Inter-state conflict captured the lion’s share of attention among scholars and practitioners for the majority of the twentieth century. However, following the end of World War II, the most numerous and devastating conflicts have occurred within states, rather than between them. Indeed, since the early 1960’s there have been no fewer than twenty civil conflicts occurring in any given year. This course discusses the causes and consequences of the dominant modes of intra-state conflict—rebellion and civil war—with special attention to the role that violence plays in shaping their character and duration. Specific topics examined include genocide and mass killing, famine, civil war, sexual violence in war, nationalism and ethnic conflict, counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, and peacekeeping. The primary modes of instruction are lecture, discussion, and film.

The goals for this course include: 1) To introduce students to competing theories of the causes, conduct, and outcomes of intra-state conflict; 2) to increase understanding as to why and how individuals, non-state groups, and the state employ violence as a means of pursuing political goals; and, 3) to heighten awareness of the complex moral and ethical issues embedded in the decisions and actions of policy-makers contemplating conflict intervention.