

Master Research Project: Civil Conflicts

Title Course

Civil Conflicts

Credits

30 EC

Instruction language

English

Time Period(s)

2019, Semester 2

Blocks 4-6

Instructor

Dr. Mike Medeiros

REC B10.05

Meetings via appt: m.medeiros@uva.nl

Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes

Students will develop the ability to:

- Evaluate social science research related to the study of civil conflicts.
- Analyse past and present cases of civil conflicts.
- Articulate specific research questions and formulate hypotheses to answer them.
- Create research designs that incorporate quantitative and/or qualitative methods to evaluate empirical evidence and test hypotheses.
- Communicate their research conclusions, as well as their theoretical, methodological, and empirical underpinnings, to a non-specialist academic audience in both speech and writing.
- Write an academic-level article.

Course Content

Civil conflicts are a prominent demonstration of intergroup tensions. Civil conflicts can have dire consequences, representing a threat to social stability and harmonious social relations. They can manifest themselves in non-violent protests or can escalate to all-out war.

The course will explore the following questions: Why do civil conflicts occur? What explains variations in their level of intensity? Why can civil conflicts escalate into violence? How can civil conflicts be resolved?

The course will introduce students to a variety of concepts, theories and methodological approaches that will allow them to gain a profound understanding of the civil conflict phenomena. The course will be organised around three dimensions of civil conflicts: onset, dynamics, and resolution. The course will challenge students to evaluate critically how well social science research explains a range of civil conflicts with diverging levels of intensity from different regions and time periods.

The course will also guide students in developing research questions and theoretical frameworks as well as the empirical analysis of cases.

Teaching methods/learning formats

The course will be taught in the form of a seminar. The sessions will primarily consist of plenary discussions among the students. Therefore, students are expected to prepare for each class by 1) critically reading the assigned literature and 2) formulating questions and topics that they would like to introduce to the discussions.