

Theories of Conflict, Violence and War
SIS – 610-002, Fall 2009, Monday 8:30 p.m. – 10:40 p.m.
Location: TBD

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Welcome to the School of International Service, and especially to the IPCR program. I hope that our shared experience in this class will contribute to your learning and academic experience at AU.

Course Summary

Survey of the theoretical and empirical literature on the causes and conditions of conflict, particularly conflict that is expressed violently at all levels. Includes analyzing violence at the individual level, defining violence (physical, economic, social, cultural, systematic,) and why societies support violence.

Course Objectives

Knowledge

- Understanding of the importance of a strong theoretical foundation in the fields of peace studies and conflict resolution in that resolving conflict and building peace require understanding why mass organized violence occurs.
- Awareness of the implications for practice of adopting various theoretical positions.
- Understanding of how studies of conflict, violence, and war fit into the International Relations framework; that is, be familiar with the traditions of realism, idealism, constructivism, etc.
- Knowledge of recent key questions regarding war and violence in international relations.
- Knowledge of the range of main theories explaining violence and war, and how they are related to each other.
- Familiarity with various levels of analysis for studying violence and war: the global system, the state or regime, social or ethnic group, and individual.
- Familiarity with various disciplinary approaches to the study of conflict, violence, and war, notably those of political science, anthropology, sociology, economics, and psychology.
- Familiarity with feminist perspectives on the study of conflict, violence, and war.

Skills

- Ability to think theoretically and critically about warfare and mass political violence.
- Ability to look at conflict, violence, and war from multiple perspectives.

Attitudes (Values)

- Respect for different disciplinary traditions in addressing violence and war.
- Respect for the necessity of integrating theory and practice.

Course Philosophy

Discussing conflict, war and violence is not an easy task. The issues can be divisive and the rhetoric is sometimes inflammatory. The challenge is to think and reflect on multiple sources of data. As faculty for this class, I would like to acknowledge that my personal and professional experience, ethnic and cultural heritage, religious identity and values impacts the way I understand the issues and the way I select to present them. In light of this acknowledgement, I would like to invite you to:

- a) Respect all points of view regardless of where you are on these issues;
- b) Listen to gain insight; reflect on what the other person is trying to communicate;
- c) Accept that we are here as a learning community – in which each person is a teacher and a learner.

Course Expectations

The following expectations will ensure that you get the most rewarding and engaging experience from the class. I would like to get your commitment to the following:

Attendance: consistent attendance is required. Failure to do so will be noted. Please let me know if you are facing circumstances beyond your control and inform me as soon as possible. **The highest grade to expect is a "B" if you happen to miss two classes. An attendance roster will be maintained.**

Participation: You are expected to participate fully in class discussions and activities. Structured exercises will support that objective. Please do not hesitate to let me know about your experience during class. I am happy to respond to any concerns that might impede your participation.

Preparation: The success of this class is dependent on our ability to discuss class readings. There might be opportunities to engage in on-line assignments, but first and foremost, in-class participation is a must. Please come prepared to discuss readings. You will be expected to be prepared to lead class discussion, answer questions related to the readings and to participate accordingly in small group discussions.

Class Completion: Please note that departmental policies dictate that an incomplete grade is granted in cases of personal or immediate family illness.

Class assignments: You are expected to complete class assignments on time. Please request prior permission should you not be able to do so. Late assignments without prior permission will be marked down by half a grade. (E.g. an "A" paper is down graded to an "- A". Please see final exam late submission grading approach.

Special Needs

I would like to invite you to bring to my attention any special needs. I will be more than happy to discuss them with you to facilitate your participation in class.

Required Texts

Hedges, Christopher. (2003) *War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*. New York: Anchor Books

Betts, Richard. (2008) 3rd Edition. *Conflict After the Cold War*. New York: Pearson /Longman

Carolyn Nordstrom. (2004) *Shadows of War*. California: University of California Press.

Articles

Galtung, Johan. "Cultural Violence." *Journal of Peace and Research*, Vol.27, No. 3, (August, 1990), pp. 291-305. (Retrieve directly from data base: J-Store)

Galtung, Johan. "A Structural Theory of Aggression." *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1964), pp. 291-305. (Retrieve directly from data base: J-Store)

Richard Just. "The Truth Will Not Set You Free: Everything We Know About Darfur and Everything We're Not Doing about it." Available at: In The New Republic.

<http://www.tnr.com/politics/story.html?id=36975a7c-224c-438a-9538-130b9e5cdd91>

Optional:

Attallah, Amjad. "The Muslim World and Darfur." *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 2

<http://www.turkishpolicy.com/images/stories/2007-02-centralearasia/TPO2007-2-atallah.pdf>

Ali, Farhana. "Why Women Kill in Iraq." *Middle East Times*. August, 7, 2008.

http://www.metimes.com/International/2008/08/07/probing_why_women_kill_in_iraq/8889/

Feldman, Noah. "Why Shariah? Millions of Muslims think Shariah means the rule of law. Could they be right?" *New York Times*, March 16, 2008.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/16/magazine/16Shariah-t.html?ref=world>

Hedges, Chris and Laila Al-Arian., (2007). "The Other War: Military veterans speak on the record about attacks on Iraqi civilians". *The Nation*, Volume 285, (Number 4), pages 11-31.

Kaplan, Robert, "The Coming Anarchy", the Atlantic Monthly, Feb. 1994. Also available: <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/199402/anarchy>

Powers, Samantha. Bystanders to Genocide. Atlantic Monthly. 2001
<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200109/power-genocide>

Course Requirements

Your course grade will be based on the following elements:

30 percent: Class participation, attendance, preparation, completion, assignments
(refer to course expectations for details) More details on your participation to include preparing and participating in facilitating class discussions related to reading. Details will be discussed on the first day of class.

30 percent: Individual research paper **Due: Oct. 26, 2009**
Write a 10 – 15 research paper discussing a theory of conflict, war and violence. Paper should include a thoughtful overview and critique of the theory. It will be evaluated for clarity of thoughts, persuasive arguments on the relevance or irrelevance of the theory to our ability in understanding conflict, war and violence. **Please email and submit hard copy**

40 percent Group Project: Case Study Analysis- Tentative kick off class presentation dates: Nov, 2009

Group Project: As a group, you have the opportunity to select a conflict (community, national, and international, organizational, environmental) that is of interest to you and other members of your group.

{Please submit by email final selection of case study (one paragraph) for approval no later than September 28, 2009) to include a list of the group members. I highly recommend that you limit your groups to five members to help facilitate productive discussions and coordination of effort. Class time will be allocated for you to organize your groups}

In this role and to complete this assignment, the group is to:

- Research, explore, and analyze the sources of the conflict, its escalation and what led to any actions of the parties to engage in adversarial behavior that may have lead to war, and/or violence or protraction.
- Identify an article or two that you would like your classmates to read before your group presentations. (Email to classmates at least one week before class presentations).
- Prepare a group presentation.
 - The purpose of your presentation is to educate your peers on the conflict, its sources, dynamics and current state / and or outcome.
 - Your presentation should include a review and discussion of theories discussed in class to help explain the conflict.
 - You are encouraged and will be rewarded on the interactive nature of your group presentation.
 - Each group member should have a role during the presentation.
 - Tie your presentation to readings and theoretical frameworks discussed during class.
- For the class presentation, please prepare a handout (and/or PowerPoint presentation) about the conflict under study. (copy to be distributed to class)
 - Include one or two slides that highlight dilemmas that you encountered as a group in analyzing the conflict. Present any recommendations for future practitioners and theorist engaging in similar research.
- Submit a 3 page personal reflection paper on your personal experience working on the topic, your personal contributions to the project (not necessarily to the to do list, but if any of your personal values and beliefs impacted the way you approached the topic, reactions from colleagues that surprised you . . .) and any additional thoughts you may have in relation to the case study by Nov.30th. **Please email and submit hard copy**

Class Schedule -610 – Spring, 2009

The class will be hosting a number of guest speakers who have kindly accepted our invitation to speak about their personal experiences as thought leaders and professionals in the field. Please note that I may shift some the readings to accommodate the guest speaker list. We will also use documentaries and film to support some of the class discussions and readings.

Week 1 August 24, 2009

Welcome, introductions, class expectations, course overview
What do we understand about conflict, war and violence . . .

Week 2 August 31, 2009

Theories of conflict, war and violence
Readings: Betts Part 1 / Hedges Intro / Nordstrom Prologue

Week 3. September 7, 2009

Betts Part 1 cont. / Read Part 2: Machiavelli / Hobbes / Carr /
Read Galtung

Week 4, September 14, 2009

Readings: Betts Part 3 – Kant, Bull
Hedges: Chapter 1, 2

Week 5, September 21, 2009

Readings: Betts Part 4
Hedges Chapter 3, 4

Week 6, September, 28

Readings: Betts Part 5: Mead, Tickner
Richard Just
Hedges Chapter 4, 5, 6

Finalize group topics

Week 6, October 5, 2009

Readings: Betts Part 6: Milward, Waltz
Nordstrom Part one
Mid-semester check in/student input on class

Week 7, October 12, 2009

Readings: Betts Part 7: Gellner, Kaufmann,
Nordstrom Part Two

Fall Break Oct 16, 2009 (Enjoy!)

Week 8, October 26

Readings: Betts Part 7: kumar
Nordstrom Part Three

Research paper due

Week 9, October 31, 2009

Readings: Betts Part 8: Jervis
Nordstrom Part 4

Week 10, November 2, 2009

Readings: Betts Part 9: Crenshaw
Nordstrom Part 5

(tentative Kick off TBD – group presentations)

Week 11, November 9, 2009

Readings: Betts 10: Homer- Dixon

(group presentations)

Week 12, November 16, 2009

Readings: Betts Part XI – Ikenberry & Slaughter, Huntington

(group presentations)

Week 13, November 23

(group presentations)

Week 14, November 30, 2009
wrap up celebrations.)

(group presentations, reflections papers due,