

## Tentative Syllabus

### **SOC 715-001: Ethnic Identity, Conflict, and Cooperation**

**Wednesday 2:30-5:00 pm, BUSAD C103**

**[Sun-Ki Chai](#), Office Saunders 237**

This course will cover the fast-growing social science literature on the cross-national modeling of ethnic identity and conflict. This work encompasses sociology, political science, and economics, as well as drawing from other social science disciplines. It comprises general theories, both qualitative and quantitative, as well as historical, ethnographic, and statistical empirical studies, including experimental work both in the lab and the field. In investigating the causes of conflict, theorists have inevitably also looked at the effect of ethnic identity on cooperation. We seek to identify the major theoretical schools of thought in this literature, strengths and weaknesses of various methodological approaches, and opportunities for integration.

We will attempt to address a number of unresolved questions in this literature. These include: To what extent is ethnic identity a causal factor or simply a label that is assigned to contemporary political violence? If ethnicity is a causal factor, is it compatible with predictive theories, and if so how can it be incorporated? Can we account for the origins and nature of ethnic identity, and if so, how? How can structure, identity, and agency be integrated into united theories of conflict and cooperation? What are the roles of qualitative case studies, retrospective statistical analysis, and experiments in informing theoretical development? Finally, how can empirical findings and the theories they inform be used to develop concrete policy recommendations for reducing conflict?

### **Assigned Texts:**

- Stathis N. Kalyvas and Ian Shapiro (eds.), *Order, Conflict, and Violence* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).
- Sun-Ki Chai, *Choosing an Identity: A General Model of Preference and Belief Formation* (University of Michigan Press, 2001).

### **Topics and Readings:**

**Week 2 (1/21): Ethnic Conflict: The State of the Literature**

**Week 3 (1/28) Ethnic vs. "Non-Ethnic" Models of Collective Conflict**

**Week 4 (2/4): Collective Conflict: The Question of Rationality**

**Week 5 (2/11) Incorporating Identity into Analysis of Conflict and Cooperation**

**Week 6 (2/18) Micro-Models of Identity Formation**

**Week 7 (2/25) Incorporating Identity into Predictive Ethnicity Theory**

**Week 8 (3/4) The Formation of Ethnic Boundaries**

**Week 9 (3/11) The Formation of Ethnic Boundaries (2)**

**Week 10 (3/18) Case Studies and Qualitative Comparison (Europe and Africa)**

**Week 11 (4/1) Case Studies and Qualitative Comparison (Asia)**

**Week 12 (4/8) Quantitative Cross-National Studies**

**Week 13 (4/15) Experimental Studies (Cultural Differences)**

**Week 14 (4/22) Experimental Studies (Diversity and Discrimination)**

**Week 15 (4/29) Paper Topic Presentations**

**Week 16 (5/6) Paper topic Presentations**

### **Main Assignments**

50% of grade: For each class from the second week on, all class members are required take on turn in a short set of critical notes on each of the readings. These should include a list of of at least 3 study questions or comments on the literature, which are designed to trigger further discussion. You will be expected to raise these (and optionally other) questions during class oral discussions.

50% of grade: You will be expected to turn in a final research paper in academic journal article format, and graded according to social science criteria for such articles. You may pick the topic of your choice relating to the course, and work with the professor to locate appropriate outside references. The last two meetings of the course will be devoted to oral presentations of your papers in their current stage.