Course Description
This is a research and writing (intensive) seminar, focused on the sources, nature, and politics of ethnic conflict, beginning with an exploration of alternative analytical perspectives on these issues. The course examines the means by which political leaders manage (and mismanage) such conflicts, based on comparative study of cases of ethnic conflict, focusing on the experience of democratic states. It is designed for Junior and Senior Politics majors, and others with prior advanced study in comparative politics, history, or political sociology. It is a discussion- and writing-based course with a demanding reading load.

Course Requirements
1. Students must complete the assigned readings in advance of each class and prepare a short (one paragraph – definitely not more than one page) “critical/analytical response” to the reading. These are to be turned in at the end of each class. Each session will begin with a student being asked to initiate discussion of the assigned readings. (Multiple readings mean multiple students will be asked to do this.) The critical/analytical responses are intended to provide students with a basis for contributing to class discussion. Well-informed classroom discussion is required of each student (although not necessarily in every class session). It is highly recommended that students annotate personal copies of, or make notes from the readings. The readings may include contending, competing and opposing perspectives and interpretations. One goal of seminar discussions will be to try to sort these out.

Responses should focus on the nature and/or quality of the argument presented in the reading, including the evidence presented to support the argument. Students are encouraged to reflect on each reading in the context of prior readings and discussions, and especially on the relative merits of varying arguments.

One student will be called upon to initiate discussion of each of the assigned readings.

2. Students must prepare three short essays (not more than three pages each), to be based on the assigned readings (this means you must use, as appropriate, the readings assigned for the course up to that point – including appropriate citation thereof – in constructing your essay). Essay topics are as follows:
   (a) What is ethnic conflict? How does it differ from other politically salient conflicts? Are these differences significant? Due September 17.
(b) Does devolution encourage or moderate ethnic conflict? **Due October 17.**
(c) Why do some ethnic conflicts turn violent? **Due November 7.**

3. A research paper of not more than 12 pages, **including citations and bibliography.** Students are required to identify, in consultation with Professor Burg, a narrowly defined, empirical question about a particular ethnic conflict, to be answered by means of a “case study” of the conflict in question, or a theoretical question to be answered empirically on the basis of evidence from two or more cases. A one paragraph statement of the topic must submitted electronically before class on **September 26.** (NOTE: this is the only written assignment that will be accepted electronically.) Final papers are due in class on **December 10** (last class session). Students are **strongly** encouraged to meet with Prof. Burg to discuss potential topics, bibliography, the rough outline of the paper/argument, etc. as the semester progresses.

4. Twenty-minute in-class presentation of student research (15-minute presentation, 5 minutes of Q&A). Class presentations will begin November 19 (I have reserved six class sessions at the end of the semester for presentations). **Dates of individual presentations to be determined by in-class lottery on November 12.** NOTE: Attendance and attention to the presentations of peers is required, and a sign of mutual respect. Students are free to “trade” presentation dates after the lottery, but must inform Prof. Burg of any such exchanges.

All written assignments must be typewritten, double-spaced in 12-point font (this syllabus is in 12-point), with one-inch margins. Pages must be numbered. Your name, the date, and the title of the assignment **must** appear at the top of the first page (left, or right). Assignments must be submitted in class, in hard copy. No electronic submissions will be accepted.

The **writing assignments** are intended to encourage students to approach reading materials critically, to foster improved research and writing skills, and to serve as a basis for contributing to class discussions. Students are expected to devote careful attention to the technical quality of their written work as well as its substance. **The ability to edit one’s own work is a critical skill.** Technical quality will be a significant determinant of the grade for each assignment. Because this is a **writing intensive (WI) course,** students may revise and re-submit any of the three short assignments (final grade will be average of initial and revised grade). In some cases, an assignment may be returned with the requirement that it be revised and resubmitted (“R&R” grade) for a letter grade. Students unsure of the quality of their writing are advised to bring a draft to the Writing Center for consultation in advance of submitting it.

**Expected workload for this course:**
In addition to three hours of class time per week, success in this class is estimated to require students to spend, on average over the course of the semester, a minimum of 9-10 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, reading responses) and completion of written assignments (short essays and research papers). Research and writing the research paper is very likely to require additional hours of work.
**Learning Goals:**
This course addresses the learning goals established by the Department of Politics (see departmental website for full statement). Specifically, it is designed to encourage and enable students
(a) to think critically about arguments, based on the evaluation of evidence [reading responses and classroom discussions]
(b) to articulate reasoned arguments clearly, both orally and in written form [classroom discussions, written assignments, oral presentation]
(c) to become familiar with a variety of research methods [“case study” readings, “historical/analytical narrative” readings, and readings based on quantitative statistical analysis]
(d) to use the concepts and methods of political science in research and analysis [term paper]

**Academic Honesty**
[The following is a statement of university policy:] *Students are expected to be honest in all academic work.* All written work for this course must include appropriate citation of the sources used. See section 56c ("Avoid Plagiarism") of the *Concise English Handbook* for guidance. The university policy on academic honesty is distributed annually as part of the *Rights and Responsibilities* handbook. *Instances of suspected dishonesty will, without exception, be forwarded to the Office of Student Affairs for possible referral to the Student Judicial System.* Potential sanctions include failure in the course and suspension from the university. If you have any questions about this, please ask.

**Use of cell phones in class is prohibited.**
If you use your phone in class (e.g., texting), you will be asked to leave. If you wish to leave your phone on, in “silent” mode, because of an ongoing emergency situation to which you may need to respond, please speak to me at the start of class to let me know. If you need to respond, please leave the class to do so. If your phone goes off because you forgot to turn it off (we all do it), just apologize and turn it off (and try not to let it happen again!).

**Use of laptops during class is restricted to class-related activity**
This includes, but is not restricted to, note-taking, accessing your annotated version of the assigned reading, source-checking, looking up facts quickly to add to classroom discussion, accessing the latte site in connection with class discussion, etc. Using your laptop for *non-class related activities* (e.g., surfing the web, using Facebook, checking email) is disrespectful to others, denies us the potentially important contribution you otherwise might make to the discussion were you paying attention, and is potentially distracting to those around you. Please do not disrespect others. You will be asked to leave class for “inappropriate use of a laptop”.

**Course Attendance**

*All students are required to attend every class, except in case of illness (especially “flu-like symptoms”!) or a dispensation granted in advance by Prof. Burg. Varsity athletes, debaters, performers, and others with conflicting extra-curricular obligations must seek dispensation from Prof. Burg in advance, and are responsible for making up the work missed (including responses to assigned readings). This includes all student presentation sessions. There is NO flexibility regarding due dates of written assignments.*

*If you miss two class sessions (one week worth of class time) without prior dispensation, you can expect your term grade to be lowered by the equivalent of a “+” or “-” (i.e., a “B” will become a “B-”). Four unexcused absences (two weeks worth) will produce a reduction of a full letter grade.*

**Accommodation of Disabilities**

*If you are a student who needs academic accommodations because of a documented disability, please contact me and present your letter of accommodation as soon as possible. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting academic accommodations, you should contact Academic Services. Letters of accommodation should be presented at the start of the semester to ensure provision of accommodations. Letters must be presented in advance of any exam or test. Accommodations cannot be granted retroactively.*

<http://www.brandeis.edu/acserv/disabilities/faculty.html>

**Evaluation**

*Students enjoy complete academic freedom in the classroom, within the limits defined by the standards of mutual respect and responsible discourse (we will discuss these concepts briefly at the outset of the course).*

*Evaluation will be based on the critical response paragraphs (~10 percent), three assigned essays (~10 percent each), seminar participation (~20 percent), the research study (~30 percent), and the presentation (~10 percent). (“~” means grading will take into account improving performance – “learning” – over time.) The presentation will be evaluated in terms of the quality/substance and organization of the presentation. “Style” should be serious and professional. The exercise is intended to give students experience “presenting” in front of peers, fielding questions (aka “being interrogated”), and leading discussion. Nervousness will not affect the evaluation; lack of preparation will. All written work for this writing intensive course will be evaluated in terms of the technical and stylistic quality of the writing as well as the intellectual substance; i.e., spelling, syntax, word usage, etc. all “count.”*
NOTE: ALL readings are available electronically on the LATTE site for this course.

Schedule of Classes, Readings, and Discussion Topics

Wednesday – August 29

**Introduction to the course and course requirements**
Requirements, expectations, goals of the course
“You are what you write.”
Guidelines for discussion of sensitive issues, criticism, and mutual respect.
What is ethnic conflict? – What we know, …or think we know!

*Handouts*

Monday – September 3 – NO CLASS – Labor Day

Wednesday – September 5

**Alternative explanations for ethnic conflict: primordialism vs. instrumentalism (“rationality”)**

Thursday – September 6 – “BRANDEIS MONDAY”

**Mobilization and ethnic conflict**

Monday – September 10 – NO CLASS – Rosh Hashanah

Wednesday – September 12

**Conflict, or violence?**

Monday – September 17
**ASSIGNED ESSAY (a) DUE TODAY**

**Nationalism in Quebec**

Wednesday – September 19 – NO CLASS – Yom Kippur

Monday – September 24 – NO CLASS – Sukkot

Tuesday – September 25 – “BRANDEIS MONDAY”

**Sources of Support for Quebec Independence**
Matthew Mendelsohn, “Rational Choice and Socio-Psychological Explanation for Opinion on Quebec Sovereignty” *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique* 36, 3 (July - Aug., 2003), pp. 511-537

Wednesday – September 26

**TOPIC OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE TODAY**

**Quebec: why no secession?**

Peter Leslie, “Canada: The Supreme Court Sets Rules for the Secession of Quebec,” *Publius* 29, 2 (Spring, 1999), pp. 135-151.


**Handouts:** data on recent public opinion in Quebec

Monday – October 1 – NO CLASS – Shmini Atzeret
Wednesday – October 3

**Flemings, Walloons and Belgium**


Monday – October 8

**Scottish Independence Movement**


Ben Jackson, “The Political Thought of Scottish Nationalism,” *The Political Quarterly* 85, 1 (Jan-Mar 2014), pp. 50-56

ScotCen Social Research, *Has the Referendum Campaign Made a Difference?*  
**Handouts**: tables from BSA 31 on referendum

Wednesday – October 10

**Spain: Basques, Catalans and Spanish Identity**


Monday – October 15

**Basque v. Catalan nationalism/secessionism**


**Handout**: Multinomial regression tables

Wednesday – October 17

**ASSIGNED ESSAY (b) DUE TODAY**

**Ethnic conflict in India**


**Monday – October 22**

**Managing Conflict in India**


**Wednesday – October 24**

**Sri Lanka: Protracted, Violent Conflict**


**Monday – October 29**

**When negotiations fail: militarized “solutions” to conflict**


**Wednesday – October 31**

**Northern Ireland: Conflict and Settlement**


[pdf on latte, but also available as a library ebook.]


Text of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement online at www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/cds
Monday – November 5

**Northern Ireland: A successful settlement?**


Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, “Paramilitary Groups in Northern Ireland” (19 October 2015)


Wednesday – November 7

**ASSIGNED ESSAY (c) DUE TODAY**

**Possible “solutions:” Power sharing**


Monday – November 12

**LOTTERY FOR DATES OF INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH**

**Possible “solutions:” Devolution**


Wednesday – November 14

**Possible “solutions:” Partition**


Monday – November 19

**Student presentations**

Wednesday – November 21 – NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break
Monday – November 26
   Student presentations

Wednesday – November 28
   Student presentations

Monday – December 3
   Student presentations

Wednesday – December 5
   Student presentations

Monday – December 10 – LAST CLASS
   FINAL PAPER DUE IN CLASS TODAY
   Wrap-up session: Lessons for Managing Ethnic Conflict