



POL 371-A: “Between the Ballot and the Bullet” Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Ukraine and Beyond Spring 2015

Instructor:

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Course number: 50863

Time: MW 1:40-3:20

Room: 201 Gray Pavilion

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Office Hours (please sign up here):

MW 12:00-1:30

Course Overview

This course provides an introduction to the study of nationalism and ethnic conflict. Using the recent outburst of ethnic violence in Ukraine as a guiding case, the course examines key questions on nationalism and ethnic conflict: What is the source of the nationalist idea and why does its appeal remain so strong? What is the effect of ethnic identities on political outcomes such as revolutions or state breakdown? Why is ethnicity such a powerful source of conflict? Why are relations between ethnic groups peaceful at some times, while at other times they escalate to outright warfare or ethnic cleansing? What can be done to prevent interethnic violence? By the end of the course, students will acquire the knowledge and tools to critically evaluate dominant theories of nationalism and ethnic strife. In addition to Ukraine, students will be exposed to recent ethnic conflicts in the Balkans and the Caucasus.

Requirements

Required Readings

The following textbooks are required and may be purchased at the Elon University bookstore (Belk library also has copies on reserve):

Horowitz, Donald L. 2000. **Ethnic Groups in Conflict**. Second Edition. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kaufman, Stuart J. 2001. **Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War**. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Petersen, Roger D. 2002. **Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth Century Eastern Europe**. New York: Cambridge University Press.

de Waal, Thomas. 2010. **The Caucasus: An Introduction**. New York: Oxford University Press.

In addition to the textbooks, we will read several articles and book chapters which are posted on Moodle in pdf format. If you are unable to access them, please contact me as soon as possible at aflorea@elon.edu.

Familiarity with current events will greatly facilitate class interaction. Hence, I strongly advise that you follow current events by frequently accessing the online editions of the New York Times, BBC, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, France24, Washington Post, Christian Science Monitor, Economist, Time, The Atlantic. You may also be interested in the discussions on the following political science blogs: The Monkey Cage, Political Violence @ a Glance, Critical Geopolitics, In Moscow's Shadows.

In this class, we will emphasize concepts and theory along with historical description of events. Please note that this course requires serious engagement on your part. The readings are mainly drawn from the academic literature. The advantage of this approach is that you will be exposed to the most relevant scholarly debates about ethnic conflict and you will be able to cultivate valuable analytical skills that will serve you beyond this class and beyond college. The other side of the coin is that the readings demand substantial time commitment.

In this course, you will learn to become an active and critical reader. You will improve your comprehension of the readings only if you *take notes* on what you read and *write down questions* about the readings. When you go over the readings, try to think of answers to the following: What is the author's main argument? What does a specific concept mean and why is it important? What are the implications of the argument made by the author? What evidence does the author bring in to support her claim? Is there an alternative explanation for the author's evidence?

Attendance

Attendance is required for this course. If you are late for class, you will not be able to sign the attendance sheet which means that you will be marked as absent. If you miss more than 3 classes over the course of POL 371-C, your final grade will be reduced by 10%. If you miss more than 4 classes, your final grade will be reduced by 15%. Beyond that, your final grade will be lowered by 25%. If you miss a class, you are responsible for consulting class lectures on Moodle and getting additional notes from classmates.

Participation

Your sustained engagement with the readings and class discussions is crucial to your taking something meaningful away from this course. Therefore, you are expected to be active in this class — **participation** (15% of your grade) is a strong indication of your intellectual engagement with the material. To ensure a fruitful interaction, I will ask you to offer your opinion on any of the required readings or on the topics discussed in class. The participation grade is based on your *involvement in class discussions* as well as your *reactions* (250-300 words) to the assigned readings. Every other week (starting with the second week of classes), at least 3 hours before class on Monday, you will be asked to post on Moodle your reactions to any reading for that week. A reaction is a comment/critique of the argument followed by a discussion question. Reactions posted after the deadline may be brought up during class discussions but will not receive any credit. While you write your reactions to the readings, I encourage you to post any links from news outlets that may be relevant to the reading material.

An effective reaction is one that demonstrates an excellent understanding of the readings, an in-depth engagement with the texts, and an ability to apply the claims of the readings to examples beyond those mentioned by the author. A less effective reaction is one that misses to engage with the readings, misreads the major claims, is confusing, vague, or general, and provides off-examples.

Article/Chapter Discussion

The **article/chapter discussion** (15% of your grade) will ask you offer your critical comments on one of assigned articles/chapters. You will be asked to serve as the discussant for one course reading during the semester. The article/chapter discussion should be approximately 10 minutes in length and should be accompanied by a handout that includes the key points of the respective reading. Your task is to comment on the reading's argument and the evidence offered in its support, and to raise discussion questions. Please note that you cannot select the same article/chapter for class discussion and reading reaction.

Midterm Exam (3/18)

The **midterm exam** (20% of your grade) will cover the material from lectures and assigned readings, and will include short essay questions. I highly recommend that you take extensive notes on the readings. I am less interested in testing your memory of dates, minor actors, or secondary points; instead, I am more interested in testing your ability to understand the concepts and the theory. Please note that there will be no make-ups for unexcused absences or lateness.

Conflict Report (5/11)

The **conflict report** (4-5 pages double-spaced, Times New Roman, 20% of your grade) assignment asks you to select an ongoing ethnic conflict in the Eastern Europe-Caucasus

area and discuss the main obstacles that prevent its resolution. Your report should include a brief history of the conflict, and a critical analysis (using the theories covered throughout the semester) of the main reasons why ongoing efforts at resolving the conflict have failed.

Final Exam (5/15)

The **final exam** (30% of your grade) will be cumulative, and will include short answer questions. Make-up exams will be permitted only in extraordinary circumstances (medical or family emergencies) and only when proper documentation is provided.

Important Dates

March 18—Midterm Exam
March 24, 26—No class (spring break)
April 6—No class (Easter holiday)
May 11—Conflict Report due
May 15—Final Exam (3-6pm)

Course policies

Grade assignment

Grades are assigned on the following point scale: A=94-100; A-=90-93; B+=87-89; B=83-86; B-=80-82; C+=77-79; C=73-76; C-=70-72; D+=67-69; D=63-66; D-=60-62; F=59 and below. You are entitled to an explanation of your grades. If you wish to challenge your grade, you must write a detailed memo explaining why you think you deserved a better grade. Once the memo has been received, an appointment will be scheduled to discuss the matter in detail.

Grade Overview:

Participation—15%
Article/Chapter Discussion—15%
Midterm Exam—20%
Conflict Report—20%
Final Exam—30%

Classroom civility

Please refrain from using a laptop, tablet, or smartphone at any time during class. Not only is this a source of distraction for your peers, it is also detrimental to your own learning experience. For example, research (see [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)) has consistently shown that the use of laptops hinders learning. If you have a documented disability, you may of course use any electronic device that is necessary.

Incivility will not be tolerated. You are strongly encouraged to ask questions, think

freely and openly, and be critical towards the readings and lectures. In interactive environments, it is absolutely natural for students to approach topics from different perspectives and belief systems. You may challenge the instructor's, authors', and your peers' ideas, but derogative statements will not be tolerated. Unacceptable behavior in class includes (but is not limited to): (a) Personal attacks. This includes attacks on a person's appearance, demeanor, or political beliefs. (b) Interrupting your instructor or other students. Please raise your hand and wait to be called on. (c) Using the discussion to argue for political positions and/or beliefs. If political discussions arise, they must be discussed as scholarly endeavors. (d) Using raised tones, engaging in arguments with other students, and being aggressive. Failure to abide by these common-sense principles may result in academic penalties ranging from a lowered grade, to dismissal, to failing the course.

Academic Conduct

By remaining enrolled in this class, you agree to abide by Elon's Honor Code. Please make sure you become familiar with the Honor Code; if you have questions about how it applies to this course, do not hesitate to contact me. On the Conflict Report assignment, you are required to sign the Honor Pledge, "On my honor, I will uphold the values of Elon University: honesty, integrity, responsibility, and respect." Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. The Writing Center provides useful resources for avoiding plagiarism.

Disability

If you have a documented disability that requires accommodation, please speak with me as early as possible, and contact the Office of Disabilities Services. All discussions will remain confidential.

Email Policy

The best way to communicate with me beyond class and office hours is via email. Please allow 24 hours for a reply. You should expect slower responses between 8pm and 8am on any weekday, and during the weekend (Friday, 5pm through Monday, 8am). Please treat the emails that you send me as confidential, professional documents. Be sure to have a clear subject line and to sign your first and last name in the email.

Schedule

Week of 2/2–2/4: Ethnic Violence in Crimea

- Course Introduction
- Darden, Keith. 2014. Ukraine's Crisis of Legitimacy. *Foreign Affairs Special Collection on Ukraine*, pp. 74–78. (Moodle)

- Bebler, Anton. 2014. Freezing a Conflict: The Russian-Ukrainian Struggle over Crimea. *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 8(3): 63–73. (Moodle)
- Burke-White, William W. 2014. Crimea and the International Legal Order. Public Law and Legal Theory Research Paper Series, Research Paper No. 14-24. University of Pennsylvania. (Moodle)
- Mearsheimer, John. 2014. Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault. *Foreign Affairs* September-October: 1–12. (Moodle)

Week of 2/9 –2/11: Ethnic Violence in Eastern Ukraine

- Video: The Donetsk People's Republic
- Luhansk People's Republic
- International Crisis Group. 2014. Eastern Ukraine: A Dangerous Winter. (Moodle)
- Congressional Report Service. 2014. Ukraine: Current Issues and U.S. Policy. (Moodle)
- Amnesty International. 2014. Abductions and Torture in Eastern Ukraine. (Moodle)
- Wilson, Andrew. 2014. The High Stakes of the Ukraine Crisis. *Current History* October: 259–64. (Moodle)

Week of 2/16–2/18: Nations and Ethnic Identities

- Renan, Ernest. 1992 [1882]. What Is a Nation? (Moodle)
- Smith, Anthony D. 1986. *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1. (Moodle)
- Hale, Henry E. 2004. Explaining Ethnicity. *Comparative Political Studies* 37(4): 458–85. (Moodle)

Week of 2/23–2/25: Ethnic Conflict (1)

- Horowitz 2000, Chapters 3, 4, and 5

Week of 3/2–3/4: Ethnic Conflict (2)

- Posen, Barry. 1993. The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict. *Survival* 35(1): 27–47. (Moodle)
- Kaufman 2001, Chapters 1 and 2

Week of 3/9–3/11: Ethnic Conflict (3)

- Varshney, Ashutosh. 2003. Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Rationality. *Perspectives on Politics* 1(1): 85–99. (Moodle)
- Hale, Henry E. 2008. *The Foundations of Ethnic Politics: Separatism of States and Nations in Eurasia and the World*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 2, and 3. (Moodle)

Week of 3/16–3/18: Ethnic Violence

- Brubaker, Rogers, and David E. Laitin. 1998. Ethnic and Nationalist Violence. *Annual Review of Sociology* 24: 423–52. (Moodle)
- Petersen 2002, Chapters 1, 2, and 11
- Movie: Prisoner of the Mountains

Week of 3/30–4/1: Solutions to Ethnic Conflicts (1)

- Kaufmann, Chaim D. 1996. Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic War. *International Security* 20(4): 136–75. (Moodle)
- Kaufmann, Chaim D. 1998. When All Else Fails: Ethnic Population Transfers and Partitions in the Twentieth Century. *International Security* 23(2): 120–56. (Moodle)
- Kuperman, Alan J. 2004. Is Partition Really the Only Hope? Reconciling Contradictory Findings about Ethnic Civil Wars. *Security Studies* 13(4): 314–49. (Moodle)

Week of 4/8: Solutions to Ethnic Conflicts (2)

- Cornell, Svante E. 2002. Autonomy as a Source of Conflict: Caucasian Conflicts in Theoretical Perspective. *World Politics* 54(2): 245–76. (Moodle)
- Brancati, Dawn. 2006. Decentralization: Fueling the Fire or Dampening the Flames of Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism. *International Organization* 60: 651–85. (Moodle)

Week of 4/13–4/15: Ethnic Conflict in the former Yugoslavia

- Kaufman 2001, Chapter 6
- Petersen 2002, Chapter 10
- Movie: No Man's Land

Week of 4/20–4/22: Ethnic Conflict in the Caucasus (1)

- de Waal 2010, Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4

Week of 4/27–4/29: Ethnic Conflict in the Caucasus (2)

- de Waal 2010, Chapters 5, 6, and 7
- Movie: Tangerines

Week of 5/4–5/6: Ethnic Conflict in Moldova

- Conflict Report Workshop
- Kaufman 2001, Chapter 5
- Zabarah, Darg A. 2012. Opportunity Structures and Group Building Processes: An Institutional Analysis of the Secession Processes in Pridnestrovie and Găgăuzia between 1989 and 1991. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 45: 183–92. (Moodle)

Week of 5/11

- Final Exam Review Session

Disclaimer: I reserve the right to amend the readings to better accommodate the course needs. All modifications will be communicated in class and via email.