

Course Outline for Economics of Conflict – EC3320 2012-2013

Course Code and Title

Economics of Warfare EC3320

Course Leader

Professor Michael Spagat

Aims

Introduce students to the main facts about conflict. Apply theoretical and empirical economic tools to the study of conflict. Give students an appreciation of the main questions at the research frontier in the economic analysis of conflict. Draw some policy conclusions on how the international community should deal with conflict. Study data issues in analyzing conflict.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course students should:

- Have substantial knowledge of the facts about conflict.
- Be able to apply theoretical and empirical economic analysis to the study of conflict
- Be conversant with the research frontier in conflict economics
- Have developed well-articulated views on policy toward conflicts
- Understand key data issues that arise in studying conflict

Course Delivery

The course will be delivered through twenty one-hour lectures and eighteen one-hour seminars. I will present the more difficult conceptual issues in lectures while the seminars will be structured discussions.

IT IS CRUCIAL FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE COURSE THAT PEOPLE DO THE READING FOR EACH SEMINAR BEFORE THE ACTUAL SEMINAR. WE WILL BE DISCUSSING THINGS IN THE SEMINAR AND THESE DISCUSSIONS WILL FALL FLAT IF PEOPLE DO NOT DO THE READING.

I will be available for consultation (either by you individually, or in small groups) during office hours or by appointment. Office hours are Tuesday, 2:30 - 3:30, Thursday 1:30 - 2:30.

Assessment

- 3-hour unseen examination, which contributes 100% of the final mark and is taken during the summer term. The exam will consist of two mandatory question plus a choice of two from four additional questions.
- Formative assessment will consist of
 - two data-oriented projects that will be due **January 8 and March 11**.
 - two in-class test that will be given **November 12 and February 18**.

Reading

I suggest that you buy the book by Alan Krueger that comes up at the very end of the course in the Spring. Or you can rely on the library which has multiple copies. For everything else I give links to the articles in the reading list below. I have tested all the links on my office computer and they all work for me as of mid September. It is possible, however, that some of these links require you to be working through RHUL subscriptions to get through. So you may need to work through the library system to obtain a few of the readings. Please let me know if you have problems with a particular reading. I will also post a few things on the Moodle web site to smooth access.

Weekly Timetable

AUTUMN TERM

Week 1. Orientation Week, no class

Week 2. Dirty War Index (DWI)

Hicks, Madelyn and Michael Spगत (2009), "[The Dirty War Index: A Public Health and Human Rights Tool for Examining and Monitoring Armed Conflict Outcomes,](#)" *PLoS Medicine*, 5(12).

Week 3. Civilian Targeting Index (CTI)

Hicks, Madelyn, Uih Ran Lee, Ralph Sundberg and Michael Spगत (2011), "[Global Comparison of Warring Groups in 2002–2007: Fatalities from Targeting Civilians vs. Fighting Battles,](#)" *PLoS ONE*, 6(9).

Seminar for week 3.

Taback, Nathan (2009), "[The Dirty War Index: Statistical Issues, Feasibility, and Interpretation,](#)" *PLoS Medicine*, 5(12).

Hicks, Madelyn, Uih Ran Lee, Ralph Sundberg and Michael Spagat (2011), [Crunching Corpse Counts: A Rejoinder by Michael Spagat et al.](#), *Duck of Minerva Blog*.

Week 4. Civilian Casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan

Hicks et al. (2009), [“The Weapons That Kill Civilians — Deaths of Children and Noncombatants in Iraq, 2003–2008,”](#) *The New England Journal of Medicine*, Volume 360:1585-1588.

Hicks et al. (2011) [“Violent Deaths of Iraqi Civilians, 2003–2008: Analysis by Perpetrator, Weapon, Time, and Location,”](#) *PLoS Medicine*, 8(2).

Hicks et al. (2011), [“Casualties in civilians and coalition soldiers from suicide bombings in Iraq, 2003—10: a descriptive study,”](#) the *Lancet*, 378(9794). (You need to register for free at the *Lancet* before you can download the paper.)

Seminar for week 4.

Iraq Body Count (2010), [“Iraq War Logs: What the Numbers Reveal.”](#)

Bohannon, John (2011), [“Counting the Dead in Afghanistan,”](#) *Science*, 331 (March 11).

Week 5. The Impact of Civilian Casualties on the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan

Condra, Luke, Joseph Felter, Radha Iyengar and Jacob Shapiro (2010), [“The Effect of Civilian Casualties in Afghanistan and Iraq,”](#) working paper, Princeton University.

Seminar for week 5.

Berman, Eli, Joseph Felter and Jacob Shapiro (2010), [“Constructive Coin: How Development can Fight Radicals,”](#) *Foreign Policy*. (You need to register for free to get the article)

Week 6. The Rwandan Genocide

Verwimp, Philip, (2006) [“Machetes and Firearms: The Organization of Massacres in Rwanda,”](#) *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 43, No. 1, 5-22.

Seminar for week 6.

Davenport, Christian, (2010) [“Rethinking Rwanda, 1994”](#), this is a videotaped lecture. It lasts for around 90 minutes so make sure you allow enough time. It’s good!

Week 7. Reading Week

Week 8. The Palestinian Israeli Conflict: A Cycle of Violence?

Jaeger, David and Daniel Paserman (2008), “The Cycle of Violence: An Empirical Analysis of Fatalities in the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict,” *American Economic Review*, Vol. 98, No. 4, September 2008, [ungated prepublication version available here: http://ftp.iza.org/dp1808.pdf](http://ftp.iza.org/dp1808.pdf).

Seminar for week 8.

AUTUMN TEST

Weeks 9 & 10. Measuring Conflict Deaths with Sample Surveys

Reading for week 9.

Spagat, Michael (2012), “[Estimating the Human Costs of War: The Sample Survey Approach](#)” *Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Peace and Conflict*.

Seminar for week 9.

Haushofer, Johannes, Biletzki, Anat and Nancy Kanwisher (2010), “[Both Sides Retaliate in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict](#),” *PNAS*, vol. 107, no. 32, 17927-17932.

Kanwisher, Nancy and Anat Biletzke (2010) “[A Cycle of Retribution](#)”

Reading for week 10.

Human Security Report 2009, “[The Shrinking Costs of War, chapter 7, The Death Toll in the Democratic Republic of the Congo](#).” (Only chapter 7 is assigned here. The link includes other chapters.)

Seminar for week 10:

[Spagat Michael, 2008, “Counting the Dead in Iraq”, presentation made at the JSM meetings in Denver.](#)

[“AAPOR releases additional detail on Burnham Standards violation \(2009\)”](#)

[“Review Completed of 2006 Iraq Mortality Study \(2009\)”](#)

Weeks 11 & 12 – The Decline of War

Reading for week 11.

Human Security Report 2009, "[The Shrinking Costs of War, chapter 6, The Paradox of Mortality Rates that Decline in Wartime.](#)" (Only chapter 6 is assigned here.)

Human Security Report 2009, "[Trends in Human Insecurity, chapters 10-12.](#)"

Seminar for week 11.

Pinker, Steven (2012), "[Violence in Retreat: Steven Pinker Reveals the Better Angels of our Nature](#), *Guardian web site*, this one's about 50 minutes long.

Reading for week 12.

Obermeyer, Ziad, Christopher J L Murray and Emmanuela Gakidou (2008), "[Fifty years of violent war deaths from Vietnam to Bosnia: analysis of data from the world health survey programme.](#)" *British Medical Journal*, 336:1482-1486.

Spagat, Michael, Andrew Mack, Tara Cooper and Joakim Kreutz (2009), "[Estimating War Deaths: An Arena of Contestation.](#)" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.

Seminar for week 12.

Reiff, David (2011), "[Millions May Die...or Not.](#)" *Foreign Policy*, Sept/Oct.

De Waal, Alex (2007), "[Deaths in Darfur: Keeping Ourselves Honest.](#)" *Making Sense of Sudan* blog.

Gabriel, Guy (2009), "[The Politics of Numbers](#)" *Making Sense of Sudan* blog.

AUTUMN COURSEWORK DUE TUESDAY, JANUARY 8.

SPRING TERM

Part 1. CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Week 1. Correlations

Collier, Paul and Anke Hoeffler (2004), "[Greed and Grievance in Civil War](#)," *Oxford Economic Papers* 56 (4).

Fearon, James and David Laitin (2003), "[Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War](#)," *American Political Science Review* 97.

The following paper is not assigned but I refer to it in the lecture notes so you probably should have the reference here:

Hegre, Havard and Nicholas Sambanis (2006), "[Sensitivity Analysis of the Empirical Literature on Civil War Onset](#)," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 50 (4): 508-535.

Week 2. Trying to establish causation: Rainfall

Reading for week 2.

Miguel, Edward, Shanker Satyanath and Ernest Sergenti (2004), "[Economic Shocks and Civil Conflict: An Instrumental Variables Approach](#)," *Journal of Political Economy*, 112 (4).

Ciccone, Antonio (2011), "[Economic Shocks and Civil Conflict: A Comment](#)," forthcoming in *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*.

Seminar for week 2.

Human Security Report 2009, "[The Causes of Peace, chapter 2](#),"

Weeks 3 & 4. Conflict and Climate Change

Reading for week 3.

Burke, MB, Miguel, E, Satyanath, ME, Dykema, JA and DB Lobell (2009) [Warming Increases the risk of civil war in Africa](#), *PNAS*, 106:20670-20674.

There was an exchange of letters in PNAS arguing about the Burke et al. paper. I give the references here in case people are curious about the details of this fight. **However, the next three references are not required reading for the course because this back-and-forth is summarized in the reading assigned for the seminar (below).**

Buhaug, Halvard (2010) "[Climate not to blame for African civil wars.](#)" *PNAS* 107 (38) 16477-16482

Burke, MB, Miguel, E, Satyanath, ME, Dykema, JA and DB Lobell (2010) "[Climate robustly linked to African civil war.](#)" *PNAS* vol. 107 no. 51 E185

Buhaug, Halvard (2010) "[Reply to Burke et al.: Bias and climate war research](#)", *PNAS* 107 (51) E186-E187.

Seminar for week 3.

Burke, MB, Miguel, E, Satyanath, ME, Dykema, JA and DB Lobell (2010), "[Climate and Civil War: Is the Relationship Robust.](#)" NBER Working paper 16440.

Reading for week 4.

Hsiang, Solomon, Kyle Meng and Mark Cane (2011), "[Civil Conflicts are Associated with the Global Climate.](#)" *Nature* 476, August 25.

Seminar for week 4.

Gleditsch, Nils Petter (2012), "Wither the weather? Climate change and conflict," *Journal of Peace Research*, 49 (1), pages 3-9.

Hsiang, Soloman (2012), "[Carefully Interpreting Climate-Conflict Results \(JPR 2012\) – Part 1](#)"

Hsiang, Soloman (2012), "[Carefully Interpreting Climate-Conflict Results \(JPR 2012\) – Part 1](#)"

Part 2. COST OF CONFLICT AND TERRORISM

Reading for week 5.

Abadie, Alberto and Javier Gardeazabal (2003), "[The Economic Costs of Conflict: A Case Study of the Basque Country.](#)" *American Economic Review*, 97 (5).

Guidolin, Massimo and Eliana La Ferrara (2007), "[Diamonds are Forever, Wars are Not: Is Conflict Bad for Private Firms?](#)" *American Economic Review*, 97 (5).

Seminar for week 5.

Krueger, Alan (2008) [What Makes a Terrorist](#), Princeton University Press, chapter 3.

Week 6. Reading Week

Reading for week 7.

Guidolin, Massimo and Eliana La Ferrara (2010), "[The Economic Effects of Violent Conflict: Evidence from Asset Market Reactions](#)," *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 47 no. 6 671-684

Seminar for week 7.

SPRING TEST

Reading for week 8.

Vargas, Juan and Oeindrila Dube (2012), "[Commodity Price Shocks and Civil Conflict: Evidence from Colombia](#)," New York University.

Seminar for week 8.

Krueger Alan and David Laitin (2004) "['Misunderestimating' Terrorism](#)" *Foreign Affairs*, September/October.

Part 3. CAUSES OF TERRORISM

Reading for week 9.

Krueger, Alan (2008) [What Makes a Terrorist](#), Princeton University Press, chapters 1 and 2.

Seminar for week 9.

Bueno de Mesquita, Ethan (2011), "[Does Poverty Lead to Violence? \(The other view\)](#)", guest post on the blog of Chris Blattman.

TUESDAY, MARCH 11, SPRING COURSEWORK DUE

Reading for week 10.

Benmelech, Efraim, Claude Berrebi and Esteban Klor (2009), "[Economic Conditions and the Quality of Suicide Terrorism](#)," working paper, Harvard University.

Seminar for week 10.

[Robert Pape versus Sam Harris on Suicide Terrorism](#)

Ashworth, Scott, Joshua Clinton, Adam Meirowitz and Kristopher W. Ramsay (2008), "[Design, Inference, and the Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism: A Rejoinder](#)," Princeton.

Week 11. Terrorism and Rational Choice

Berrebi, Claude, 2009, "[The Economics of Terrorism and Counterterrorism: What Matters, and is Rational-Choice Theory Helpful?](#)", in Social Science for Counterterrorism, Paul K. Davis and Kim R. Cragin, eds.

Seminar for week 11.

Lemann, Nicholas, (2010), "[Terrorism Studies](#)," *The New Yorker*, April 26.