

Course Outline for Economics of Conflict – EC3321

Course Code and Title

Economics of Conflict EC3321

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. Assess the economic costs 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 dictatorship, repression and the relationship between conflict and development.

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 able to evaluate the existing attempts researchers have made for measuring the costs of conflict
- Be conversant with the research frontier in conflict economics
- Have developed well-articulated views on policy toward conflicts
- Have well-formed views on dictatorship, repression and the relationship between conflict and development.

Course Delivery

The course will be delivered through ten one-hour lectures and nine one-hour seminars. I will present the more difficult conceptual issues in lectures while the seminars will be structured discussions. I will post my lecture notes on my personal web page <http://www2.rhbnc.ac.uk/~uhte014/> along with other course materials. Students should also consult <http://personal.rhul.ac.uk/pkte/126/Pages/ccar.htm> which is a web site on conflict that some of us in the department maintain.

I will be available for consultation (either by you individually, or in small groups) during advertised office hours or by appointment.

Assessment

- 2-hour unseen examination, which contributes 100% of the final mark and is taken during the summer term. The exam will consist of one mandatory question plus two from four additional questions.
- Formative assessment will consist of two in-seminar tests. The dates for these are laid out in the current Student Handbook. You will be provided with standardized feedback on these pieces of work.

Reading

The books, *Breaking the Conflict Trap*, The World Bank, 2003, and Bates, R. H. 2001, *Prosperity and Violence. The Political Economy of Development*, New York, Norton, can be purchased at the College bookstore. They are also on short loan in the library along with all the other course materials. When material can be downloaded from the web I indicate this below (to be completed near the beginning of the course).

Weekly Timetable

Week 1 – Cross-country conflict data

At the end of the end of this week students should understand the basis for big cross-sectional studies of civil conflict.

Reading

Bethany Lacina and Gleditsch, N. P., “Monitoring Trends in Global Combat: A New Dataset of Battle-deaths,” <http://www.prio.no/cscw/cross/battledeaths>.

Restrepo, J. M. Spagat and J Vargas, 2004, “The Severity of the Colombian Conflict: Cross-Country Datasets vs. New Micro Data,” unpublished manuscript, personal web site.

Week 2 – The World Bank Report

At the end of this unit students should have a basic understanding of why civil war matters.

Reading

Breaking the Conflict Trap, The World Bank, 2003, pp. 1-50.

Week 3 – The World Bank Report

At the end of this unit you have a basic understanding of what fuels civil wars.

Reading

Breaking the Conflict Trap, The World Bank, 2003, pp. 51-118.

Week 4 – The World Bank Report

At the end of this unit you have a basic understanding of the prospects of possible policy interventions for peace.

Reading

Breaking the Conflict Trap, The World Bank, 2003, pp. 119-186.

Week 5 – Micro Data on Colombia

At the end of this unit you should understand the micro approach to conflict data gathering and have a good understanding of the Colombian conflict.

Reading

Restrepo, J. M. Spagat and J Vargas, 2004, "The Dynamics of the Colombian Civil Conflict: A New Dataset," forthcoming in *Homo Oeconomicus*.

Restrepo, J. and M. Spagat, "The Colombian Conflict: Uribe's First 17 Months," unpublished manuscript, 2004, personal web site.

Week 6 – Theory of Conflict

At the end of this unit you should understand the mechanics of some simple economic models of conflict.

Reading

Hirshleifer, J., 1991, "The Paradox of Power," *Economics and Politics*, 3, pp. 177-200.

Daniel Mejía, 2004, "Conflict and Economic Growth: A Survey," unpublished manuscript, course web site..

Week 7 – Logic of Violence in Civil War

At the end of this unit you should understand some of the reasons my armed groups chose particular forms of violence.

Reading

Kalyvas, S. 2001, "The Logic of Violence in Civil War: Theory and Preliminary Empirical Results," unpublished manuscript, <http://www.duke.edu/web/licep/1/kalyvas/kalyvaspaper.pdf>.

Restrepo, J. and M. Spagat, "Civilian Casualties in the Colombian Conflict: A New Approach to Human Security," unpublished manuscript, personal web site.

Week 8 – Dictatorship

At the end of this unit students should have basic understanding of some economic approaches to dictatorship.

Reading

Wintrobe, Ronald, 2002, "Dictatorship," unpublished manuscript, http://publish.uwo.ca/~rwintrob/WorkingPapers/DICTATORSHIP_SURVEY.pdf.

Week 9 - Dynamics of Protest and Repression

At the end of this unit students should understand the main empirical patterns of protest and repression as well as a sense of what economic models of repression might look like.

Reading

Goldstone, J.A. and C. Tilly, 2000, "Threat (And Opportunity): Popular Action and State Response in the Dynamics of Contentious Action," in *Voice and Silence in Contentious Politics*, by Ron Aminzade, et. al. Cambridge University Press.

Restrepo, J. and M. Spagat, "The Dynamics of Repressive Dictatorships," unpublished manuscript, personal web site.

Week 10 – Conflict and Development

At the end of this unit you should have some understanding of the links between conflict and development.

Reading

Bates, R. H. 2001, *Prosperity and Violence. The Political Economy of Development*, New York, Norton.