Ethnic Conflicts in Comparative Perspective

Dr. Tamir Sorek
Time: Monday 9:35 to 12:35.
Place: 201D Walker Hall
Office hours: 205 Walker Hall, Tuesday, 1:00-2:00.
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Description
This course aims to develop a theoretical and socio-historical understanding of ethnic conflicts. Throughout the course we will discuss the following questions: What do we mean by defining certain conflicts as ‘ethnic’? How does this definition relate to close and related concepts such as ‘nation’, ‘race’, and ‘culture’? How and under which conditions does ‘ethnic’ identification emerge, and under which conditions does a political mobilization of these identities occur? Special attention will be given to the implications of colonial and post-colonial contexts for the emergence and endurance of ethnic conflicts, to the legacy of multi-ethnic states and empires, and to the conflicts between ‘settlers’ and ‘natives’. Theory and reality are interwoven in the course structure. We will learn different theoretical approaches gradually and accumulatively by studying specific case studies in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

Assignments
Reading required items:

- Steve Fenton, Ethnicity (Polity, 2007, 2nd edition)
- James L. Gelvin, The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War (Cambridge University Press, 2014, 3rd edition)
- Items on e-reserve
Participation

Attendance in class is mandatory. Students are expected to show up in class after reading the relevant materials for discussion. Each student will serve as the discussion leader for two class sessions, which will comprise 10% of the final grade (5% for each class session).

Paper

Until 9/22 you are required to submit a paper proposal, including your research question and an initial bibliography (5% of your grade). The paper will be written in one of the following formats: 1) a library research project with a comparative focus; 2) an empirical quantitative research based on existing databases; or 3) an empirical qualitative research based on primary sources (not translations). The expected length depends on the format you choose, but in any case it should not be longer than 3,000 words. By 11/10 submit a first draft of your paper (15% of your grade). This will be an open submission: You should post your work on the course website to enable the other students to read and comment on it. Final submission is due on 12/9 (55% of the final grade).

A movie review
Throughout the semester we will watch several documentaries. You are required to submit a review of one of them no later than 7 days after the screening. A review is not a summary - write your thoughts about the movie using the analytical tools you will acquire in the course. The length of a review should be approximately 400 words (5%).

In-Class paper presentations
During the last meeting, every student will present his/her paper in class (10%)

Grading

1. Leading a discussion on a reading item 10 %
2. Presentation of your own work 10 %
3. Movie review 5 %
4. Defining research question 5 %
3. Paper - first submission 15 %
4. Paper – final submission 55 %
Class schedule and reading assignments

Section 1: Terminology and definitions

8/31: Introduction:
Reading: Fenton (p.1-23): Introduction + ch.1 (Ethnos: Descent and Culture Communities)

9/14: Reading: Fenton (p. 51 to 114): Ch. 3 (The Demise of Race, the Emergence of ‘Ethnic’), Ch. 4 (The Primordialism Debate), Ch. 5 (How Real are Groups?)
Movie: Provos (BBC, 1997).

Section 2: Natives and Settlers

9/21: Northern Ireland
Mulholland, p. 1-124
Movie: Loyalists (BBC, 1997)

9/28: Northern Ireland – continue


10/4: South Africa
Worden, p. 73-166

10/11: South Africa - continue


10/18: Israel/Palestine
Gelvin, (Chs 1,2,3,4).

10/25: Israel/Palestine - continue
Gelvin, Ch. 5-6.

Ch. 1 (pp. 1-13) and 8 (150-182) from: Tamir Sorek, "Arab Soccer in a Jewish State" Cambridge University Press, 2007
Movie: Bridge over the Wadi (Israel 2007).

**Section 3: Former multi-ethnic states and empires**

11/2: **Turkey**


11/9: **Turkey - continue**


Fenton (pp.115-168): Ch.6 (Migration and Ethnicity) and Ch. 7 (Social Conditions of Ethnicity).

11/16: **Former Yugoslavia**


11/23: **Former Yugoslavia - continue**


11/30: **Rwanda**


**Section 4: 12/7 – Students’ presentations**