

Washington University in St. Louis
Department of Political Science

PS 335. Topics in Politics: Political Psychology of Intergroup Conflict

Syllabus

Fall 2012

Tu & Th 4–5:30, Siegle 206

Instructor

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Office hours: Tu & Th 3–4

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Course Description

Intergroup conflict and violence continue to plague many parts of the world. A great number of social scientists have turned their attention to these topics, but they do so from varying academic disciplines and intellectual approaches. The result is that our knowledge is fragmented and our understanding limited.

This class will search for a broader understanding by reading research and commentary from various academic disciplines, but psychology and political science in particular. Psychologists have a wealth of theories about intergroup relations, but these tend to be somewhat removed from actual political conflicts and, indeed, seldom leave the university laboratory. Political scientists, for their part, actually conduct research in places where intergroup violence occurs, but they tend to stay away from psychological theories. The goal is to combine the strengths of both the political science and psychology approaches in our quest to understand intergroup conflict.

The class is organized around three main questions: (1) why do people have identities, or why are groups so important for politics?; (2) why do people hate those from other groups, and, especially, why do they take part in violence against other groups?; and finally (3) how can we reduce intergroup hatred and violence?

Overview of Topics

- Why do people have identities? (Or, why are groups so important?)
 - Uncertainty reduction
 - Coordination
 - Essentialist cognition
 - In-group cooperation
- Why do people hate those from other groups, and why do they take part in intergroup violence?

- Leadership
 - Predation / Self-interest
 - Authoritarianism
 - Dominance
 - Anger
 - Resentment
 - Revenge
 - From resistance to the rampage
 - Conformity and obedience
- How can we reduce hatred and stop intergroup violence?
 - Empathy
 - Contact
 - Morality
 - Reason

Attendance

It is important that you attend every class our in-class discussions and my presentations will extend beyond the readings. Twenty percent (20%) of your grade will be determined by participation in class. Missing a class obviously means that you will get zero for that day's participation grade. On the other hand, attending class and participating in some way—by joining a discussion or asking a question, for example—is an easy way to get one-fifth of your total grade.

Academic Honesty

I follow the university rules on ethics, academic misconduct, and plagiarism. I recommend that you make yourself familiar with these rules, which are available at this site: <http://www.wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html>.

Assignments and Grades

Presentation and discussion leader ($2 \times 10\% = 20\%$): This assignment entails students doing short presentations covering the assigned readings for a class. You are also required to prepare a set of 2 to 4 questions that are provoked by your reading, and that will be useful to animate further class discussion. The presentations should be in the region of 5 to 10 minutes in length, and you may use any media you wish. While the presentations should summarize the readings, the questions should extend beyond the readings in some way, by for example, offering a critique of a theory or experiment, or by applying the theory to a case that is of interest to you. Students are required to present and lead the discussion twice in the semester. Discussion slots will be chosen during class on Tuesday, September 4th.

In-class quizzes ($4 \times 5\% = 20\%$): Short multiple-choice quizzes will be held in class on 9/20, 10/11, 11/6, and 12/4. No additional preparation, aside from keeping up with readings and attending class, will be required for these quizzes. Each quiz will cover all the assigned readings, lectures, and in-class

discussion from the day of the previous quiz. Thus the quiz on 10/11 will include all material covered from 9/20 until 10/9, both inclusive.

Research paper (40%): Students must identify a research question provoked by the readings, review the literature on the topic, and (1) develop a new theory or extend an existing theory in some way; or (2) derive a set of testable hypotheses and describe a feasible method of testing these hypotheses. For many questions, it will be useful to apply the literature to a particular case of intergroup violence.

I will meet with students individually during the class session on November 1 (and the office hour before) to discuss the choice of topic and empirical case (if appropriate), and to suggest sources that may be useful. A 1-page proposal will then be due in the class session on November 13. A completed first draft will be due in class on December 4th. These drafts will be returned, with comments, in class on December 6th. A final draft of the paper will then be due, via email, by 5pm on December 13th.

Grades: A summary of the assignments for the class follows:

Assignment	Due Date	% of Grade
<i>Participation</i>		20
<i>Quizzes</i>		20
Quiz 1	20 September	
Quiz 2	11 October	
Quiz 3	6 November	
Quiz 4	4 December	
<i>Presentations</i>		20
Presentation 1	chosen by student	
Presentation 2	chosen by student	
<i>Paper</i>		40
Paper: final draft	13 December	
Paper: first draft	4 December	
Paper: proposal	13 November	
Paper: one-on-one discussion of topics	1 November	

The following number to letter grade conversion will be used:

100–97 = A+	87–89 = B+	77–79 = C+	67–69 = D+
93–96 = A	83–86 = B	73–76 = C	63–66 = D
90–92 = A-	80–82 = B-	70–72 = C-	60–62 = D-

Class Communication

I will be using Blackboard (bb.wustl.edu) to handle many aspects of this class. Most of the readings will be available through Blackboard, I will use it to email students and make general announcements. Questions can be emailed directly to me or posted for general discussion on the message boards.

Required Readings

There is only one required book: *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined* by Steven Pinker. It is available, both new and used, from numerous online bookstores. We will only begin reading the book at the end of September, so there is plenty of time to order it.

Other readings will be available through Blackboard. The reading load is not very heavy, but the difficulty of the texts varies. Some readings, such as those from the journal *Science*, are short but dense. Others (such as the Pinker book) are written for a popular audience and are thus easy to read. Some of these popular readings may appear longer in terms of number of pages, but will be quite quick to read.

In all cases you should read with a critical eye. All aspects of course evaluation, from class participation to the research paper, will reward students who can go beyond merely summarizing the literature to offering some kind of critique or broader reflection. I will also be evaluating whether students are able to make links between different readings and indeed, different sections of the class.

Class Schedule

28 August: Introduction

30 August: No class (American Political Science Association conference)

- Mark Schaller, Justin H. Park & Douglas T. Kenrick. 2007. "Human Evolution and Social Cognition." In *Oxford Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology*.
- Leda Cosmides & John Tooby. 1997. "Evolutionary Psychology: A Primer." <http://www.psych.ucsb.edu/research/cep/primer.html>

Part I: Why do we have identities? (Or, why are groups so important?)

4 September: Introduction to groups and identities

- Henri Tajfel. 1970. "Experiments in Intergroup Discrimination." *Scientific American*.
- Kanchan Chandra. 2004. "What is Ethnic Identity and Does it Matter?" *Annual Review of Political Science*.

6 September: Uncertainty reduction

- Henry Hale. 2008. *The Foundations of Ethnic Politics*, ch. 3.

11 September: Coordination

- Richard McElreath, Robert Boyd, and Peter J. Richerson. 2003. "Shared Norms and the Evolution of Ethnic Markers." *Current Anthropology*.

- Charles Efferson, et al. 2008. "The Coevolution of Cultural Groups and Ingroup Favoritism." *Science*.

13 September: Essentialist cognition

- Francisco J. Gil-White. 2001. "Are Ethnic Groups Biological 'Species' to the Human Brain?" *Current Anthropology*, pp. 515–536.

18 September: In-group cooperation

- Robert Kurzban, John Tooby and Leda Cosmides. 2001. "Can Race Be Erased? Coalitional Computation and Social Categorization." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.
- Samuel Bowles. 2009. "Did Warfare Among Ancestral Hunter-Gatherers Affect the Evolution of Human Social Behaviors?" *Science*.

Further reading:

- Leda Cosmides, John Tooby and Robert Kurzban. 2003. "Perceptions of Race." *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*.

Part II: Intergroup prejudice, hatred, and violence

20 September: Introduction

- Ashutosh Varshney. 2007. "Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict." *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, ch. 12
- Donald Horowitz. 2001. *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*, pp. 17–28.

25 September: Leadership

- Steven Wilkinson. 2004. *Votes and Violence*, pp. 1–9
- Daniel Posner. 2005. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review*.

Further reading:

- Jack L. Snyder. 2000. *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*.

27 September: Predation / Self-interest I

- Steven Pinker. 2011. *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, pp. 509–515.
- Muzafer Sherif. 1956. "Experiments in Group Conflict." *Scientific American*.

2 October: Predation / Self-interest II

- Susan Olzak. 1990. "The Political Context of Competition: Lynching and Urban Racial Violence, 1882–1914." *Social Forces*.

Further reading:

- Donald P. Green, Jack Glaser, and Andrew Rich. 1998. "From lynching to gay bashing: The elusive connection between economic conditions and hate crime." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

4 October: Authoritarianism I

- Philip Zimbardo. 2007. "Revisiting the Stanford Prison Experiment: A Lesson in the Power of Situation." *Chronicle of Higher Education*.
- S. Alexander Haslam and Stephen D. Reicher. 2005. "The Psychology of Tyranny." *Scientific American Mind*.

9 October: Authoritarianism II

- Sales, Stephen M. 1973. "Threat as a Factor in Authoritarianism: An Analysis of Archival Data." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.
- Stanley Feldman. 2003. "Enforcing Social Conformity: A Theory of Authoritarianism." *Political Psychology*, pp. 41–43, 46–52.

11 October: Dominance

- Steven Pinker. 2011. *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, pp. 515–529.
- Herbert Blumer. 1958. "Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position." *Pacific Sociological Review*.
- Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto. 1999. "Social Dominance Theory: A New Synthesis." *Social Dominance*.

Further reading:

- Richard Wrangham. 1999. "Evolution of Coalitionary Killing." *Yearbook of Physical Anthropology*.
- Jerome H. Barkow. 1975. "Prestige and Culture: A Biosocial Interpretation." *Current Anthropology*.

16 October: Resentment

- Roger Petersen. 2002. *Understanding Ethnic Violence*, ch. 3

18 October: Anger

- Steven Pinker. 2011. *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, pp. 482–509
- Christopher Claassen. 2012. "The Emotional Logic of Participation in Intergroup Violence."

Further reading:

- Jaap Panksepp. 2004. *Affective neuroscience: The foundations of human and animal emotions*
- Diane Mackie, Eliot R. Smith, and Devin G. Ray. 2000. "Intergroup Emotions and Intergroup Relations". *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*.
- Leonie Huddy, Stanley Feldman & Erin Cassese. 2007. "On the Distinct Political Effects of Anxiety and Anger." In *The Affect Effect: The Dynamics of Emotion in Political Thinking and Behavior*.

23 October: Revenge

- Steven Pinker. 2011. *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, pp. 529–547.
- Napoleon Chagnon. 1988. "Life histories, blood revenge, and warfare in a tribal population." *Science*.
- Jared Diamond. 2008. "Vengeance is Ours." *New Yorker*.

Further reading:

- Michael E. McCullough, Robert Kurzban and Benjamin A. Tabak. 2010. "Evolved Mechanisms for Revenge and Forgiveness." *Understanding and reducing aggression, violence, and their consequences*.

25 October: From resistance to the rampage I

- Steven Pinker. 2011. *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, pp. 547–556.
- Barbara Ehrenreich. 1997. *Blood Rites. Origins and History of the Passions of War*, pp. 7–23.
- Randall Collins. 2008. *Violence: A Micro-Sociological Theory*, pp. 39–82.

30 October: From resistance to the rampage II

- Randall Collins. 2008. *Violence: A Micro-Sociological Theory*, pp. 83–121.
- Bill Buford. 1988. *Among the Thugs*, pp. 71–93

Further reading:

- Donald Horowitz. 2001. *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*, pp. 71–123.
- Edward C. Banfield. 1970. "Rioting Mainly For Fun and Profit." *The Unheavenly City*.

1 November: Discussion of paper topics

6 November: Conformity and obedience I

- Steven Pinker. 2011. *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, pp. 556–569.
- Jerry Burger. 2009. "Replicating Milgram: Would People Still Obey Today?" *American Psychologist*.

Further reading:

- Stanley Milgram. 1963. "Behavioral Study of Obedience." *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*.

8 November: Conformity and obedience II

- Robb Willer, Ko Kuwabara and Michael W. Macy. 2009. "The False Enforcement of Unpopular Norms." *The American Journal of Sociology*.
- Gerard Prunier. 1998. *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, pp. 242–248

Further reading:

- Damon Centola, Robb Willer and Michael Macy. 2005. "The Emperor's Dilemma: A Computational Model of Self-Enforcing Norms." *The American Journal of Sociology*.
- Lee Ann Fuji. 2008. "The Power of Local Ties: Popular Participation in the Rwandan Genocide." *Security Studies*.
- Ravi Bhavnani. 2006. "Ethnic Norms and Interethnic Violence: Accounting for Mass Participation in the Rwandan Genocide." *Journal of Peace Research*.
- Helen M. Hintjens. 1999. "Explaining the 1994 genocide in Rwanda." *The Journal of Modern African Studies*.

Part III: Reducing prejudice and intergroup violence

13 November: Empathy

- Steven Pinker. 2011. *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, pp. 571–592.
- C. Daniel Batson and Nadia Y. Ahmad. 2009. "Using Empathy to Improve Intergroup Attitudes and Relations." *Social Issues and Policy Review*.

Further reading:

- Stephanie D. Preston and Frans B. M. de Waal. 2002. "Empathy: Its ultimate and proximate bases." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*.
- Frans B.M. de Waal. 2008. "Putting the Altruism Back into Altruism: The Evolution of Empathy." *Annual Review of Psychology*.

15 November: Contact

- Thomas Pettigrew. 1998. "Intergroup Contact Theory." *Annual Review of Psychology*, pp. 65–73
- Deepak Malhotra and Sumanasiri Liyanage. 2005. "Long-Term Effects of Peace Workshops in Protracted Conflicts." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.

Further reading:

- Donald P. Green and Janelle S. Wong 2008. "Tolerance and the Contact Hypothesis: A Field Experiment." *The Political Psychology of Democratic Citizenship*, ch. 10

20 November: Norm change

- Elizabeth Levy Paluck. 2009. "Reducing Intergroup Prejudice and Conflict Using the Media: A Field Experiment in Rwanda." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

22 November: Thanksgiving, no class

27 November: Morality I

- Steven Pinker. 2011. *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, pp. 622–637.
- Alan Page Fiske and Philip E. Tetlock. 1997. "Taboo Trade-offs: Reactions to Transactions That Transgress the Spheres of Justice." *Political Psychology*.

Further reading:

- Alan Page Fiske. 1992. "The Four Elementary Forms of Sociality: Framework for a Unified Theory of Social Relations." *Psychological Review*.
- Jonathan Haidt. 2007. "The New Synthesis in Moral Psychology." *Science*.
- Jonathan Haidt. 2008. "Morality." *Perspectives on Psychological Science*.

29 November: Morality II

- Steven Pinker. 2011. *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, pp. 637–642.
- Jeremy Ginges, et al. 2007. "Sacred Bounds on Rational Resolution of Violent Political Conflict." *PNAS*

4 December: Reason

- Steven Pinker. 2011. *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, pp. 642–670.

Further reading:

- Diana Mutz. 2006. *Hearing the other side: Deliberative versus participatory democracy*, ch. 3.

6 December: Conclusion