Political Science 7941: Civil War
Fall 2012
Class Meetings: Tuesday 9-11:50
Class Location: 210 Stubbs
Professor: David Sobek (dsobek@lsu.edu)  Office Phone:  578-2134
Office Location: Stubbs 211  Office Hours:  Thursday 9:00-10:00
                                Wednesday 9:00-10:00

Summary:
Civil war research is a broad and diverse literature both in terms of research questions and methodological approaches. In terms of research questions, these range from why civil wars begin to how long they last to their effects on the state, society, and economy. Methodologically, researchers have used qualitative, quantitative, game theoretical, and simulations in their attempts to answer these questions. The goal of this course is to provide you with an in depth knowledge of the most frequently asked research question (the onset of civil wars) and expose you to the range of methods. The literature is much broader than the onset of civil war but a deep dive into this question should provide you with the skills to understand the other questions that surround civil wars.

Course Requirements:
Attendance and Participation (20%): Attendance and participation account for 20% of your final grade. It is vitally important for you to come to class prepared, i.e. having carefully read the assignments. Simply showing up for class is not sufficient. You will need to consistently contribute to class discussion in order to satisfy the participation aspect of this part of your grade.

2 Reviews and Presentations (25% each): Two times in the semester you will be required to do an in depth analysis of the readings and the topic of the week (about 5 pages in length). During these weeks you need to prepare a summary of the topic, which would include a discussion of the required readings as well as a minimum of 8 additional articles (a book would count as 4 articles). The goal of this review is to be able to present both the basic literature on the topic as well as highlight the important research questions that are left unanswered. You will also be expected to present a summary of this to the class (about 10-15 minutes). The written reviews need to be sent to me by 5:00 PM the Monday before the class.

Paper Assignment (30%—5% research question and 25% paper): During the semester you will be required to write one 18-22 page research paper (due last week of class). This paper is essentially the first half of what would be in a research paper. You will be required to have a literature review, theory section, and research design. You do not need to analyze the data but it has to be a “doable” analysis. If your paper is of sufficient quality and you wish to continue the project, we can discuss an independent study for the spring semester where you would complete the paper and submit it for publication. As part of the writing process you will be require to write a one page summary of the research question (due to me on week 7) and present it to the class (on week 8).
Required Books:


Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: Where are we now?

Traditional Explanations of Civil Wars
Week 3: Wealth and Civil War

Week 4: Resource Curse, Part 1

Week 5: Resource Curse, Part 2

Week 6: Greed Versus Grievance

Week 7: Ethnic Conflict, Part I

Research question due to me.
Week 8: Ethnic Conflict, Part II

Research questions presented to the class.

The State and Civil War
Week 9: The Type of State

Week 10: The Strength of State, part 1

Week 11: The Strength of State, part 2

New Direction of Civil War Research
Week 12: A Climate for Violence, Part II
Special Issue on Climate Change and Conflict. 2012. *Journal of Peace Research*. 49(4)

Week 13: Will Fight for Food
Week 14: Micro-Foundations of Civil War, Part I

Week 15: Micro-Foundations of Civil War, Part II
Paper due.