

**MC 202-003**  
**Introduction to the Study of Public Affairs II**  
**James Madison College**  
**Spring 2020**  
**Professor Lora DiBlasi**

**Course Information**

Class time: Monday & Wednesday 12:40-2:30 pm  
Class location: 336 Case Hall

**Contact Information**

Email: [diblasil@msu.edu](mailto:diblasil@msu.edu)  
Office: 370 North Case Hall  
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 2:30-4 pm or by appointment

**Course Overview**

This course aims to introduce students to the study of political violence and human rights. We will begin the course by introducing the core concepts in political violence with a focus on the impact for human rights. We will then examine various topics types of political violence, including protest, dissent, civil war, and terrorism. The next part of the course provides a brief overview of how the international community responds to concerns of human rights abuses and the institutions in place to address these concerns. In addition, we will analyze the current state of human rights practices around the world and compliance with international norms and laws. We will also explore how pro-government militias are used around the world by leaders and their effect on human rights. Following this, we will survey other topics related to political violence, such as how gender and influence the onset and outcomes of political violence as well as the influence of changes in our environment on the likelihood of conflict. Next, we will study humanitarian intervention and its relationship with genocide. The Rwandan genocide is the main case study for this portion of the course. Next, we will discuss how we measure and monitor human rights practices around the world. Lastly, we will conclude the course with a discussion of future issues in political violence and human rights and trends in today's world.

This course is designed to familiarize students with the social scientific approach to understanding political violence. By the end of this course, students will be able to engage with empirical research and debates in the literature on topics of political violence and human rights. In addition, this course aims to critically engage students in discussions about debates about current events and politics. Lastly, students will be able to carry-out empirical research, write research papers, and present their work on issues of political violence.

Overall, the assignments and evaluations in this course serve to ensure students are critically engaged with the course material and able to meet all the learning objectives. Together, the class discussions and lectures should reinforce the reading material and help students comprehend the main contributions from each assigned reading. This course requires students to complete a research paper along with a final presentation of their findings. The course will help students develop each portion of this paper and introduce them to the research process. Students will also share their drafts in small groups to provide peer commentary on early drafts of their arguments. Lastly, students are expected to continually engage in class discussions and small group work to further enhance their learning experience.

## Course Materials

Students are required to attend all classes, complete all assigned readings before coming to class, and complete all examinations and course assignments to pass the course.

Please purchase the following book for this class. Either digital or physical copy is fine. Also, please be sure to purchase the correct edition of the book. Previous editions will have different content and page numbers.

- Goodhart, Michael (Editor). 2016. *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*. **Third Edition**. Oxford University Press.

We will also use the **Fourth Edition** of “[The Craft of Research](#)” by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William T. Fitzgerald. This book is available for free through the MSU library as an online resource. I will refer to this book as “Booth et al.” on the daily reading schedule with a hyperlink to access the text through the MSU library.

Most other course material can be found through the MSU library with the provided hyperlink.

Items that are marked with a \* will be uploaded on Desire2Learn (D2L) under the appropriate heading. Please ensure you have access to D2L at the beginning of the semester. If you do not have access, please email the instructor within the first week of the course.

You should also consider reading periodicals with good international coverage. *The New York Times* is typically the most complete, while the *Washington Post* and the *Economist* also provide strong coverage. *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *Survival*, and *International Security* are also recommended journals with more sustained coverage of many of the topics we are studying. Knowledge of current events is expected. I can also point you to a variety of blogs that I think might be helpful to you.

## Evaluations

Course grades are based on several components of a research paper, peer review, a final presentation, and class participation.

Due dates are below:

**January 22 (Research Question/Topic Due)**

**February 5 (Annotated Bibliography & Revised Research Question Due)**

**February 19 (Outline/Proposal Due)**

**March 11 (Argument and Hypothesis Due)**

**March 23 (Draft of Full Research Paper Due – not graded)**

**March 25 (Peer Review Commentary Due)**

**April 13-22 (Final Presentation)**

**April 27 (Final Research Paper Due)**

Research Question/Topic (5% of final grade)

You will need to submit a short memo with a research question and explanation of your research topic for your final paper. Guidelines will be discussed in class and posted on D2L.

**Due Date: Wednesday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> by the start of class (upload to drop box on D2L)**

Annotated Bibliography and Revised Research Question (10% of final grade)

Each student is expected to write an annotated bibliography for their research paper. In addition, students are expected to also revise their research question given the feedback from the instructor and their own research. Guidelines will be discussed in class and posted on D2L.

**Due Date: Wednesday, February 5<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 pm (upload to drop box on D2L)**

Outline/Proposal (10% of final grade)

Students will be required to submit an outline or brief proposal of their final research paper. This assignment aims to help students organize their thoughts and structure of their final paper before they begin writing. Guidelines will be discussed in class and posted on D2L.

**Due Date: Wednesday, February 19<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 pm (upload to drop box on D2L)**

Argument and Hypothesis (15% of final grade)

Each student is required to submit their main argument and hypothesis for their research paper. Guidelines will be discussed in class and posted on D2L.

**Due Date: Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 pm (upload to drop box on D2L)**

Peer Review Commentary (5% of final grade)

Students will be assigned to Peer Review Groups throughout the semester to provide feedback and commentary on components of the final research paper. The purpose of these groups is to share ideas and respectfully engage with drafts from your peers. Each student will be expected to read and review drafts assignments for all other members of their group. You are expected to address all prompts on the guidelines and respectfully engage with the drafts.

There will be an in-class writing workshop on **Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>** to provide time for students to work on their peer review commentary.

Please note, only your commentary on other students' drafts will be graded for this assignment.

Guidelines will be discussed in class and posted on D2L.

**Due Date: Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> (Uploaded to D2L by the start of class and shared during class period with Peer Review Group)**

Research Paper Presentation (10% of final grade)

Each student will be required to present the main components and significance of their final research paper during the last two weeks of class. Presentations should be about 10 minutes long and use Power Point (or similar software) presentation slides. Each presentation will be followed by a short question and answer session. Guidelines will be discussed in class and posted on D2L.

**Presentations will be during the last two weeks of class (April 13<sup>th</sup>-April 22<sup>nd</sup>)**

Final Research Paper (25% of final grade)

You will need to write one research paper on a topic of human rights or political violence. The paper should be about 10-12 pages long (double-spaced). Guidelines will be discussed in class and posted on D2L.

**Students will need to submit a draft of their research paper to be circulated for peer review by Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> by 9 am.** This draft is not graded and will only be used for peer review on March 25<sup>th</sup>. You should use the feedback from the peer review to revise your paper for the graded submission.

Please upload your final research paper in the drop box titled “Final Research Paper” on D2L by the due date.

**Due Date: Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup> at 2:45 pm (upload to drop box on D2L)**

#### Attendance and Participation (20% of final grade)

The final component of your grade is determined by your attendance and participation in class. Students are expected to attend all classes and actively participate in discussion. Attendance will be tracked by a sign-in sheet that will be distributed in class. If a student knows they will miss class for a university recognized event (student-athletics, university sponsored club or organization event, religious observance, etc.), they are expected to follow university policies by informing me at the start of the semester and sending a reminder one week before the event takes place.

Note: Excessive absences or failures to post will adversely impact your class grade.

#### **Grading Policies**

All assignments, participation, and exams will be graded according to the following criteria:

4.0: Exceptional work. Offers exceptional insights during class discussions; outstanding, original written work displays complex understanding of the assigned readings and develops a sophisticated argument.

3.5: Excellent work. Makes consistent contributions to large class discussions which demonstrate full and careful reading of assigned materials; consistently on task during small-group discussions; written work is original, clearly written, and carefully argued.

3.0: Good work. Makes consistent contributions to large class discussions; however, these contributions are not always consistent in terms of quality or quantity; written work makes a persuasive argument that is clearly written and reasoned.

2.0: Sufficient work. Meets minimum requirements. Occasionally contributes to class discussion; written work reveals knowledge of course themes and familiarity with the assigned materials; however, it is not always clearly written and does not develop a consistent argument.

1.0: Below average work; does not meet minimum requirements.

#### Break Down of Grade:

Research Topic/Question: 5%

Annotated Bibliography and Revised Research Question: 10%

Outline/Proposal: 10%

Argument and Hypothesis: 15%

Peer Review Commentary: 5%

Research Paper Presentation: 10%

Final Paper: 25%

Participation: 20%

## Grading Scale

4.0 = 92% and above

3.5 = 91% to 86%

3.0 = 85% to 80%

2.5 = 79% to 75%

2.0 = 74% to 70%

1.5 = 69% to 64%

1.0 = 63% to 58%

0.0 = below 58%

Any challenges to grades must be submitted in writing no sooner than one week after I have returned graded the assignment.

## **Course Policies**

### Communication

Email is the best way to contact me outside of class. My email address is **diblasil@msu.edu**. Please do not email me through D2L. If you email me, include “MC 202-003” in the subject line to make sure the email does not get missed.

### Technology in the Classroom

Laptops and tablets are allowed for note-taking purposes only. Any use of technology for other purposes (email, Facebook, Youtube, etc.) is not allowed. Do not record lectures unless given explicit permission. I reserve the right to ban laptops and tablets from class should they be abused.

Lecture slides from each class will be posted on D2L in PDF format after class. Please note that slides will not be available before class.

### Missed Exams or Assignments

You are responsible for ensuring that all exams and assignments are completed as scheduled on the due dates listed in the syllabus. Papers that are late will be penalized by 15 points per day. Papers that are more than one week late will receive a 0. Makeup exams are administered only in the case of a university excused absence or medical emergency (ie. hospitalization). In the case of university excused absence, students are required to notify the instructor at least two weeks before the assignment or exam is to take place and provide relevant documentation associated with the absence. In the case of medical emergency, a doctor’s note is required. Students must contact the professor and provide the doctor’s note **BEFORE** the time of the exam/assignment, and the work (exam or paper) **MUST** be submitted within one week of the original deadline unless further doctor’s notes are submitted. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure the make-up exam is scheduled within this timeframe.

Grief Absence Policy: <http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/regulations/selected/grief-absence-policy>

### Classroom Etiquette

Please be respectful both to your classmates and me. I request that you avoid the following behavior while in class:

- Use of Mobile Devices (talking, texting, web-surfing, or email use)
- Facebook or other social media websites

- Excessive Tardiness
- Sleeping in class
- Excessive Disruption (talking/arguing with classmates, reading newspapers, leaving class, etc.)

Note: Engagement in these activities during class will adversely impact your attendance/participation grade.

### Accommodations for Students

Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at [rcpd.msu.edu](http://rcpd.msu.edu). Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a verified individual services accommodation (“VISA”) form. Please present this form to me at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc).

### Academic Honesty

Article 2.III.B.2 of the SRR states: “The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards.” In addition, the Department of Political Science adheres to the policies on academic honesty specified in General Student Regulation 1.0, *Protection of Scholarship and Grades*; the all-University Policy on *Integrity of Scholarship and Grades*; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations.

Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the [www.allmsu.com](http://www.allmsu.com) Web site to complete any course work in this course. Students who violate MSU regulations on Protection of Scholarship and Grades will receive a failing grade in the course or on the assignment.

Faculty are required to report all instances in which a penalty grade is given for academic dishonesty. Students reported for academic dishonesty are required to take an online course about the integrity of scholarship and grades. A hold will be placed on the student's account until such time as the student completes the course. This course is overseen by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education.

### Spartan Code of Honor: Academic Pledge

The Spartan Code of Honor was adopted by ASMSU on March 3, 2016, endorsed by Academic Governance on March 22, 2016, and recognized by the Provost, President, and Board of Trustees on April 15, 2016.

The Spartan Code of Honor Academic Pledge:

“As a Spartan, I will strive to uphold values of the highest ethical standard. I will practice honesty in my work, foster honesty in my peers, and take pride in knowing that honor in ownership is worth more than grades. I will carry these values beyond my time as a student at Michigan State University, continuing the endeavor to build personal integrity in all that I do.”

<https://msu.edu/unit/ombud/academic-integrity/Spartan%20Code%20of%20Honor%20Academic%20Pledge.html>

### Anti-Discrimination Policy

All members of James Madison College and Michigan State University are subject to the University's Anti-Discrimination Policy, which prohibits discrimination or harassment of any kind on the basis of someone's age, color, gender, gender identity, marital status, disability status, height, national origin, political persuasion, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, weight or any other characteristic. Discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated in this class. Any and all acts of discrimination by a member of this classroom community will: A) be immediately reported to the appropriate University officials; and, B) result in a participation grade reduction. To access the full MSU Anti-Discrimination Policy, please click this [link](#).

**Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct:** All members of James Madison College and Michigan State University are subject to the University Policy on Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct (RVSM). To access the full University Policy on RVSM, please click this [link](#) or see the PDF document posted on our course D2L site. To access the Student Quick Guide to RVSM, please click this [link](#). Both documents contain information about support resources and procedures for reporting relationship violence or sexual misconduct.

**JMC Writing Consultancy:** All students are encouraged to seek additional writing help from the [James Madison Writing Consultancy](#) in 230 S. Case Hall or the [MSU Writing Center](#) in 300 Bessey Hall and the Main Library. Consultants work with students on any stage of the writing process: planning, drafting, revising, and editing.

**IMPORTANT:** As your professor, I am your ally and my door is always open to you if you are in need. Please note, however, that I am a mandatory reporter. That means that if you reveal to me that you have experienced relationship violence or have been the target of sexual misconduct, I am required by law to report your case to the appropriate University officials.

**Please Note:** I reserve the right to modify this syllabus at any point in the course to suit the needs of the class. All changes will be announced in class, sent to students via email, and a revised syllabus will be posted to D2L as soon as possible.

Commercialization of lecture notes and university-provided course materials is not permitted in this course.

## Course Schedule

### **January 6: Introduction**

- No Reading

### **January 8: Introduction to Human Rights and Political Violence**

- Chapter 1
- Fein, Helen. *Human Rights and Wrongs: Slavery, Terror, Genocide*. Chapter 1\*
- [Booth et al.](#), Chapter 1

### **January 13: Why Violence?**

- Tilly, Charles. 1978. "Collective Violence." In *From Mobilization to Revolution*. New York: McGraw Hill. 172-188 (Ch. 6)\* 
- Powner, Leanne C. *Empirical Research and Writing: A Political Science Student's Practical Guide*. Chapter 1\*

### **January 15: Participation in Violence**

- Tarrow, Sidney. 1998. "Political Opportunities and Constraints" In *Power in Movement*. 2nd ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 71-90 (Ch. 5)\* 
- Zeitzoff, Thomas. 2015. "[Calculated or Emotional? How Insurgents Are Both Rational and Ideological](#)" *Political Violence at a Glance*
- [Booth et al.](#), Chapter 3-4

### **January 20: No Class**

- No Reading

### **January 22: Political Dissent and Protest**

\*\*Topic and Research Question due by start of class\*\* 

- Chapter 14
- Claire Harbage and Hannah Bloch. 2019. "[The 2010s: A Decade Of Protests Around The World](#)" *The Picture Show – NPR*. Dec. 31, 2019.

### **January 27: Library Workshop - \*\*Meet in Beaumont Instruction Room (2 West)\*\***

- [Booth et al.](#), Chapters 5-6

### **January 29: Civil War**

- Gary J. Bass. 2006. "[What Really Causes Civil War?](#)" *The New York Times Magazine* 
- Barbara F. Walter. "[Bargaining Failures and Civil War](#)" *Annual Review of Political Science* 12: 243-261.

### **February 3: Terrorism I**

- Martha Crenshaw, "The Strategic Logic of Terrorism" \* 
- Osama bin Laden, "Speech to the American People" \*

## February 5: Terrorism II

\*\*Annotated Bibliography and Revised Research Question due by 11:59 pm\*\*



- Stephen Walt (2015) "[The Soft Logic of Soft Targets](#)", *Foreign Policy*
- Thomas, Jakana. 2014. "[Actually, sometimes terrorism does work.](#)" *Monkey Cage at The Washington Post*. April 24

## February 10: International Law

- Chapter 4

## February 12: International Institutions

- Robert Keohane (1998) "[International Institutions: Can Interdependence Work?](#)" *Foreign Policy* 110: 82-96
- Erik Voeten, "[International Law and Institutions Look Pretty Weak Now, but They Will Matter a lot Down the Road](#)", *Monkey Cage*



## February 17: Human Rights Compliance

- Hafner-Burton, Emilie M. "[Sticks and Stones: Naming and Shaming the Human Rights Enforcement Problem.](#)" *International Organization* 62:4 (2008)
- Powner, Chapter 3\*



## February 19: Library Workshop - \*\*Meet in Red Cedar Instruction Room (2 West)\*\*

\*\*Proposal/Outline due by 11:59 pm\*\*

- No Reading

## February 24: Militias

- Carey, Sabine C., Neil J. Mitchell, and Will Lowe. 2012. "[States, the security sector, and the monopoly of violence: A new database on pro-government militias.](#)" *Journal of Peace Research* 50:2
- [Booth et al.](#), Chapters 7-8
- Powner, Chapter 2\*

## February 26: In-Class Movie Day

- No Reading

## March 2: No Class – Spring Break

## March 4: No Class – Spring Break

## March 9: Climate Change and Conflict



- Idean Salehyan and Cullen Hendrix (2014) "[Climate Shocks and Political Violence](#)" *Global Environmental Change* 28: 239-250
- Chapter 23
- [Booth et al.](#), Chapters 12-13

**March 11: Gender and Political Violence**

\*\*Argument and Hypothesis due by 11:59 pm\*\*

- Chapter 11
- Thomas, Jakana L. and Kanisha D. Bond. 2015. "[Women's Participation in Violent Political Organizations](#)." *American Political Science Review* 109:3
- [Booth et al.](#), Chapters 9-10

**March 16: Human Trafficking and Forced Migration**

- Fein, Chapter 3\*
- Chapter 16

**March 18: Humanitarian Intervention**

- Chapter 21
- Benjamin Valentino (2011) "[The True Costs of Humanitarian Intervention](#)", *Foreign Affairs*

**March 23: Writing Workshop Day (Peer Review Commentary)**

\*\*Draft of full research paper due by 9 am\*\* (Not graded – for peer review only)

- No Reading

**March 25: Peer Review Day**

\*\*Peer Review Commentary due by start of class\*\*

- No Reading

**March 30: Genocide**

- Chapter 20
- Fein, Chapters 5-6\*

**April 1: Genocide Case Study: Rwanda**

- Philip Gourevitch, "We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda" \*
- Alan J. Kuperman (2000) "[Rwanda in Retrospect](#)", *Foreign Affairs*

**April 6: Monitoring and Measuring Human Rights**

- Chapter 8

**April 8: Conclusion and the Future of Political Violence and Human Rights**

- Fein, Chapters 8-9\*

**April 13: Final Presentations**

- No Reading

**April 15: Final Presentations**

- No Reading

**April 20: Final Presentations**

- No Reading

**April 22: Final Presentations**

- No Reading

**April 27: Final Research Paper due by 2:45 pm in D2L drop box**