

## ECONOMICS OF CONFLICT

Professors: **Mathieu COUTTENIER, Jean-François MAYSTADT**

Session: **July 2025**

Language of instruction: **English**

Number of hours of class: **36h**



### Course Description

Why do we fight (or not)? The course covers the economics of conflict, focusing on the causes and consequences of conflict from an economic perspective. Lecturers will present theoretical and empirical recent advances from the economics and political sciences literature. After illustrating the various reasons why we should care about conflict, we will conduct a thorough analysis of the causes of conflicts, drawing on the dense academic literature on the subject. Different causes will be studied, such as the role of income and price variations, of inequalities, and of the presence of natural resources, among others. Next, we will examine conflict dynamics across various dimensions: from individuals, groups, communities to the state in the context of a warming and more fragmented world. Throughout the course, we will discuss solutions that can be provided by countries, international organizations, or even private actors.



### Learning Outcomes

1. Develop proficiency in logical and structured problem analysis, specifically tailored to understanding the complex dynamics inherent in conflicts.
2. Demonstrate advanced skills in critically assessing and analyzing real-world issues pertaining to the economics of conflict, integrating economic principles with broader socio-political contexts.
3. Acquire proficiency in reading and interpreting econometric tables, enabling the application of economic theory to analyze conflict-related data and understand underlying mechanisms.
4. Gain a profound understanding of the intricate interplay between economics and politics, elucidating how economic factors influence political decisions and vice versa within the context of conflicts. ability for logical and structured problem analysis.



## Learning Outlines

1. Cultivate the ability to methodically structure thoughts using economic reasoning and mechanisms, facilitating insightful analysis and problem-solving in conflict-related scenarios.
2. Develop adeptness in critically analyzing economic articles, discerning key arguments, evaluating evidence, and synthesizing diverse perspectives to inform well-rounded perspectives on conflicts.
3. Strengthen argumentation skills through rigorous engagement with economic theories, empirical evidence, and multidisciplinary perspectives, enabling articulate and compelling advocacy in discussions and debates surrounding conflicts.



## Professors' Biography



**Mathieu COUTTENIER** is Professor at Sciences Po and at the University of Lyon-École Normale Supérieure de Lyon-GATE and since 2018, a Research Chair Investissement d'Excellence (IDEX). He is also a CEPR Research Affiliate.

His research fields are political economy and development economics. He focuses in particular on microeconomic questions in the field of applied political economy. His main research interests are in the understanding of violence and civil wars. He has published many academic papers on the role played by income shocks, natural resources or climate on the diffusion of conflicts over space and time. Some of his present research agenda also studies the political economy aspects of media coverage or of international economics.



**Jean-Francois MAYSTADT** is a Research Associate at the Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique - FNRS and a Professor at the Economic School of Louvain, UCLouvain. He is also a Senior Lecturer at Lancaster University and an invited lecturer at Sciences Po.

He is a development economist specialized in the study of Conflicts, Climate Change, and Migration. His current research focuses on the causes and consequences of conflicts and forced migration, particularly in developing countries.

He obtained a PhD in Economics from the Université catholique de Louvain (UCL, Belgium) under the supervision of Jacques Thisse in 2010. During his PhD, he was a research fellow at the Center for Operational Research and Econometrics (CORE). He

then held research positions at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI, Washington DC, 2010-2014), the Center for Institutions and Economic Performance (LICOS, 2012-2014) at KU Leuven, and the Institute of Development Policy (IOB) at the University of Antwerp (2018-2020). He holds a fractional appointment at Lancaster University where he worked full time between August 2014 and August 2018. From September 2024, he is invited to give lectures on the Economics of Conflict with Mathieu Couttenier (ENS-Lyon).