to know what major streams of thought have been used to understand ethnic politics, even though some of them have largely been discredited (e.g., primordialism). We’re reading up on them in the hopes that they inspire you to think interesting thoughts rather than because I want you to pick a team and defend it to the death (please don’t).
- Readings:
  - Varshney (2007)
  - Varshney (2003)
  - Geertz (1963, ch. 10)
  - Hardin (1995, ch. 1–3)
  - Chandra et al. (2001)

## Oct. 03: *-isms* 2

- Topic: More on *-isms*: applying *-isms*. This week's readings develop some of the ideas from last week. You should see various shades of instrumentalism and constructivism in these readings, although with more emphasis on the former than the latter. Note that the Posner book (his first, based on his dissertation) won a disciplinary award for extreme cleverness. Hence, it wouldn't be a bad idea to read the whole thing and see what he did with it.
- Readings:
  - Posner (2005, ch. 1–5)
  - Eifert et al. (2010)
  - Corstange (2012)
  - Abrajano et al. (2001)

## Oct. 10: Psychological Aspects

- Topic: Introduction to the social psychology of ethnic politics. Many scholars study ethnicity by way of psychology. This week provides a basic introduction to some of the main ideas in an enormous literature, along with a couple of applied pieces to provide inspiration. We could devote an entire semester to this stream of the literature, though, so this week's readings barely scratch the surface.
- Readings:
  - Horowitz (1985, ch. 3–5)
  - Huddy (2001)
  - Macrae and Bodenhausen (2000)
  - Kurzban et al. (2001)
  - Kuklinski and Hurley (1994)

## Oct. 17: Distributive Politics

- Topic: Introduction to the connection between distributive politics and ethnic politics. The two early Bates articles are classics, and you should be familiar with the arguments. The Chandra book raises interesting ideas about ethnic politics in patronage democracies. Note that there will be considerable overlap between this week's readings and the next couple of weeks when we discuss the provision of public goods.
- Readings:
  - Chandra (2004, Part I)
  - Bates (1974)
  - Bates (1983b)
  - Bates (1990)
  - Kasara (2007)
  - Eifert et al. (2010) (review)

## Oct. 24: Public Goods 1

- Topic: Ethnicity and the provision of public goods. These articles lean heavily toward the empirical side. The Easterly and Levine piece has been astoundingly fecund, inspiring an untold number of papers on the same general idea. A few of the rejoinders follow, which criticize various components of the original piece. Note that we'll touch on some of the measurement criticisms again at the end of the semester.
- Readings:
  - Easterly and Levine (1997)
  - Alesina et al. (1999)
  - Arcand et al. (2000)
  - Montalvo and Reynal-Querol (2005)

## **Oct. 31: Public Goods 2**

- Topic: Another go at ethnic politics and public goods provision, but this time with field experiments. The previous week's readings were all based on observational, cross-sectional data. This week's book studies some of the same general concepts, but tries to do so at the microlevel by applying experimental control in the field. Note that this book won a disciplinary award for general awesomeness. You may or may not walk away from it convinced, but either way, it may inspire you to build on it.
- Readings:
  - Habyarimana et al. (2009)

## **Nov. 07: Institutions to Regulate Conflict**

- Topic: Formal institutions as a means to regulate conflict. This week provides an introduction to a long-running debate about which institutional configurations are more or less desirable for regulating conflict. At the risk of outlandish oversimplification, the core of the debate has been between proponents of consociationalism (here represented by Lijphart) and scholars favoring institutions that stimulate the formation of multiethnic parties (here represented by Horowitz).
- Readings:
  - Lijphart (1977, ch. 1–3)
  - Horowitz (1992, ch. 5)
  - Lijphart (2001) (review)
  - Brancati (2006)

## **Nov. 14: Violence and Conflict Management**

- Topic: conflict management outside formal institutions.
- Readings:

- Bates (1983a, ch. 1)
- Hardin (1995, ch. 6)
- Fearon and Laitin (1996)
- Varshney (2001)

## **Nov. 21: (no class)**

- Topic: (no class — enjoy Thanksgiving)
- Readings:
  - None

## **Nov. 28: Civil War**

- Topic: ethnicity and civil war. Most of these readings are heavily empirical in nature. The civil war literature is vast, so this week can only hope to introduce some of the debates about the connection between ethnicity and internal war.
- Readings:
  - Fearon (1998)
  - Collier and Hoeffler (1998)
  - Fearon and Laitin (2003)
  - Sambanis (2001)
  - Wucherpfennig et al. (2012)
  - Cunningham et al. (2012)

## **Dec. 05: Measurement Issues**

- Topic: some measurement issues in macrolevel research. Although we often study “ethnic politics” at the level of the state, it is often unclear what, exactly, we mean by

that phrase. Here, we revisit some of the issues of operationalization and measurement, particularly with respect to reducing a multidimensional concept like ethnicity down to single-dimension scales.

- Readings:
  - Laitin and Posner (2001) (review)
  - Posner (2004)
  - Baldwin and Huber (2010)
  - Fearon et al. (2007)
  - Cederman et al. (2010)
  - Wucherpfennig et al. (2011)

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