

Researching Ethnic Politics

PLSC 675/INRL 535/INTS 383/PLSC 391

Spring 2007

Schedule: Tuesdays 1:30-3:20

WLH 115

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Course website: on classes*v2 server

What are the sources of ethnic identity, and what are the political and economic consequences of sectarian divisions? How do political institutions shape, constrain or foment ethnic conflict? What is the relationship between cultural cleavages, democracy, and economic development? These questions suggest some of the major substantive themes that we will consider in this seminar. Our focus will be comparative, and we will explore answers to these questions by reading analyses drawn from many parts of the world, particularly Africa, India, and Latin America.

In addition, however, the goal of this course is to explore specific challenges that may arise when conducting one's own research on ethnic politics. How can ethnicity usefully be conceptualized and measured? What are some of the pitfalls involved in developing and testing causal theories about the causes and consequences of sectarian divisions? What are leading examples of research strategies that try to overcome some of these pitfalls? What is the role and utility of different sorts of research strategies, from controlled experiments to ethnographic fieldwork? Thus, while we will be engaged with fundamental, substantive questions and topics, we will also be especially concerned with discussing and learning together how to do research on ethnic politics.

The major requirement for the course, in addition to informed participation in seminar discussions and in-class presentations, is to develop a research paper (described below).

The course is cross-listed as an undergraduate and graduate course. In one sense, it will be a single course, in that we will be equal participants in class discussions and presentations. In another sense, it will be two courses, in that requirements and expectations for undergraduate and graduate students will differ somewhat (see below).

Preference for enrollment may be given to undergraduates in international studies or political science, M.A. students in international studies, and graduate students in political science, but graduate students from other disciplines or from the law school are welcome as well. Substantively, the seminar is related to a lecture course offered in the fall, INTS 382/PLSC 393, but the fall lecture course is not a prerequisite for this seminar – though undergraduates may find it helpful to have taken the lecture first. Among

undergraduates, admission priority may be given to those who have taken the course. There is some overlap in the readings across the two courses.

Readings

There is a course packet available at RIS. In addition, the following books, which are on order at the Yale bookstore, should be purchased:

Posner, Daniel. 2005. *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wilkinson, Steven I. 2004. *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yashar, Deborah. 2005. *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Requirements:

(1) Students will write a substantial (20-25 page) research paper.

For undergraduates, the paper can be primarily focused on identifying a research question, discussing the strengths and weakness of existing literature relating to this question, and proposing a way to study the question further. Alternatively, you may pick 1-3 countries and write a (comparative) analysis, using some of the analytic tools and approaches we have discussed in the seminar and drawing on the secondary literature on these countries to analyze the phenomenon in which you are interested. Papers can be focused on causal theories of ethnic politics (applying and testing them in different cases) or may focus on the conceptualization and measurement of ethnicity in a particular region or country. I will provide further guidance on the paper in some of our early meetings.

Graduate students should view this as an opportunity to begin to develop publishable work. I will meet individually with graduate students in the first weeks of the semester to discuss their interests and how the course may help them meet their goals.

Writing the paper will proceed in four stages:

- First, you will lead a brief (5-10 minute) discussion of your initial research ideas in one of our early meetings. The idea here is simply to brainstorm with the class about your project; you do not need to have more than an idea of the topic on which you might work. If you wish, you may also come see me first to discuss your ideas. We will do this on February 6, February 13, and February 20.
- Second, you should draw up a 2-page research proposal, laying out the question you want to investigate and how you plan to investigate it (due February 27).

- Third, you should turn in a rough draft of your paper (due March 27).
- Finally, you should turn in a final draft of your paper (due April 30).

(2) There will be a brief (1-2 page) written assignment in addition to the research paper. This will be turned in on April 10, when we have finished the section on testing theories of ethnic politics. You will be asked to imagine how you might use the different approaches we have discussed – natural experiments, experiments, field research/ethnography, and formal models – to investigate the research topic on which you are writing. (You are not expected actually to use any of these methods yourself but rather are simply meant to imagine and describe how you **might** do so, given unlimited time and resources). This assignment may contribute to the research paper itself, however, in that you may discover issues and points that it would be useful to include in your paper.

(3) At the end of the seminar, you will also prepare a short presentation on the results of your research to the class.

Grade breakdown:

- Research paper (65%). This includes completion of the initial presentation of ideas, the short proposal, and the rough draft (see above).
- Short written assignment on using different methods/approaches (10%)
- Seminar participation, including presentations of student projects (25%)

SCHEDULE AND OUTLINE

January 16: INTRODUCTION

PART I. CONCEPTUALIZING AND MEASURING ETHNIC IDENTITY

January 23: CONCEPTUALIZING ETHNICITY

- Horowitz, Donald L. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Read pp. 51-92. In course packet.
- Yashar, Deborah. *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America: The Rise of Indigenous Movements and the Postliberal Challenge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Chapter One.
- Chandra, Kanchan. 2006. "What is Ethnic Identity and Does it Matter?" Forthcoming in the *Annual Review of Political Science*. Read pp. 1-29.
- Fearon, James, and David Laitin. 2000. "Ordinary Language and External Validity: Specifying Concepts in the Study of Ethnicity." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 2000.

January 30: MEASURING ETHNICITY

- Posner, Daniel. 2004. "Measuring Ethnic Fractionalization in Africa." *American Journal of Political Science* 48 (4): 849-863.
- Chandra, Kanchan. Forthcoming, "A Constructivist Dataset on Ethnicity and Institutions (CDEI). In Rawi Abdelal, Yoshiko Herrera, Ian Johnston and Rose McDermott, eds., *Identity as a Variable*.
- Laitin, David and Daniel Posner. 2000. "Constructing Ethnic Fractionalization Indices." Memo presented to the first meeting of the Laboratory in Comparative Ethnic Processes (LiCEP), April 20.
- Posner, Daniel. 2000. "Measuring Ethnic Identities and Attitudes Regarding Inter-Group Relations: Methodological Pitfalls and a New Technique." Memo presented to the second meeting of the Laboratory in Comparative Ethnic Processes (LiCEP), October 21.

PART II. THEORIES OF ETHNIC POLITICS

February 6: WHICH CULTURAL CLEAVAGES ARE SALIENT?

- Posner, Daniel. 2005. *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Entire.

February 13: ELECTORAL COMPETITION AND ETHNIC VIOLENCE

- Wilkinson, Steven I. 2004. *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Entire; read Chapters 1-2 and 5-6 first, then 3-4 and 7.

February 20: ETHNIC PARTIES AND ETHNIC MOVEMENTS

- Yashar, Deborah. 2005. *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters Two-Seven.
- Chandra, Kanchan. 2005. "Ethnic Parties and Democratic Stability." *Perspectives on Politics* 3 (2): 235-252.

PART III. APPROACHES TO TESTING THEORIES OF ETHNIC POLITICS

February 27: EXPERIMENTS

- Habyarimana, James, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel Posner, Jeremy Weinstein. "The Co-Ethnic Advantage: Diversity and the Impediments to Collective Action." Book manuscript. To be distributed in class.

March 6: NATURAL EXPERIMENTS

- Posner, Daniel N. 2004. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review* 98 (4): 529-545. In course packet.
- Miguel, Edward. 2004. "Tribe or Nation: Nation Building and Public Goods in Kenya versus Tanzania." *World Politics* Vol. 56 (3): 327-362. In course packet.
- Dunning, Thad. "Improving Causal Inference: Strengths and Limitations of Natural Experiments." Manuscript, Department of Political Science, Yale University. In course packet.

March 13: Spring recess, no class

March 20: Spring recess, no class

March 27: FIELDWORD/ETHNOGRAPHY

- Laitin, David. 1986. *Hegemony and Culture: Politics and Religious Change Among the Yoruba*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Appendix (in course packet).
- Additional reading TBA

April 3: FORMAL MODELS

- Fearon, James D. and David D. Laitin. 1996. "Explaining Interethnic Cooperation." *American Political Science Review* 90 (4): 715-735.
- Additional reading TBA

April 10: Catch-up (date may need to be rescheduled)

April 17: Student Presentations of Research Papers

April 24: Student Presentations of Research Papers