COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

If—as Carl von Clausewitz famously put it—war is “a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means,” then the targeting and killing of civilians in war is often “a continuation of war by other means.” Noncombatants historically have comprised half of all war deaths, a statistic which shows few signs of changing in civilians’ favor. Indeed, more civilians were killed in twentieth century armed conflicts than in any previous century, and noncombatants have been the primary targets and suffered the vast majority of the deaths in several recent conflicts, such as the civil war in Darfur. What explains this carnage? Why do states and rebel groups put civilians in the cross-hairs in some wars but not others? What norms and laws protect civilians from harm, and why do they seem to be observed so rarely? What are some of the major cases of violence against civilians in the last one hundred years and why did they occur? Does targeting civilians help belligerents achieve their political or military goals? What leads people to participate in violence against noncombatants?

This course aims to answer some of these questions by examining the normative, ethical, and legal prohibitions against harming noncombatants and how they arose; the major social science theories for explaining the occurrence and effectiveness of large-scale violence against civilians in wartime; and a close study of several prominent cases of wartime victimization of noncombatants. The course begins by seeking a definition of civilians/noncombatants; it then proceeds to examine the origins of the principle of noncombatant immunity and how it eventually became codified as an international norm and the subject of increasingly specific international law. The second section of the course turns to theories of large-scale violence against noncombatants, examining a number of independent variables that have been used to explain why states or rebel groups target civilians: regime type, barbaric images of the enemy as sub-human or outside of the boundaries of civilization, military culture, parochial organizational interests in the military, the dynamics of guerrilla warfare, cost-aversion and casualty-sensitivity, desperation to achieve victory, and territorial annexation. After a brief section on whether civilian victimization is effective for achieving belligerents’ political/military goals, the course analyzes several cases of civilian victimization in detail in order to ascertain which factors led to the targeting of noncombatants and whether targeting civilians helped or hindered the perpetrators’ war effort. Finally, the class concludes by examining theories of individual participation in mass killing and how these theories apply to cases of massacre. Although civilian victimization is an ancient as well as a modern practice, most of the cases examined are from the last one hundred years, spanning colonial/imperial wars, the two World Wars, wars of decolonization, as well as recent counterinsurgency campaigns and ethnic killings.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course is organized into two one-hour and fifteen minute lecture/discussion periods each week. Grades will be based on the following set of criteria:

- **Attendance/Participation** (15%): Students are expected to attend all class meetings, do all of the required reading before each session, and be able to participate in discussion.
- **Midterm Examination** (20%): Thursday, October 14. In-class, closed-book essay exam covering the first two sections of the course.
- **Final Examination** (30%): Saturday, December 18, 7-10PM. Cumulative, closed-book final exam, consisting of identifications and essays, emphasizing the last three sections of the course. Students must take the exams on these dates/times unless they have an official Dean’s Excuse.
- **Research Paper** (35%): 15-20 pages, hard copy due in class on Thursday, December 9. See below for more details. **Papers sent by e-mail will not be accepted without prior authorization.**
A. Downes  POLSCI 186  Fall 2010

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to comply with the Duke Community Standard in their work for this course, meaning that you will not lie, cheat, steal, or otherwise conduct yourselves dishonorably, and will do something if you observe others engaging in such conduct (see http://www.registrar.duke.edu/bulletins/communitystandard/; for specific definitions, see http://www.studentaffairs.duke.edu/conduct/resources/academicdishonesty). All work you submit for this course must be your own. I will not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty. Suspected cases will be referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs. If you have questions about what constitutes proper use of published or unpublished sources, please consult “Plagiarism: Its Nature and Consequences” on the Duke Library website (http://www.library.duke.edu/research/citing/plagiarism.html), or ask the instructor.

OTHER POLICIES

- Late papers will be accepted only in cases of extraordinary personal or family emergency; if you find yourself in such a situation, consult the instructor as soon as possible
- Laptops are allowed in class for note-taking purposes, not for checking e-mail or surfing the web
- The only cell phones allowed in class are those that have been turned off

RESEARCH PAPER

Students are required to write a research paper of 15 double-spaced pages on a topic of their choice related to civilian victimization. In past years, most papers have chosen particular cases or campaigns of civilian victimization and sought to explain why they occurred. Others have looked at certain states or rebel groups and tried to explain consistency or variation in their treatment of civilians. Still other papers have investigated the origins of suicide terrorism, the effectiveness of civilian victimization, or compared Muslim and Christian views regarding morally permissible behavior in war. The topic, question, or case you write about is largely up to you, subject to three caveats: (1) it must be about some aspect of civilian victimization or the fate of noncombatants in armed conflict; (2) it must be approved by the instructor; and (3) it should not be a case we have examined in class (unless specific permission is received).

For papers about the causes of civilian victimization—the most common type of paper—there are several potential research designs. One approach, for example, is to test at least two theories against evidence from a single case to determine which theory (or combination of theories) provides the best explanation for why civilian victimization did or did not occur in that case. These single-case studies can also be divided up into several segments or decision points, a process which multiplies the number of observations and permits comparisons across time. A second method is to test one theory against evidence from at least two cases to see how well the theory holds up in multiple instances. This design permits interesting across-case comparisons, but also requires greater historical knowledge on the part of the researcher. A third approach is to identify and try to explain puzzling variation in outcomes: why here and not there? Why this time but not that time? This method involves the comparison of at least two cases, one positive and one negative, and tries to locate the source of the divergence in outcome. Finally, students can also compare cases that appear quite different at first glance but have the same outcome. Why do such seemingly divergent cases end up turning out the same? Research design and other issues regarding the paper will be discussed in class on October 19.

In past years, papers written for POLSCI 186 have been selected for inclusion in the Duke Journal of Politics, the department’s journal of undergraduate research, and the Duke Journal of Public Affairs in the Sanford School of Public Policy. The authors of these works consulted between a dozen and two dozen sources of information each, and also used multiple types of information: secondary historical and analytical works, journal articles, newspapers, and reports by human rights organizations. Other papers used primary sources, such as U.S. government documents posted on web resources like the Foreign Relations of the United States (http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus) or the National Security Archive (http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv). This is not a paper, in other words, that can be written in a few days using one or two books. Nor can good papers be written simply by combing the internet: students must also consult reputable, scholarly, printed sources.
It is imperative to begin thinking about your paper topic early in the semester. To get the ball rolling, students will turn in a 1-page single-spaced memo (in hard copy) at the beginning of class on Thursday, September 23. This memo should answer the following questions:

- What is the question you intend to answer in your paper?
- What potential hypotheses or explanations have you identified?
- What potential sources of information and evidence have you identified? Include a short bibliography.

Memos will not be graded, but must be approved by the instructor for students to proceed. All students will meet individually with the instructor after Fall Break to discuss their proposed topic. Students who would like help with their writing—especially those who have not written a paper of this length before—are encouraged to consult the Duke University Writing Studio (http://uwp.duke.edu/writing-studio) for assistance. I am unable to read entire rough drafts, but will read and comment on short sections (up to 5 pages) of papers.

**BOOKS**

The following books have been ordered and are available at the Duke University Textbook Store in the Bryan Center. They are also on reserve at Perkins Library.


**ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS**

Many of the readings for the course are articles or book chapters. Some of these are available online via databases accessible through the Duke University Library. These are indicated by the word “online” in parentheses after the citations below. To retrieve these articles, go to the Duke Library’s web site, select “E-journals,” search on the journal name, and follow a link (sometimes there are several) that includes the date of the article you want. Many other selections, however, are on E-Reserve, indicated by the term “e-res” after the citation. These texts are easily obtained through the Blackboard site that has been established for the class. Click on “Blackboard” from the library’s main page, log in, go to the page for this class, and click on “E-Reserves” on the left side of the screen. Articles and chapters are posted by the author’s last name and the first few words of the title. You may also search Course Reserves on the library’s web site to retrieve E-Reserve material. Readings for a few class sessions will be posted on Blackboard under the heading “Course Documents” when available.
COURSE SCHEDULE

1. **Introduction and Course Overview**
   - No assigned readings

2. **No Class: American Political Science Association Annual Meeting**
   - Get started on readings for September 7

**Part I. Normative and Legal Protections for Noncombatants**

3. **War by Other Means?**

4. **Defining Civilians/Noncombatants**

5. **Origins of Noncombatant Immunity**
6. **Legal Codifications of Noncombatant Immunity**


7. **Arguments About the Morality of Killing Civilians**


**Part II. Theories of Civilian Victimization**

8. **Regime Type**


9. **Race and Identity**

- Mann, *Dark Side of Democracy*, 1-33.
- Tanisha Fazal and Brooke Greene, “A Particular Difference: European Identity and Compliance with *Jus in Bello,*” manuscript, Columbia University (Blackboard).

10. **Organization Theory**

11. **Desperation and Annexation**  
October 5  
- Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War*, read 1-56, 180-183; skim 57-82.  

12. **Guerrilla Warfare/Insurgency**  
October 7  

13. **FALL BREAK: NO CLASS**  
October 12

14. **MIDTERM EXAM**  
October 14

15. **Research Papers in Political Science**  
October 19  
- Readings TBD

**Part IV. Does Civilian Victimization Work?**  
October 21

16. **Assessing the Effectiveness of Targeting Civilians**  

17. **Assessing the Effectiveness of Terrorism**  
October 26  
Part IV. Historical Cases

A. CONVENTIONAL WARS OF ATTRITION

18. World War I: Starvation Blockades October 28
   • Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War*, 83-114.

19. World War II: The Bombing of Germany November 2

20. World War II: The Bombing of Japan November 4
   • Thomas R. Searle, “‘It Made a Lot of Sense to Kill Skilled Workers’: The Firebombing of Tokyo in March 1945,” *Journal of Military History* 66, no. 1 (January 2002): 103-133 (online).
   • Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War*, 115-141.

B. COUNTERINSURGENCY

21. The Boer War November 9
   • Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War*, 156-177.

22. France in Algeria November 11
   • Aussaresses, *Battle of the Casbah*, all.
   • Movie, time TBA: *The Battle of Algiers*

23. Darfur November 16
C. CLEANSING

24. World War I: The Armenians
   November 18
   - Valentino, *Final Solutions*, 152-166.

25. World War II: The Killing Machine
   November 23
   - Valentino, *Final Solutions*, 166-178.
   - Mann, *Dark Side of Democracy*, 180-211.

26. THANKSGIVING RECESS: NO CLASS
   November 25

27. Rwanda
   November 30
   - Mann, *Dark Side of Democracy*, 428-73.
   - Movie, time TBA: *Hotel Rwanda* or *Sometime in April*

Part V. Individual Participation

28. Theories of Individual Participation
   December 2

29. One Morning in Josefow: Reserve Police Battalion 101 in Poland
   December 7
   - Browning, *Ordinary Men*, all.

30. Course Wrap-Up
    December 9
    *Final Papers Due*

31. FINAL EXAM, 7-10PM
    December 18