COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course will examine political violence and revolution through a comparative perspective. We will study the causes and consequences of civil wars and military coups, and how the occurrence of violence often interacts with variables such as ethnicity or poverty. We will also engage with theories of revolution and study historical cases of uprisings as well as more recent revolutions. In addition, we will examine how political violence affects the state: can wars facilitate the creation of local or national institutions? Our theoretical discussions will be rooted in studies of specific events, such as the Arab Spring, Chinese revolution, and military coups in Sub-Saharan Africa.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
1. Attendance and Participation – 20%
   Attendance and participation are especially important in seminars, and we will take advantage of the small class size to have many student led discussions of the material. Attendance for this class is mandatory. Students are expected to have completed all the assigned readings before class and be prepared to engage in critical discussions of the works.

2. Discussion Questions and Papers – 30%
   Discussion Questions (15%): Each student should email me 2 discussion questions every week by 2 PM on Tuesday before each class.

   Discussion Papers (15%): Each student is required to write 2 discussion papers throughout the semester. Discussion papers should be posted online at the portal by 2 PM on Tuesday before the class. Students can pick any 2 weeks between August 31 and November 30 that they would like to present. Other seminar participants should read the discussion papers before class and be prepared to discuss them.

Discussion papers should be 2 pages in length and focus on any 2 articles (or book chapters) assigned for that week. The discussion papers should consider the following questions: What is the puzzle the author is trying to explain? What is the argument? What kinds of evidence does the author provide that supports his thesis? Are there any remaining questions that should be discussed? How can we think about the two articles in relation to each other?
Students who wrote discussion papers will be the point person for the seminar that week. We will open the discussion with brief presentations where the student will provide key ideas, themes, and questions that we can discuss.

3. Research Paper – 50%
   Proposal (5%) – due October 12
   Draft Literature Review and Working Theory (10%) – due November 16
   Peer Review (5%) – due November 23
   Final Paper (30%) – due December 9

The field of authoritarian politics is an active research topic with a number of open questions remaining. The main assignment of this class is to produce a research paper that addresses a question you find interesting and propose a way to test your argument. Your research paper should include all the components of an article published in a political science journal, minus the section presenting empirical results.

Your paper should include the following sections: (1) An introduction that identifies the research question and explains why this question is important. (2) A literature review that summarizes existing research on this topic and a discussion of how your paper relates to these existing studies. (3) Your own theoretical argument and discussion of key factors that you think explain the outcome that you are looking at. (4) Proposed test of your theoretical argument. Your proposed empirical test can be either qualitative or quantitative. For a qualitative proposal, propose case studies you would examine. For a quantitative proposal, identify existing data that you could use to test your hypothesis.

We will write the paper in three main stages. First, a one-page proposal that describes your research question will be due on October 12. Second, a draft of the research question, literature review, and working theory (approximately 5-6 pages) will be due on November 16. Each student will exchange their draft with an assigned partner and provide feedback on their partner’s draft. The feedback should be at least 1 page in length and will be due on November 23. The final research paper should be 20 pages doubled-spaced and will be due on Friday, December 9.

I highly encourage students to come talk to me during office hours about the research paper throughout the semester, and especially during the proposal stage! I can give you early feedback about the feasibility of the topic and we can discuss possible arguments and strategies for testing the argument.

COURSE POLICIES
Late assignments
I do not accept late assignments, so please plan ahead and complete all assignments on time. If you really are facing an extenuating circumstance (such as documented medical issue), please come talk to me.

Re-grade policy
If a grade dispute arises, please provide a one-page memo explaining why you believe the grade you received is incorrect. A copy of the graded assignment should be included along with the memo. Re-grade requests must be submitted within a week from the time the grade was first received. Note that re-grade requests may result in a higher or lower grade, so utilize this option carefully.

Classroom etiquette
All cell phones, laptops, tablets, and related devices must be turned off and stowed away during class.

Academic Honor Code
All students are expected to submit work that is a reflection of their own ideas and to properly cite published sources when referencing the ideas of others. If you have any questions about proper citation practices or what constitutes plagiarism, please come talk to me. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course.

Schedule
We will read all or large sections of the following books. They are all available (new and used) on Amazon and at the campus bookstore.


The rest of the readings can be accessed on Collab. The PDFs of each reading is listed by the author’s last name and year.

Week 1 (8/24): Introduction

Week 2 (8/31): Why does conflict occur? An overview


Week 3 (9/7): Ethnicity and Violence


**Week 4 (9/14): Poverty and Violence**


**Week 5 (9/21): How rebel-group structure affects violence**


**Week 6 (9/28): Why are some rebel organizations more durable?**


**Week 7 (10/5): Post-conflict governance**


John Ishiyama and Anna Batta. 2011. “Swords Into Plowshares: The Organizational Transformation of Rebel Groups Into Political Parties.” *Communist and Post Communist*


**Week 8 (10/12): **Class Cancelled**
[Research Proposal due]

**Week 9 (10/19): The Coup d’etat**


**Week 10 (10/26): Causes and Consequences of Coups**


**Week 11 (11/2): Theories of Revolution**
Theda Skocpol. 1976. “France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 18(2)


**Week 12 (11/9): Revolutions and State Building**


Week 13 (11/16): The Middle East and Arab Spring
[Draft Literature Review and Working Theory due]


Week 14 (11/23): Thanksgiving break – No class
[Peer Review comments due]

Week 15 (11/30): Case Study: The Chinese Revolution

*December 9: Final Research Papers Due*