
PLSC 380X
Political Economy of Development and Violence

Term: Winter 2016
Location: Online, Distance Learning

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🌐 [Blackboard](#)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Why do states form, and why do existing states sometimes fail? Why do some societies resort to violence, when peace and prosperity are much more desirable? This course is designed as a survey of development, social organization, and the logic of violence in obtaining political and economic outcomes; it addresses why some societies prosper and others fail. Topics covered in this course include: privatized protection, anarchy and the foundations of the modern state, democracy and dictatorship, political order and change, institutional development, property rights, and war in the modern international system.

Learning Objectives:

- Students will develop an understanding of social scientific research, and will be able to apply this understanding to several important issues in the study of development and political violence.
- Students will build on basic causal mechanisms that will be a complement to more advanced, specialized topics in world politics and comparative politics at the same course level. Accordingly, students will follow principles of the scientific method in order to construct and evaluate causal theories beyond the material presented in the course. This includes using theories and empirical evidence to make decisions about policy.
- Students will develop an understanding of preferences and self-interest, as well as constraints that shape individuals' decisions. Thus, by the end of the course, students will be able to apply their understanding of preferences and constraints to analyze the effects of government policies and decisions, and make more informed and efficient choices in their own lives. This is, by far, the most important learning objective of the course.
- Students will hone their persuasive writing skills by constructing clear and precise arguments. In the process, students will make linkages between course readings, as well as develop constructive criticism of others' scholarship.

READINGS

Readings for the course will consist of books and a set of articles (listed by topic below). Articles and selected chapters will be posted in the appropriate topic folder in the **Content** section on Blackboard. The readings listed below use the following abbreviations (listed in **bold** after the citation):

- (R): Book is required.
 - (B): Available online on Blackboard.
 - (Y): Video lecture on YouTube and Blackboard.
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REQUIRED BOOKS

- Bates, Robert H. 2008. *When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late-Century Africa*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
– Referred to as: **Bates (2008)**
- Gambetta, Diego. 1996. *The Sicilian Mafia: The Business of Private Protection*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
– Referred to as: **Gambetta**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Read the Syllabus! The syllabus is for the benefit of the class; it informs you about required readings, grading expectations, course policies, how to contact me, required assignments, and any other general information pertaining to this class. Besides attending class, most important to the course is keeping up with the reading material and being able to assess and compare the theoretical arguments you encounter in the literature. So the most important thing you must do is keep up with the reading.

Grading: Students will be assessed according to the following Binghamton University grade scale:

A (93–100)	A– (90–92)	B+ (87–89)	B (83–86)	B– (80–82)
C+ (77–79)	C (73–76)	C– (70–72)	D (66–69)	F (≤ 65)

Final grades are rounded to whole numbers, where $\geq \#.5$ is rounded up and $\leq \#.4\bar{9}$ is rounded down. Grades for the class will be based on the following points system:

Critical Review Papers (1pg.)	◇	$2 \times 75 = 150$
Quizzes (best 10 out of 11)	◇	$10 \times 30 = 300$
Online Participation	◇	$5 \times 50 = 250$
+ Final Examination	◇	300
Total	◇	$1000/10 = 100\%$

Quizzes: There will be a total of 11 quizzes during the semester, each of which will be taken online. Quizzes will be posted in advance of their deadlines, so students are free to get as far ahead as they like. I will count the best 10 out of 11 quizzes, which means that I drop the lowest quiz. The total points possible from quizzes is 300, so each quiz is worth 30 final grade points towards the 1000 total possible points. Each quiz will have 6 questions, worth 5 points each. Students will have 12 minutes to take each quiz, and may only attempt each quiz once. All quiz questions are multiple choice, where the student must select the best answer to the question. There will be no make ups for these quizzes.

Because this is a three week course, the quizzes will be mainly based on the assigned readings and video lectures for the topic the quiz appears under, with a smaller part being cumulative up to that day of the course. The quizzes will assess your general knowledge of the readings and video lectures. Some questions will require you to identify a term that describes the passage; some will require you to do the reverse; and finally, some questions will require you to make inferences about a passage (e.g. what would Bates say about the problem identified in the passage). Students will have until 9:00am EST on the day after the

topic to complete the quiz. Once the deadline passes, that's it. You will be accountable for missing any of the quizzes, and no excuses will be accepted.

So for example:

- **Quiz 1** is posted on Jan. 06 → must be attempted by 9:00am EST on Jan. 07
- **Quiz 3** is posted on Jan. 08 → must be attempted by 9:00am EST on Jan. 09 (which is a Saturday)

The quizzes are open notebook, but I strongly encourage you to be prepared ahead of time, and to not rely on scanning through a lecture video to find an answer. Any suspicion of collaboration between students will be punished accordingly (see below).

Participation: Students are required to participate in online discussion in all three weeks. The purpose of online discussion for this class is to have students interact with one another by responding to questions the instructor proposes and commenting on other students' posts/responses. Online discussion will be as follows:

- There will be a total of 5 discussion questions across the three weeks of the course that are relevant to the readings or other material assigned for the course. The instructor's questions may include a short assigned reading (e.g. an article from *The Economist*). There will be 2 discussion questions in **each** of the first two weeks, and 1 discussion question in the third week of the course (5 total).
- Students will post a response to **each** of the 5 questions I propose.
 - Students' responses to **each** question (2 in the first week, 2 in the second week, and 1 in the third week) are due on Wednesday of every week (25 points).
- Students must respond to 1 other student's post for **each** of the 2 questions I propose (2 total responses per week to others' posts).
- Responses to others' posts are due on Friday of each week (25 points). Responses to other students must do one of the following to receive credit:
 - **Critique:** This type of response will provide constructive criticism of the post, with an eye on improving the argument or evidence presented in the post.
 - **Challenge:** This type of response will provide a counter-argument and evidence that challenges a post.
 - **Expand:** This type of response will take an existing post and build on it by applying the argument to another case.

Posts and responses will each be 250 words or less, and will be graded on the following criteria.

- (25) Observant and thoughtful attention to the theories, arguments, and evidence presented in the readings and lectures; original ideas; clear and carefully written.
- (20) Clear ideas, thorough coverage, and solid presentation of argument and evidence.
- (15) Minimal performance that covers the basics of the assignment, but just barely.
- (10) A summary of the reading only.
- (5) Post or response is completed on time, but with no evidence that the student read or thought about the assignment.
- (0) Post or response is incomplete or submitted after the deadline.

Response Papers: During the semester, students will write 2 short response papers, each worth 75 final grade points. Students will be expected to write their paper based on the following document format (no exceptions):

- Computer typed
- 12-point font
- Times New Roman typeface
- Single-spaced text
- One-inch page margins on all four sides
- Less than or equal to one 8.5×11 inch page

Each response paper will consist of 3 paragraphs, and deviations will face penalties. A comprehensive survey of the assignment will be posted on Blackboard. But as a brief description, the 3 paragraphs will be written about the following:

Paragraph 1: Abstract of assigned reading: Provide a comprehensive, thematic summary of the reading, its argument, and contribution to the theme of the course. This is not a mechanical outline of what the author said, nor is it a replication of the reading's abstract. You should begin by addressing the thematic question the author is trying to answer. An excellent way to start this paragraph is: "Author (date) addresses the question of . . ." Remember that the course topic that the reading is listed under does not equal the question the reading is trying to answer. Moving forward, spell out the approach the author uses to address the question, the main argument, and empirical evidence. *Note:* This is no easy task, but mastering this will help you develop skills transferable to the final examination (as well as other writing-intensive courses).

Paragraph 2: Integration with other course materials: Provide a linkage to another topic we've discussed on the syllabus. What does this reading tell us that is similar to something else we've discussed and read; what does it tell us that is different?

Paragraph 3: Your suggestion for improvement and extension: Provide a discussion about what could be challenged and improved about the reading and why? Do not critique something without either providing a solution or an alternative. For example, saying that a certain method of analysis is bad is not a constructive critique. A thoughtful, constructive critique will provide an alternative or a solution that is well thought out, and perhaps even borrows from another reading. Finally, what guidance will this reading have for policy implications?

You may choose any reading, article or chapter, on the syllabus, and may use any other reading from the syllabus to make your integration paragraph. Note that students may not use readings posted for discussion. The purpose of these assignments is to use constraints on formatting and content that are aimed at making thoughtful, polished papers that are clear and to the point. Papers are due at 5:00pm EST on the specified due dates.

Note: Students are encouraged to write a practice critical review, which I will treat as an ungraded assignment, giving comments and a "hypothetical," yet realistic grade as if I were actually grading the review. The practice review is entirely optional.

Final Examination: There will be a final examination, consisting of an essay question or two, to be announced. Students will be expected to make clear and concise arguments that address the contents of the question(s), and will know of the question the day before the final exam due date. The essay question(s) will require students to take their knowledge of the course material, and apply it to question(s). The critical review assignments and discussion posts will greatly help students prepare for the final exam.

A copy of the final examination will be on Blackboard. It is open book/open notes, just not open collaboration! You will have until 5:00pm EST on Jan. 22 to take the examination. Exams submitted after the deadline will receive a failing grade, so students are expected to keep track of the time.

Examination answers **MUST** be submitted as a Word or Pages document to the Turnitin link on Blackboard before the deadline. While the examination is open book/notes, please keep in mind that you are still accountable for maintaining academic honesty, which includes citations for referenced material.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Students will be expected to fully understand the implications of turning in their assignments late. No excuses will be accepted for late assignments, as students can submit assignments at any time before the due date, if they choose to do so. If an emergency arises, creating a situation where an assignment cannot be completed by the deadline, students are required to submit the work they have at the time of the emergency. Send me an email with the assignment as an attachment (kmackey1@binghamton.edu). I will judge the quality of the work, given the emergency. Keep in mind that I will need some sort of proof that an emergency occurred. Absent of an emergency, **all** late assignments and assessments will be penalized according to the following procedure:

Any assignment submitted past the deadline will receive a grade of 0 points

Failure to complete any of the assignments for the course implies more than just a zero for that assignment. Students are required to complete all **graded** and **ungraded** assignments. **Failure to submit all assignments (late or on time) will result in an F for the entire course, regardless of your overall grade in the class.**

COURSE OUTLINE

Date	Topic	Assigned Material
Jan. 04	Course Introduction	Read Course Syllabus ^(B) Read Critical Review Guideline ^(B)
Jan. 05	Development and Governance ** Add/Drop Deadline **	Read Olson (1993) ^(B) Watch Roving-versus-Stationary Bandits ^(Y) Watch Principle-Agent Relations ^(Y) Watch <i>Godfather</i> clip ^(Y)
Jan. 06	Origins of Modern States Quiz 1	Read Bates (2010) Ch. 3 ^(B) Watch The Privatization of Violence ^(Y) Watch The Origin of Modern States ^(Y)
Jan. 07	Resources and Political Conflict Quiz 2	Read Smith (2008) ^(B) Watch Selectorate Theory ^(Y) Watch The Resource Curse ^(Y)
Jan. 08	Power and Political Change Quiz 3	Read Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) ^(B) Watch Commitment Problems ^(Y) Watch The Inefficient Use of Power and Economic Development ^(Y)
Jan. 11	State Failure I Quiz 4	Read Bates (2008), Ch. 1–3 ^(R) Watch Anarchy-versus-Hierarchy ^(Y) Watch The Prisoners' Dilemma ^(Y) Watch Political Interests ^(Y)
Jan. 12	State Failure II Quiz 5 Critical Review 1 Due (5:00pm EST)	Read Bates (2008), Ch. 4–5 ^(R) Watch The Politics of Control Regimes ^(Y) Watch Investment in Capital ^(Y)
Jan. 13	State Failure III Quiz 6 ** Academic Withdrawal Deadline **	Read Bates (2008), Ch. 6–7 ^(R) Video Lectures TBA
Jan. 14	Wealth and Destruction Quiz 7	Read Leeson (2014) ^(B) Watch Conspicuous Destruction ^(Y)

Date	Topic	Assigned Material
Jan. 15	Governance and Civil War Quiz 8	Read Walter (2015) ^(B) Watch Economic Downturns and Civil War ^(Y) Watch Rebel Disarmament and Civil War ^(Y) Watch Governance and Civil War ^(Y)
Jan. 18	A Market for Protection I Quiz 9	Read Gambetta, Ch. 1–3 ^(R) Watch Adverse Selection ^(Y) Watch Adverse Selection with Privately Supplied Violence ^(Y)
Jan. 19	A Market for Protection II Quiz 10	Read Gambetta, Ch. 4–6 ^(R) Watch Ownership and Succession ^(Y) Video Lectures TBA
Jan. 20	A Market for Protection III Quiz 11 Critical Review 2 Due (5:00pm EST)	Read Gambetta, Ch. 7–9 ^(R) Video Lectures TBA
Jan. 21	Preparation Day	Please Read and Prepare for the Final Examination ^(B)
Jan. 22	Final Examination (Due 5:00pm EST)	

Gen. Ed. Requirements: This course satisfies the Social Science N requirement. Students in N courses will demonstrate: (1) Knowledge of major concepts, models, and issues (and their interrelationships) of at least one of the social sciences: anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, or sociology; (2) An understanding of the methods used by social scientists to explore social phenomena, including, when appropriate to the discipline, observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and analysis by mathematics or other interpretive frameworks.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism and cheating are serious matters that, should they occur, will be pursued to the limits of University rules. Moreover, academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade for the course. For details regarding the University's policy on cheating and plagiarism and academic dishonesty more generally, see the University Handbook.

Course Material: Students are advised to **retain all course material** for all course work for **two weeks** after final grades are received. This includes: returned assignments, Turnitin email receipts, and electronic versions of written assignments. I will not consider any grading questions without evidence of the assignment. All writing assignments are to be submitted through Turnitin.

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities should register with the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (607.777.2686), University Union (Room 119), ssd@binghamton.edu. Extra time and necessary arrangements can be made in conjunction with that office and the instructor.

Course Website/Syllabus: Please visit the course website on Blackboard; I'll update it weekly with electronic versions of the chapters from books that are not listed as *required* for the course. Students will be expected to find articles through the [Binghamton Libraries](#) website. The online version of the syllabus is the official syllabus for this course as it is updated periodically. I reserve the exclusive right to alter the syllabus if I feel such changes are necessary for the class. Visit the course website to view the most recent version of the syllabus (updated date is located at the lower right corner of the document). You will be notified in your Binghamton email of any changes to the syllabus. **YOU** as the student are responsible for having the most updated copy of this document, and I will make sure you are notified of any changes.

Internet Access & Assignments: Failure to complete an assignment because of a faulty or lacking internet signal will not be excused. Assignment dates and times are posted well in advance, and it is your responsibility to ensure that you will have adequate access to Blackboard during those and other times required to fulfill assignment requirements, if necessary.

Assignment Extensions: No extensions will be allowed for any assignment, as all assignments are posted well in advance of the due date. Students are expected to know the deadlines and complete all assignments by their due date, preparing in advance for any unforeseen events that may fall around the assignment deadline. I will not respond to extension requests, and **no** excuses will be accepted.

Incompletes: I will not give a final grade of Incomplete. All work must be submitted before the end of the semester.

Extra Credit: No extra credit assignments will be provided for this course; I will not respond to requests.