Course Overview

This course surveys the various sources and forms of identity politics across the world. The course will focus on thematic questions that are essential to understanding various forms of political identity and political mobilization that are pertinent to the developing world such as Asia, Africa and the Middle East as well as Europe and U.S. The issues dealt in the course include nationalism, ethnic and sectarian conflict, culture and democracy, religion and politics, party politics, ethnic/religious minorities, and religious movements.

Ethnic, religious and other forms of identities manifest themselves in various forms of political mobilization and organization in many parts of the world. Political parties in multi-ethnic Malaysia, for example, are primarily based on ethnicity in stark contrast to other Muslim-majority nations such as Indonesia and Pakistan. The onset of a multi-party political system in the post-authoritarian regime in Indonesia has witnessed the emergence of a large number of religious parties. In Europe, growing Muslim immigrant communities have generated heated debates about a range of issues such as secularism, national identity, and constitutional rights of religious freedom.

Why is ethnic and cultural cleavage so salient in political mobilization in some nations but not in others? Why are people willing to die for their faith or ethnicity? Why have some nations experienced a number of ethnic and religious conflicts while others have not? Do these variations in outcomes across countries in the region have to do with culture, institutions, or other structural factors?

This course will offer students analytical tools and theoretical approaches to analyze such issues of political and policy significance from comparative perspectives. Students will learn how to account for various patterns of experiences across place and across time under investigation while exploring appropriate research methodologies to answer relevant questions.
Course readings are chosen based on the merits of their analytical arguments rather than their country coverage, and combine theoretical literature and case studies from various countries and regions. The readings are intended to enable students to achieve the following goals: (1) to gain empirical and conceptual understandings of identity-based political mobilization; (2) to think comparatively across the developing world more generally; and (3) to address and debate theoretical questions in social science through empirical cases. We do not, therefore, cover every single country in the same depth, although empirical focus is given to Asia and the Muslim world. The course will refer to other cases including Africa, Europe and the U.S., however, whenever they are relevant to our theoretical inquiry.

This is a seminar course intended for graduate students. In order to encourage discussion and interaction among students, weekly class meetings will consist of brief lectures followed by student presentations and discussion. Students will make oral presentations and discuss the week’s readings.

The course is largely divided into three sections. The first is on various sources and forms of identity politics. The section introduces students to various theoretical models and analytical perspectives to study the origins and manifestations of ethnic/religious identity in politics. The second section focuses on varying patterns of identity politics. It explores how ethnic and religious identity shape political mobilization and political change in general, and the behaviors of state and societal actors in particular. In the third and final section, we will examine issues that broadly pertain to ethnic conflict and maintenance of peaceful inter-ethnic relations. Such issues as religious and ethnic conflicts, Islamic radicalism, terrorism, and management of—and solutions to—conflicts will be discussed here.

**Course Requirements**

1. This is a reading-intensive and discussion-based course. All the course requirements will enable students to develop their analytical writing skills in the course of your study. Students are expected to come to class having done all the required readings beforehand and to actively initiate and participate in discussion.
   
   A) Students are required to write a one-page long response paper based on the required readings every week. The paper should be submitted to the instructor after each weekly meeting and will be counted as attendance. The paper should address the following questions and should not be a summary of the readings.
   
   B) It is helpful to approach the readings with the following questions in mind: (a) what is the central question/debate? (b) what is the main argument? (c) what is the
evidence for the argument? (d) what are the problems with the argument? (e) can you think of counterarguments? Students should also address these questions in writing assignments.

2. Two take home exam essays of approximately 2500-3000 words (8-10 pages) in length:
   A) Mid-term take-home exam.
   B) Final take-home exam.
      ① The take-home exam will ask students to answer a question that will address broad thematic questions addressed in the course. The paper must be comparative in nature (referring to at least three to four countries/cases) and needs to make an argument/take a position and be supported by evidence from lectures and course readings. The exam essays are meant to assess your ability to analyze some of the key theoretical questions. Students are not required to refer to readings beyond those required and recommended for the course. Students will have one week to complete the assignment.
      ② The exams must be double-spaced, Times New Roman font, 12 font-size, and properly cited.
      ③ Post your essay in Safe Assign (prepared on BB) before you submit a hard copy in class.

3. One analytical research paper in the form of “review article” of approximately 3000 words (10-12 pages) in length: the paper is intended to assess students’ skills to debate and test theories learnt in the course by examining specific empirical cases. The paper should address a thematic question selected from the range of themes covered in the course. Students are required to choose a weekly topic of their liking (see 4.A). It should be designed to address central questions and debates by adopting some case studies and to put force some arguments. The paper should be comparative in nature and refer to various comparable empirical cases of your preference covered in the course. Students are recommended to refer to the required and recommended readings assigned in the relevant weeks. A good research paper will not just adopt a theory to determine if a given case fit the theory, nor simply describe cases, but should be driven by a good “puzzle”; it will attempt to resolve some intriguing puzzle that does not fit any dominant theory/model in explaining a particular political phenomenon.
   A) Students are asked to present their selected topic in the class to get feedback from their classmates and instructor (see 4.B). The presentation (and the paper) should be explicit about the following points:
① Question: what is your puzzle?
② Debates: what are the contending arguments in the existing literature?
③ Hypothesis: what is your argument and findings?
④ Case studies: what does your case(s) represent?

B) Grading is based on fulfillment of these prerequisites.
C) The paper must be double-spaced, Times New Roman font, 12 font size, and properly cited.
D) Further guideline for this assignment will be given in the class.
E) The deadline: Week 16.

4. **Two** class presentations:

A) On the weekly readings:
   ① On the first day of class, students will be asked to sign up for one or two week in which to present. The presentation topic should not coincide with your research paper topic (see 3.A and 4.B) or selected topic to answer in the exams.
   ② Your presentation must address central controversies and debates to stimulate class discussion. The presentation should be a critique of the readings and not a summary of individual readings. The critique can also include issues of policy relevance and/or comparative perspectives from outside the regions (you can be creative). The presentation should be approximately 15 minutes.
   ③ A week’s presenter should distribute a one-page long response paper that will navigate class discussion by Tuesday midnight. All the students have to read the paper before coming to the class.

B) On the analytical paper project:
   ① After around 3-4th week, students will present their research paper projects in turn to get feedback from their colleagues. Students are asked to sign up for a week in which to present.
   ② The presentation should focus on the points mentioned above (see 3.A) and should be approximately 15 minutes. Students assigned to present in earlier weeks of the course will be expected to give more emphasis on their research questions and the contending arguments in the literature. Students assigned in later weeks will be expected to give more emphasis on their case studies and findings without neglecting their questions.

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*Grade Distribution*
1. Class attendance and participation (10%)
2. Presentations 20% (10% each)
3. Exam essays 40% (20% each)
4. Analytical essay (30%)

Final course grades will be translated into the letter grades as follows:
A: 93-100%   A-: 90-92.9%   B+: 87-89.9%   B: 83-86.9%   B-: 80-82.9%
C+: 77-79.9%  C: 73-76.9%   C-: 70-72.9%   D+: 67-69.9%   D: 63-66.9%
D-: 60-62.9%  F: 0-59.9%

Please note: late submission will result in grade reduction for a half-mark per day (e.g., “A”
will be reduced to “A-” if submission is a day late).

Books to Purchase

All of the required books listed below have been ordered at the university bookstore.
Students are encouraged to search Google books, Amazon and other means to reduce their
expense for book purchase when entire books (listed here and beyond) are assigned.

Required textbooks:

Brown, Nathan J. 2012. When Victory Is Not an Option Islamist Movements in Arab
Oxford University Press.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
University Press.
Tajima, Yuhki. 2014. The Institutional Origins of Communal Violence: Indonesia's
Transition from Authoritarian Rule: Cambridge University Press.

Recommended textbooks:


**Class Schedule**

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**MAY 7** **Final Exam Due**
SECTION I: THE ORIGINS OF IDENTITIES AND VARIOUS FORMS OF
IDENTITY POLITICS

WEEK 1 (JAN 17) Introduction: Identity Politics in Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives

- Course outline
- Salience of cultural identities in politics and social science analysis

Required readings:


Recommended readings:


WEEK 2 (JAN 24) Identity Formation: Primordialism and Instrumentalism

- Discuss three major theoretical approaches in the analysis of identity formation. What do these approaches tell us about why individuals adopt particular collective identities (among others)?
- What are the strengths and limitations of each of these approaches?
- How do these approaches differ with one another?
Required readings:


Recommended readings:


**WEEK 3 (JAN 31)   Identity Formation: Constructivism and Historical Institutionalism**

**Required readings:**


**Recommended readings:**


WEEK 4 (FEB 7) Nationalism: Making a “Nation” and “Race”

- What is a “nation”?
- Where does a “nation” come from?
- State and Nation

Required readings:


Recommended readings:


WEEK 5 (FEB 14) Religion and Politics: State-Religion Relations

- How does a modern state related to religion? How do state-religion relations relate to regime formation?
- Is “secularism” an accepted norm and practice in a modern nation-state?
Does democracy always facilitate secularism? How about authoritarian rule?

Required readings:


- Read chap.1 and either the Part I (the United States) or the Part III (Turkey).


Recommended readings:


SECTION II: IDENTITY AND POLITICAL MOBILIZATION

WEEK 6 (FEB 21) Culture and Democracy (1): Compatibility

- Mid-term exam questions provided
- Will a particular cultural tradition facilitate or hinder democratization?
- Under what conditions does liberal democracy work in non-secularized society?
- Will a modern liberal democracy require secularism?
- How does a modern democracy accommodate religion? How do religious authorities accommodate themselves to social and political transformations?

Required readings:


**Recommended readings:**


WEEK 7 (FEB 28) MID-TERM EXAM DUE

- Post a soft copy in Safe Assign on BB.
- Submit a hard copy to the instructor.

WEEK 8 (MAR 7) Culture and Democracy (2): Inclusion-Moderation Thesis

- Under what conditions are religious parties/actors committed to “moderation” and contribute to democratization?

Required readings:


Tezcür, Güneş Murat. "The Moderation Theory Revisited: The Case of Islamic Political
Recommended readings:


WEEK 9 (MAR 14) SPRING BREAK

WEEK 10 (MAR 21) AAS Annual Meeting **NO CLASS**

WEEK 11 (MAR 28) Culture and Democracy (3): Parties and Elections

- What is Islam’s political advantage?
- Under what conditions could religious parties gain (and stay) in power?

Required readings:


Recommended readings:


SECTION III: ETHNIC CONFLICTS

WEEK 12 (APR 4) Ethnic Conflict (1): Theories and Debates

- Typologies and theories of ethnic violence
- What are the causes of ethnic violence?

Required readings:


Recommended Readings:


**WEEK 13 (APR 11) Ethnic Conflict (2): Case Studies**

**Required readings:**


Posner, chaps.7-8.


**Recommended readings:**


**WEEK 14 (APR 18) Religious Conflict (1): Religious Minorities and Pluralism**

**Required Readings:**


- Read chaps.3.4 and/or 11.


**Recommended Readings:**


**WEEK 15 (APR 25) Religious Conflict (2): Radicalism and Terrorism**

- What conditions facilitate religious violence?
- Identify psychological, ideological, institutional and structural foundations of religious violence as an analytical approach

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended readings:**


University Press.

WEEK 16 (MAY 2)  Managing Ethnic Conflict: Solutions?

- Research paper due
- What are the prerequisite conditions for conflict reduction and/or resolution?
- What does “conflict resolution” means to people? Does conflict end when men and women stop killing one another?

Required readings:


Recommended readings:


**MAY 7 FINAL EXAM**

**Other Important Information**

**Academic Dishonesty**

Regarding plagiarism, the NIU Undergraduate Catalog states: "Students are guilty of plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging them. Students guilty of, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university."

The above statement encompasses a paper written in whole or in part by another; a paper copied word-for-word or with only minor changes from another source; a paper copied in part from one or more sources without proper identification and acknowledgment of the sources; a paper that is merely a paraphrase of one or more sources, using ideas and/or logic without credit even though the actual words may be changed; and a paper that quotes, summarizes or paraphrases, or cuts and pastes words, phrases, or images from an Internet source without identification and the address of the web site.
Statement Concerning Students with Disabilities
Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NIU is committed to making reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Those students with disabilities that may have some impact on their coursework and for which they may require accommodations should notify the Disabilities Resource Center on the fourth floor of the Health Services Building. The Disabilities Resource Center will assist students in making appropriate accommodations with course instructors. It is important that the Disabilities Resource Center and instructors be informed of any disability-related needs during the first two weeks of the semester. The Disability Resource Center is located in the 4th floor of the Health Services Building, and can be reached at 815-753-1303 [v], 815-753-3000 [TTY] or email at drc@niu.edu.

Department of Political Science Web Site
Undergraduates are strongly encouraged to consult the Department of Political Science web site on a regular basis. This up-to-date, central source of information will assist students in contacting faculty and staff, reviewing course requirements and syllabi, exploring graduate study, research career options, tracking department events, and accessing important details related to undergraduate programs and activities. To reach the site, go to http://polisci.niu.edu

Classroom Decorum
Students are to arrive at class on time. Two tardy arrivals are equivalent to one class absence. Students are to remain for the entire session unless excused by the professor beforehand or confronted with a serious personal emergency. For instance, it is not acceptable to students to walk in and out of class to answer cell phones, take casual bathroom and smoking breaks, or attend to other personal matters. Cell phones, pagers, or any electronic devices that make noise must be turned off during class unless the instructor has been notified beforehand of a special circumstance (e.g., sick family member, pregnant wife, special childcare situation, etc.). No one should talk while someone else is talking; this includes comments meant for a classmate rather than the entire group. What may seem like a whisper or a harmless remark to one person can be a distraction to someone else, particularly in a small room. Overall, classroom dialogue and behavior should always be courteous, respectful of others, and consistent with the expectations set forth by the university.
Assessment Standards for Term Paper

A: The argument is clearly articulated and logically developed, using relevant evidence. The research is of high quality, cleverly ordered to support the argument with an original and creative synthesis of materials and displaying understanding of wider issues. The presentation is of high standard.

B: The argument is well proposed but the structure is not fully developed. The research is quite extensive but sources are not fully utilized which limits the ability to be creative and deal with a full range of issues. The presentation is solid but can be improved.

C: The argument is satisfactory, with some limitations, but the structure is not well thought out. The research used is just adequate, but insufficient to fully develop the argument or display much originality. The presentation is adequate but could be improved.

D: While the essay displays a basic understanding of the subject, the argument lacks coherence and logical development. The research is basic and the use of evidence does not sufficiently support the argument nor display originally or understanding of wider issues. The presentation is not of sufficient standard.

F: The presentation is well below acceptable standard. The essay is incoherent with glaring misunderstandings.