

# Contention & Conflict in Africa

## Political Science 120N

UC San Diego | Summer 2020 | MW 14:00–16:50

Last Updated: June 25, 2020

### 1 Summer 2020 Digital Course Format

This syllabus reflects the current teaching and learning protocols for Summer 2020, instituted by the University in response to the ongoing Novel Coronavirus (SARS-COV-2) **outbreak**. These protocols necessitate the transition to a digital course format. In practice, this means:

1. We will not meet in person during the summer term,
2. All class sessions will take place over **Zoom**,
3. Class sessions will be recorded and made available for asynchronous viewing via **Canvas**,
4. Written assignments will be submitted digitally through Canvas,
5. Office hours and all one-on-one and group meetings with the instructor will take place over Zoom.

Please check Canvas frequently for announcements, as I may need to clarify certain instructions and policies, or tweak the course format in response to students' feedback and the incredibly fluid nature of the current public health setting. Naturally, you should all feel free to reach out with questions and concerns.

It is *unlikely*, but not out of the realm of possibility that either you or I will fall ill during the course of the term. If you do fall ill, please try to keep me apprised of your situation, so that we may arrange for an incomplete or enact other policies as directed by the University and the Department of Political Science. If I fall ill, we will try our best to maintain the continuity of course by assigning an alternate instructor to facilitate class sessions. The health and safety of our students remains a priority. We will carefully monitor the COVID-19 situation, and adapt the course structure and policies as necessary to accommodate any developments and to maintain compliance with all University and departmental guidelines.

You can find the latest information and updates regarding the Novel Coronavirus at the **UC San Diego Information Center**. This website also contains a section on the **CDC's** recommendations to help prevent the spread of viruses, such as **SARS-COV-2**. If you develop **symptoms** consistent with the flu, or are concerned that you may have been exposed to COVID-19, please reach out to **Student Health Services**. Additionally, we understand that many students may be worried about the virus and the general atmosphere of uncertainty, and may experience heightened feelings of anxiety. If you would like access to counseling services, there are resources available through UC San Diego's **Counseling and Psychological Services**.

## 2 Instructor

Michael F. Seese, Course Instructor  
PhD Candidate, Political Science & International Affairs

Email: [mseese@ucsd.edu](mailto:mseese@ucsd.edu)  
Office Hours: Online, by appointment  
Zoom Link: [REDACTED] (Office Hours)

## 3 Course Description

This course is an introduction to the systematic study of contention and conflict in Africa, with an emphasis on sub-Saharan Africa. The course has four principal aims:

1. To familiarize students with the broad contours of African history as it relates to current and past periods of contention and conflict,
2. To provide students with an overview of the primary theories and methods that social scientists use to study conflict and political violence,
3. To offer a substantive introduction to the forms of conflict prevalent in the region, and
4. To provide students with the tools to learn about, understand, and explain current and historical conflicts in Africa.

The course is divided into four units. The first explores the historical background of the African continent, and the various cultures and nations that exist, or have existed, there. We touch on several aspects of pre-colonial history, colonialism and independence, and the emergence of the contemporary African state from a macro-historical and macro-economic perspective, occasionally delving into specific case studies.

The second unit covers various political, economic, and sociological theories of contention and violence. We review the types of social and political interactions that are likely to result in conflict, and look at the different mechanisms that may (or may not) explain why conflict emerges in certain cases, but not in others. We also engage with some of the empirical research on conflict, to get a sense of the methods used by political scientists and other social scientists that conduct research in this field.

The third unit discusses specific forms of conflict that arise in the African context, including:

- Civil war and high-risk participation,
- Ethnic violence and electoral violence,
- Regime change, revolution, and coup d'état,
- Terrorism, sexual violence, and violence against civilians, and
- Riots, genocide, and mass participation.

The final unit will look at specific incidents of violence on the continent. Students will apply material from the first three units to analyze and understand these particular cases. We will conclude with a session on the "end of violence," in which we discuss civil war termination, post-conflict justice and reconciliation, and the prospects of reducing the incidence of violent conflict on the continent.

## 4 Assignments & Grades

### 4.1 Readings

All of the assigned readings are available on Canvas or via [electronic reserve](#) through the library. Because this is a five-week summer session course, the reading load is quite intensive. Typically, students will need to read four or six papers or book chapters per week. These are not textbook readings, but rather academic works that require close attention and thought. Some of these readings are in fact quite difficult, though students are not expected to understand every reading prior to class. We will spend a good deal of time identifying and analyzing the authors' main points. Additionally, *please pay attention to the assigned pages and sections*. Occasionally, only a portion of a paper or book chapter will be assigned; we will try to skip over some of the more technical details of these pieces, and instead focus on the authors' theories and conclusions.

To help manage the reading load, one of the assignments for this course (see section [4.2](#) below) will be a short presentation on (at least) one of the readings. This will hopefully allow students to focus on a couple of the papers / book chapters this term, and provide some cover for students who didn't quite make it through all of the day's readings.

### 4.2 Reading Presentations

Students will need to put together a five minute talk (with slides), that summarizes at least one of the assigned readings in a particular class session. The presentation should also provide thoughtful analysis and commentary, and pose a couple of discussion questions for the class to consider. We will go over this particular assignment in more detail during our first class meeting, and circulate a sign up sheet such that all of the readings are covered.

### 4.3 Written Exams

There will be only one written exam in this class. The exam will take the form of a map quiz, which will be issued online during Week 2. Students will be expected to identify all 54 African countries, their capitals, and their former colonial power(s) (if applicable). I know this type of rote memorization is tedious, but I assure you it *is* necessary for this course. It is impossible to have an intelligent discussion about conflict in [Gulu](#) or [N'Djamena](#) if you can't locate these places on a map. A study guide is available in Section [7](#) below, though [this](#) online quiz is a good place to start preparing.

### 4.4 Group Presentation

Students will select a case study group during the first week of class. Groups are expected to present a  $\approx$  45 minute lecture (with slides) to the class on a given conflict case study at the end of the term. The lecture should describe and explain the particular conflict, and apply theories we have learned about in class to the case study. Students will also be expected to lead a brief ( $\approx$  10 minute) discussion of their case, and respond to questions from both students and the instructor. The possible case studies include:

1. Central African Republic or Cameroon
2. DRC (Great African War)
3. Nigeria & Kenya (Electoral Violence)
4. Nigeria & Boko Haram
5. Sudan & Darfur
6. South Sudan
7. Burundi or Sierra Leone
8. Rwanda (Genocide)

If you are interested in a different case study, please feel free to run it past me during the first week of class. If the case is acceptable, and you can assemble a team to work on it, I will be happy to let you present on it.

Note that groups will need to perform a substantial amount of independent research to prepare for these lectures. Students are encouraged to seek out contemporary sources of information (news articles, blog posts, etc.), along with both theoretical and case-specific academic research. Please make use of the UCSD library resources (many of which are available online), and contact me if you need help locating material.

Groups will be graded on: (1) depth of understanding of the case, (2) ability to apply the theories learned in class, (3) clarity and originality of slides and delivery. Importantly: Each group will need to submit a two or three page written memo on your case no later than **Friday, 31 July 2020 at 17:59** Pacific time to the Turnitin link on Canvas. This written memo will comprise 10% of your *presentation grade*.

I am aware of the fact that group projects are stressful, as different students have different styles, and because some students will inevitably free-ride on the hard work of others. However, these are situations that you will inevitably encounter in life, and learning to work in a diverse team is a valuable skill to build. Nevertheless, to disincentivize free-riding behavior, you will each be given the opportunity to assess your group members' performance; these peer assessments may be factored into your individual group project grades.

I also realize that the digital nature of this course, as well as the ongoing physical distancing requirements make these types of group projects even more difficult than they would be under "normal" circumstances. But we now live in a world in which this type of online and asynchronous work environment is becoming commonplace. Even as the threat of the Coronavirus diminishes, you may find yourself forced to work with classmates and colleagues located in different countries and different timezones. Consider this an opportunity to hone your remote collaboration skills. However, *if the collaborative nature of the project becomes too onerous, or if there are strong objections to the format of this project, we will reassess.*

## 4.5 Participation

Ideally, this course will be run as a seminar rather than a lower division-style lecture. This means that students should attend class having completed the readings and ready to discuss the day's material.

In general, I expect students to actively participate in and contribute to class discussion. However, University guidelines prevent course instructors from assigning attendance-based grades. If you are able to attend class regularly, I encourage you to do so. There is much added value to our time together. Whether you attend or not, "participation" will be graded. For those that can make it to class, regular contributions will be sufficient to maximize your participation score. For those taking this course asynchronously, or for those who miss a class session without a legitimate excuse, I will expect a two page summary of the readings for the day's lecture, due Friday by noon (via email) of the week of your missed class session. The reading summary should also include some commentary and analysis (replicating the contributions you would have made in class), and a couple of broad discussion questions based on the readings.

Naturally, some students are more comfortable participating in class discussion than others. While I encourage all students to contribute, I will not penalize those who prefer to observe from the sidelines. If you are concerned about your ability to engage, please reach out to me and we can work something out.

## 4.6 Grading

Your overall grade for this course is calculated as the weighted average of your map quiz, group presentation, midterm exam, and participation grade. The weights are as follows:

Map Quiz	10%
Reading Presentation	20%
Group Presentation	50%
Participation	20%
	<hr/>
	100%

## 5 Course Policies

### 5.1 Class Sessions

Students are expected (but not technically required) to attend class twice per week. Please try to let me know in advance if you are unable to attend class regularly, or if you need to miss class on a specific day. Class sessions will be conducted through Zoom, and you can find a recurring Zoom meeting link on Canvas.

### 5.2 Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is expected of all students (and faculty) at UCSD. Lying, cheating, and dishonesty will not be tolerated, as these actions undermine learning and inhibit the University's ability to certify students' knowledge and abilities. Thus, any attempt to enhance your grade (or anyone else's) by lying, cheating, or dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office and will result in sanctions. Sanctions may include a failing grade in the class *and* suspension or dismissal from the University. You can read more about academic integrity [here](#).

### 5.3 Accessibility & Accommodations

Students with disabilities may request accommodations through the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#), located in University Center, Room 202. Students must present their "Authorization for Accommodation" letters to the course instructor and the Department of Political Science *prior* to the midterm (i.e., map quiz) or final exam to receive accommodation. We are unable to accommodate students retroactively.

Students that require academic support should contact the [UCSD Teaching + Learning Commons](#), which offers tutoring and group study, supplemental instruction, and writing support. Non-native English speakers and those with limited academic writing experience are encouraged to reach out to the [UCSD Writing Hub](#), located in Geisel Library.<sup>1</sup>

### 5.4 Inclusion & Basic Needs

The University is committed to creating a learning environment that supports diversity of thought, perspective, experience, and identity. Harassment of any form will not be tolerated. Any speech or act that is blatantly or implicitly discriminatory, intimidating, or predatory will be reported to the [UCSD Office of Student Conduct](#) and / or the [UCSD Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination](#).

Any student who has difficulty accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in this course, is encouraged to contact the [UC San Diego Basic Needs Center](#) or the [Triton Food Pantry](#).

<sup>1</sup>Some of these resources may be unavailable during Summer Session due to disruptions caused by the ongoing COVID-19 situation, though my understanding is that students can set up online consultations with tutors and writing consultants.

I am cognizant of the fact that the digital format for this course may impose an undue burden on some students. If you have difficulty accessing the technology necessary to participate in, or to complete this course, please reach out. I will make every reasonable effort to accommodate your particular circumstance.

## 5.5 Make Up Exams & Regrades

Make up exams will not be provided without a legitimate, documented excuse. However, reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate students that have genuine religious conflicts with scheduled exams.

Regrade requests must be made to the instructor *in writing* in a timely manner. Written regrade requests should not exceed two paragraphs, and should outline any errors that you believe occurred in the grading process. Note that regrade requests are intended to correct grading errors, *not to negotiate a higher grade*. When submitting work for a regrade, the entire work will be evaluated, which may result in a lower grade.

## 5.6 Digital Course Presence

All course materials, including class session recordings and announcements, are available through [Canvas](#). Additionally, all scheduled class meetings and office hours will utilize [Zoom](#).

### 5.6.1 Zoom Privacy Disclaimer

Zoom uses video and audio recording and / or other personal information for the purpose of facilitating course meetings. If you have privacy concerns and do not wish to appear in the recording of the class session, do not turn on your video. If you prefer to use a pseudonym instead of your name, please let the instructor know what name you will be using before class so that they will know who you are during the session. You may use the Zoom private chat feature to comment or ask questions. The University of California San Diego does not allow vendors to use this information for other purposes. Recordings will be deleted when no longer necessary. However, if cheating is suspected, the recording may become part of the student's administrative disciplinary record. For more information, please see the University of California San Diego COVID-19 [privacy policy](#).

# 6 Schedule of Classes and Reading Assignments

This schedule is tentative, and subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

## Unit 1 — The African Context

### Monday, 29 June: Course Introduction & Pre-Colonial History

- Gettleman, *Africa's Forever Wars*
- Herbst, *States and Power in Africa*, Chapters 1–3
- Bates, *Essays on the Political Economy of Rural Africa*, Chapter 1

### Wednesday, 1 July: Colonialism, Independence, and The Modern State

- Jackson & Rosberg, *Why Africa's Weak States Persist*

- Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, *The Long-Run Effects of the Scramble for Africa*
  - Skim math and tables, but try to get a sense of the the authors are doing empirically.
- Nunn & Puga, *Ruggedness: The Blessing of Bad Geography in Africa*
  - Skim “Econometric Framework” and robustness sections.

## Unit 2 — Theoretical Frameworks

### Monday, 6 July: Dynamics of Contention & The Logic of Political Violence

- McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Comparative Perspectives on Contentious Politics*
- Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy*
- Fearon, *Ethnic War as a Commitment Problem*

## Unit 3 — Varieties of Violence

### Wednesday, 8 July: Civil War & High Risk Participation

- Elbadawi & Sambanis, *Why are There so Many Civil Wars in Africa?*
- Blattman & Miguel, *Civil War*
- Humphreys & Weinstein, *Who Fights? the Determinants of Participation in Civil War*
  - Try your best to interpret the tables, but don't worry if you're unclear on the math.

### Monday, 13 July: Nationalism & Coup d'état; Ethnic & Electoral Violence

- Roessler, *The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa*
- Paine, *Ethnic Violence in Africa: Destructive Legacies of Pre-Colonial States*
- Fjelde & Höglund, *Electoral Institutions and Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa*

### Wednesday, 15 July: Terrorism, Sexual Violence, and Violence Against Civilians

- Berman & Laitin, *Religion, Terrorism, and Public Goods: Testing the Club Goods Model*
- Marks, *Sexual Violence in Sierra Leone's Civil War*
- Fjelde & Hultman, *Weakening the Enemy: A Disaggregated Study of Violence Against Civilians in Africa*

### Monday, 20 July: Riots, Genocide, and Mass Participation

- Scacco, *Who Riots? Explaining Individual Participation in Ethnic Violence*
- Friedman, *The Economics of Genocide in Rwanda*
- Manacorda & Tesei, *Liberation Technology: Mobile Phones and Political Mobilization in Africa*

## **Unit 4 — Case Studies & Conclusion**

**Wednesday, 22 July: Case Studies, Day 1**

**Monday, 27 July: Case Studies, Day 2**

**Wednesday, 29 July: Civil War Termination & Future Prospects**

- Walter, *Designing Transitions from Civil War*
- Straus, *Wars do End! Changing Patterns of Political Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa*
- Pinker, *The Better Angels of our Nature*, Chapter 6

**Friday, 31 July: Memo Due**

Please submit your case study memo to the Turnitin link on Canvas by 17:59 Pacific time.



## 7 Map Quiz Preparation Materials

Note that these resources exclude **Western Sahara**. This is not a political statement. Because (a) the territory is currently disputed, (b) it has no de facto capital within the territory,<sup>2</sup> and (c) it was formally a part of Morocco at “independence,” it is not explicitly included in the maps in Figures 1 and 2.

### Contention & Conflict in Africa Map Quiz Study Guide



Figure 1: African Countries and Colonial Powers at Independence (Excludes Protectorates)

<sup>2</sup>The government in exile is currently based at the Sahrawi Refugee Camp in Tindouf, Algeria.

## Contention & Conflict in Africa Map Quiz Study Guide



Figure 2: African Capitals

Table 1: African Countries, Capitals, and Colonial Powers

ISO Code	Country	Capital	Colonial Power	Est. Population (2019)
DZA	Algeria	Algiers	France	40969443
AGO	Angola	Luanda	Portugal	29310273
BEN	Benin	PortoNovo	France	11038805
BWA	Botswana	Gaborone	UK	2214858
BFA	Burkina Faso	Ouagadougou	France	20107509
BDI	Burundi	Bujumbura	Belgium	11466756
CPV	Cabo Verde	Praia	Portugal	560899
CMR	Cameroon	Yaoundé	France	24994885
CAF	Central African Republic	Bangui	France	5625118
TCD	Chad	N'Djamena	France	12075985
COM	Comoros	Moroni	France	808080
COG	Congo	Brazzaville	France	4954674
COD	Congo DRC	Kinshasa	Belgium	83301151
CIV	Côte d'Ivoire	Yamoussoukro	France	24184810
DJI	Djibouti	Djibouti	France	865267
EGY	Egypt	Cairo		97041072
GNQ	Equatorial Guinea	Malabo	Spain	778358
ERI	Eritrea	Asmara	Ethiopia	5918919
SWZ	Eswatini	Mbabane	UK	1467152
ETH	Ethiopia	Addis Ababa		105350020
GAB	Gabon	Libreville	France	1772255
GMB	Gambia	Banjul	UK	2051363
GHA	Ghana	Accra	UK	27499924
GIN	Guinea	Conakry	France	12413867
GNB	Guinea-Bissau	Bissau	Portugal	1792338
KEN	Kenya	Nairobi	UK	47615739
LSO	Lesotho	Maseru	UK	1958042
LBR	Liberia	Monrovia		4689021
LBY	Libya	Triploi		6653210
MDG	Madagascar	Antananarivo	France	25054161
MWI	Malawi	Lilongwe	UK	19196246
MLI	Mali	Bamako	France	17885245
MRT	Mauritania	Nouakchott	France	3758571
MUS	Mauritius	PortLouis	UK	1356388
MAR	Morocco	Rabat		33986655
MOZ	Mozambique	Maputo	Portugal	26573706
NAM	Namibia	Windhoek	South Africa	2484780
NER	Niger	Niamey	France	19245344
NGA	Nigeria	Abuja	UK	190632261
RWA	Rwanda	Kigali	Belgium	11901484
STP	Sao Tome and Principe	Sao Tome	Portugal	201025
SEN	Senegal	Dakar	France	14668522
SYC	Seychelles	Victoria	UK	93920
SLE	Sierra Leone	Freetown	UK	6163195
SOM	Somalia	Mogadishu	UK and Italy	11031386
ZAF	South Africa	Pretoria; Cape Town; Bloemfontein	UK	54841552
SSD	South Sudan	Juba	Sudan	13026129
SDN	Sudan	Khartoum	UK and Egypt	37345935
TZA	Tanzania	Dar es Salaam; Dodoma*	UK	53950935
TGO	Togo	Lomé	France	7965055
TUN	Tunisia	Tunis	France	11403800
UGA	Uganda	Kampala	UK	39570125
ZMB	Zambia	Lusaka	UK	15972001
ZWE	Zimbabwe	Harare	UK	13805084

## 8 Bibliography

- Bates, Robert H. (Apr. 20, 1987). *Essays on the Political Economy of Rural Africa*. University of California Press. 200 pp.
- Berman, Eli and David D. Laitin (Oct. 1, 2008). "Religion, Terrorism and Public Goods: Testing the Club Model". In: *Journal of Public Economics* 92.10, pp. 1942–1967.
- Blattman, Christopher and Edward Miguel (Mar. 2010). "Civil War". In: *Journal of Economic Literature* 48.1, pp. 3–57.
- Elbadawi, E. and N. Sambanis (Oct. 1, 2000). "Why Are There so Many Civil Wars in Africa? Understanding and Preventing Violent Conflict". In: *Journal of African Economies* 9.3, pp. 244–269.
- Fearon, James D (Aug. 1995). "Ethnic War as a Commitment Problem". In: American Political Science Association. New York, p. 24.
- Fjelde, Hanne and Lisa Hultman (Oct. 1, 2014). "Weakening the Enemy: A Disaggregated Study of Violence against Civilians in Africa". In: *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58.7, pp. 1230–1257.
- Fjelde, Hanne and Kristine Höglund (Apr. 2016). "Electoral Institutions and Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa". In: *British Journal of Political Science* 46.2, pp. 297–320.
- Friedman, Willa (2016). "The Economics of Genocide in Rwanda". In: *Economic Aspects of Genocides, Other Mass Atrocities, and Their Prevention*. Ed. by Charles H. Anderton and Jurgen Brauer. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 339–355.
- Gentleman, Jeffrey (Feb. 11, 2010). "Africa's Forever Wars". In: *Foreign Policy*.
- Herbst, Jeffrey (Dec. 21, 2014). *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control - Second Edition*. 2 edition. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 312 pp.
- Humphreys, Macartan and Jeremy M. Weinstein (2008). "Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War". In: *American Journal of Political Science* 52.2, pp. 436–455.
- Jackson, Robert H. and Carl G. Rosberg (Oct. 1982). "Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood". In: *World Politics* 35.1, pp. 1–24.
- Kaplan, Robert D. (Feb. 1994). "The Coming Anarchy". In: *Atlantic Monthly* 273.2, pp. 44–76.
- Manacorda, Marco and Andrea Tesei (2020). "Liberation Technology: Mobile Phones and Political Mobilization in Africa". In: *Econometrica* 88.2, pp. 533–567.
- Marks, Zoe (Jan. 1, 2014). "Sexual Violence in Sierra Leone's Civil War: 'Virginisation', Rape, and Marriage". In: *African Affairs* 113.450, pp. 67–87.
- McAdam, Douglas, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly (2009). "Comparative Perspectives on Contentious Politics". In: *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*. Ed. by Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman. Cambridge University Press.
- Michalopoulos, Stelios and Elias Papaioannou (July 2016). "The Long-Run Effects of the Scramble for Africa". In: *American Economic Review* 106.7, pp. 1802–1848.
- Nunn, Nathan and Diego Puga (Nov. 3, 2010). "Ruggedness: The Blessing of Bad Geography in Africa". In: *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 94.1, pp. 20–36.
- Paine, Jack (2019/ed). "Ethnic Violence in Africa: Destructive Legacies of Pre-Colonial States". In: *International Organization* 73.3, pp. 645–683.
- Pinker, Steven (Sept. 25, 2012). *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*. Reprint edition. New York: Penguin Books. 832 pp.
- Roessler, Philip (Apr. 2011). "The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa". In: *World Politics* 63.2, pp. 300–346.
- Scacco, Alexandra (Sept. 2008). "Who Riots? Explaining Individual Participation in Ethnic Violence".
- Straus, Scott (Apr. 1, 2012). "Wars Do End! Changing Patterns of Political Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa". In: *African Affairs* 111.443, pp. 179–201.
- Walter, Barbara F. (July 1, 1999). "Designing Transitions from Civil War: Demobilization, Democratization, and Commitments to Peace". In: *International Security* 24.1, pp. 127–155.