

POL 329S: EXPERIENCES OF CONFLICT

Winter 2026, Mondays 11-1

Instructor: Professor Nancy Bertoldi

Phone: 416-946-0181. Email: nancy.bertoldi@utoronto.ca

You can also email me via Quercus.

Office Hours: Thursdays 2:30-4 on zoom by appointment only.

Book your appointment in advance on Quercus using the 'calendar' function.

Zoom link for office hours is available on Quercus under 'announcements.'

COURSE DESCRIPTION

POL 329 examines experiences of conflict as represented in selected novels in conjunction with paired political science themes. The goal is to have a two-way conversation between political science and literature in light of the personal narratives that the assigned novels make available. This gives students a practical understanding of the human dimension of conflict and the possibilities for personal and social resistance to injustice and violence. Special attention is paid to questions of identity formation and moral choice in contexts of war and ethnonationalism. The selected novels address conflicts in Bosnia, India, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Canada.

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Describe the ways in which large-scale conflicts affect individuals and communities.
2. Develop a familiarity with selected conflicts from around the world.
3. Identify areas of convergence between political science and literature.
4. Define core concepts that are commonly used in the study of experiences of conflict.
5. Identify the possibilities for resistance to dominant narratives.
6. Improve oral and written communication skills.
7. Write effective essays that consider the impact of experiences of conflict.
8. Work cooperatively with peers in lectures to address controversial topics about experiences of conflict with civility and mutual respect.

TRIGGER WARNING

This is a course about experiences of conflict that deals with difficult and potentially traumatic topics in cases of large-scale violence and injustice. The instructor is committed to providing an open space for the critical and respectful exchange of ideas about difficult topics in our class. Students are expected to do their share in creating an atmosphere of civility and mutual respect for class discussions. Students are also invited to approach the instructor for any accommodations they may need. Additional resources for support are also listed below.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Lecture attendance and participation:

- The course will meet for 2 hours of lecture every week.
- Attendance and informed participation in lectures are mandatory and assessed every week. Missed classes receive a grade of 0 and can make a big difference to the final participation mark. Students who register late or who have other acceptable reasons for being absent should arrange for a make-up within one week of their absence. Please follow instructions for absences given below under 'course policies.'
- Lectures and readings are complementary, but they do not overlap. Successful class participation presupposes familiarity with the materials covered in assigned readings, so students should make sure to complete assigned readings before the start of each week's lecture.

Readings:

- The following required reading materials will be used in the course:
Selected articles and chapters available electronically via U of T libraries or Quercus
Steven Galloway, *The Cellist of Sarajevo*, (Knopf, 2008). Also available online at U of T.
Khushwant Singh, *Train to Pakistan*, (Penguin, 2007). Also available online at U of T.
Chimamanda Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, (Vintage Canada, 2007)
Michelle Good, *Five Little Indians*, (Harper Perennial, 2020)
- The books are available for short-term loan at Robarts Library. They can also be purchased at U of T Bookstore or online. Different editions of the books (including kindle) are acceptable.

Evaluation:

- Performance in the course will be evaluated based on the following components:

Paper	40%	due on Quercus on <u>March 23</u> at 11:59 pm
Test 1	25%	in class time (11-1) on <u>February 9</u> , room TBA
Test 2	25%	in class time (11-1) on <u>March 30</u> , room TBA
Participation	10%	required in class and graded every week
- Students are responsible for course materials covered in both the assigned readings and in lectures.
- The rooms for the term tests will be announced on Quercus.
- The University of Toronto grading scale is used to mark all course requirements and should be used as a rubric of expectations. More information on the grading scale is provided below under ‘course policies.’
- Detailed instructions for each required course component are available on Quercus in modules under ‘evaluation instructions.’

LECTURE SCHEDULE

There is no class on February 16 due to the winter reading week. Drop deadline is March 16.

Jan 5	Week 1	Overview
Jan 12	Week 2	Ethnonationalism
Jan 19	Week 3	Galloway
Jan 26	Week 4	National Self-determination
Feb 2	Week 5	Singh
Feb 9	Week 6	Test 1 (room TBA)
Feb 23	Week 7	Civil War
Mar 2	Week 8	Adichie
Mar 9	Week 9	Reconciliation
Mar 16	Week 10	Good
Mar 23	Week 11	Dehumanization (paper due)
Mar 30	Week 12	Test 2 (room TBA)

READING ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1: Overview

- Ingrid Byerly, “What Every Revolutionary Should Know” in Jonathan Friedman (ed.), *The Routledge History of Social Protest in Popular Music*, (Routledge, 2013), ch. 17.

Week 2: Ethnonationalism

- Anthony Smith, “Ethnicity and Nationalism” in Gerard Delanty and Krishan Kumar (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Nations and Nationalism*, (Sage, 2006), ch. 14.

- Michael Ignatieff, “The Narcissism of Minor Difference” in Michael Ignatieff, *The Warrior’s Honor*, (Viking, 1998), pp. 34-71.
- François Rochat and Andre Modigliani, “The Ordinary Quality of Resistance: From Milgram’s Laboratory to the Village of Le Chambon,” *Journal of Social Issues*, 51/3 (1995), pp. 195-210.

Week 3: Galloway

- Steven Galloway, *The Cellist of Sarajevo*, (Knopf, 2008).

Week 4: National Self-determination

- Margaret Moore, “Nationalism and Political Philosophy” in Gerard Delanty and Krishan Kumar (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Nations and Nationalism*, (Sage, 2006), ch. 8.
- Margaret Moore, “The Moral Value of Collective Self-Determination and the Ethics of Secession,” *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 50/4 (2019), pp. 620-641
- Atul Kohli, “Can Democracies Accommodate Ethnic Nationalism? Rise and Decline of Self-Determination Movements in India,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 56/2 (1997), pp. 325-344.

Week 5: Singh

- Khushwant Singh, *Train to Pakistan*, (Penguin, 2007).

Week 6: Test 1 (Room TBA)

Week 7: Civil War

- Neal Jesse, “Ethnicity and Identity Conflict” in Karl DeRouen and Edward Newman (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Civil Wars*, (Routledge, 2014), ch. 8.
- Donald Horowitz, “Group Comparison and the Sources of Conflict” in Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, (University of California Press, 1985), ch. 4. Available online at: <http://books.google.com/books?id=Q82saX1HVQYC> (pp. 141-184).
- E. Wayne Nafziger, “The Political Economy of Disintegration in Nigeria,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 11/4 (1973), pp. 505-536.

Week 8: Adichie

- Chimamanda Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, (Vintage Canada, 2007).

Week 9: Reconciliation

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honoring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Executive Summary*, (May 2015), introduction and calls to action, pp. 1-22, 313-337.
- Sheryl Lightfoot, *Global Indigenous Politics*, (Routledge, 2016), ch. 7.
- Taiiake Alfred, “On Reconciliation and Resurgence” in Dimitrios Karmis and Jocelyn Maclure (eds.), *Civic Freedom in an Age of Diversity*, (McGill-Queen’s, 2023), ch. 10.

Week 10: Good

- Michelle Good, *Five Little Indians*, (Harper Perennial, 2020).

Week 11: Dehumanization

- Gerald O’Brien, “Indigestible Food, Conquering Hordes, and Waste Materials: Metaphors of Immigrants and the Early Immigration Restriction Debate in the United States,” *Metaphor and Symbol*, 18 (2003), pp. 33-47.
- Vitoria Esses, Stelian Medianu, and Andrea Lawson, “Uncertainty, Threat, and the Role of the Media in Promoting the Dehumanization of Immigrants and Refugees,” *Journal of Social Issues*, 69 3 (2013), pp. 518-536.

- Catherine Martin, “Influxes and invaders: the intersections between the metaphoric construction of immigrant otherness and ethnonationalism,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 46 7 (2023-05), pp. 1478-1501.

Week 12: Test 2 (Room TBA)

COURSE POLICIES

Assignment submission: All written assignments must be submitted online on Quercus by 11:59 pm on their due date.

Length penalties: Students should include word counts on all written assignments. Assignments that are more than 10% longer or shorter than the assigned word count will be penalized by **5%**.

Late penalties: Late assignments will be penalized. The late penalty is **2% per late day**, weekends included. The number of late days will be determined by submission times on Quercus. Late assignments will not be accepted after marked assignments have been returned to the class.

Grading scale: The University of Toronto grading scale is used to mark all course requirements. The Faculty of Arts and Science specification of the meaning of grades below should be used as a rubric of expectations.

- A range: 80-100. Excellent. Strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
- B range: 70-79. Good. Evidence of grasp of subject matter, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.
- C range: 60-69. Adequate. Student who is profiting from the university experience; understanding of the subject matter and ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.
- D range: 50-59. Marginal. Some evidence of familiarity with the subject matter and some evidence that critical and analytic skills have been developed.
- F: 0-49. Inadequate. Little evidence of even superficial understanding of subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited or irrelevant use of literature.
- Credit/No Credit: CR/NCR is not in general use in the Faculty.

More information on the University of Toronto grading scale can be found at:

- <https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/general/grading-policy/>
- <https://registrar.utoronto.ca/transcripts/transcript-grading-scales-notations/>
- <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/grading-practices-policy-university-assessment-and-january-1-2020>

Grade appeals: Students who have concerns about the mark they received can request that their work be remarked within two weeks after their marked assignments have been returned. Appeal requests must be submitted in writing to your TA and must include a statement of your substantive reasons for what you feel was overlooked in the marking of your work. After your TA responds in writing, any remaining concerns should be submitted in writing to the instructor. In accordance with the Faculty of Arts and Science policies, grades may go up, stay the same, or go down in the appeals process.

Extensions and make-ups: In general, no extensions or make-ups will be granted on any course requirement, unless students have acceptable reasons that are documented, such as illness or unexpected personal circumstances beyond the student’s control that interfere with the completion of academic obligations. When students have appropriate reasons for an extension or make-up, appropriate documentation must be submitted to the instructor within one week of the missed work. Students should follow the instructions on absence documentation below. Assignments and tests from other courses, work obligations, co-curricular commitments,

or transportation problems do not generally constitute acceptable reasons, so students should plan accordingly in advance. Accommodations for special needs and disabilities must be arranged directly with Accessibility Services. No extensions will be granted on written assignments beyond the date that marked assignments have been returned to the class.

Absences: For absences caused by illness, disability, or other unexpected serious circumstances that interfere with the completion of their academic obligations, students must contact the instructor and submit appropriate documentation within one week of their absence to support accommodation. For illness, this documentation can be an absence declaration (via ACORN) or the University’s verification of student illness or injury (VOI) form. Students can also submit a letter from a doctor in lieu of a VOI, as long as it is an original medical document that contains the same information as the VOI (including dates, academic impact, practitioner’s signature, phone and registration number). More information on the VOI is available at <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>. More information on absence declarations is available at <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence>. Students who suffer from concussions, fractures, or other injuries or conditions with ongoing impact should also register with Accessibility Services. Disability-related absences require a letter from Accessibility Services and serious personal circumstances require a registrar’s letter to support accommodation.

Academic integrity: The University of Toronto takes academic integrity very seriously. The code of behavior on academic matters states that “It shall be an offence for a student knowingly:

- a. to forge or in any other way alter or falsify any document or evidence required by the University, or to utter, circulate or make use of any such forged, altered or falsified document, whether in print or electronic form;
- b. to use or possess an unauthorized aid or aids or obtain or provide unauthorized assistance in connection with any form of academic work;
- c. to personate another person, or to have another person personate, in connection with any form of academic work;
- d. to represent as one’s own any idea or expression of an idea or work of another in connection with any form of academic work, i.e. to commit plagiarism (for a more detailed account of plagiarism, see section 2.n));
- e. to submit, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work that has previously been submitted or is currently in the submission process in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere;
- f. to submit any academic work containing a purported statement of fact or reference to a source which has been concocted.”

The use of AI tools or any other outside assistance on course requirements is not permitted and will be considered an “unauthorized aid”. The code of behavior on academic matters can be found at:

<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2025> More information on examples of common academic integrity risks is also available at: <https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/perils-and-pitfalls/>

Plagiarism: All sources used in written assignments must be properly cited. Failure to acknowledge sources constitutes plagiarism—a serious academic offense. For more information, students can review “How Not to Plagiarize” and other advice on using sources on Quercus and at www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources.

Plagiarism detection: “Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University’s plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool’s reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).”

Code of conduct: The University of Toronto expects all its members to treat each other with courtesy and respect at all times. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and voice different views. Students should make sure to read the University's Student Code of Conduct <<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-student-conduct-december-13-2019>> and the University's policy on the Appropriate Use of Information and Communication Technology <<https://www.provost.utoronto.ca/planning-policy/information-communication-technology-appropriate-use/>>.

RESOURCES

Accessibility services: Students with special needs or disabilities should register with Accessibility Services to arrange appropriate accommodations for their needs.

Registrar support: Students should contact their registrar as soon as they are able if they experience unexpected challenges during the course that may require accommodation.

Academic support:

- Recognized Study Groups (RSG) are student-led study groups of up to 8 students enrolled in the same A&S course: <https://sidneysmithcommons.artsci.utoronto.ca/recognized-study-groups/>
- The Meet to Complete (MTC) program helps students stay focused by working alongside a small group of students: <https://sidneysmithcommons.artsci.utoronto.ca/meet-to-complete/>
- Students can visit www.writing.utoronto.ca for information on all aspects of academic writing. Advice files are available at <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/student-pdfs>. The advice files on how not to plagiarize and on standard documentation formats are particularly important and are listed at <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources>.
- For group instruction on writing and study skills, students can take advantage of the “Writing Plus” workshop series. More information is available at <https://uoft.me/writingplus>.
- Writing centers offer individualized consultations on written assignments. Interested students should book their appointments early, as they fill up fast. More information about the writing centers is available at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science>.
- International students can find information about the English Language Learning program (ELL) at <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/english-language-learning>. For more information, contact the ELL coordinator Leora Freedman at ell.newcollege@utoronto.ca.

Health and wellness: The University's mental health portal <https://mentalhealth.utoronto.ca/> lists a wide range of available resources that support student wellbeing. Students can also consult the programs that are listed at: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/health-wellness/>

Crisis support: If you're experiencing distress, you are not alone! Please reach out for help!

Many free crisis lines and support services are available at U of T and the City of Toronto including:

- U of T Telus Health Student Support (formerly My SSP) available 24/7. Call 1-844-451-9700. Outside of North America, call 001-416-380-6578. Online information: <https://mentalhealth.utoronto.ca/telus-health-student-support/>
- University of Toronto: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/task/support-when-you-feel-distressed/>
- Good 2 Talk Student Helpline: 1-866-925-5454
- Gerstein Crisis Centre: 416-929-5200
- City of Toronto crisis services: <https://www.toronto.ca/home/311-toronto-at-your-service/find-service-information/?ctx=homepage&keywords=crisis>
- Distress Centres of Greater Toronto: 416-408-HELP (4357), <https://www.dcoqt.com>
- The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH): 250 College Street (walk-in)