



## **Introduction to Peace and Conflict Resolution SIS 308.002 Fall 2011**

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American University  
School of International Service  
Fall 2011  
Tuesday 11:45-2:25  
Room: SIS 102

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Office Hours: Mon. 12:30-1:30, Wed.  
12:30-3:30 or by appointment.

### **Course Description and Objectives**

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Peace is not just the product of wishful thinking by people who *want* to make a difference. Ending situations of large-scale violence, hatred and injustice takes dedicated work that builds on the best practices and findings of peace research and other social science disciplines. Wanting peace is important and needs to be accompanied by careful, analytical thinking in order to respond to extremely complex problems and difficult situations.

In this course, we will explore and analyze the central concepts of peace and conflict resolution, important theories of causes of conflict and applications of conflict resolution in difficult global contexts. We begin the course by analyzing our key terms: peace and conflict. We compare definitions of peace, and explore the types of conflict we confront. We then proceed to analyze conflict. There is considerable debate over what causes conflict, and we will study multiple perspectives, which range from individual-level theories of aggression and human nature to inter-group theories of identity and mobilization. We will also learn to map stakeholders as well as the dynamics of conflict as precursors for intervention and critical components of conflict analysis. During the course you will work in a team exploring a particular conflict case to deepen your understanding of theories and their application.

The second half of the course looks at ways to resolve intergroup conflict. We will focus on three main types of intervention: negotiation, mediation, and nonviolent social movements. Our analysis of these intervention methods will include theoretical aspects, research findings as well as hands-on applications to broaden your understanding of the methodologies.

Course objectives:

- Improve your understanding of the field of peace and conflict resolution;
- Explore central concepts and theories about causes of conflict;
- Understand central concepts and approaches to conflict resolution;
- Help you gain an appreciation of the multi-faceted nature of conflicts and the challenges of conflict resolution;
- Provide opportunities for collaborative research and reporting;
- Encourage students to become analytical, reflective learners.

## Learning Outcomes

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Students who complete SIS-308 will be able to:

- Define key terms and concepts in the field of peace and conflict resolution;
- Understand various theories and approaches to peace and conflict resolution;
- Compare and contrast theories of conflict causation, escalation and persistence;
- Assess the benefits and shortcomings of different conflict resolution methods;
- Carry out a conflict analysis.

Students will also be introduced to conflict resolution skills.

## Academic Integrity

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Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's Academic Integrity Code, which can be found in the University catalog. By registering, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary actions will be taken should such violations occur. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the Code in general or as they relate to particular requirements for this course. You can read the University's full Academic Integrity Code here:

<http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code/htm>

## Course Readings

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### Required Readings:

Barash, David (Ed) (2010) Approaches to Peace: A Reader in Peace Studies. NY: Oxford University Press. (referred to as AtP below). *Make sure you have the Second Edition.*

Deng, Benson, Deng, Alephonsion and Benjamin Ajak with Judy A. Bernstein (2005) They Poured Fire on Us from the Sky: The true story of three lost boys from Sudan. NY: Public Affairs.

Fisher, Roger and William Ury (1991) Getting to Yes. NY: Penguin Books.

### Recommended Reading:

Lederach, John Paul (2003) The Little Book of Conflict Transformation. PA: Good Books.

Ramsbotham, Oliver, Tom Woodhouse & Hugh Miall (2005) Contemporary Conflict Resolution, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Malden, MA: Polity Press.

## Course Requirements

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Your grade for this course will come from the following components:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Points</u>
Class Participation	20%
Case Presentation (Group)*	15
Mid-Term Exam (take home)	30
<u>Simulation Analysis (take home final)</u>	<u>35%</u>
Total	100%

**Class Participation (20%):** Regular class participation is an important part of this course in order to create a learning community within the classroom. As this is a seminar, you are expected to participate in all classes. Please note that class participation includes attendance but goes considerably beyond it. In this class we engage in group work, simulations as well as class discussions. You are expected to: take part actively in discussions; incorporate the course readings into your remarks; do extra reading and preparation for days with case study work; ask intelligent questions; as well as be attentive and respectful listeners to your classmates. Excused absences are allowed only in cases of genuine emergency; medical notes are required.

**What am I looking for in good class discussion?<sup>1</sup>**

- Evidence of careful reading and preparation, including factual details – it is important for you to do all of the assigned readings to ensure you and your classmates get the most out of our discussions;
- Contributions that are logically consistent, original and use relevant evidence;
- Comments that are clear, enthusiastic and respectful;
- Comments that contribute and are appropriate to the discussion, such as building-on other's ideas, providing constructive criticism, asking constructive, analytical questions, or show that you were listening carefully to others.

**Case Presentation (15%):** The class will be divided into small teams of two or three members. You will meet in these teams in order to learn about a specific case, apply concepts to the case, and present your analysis in an in-class presentation. There will be presentations on conflict analysis and intervention. More specifically, there are three components to conflict analysis which we will apply: 1) cause analysis; 2) stakeholder analysis; and 3) conflict dynamics analysis. And, there are three types of interventions that we will examine: 1) negotiation; 2) mediation; and 3) collective nonviolent social action. Your group will be responsible for presenting only one of the components of conflict analysis *or* one type of intervention (e.g. a round of negotiations or a mediation effort) in the case that you have chosen.

Presentations will take place on: September 27 (cause analysis), October 11 (stakeholder analysis), October 25 (conflict dynamics analysis), and November 8 (intervention).

You will choose one case from three possible cases, and explore that case in detail over the semester. Pick a case you are interested in learning more about! We will come up with the final list of cases in class, but examples of cases you might choose are: southern Somalia, Georgia (Abkhazia), Democratic Republic of Congo (Kivu region), Mindanao (southern Philippines).

Presentations should be no more than 10 minutes long and will be assessed based upon: clarity and organization, depth and quality of analysis, appropriateness and accuracy of concept applications, timing and team work. An additional handout sheet provides further details. I encourage teams to meet with me before they present to make sure they are on the right track.

\*Alternative Option to Case Presentation: Up to eight students (on a first come first serve basis) can choose to participate in a series of seven weekly dialogue sessions on campus run by the Dialogue Development Group (DDG). This is a great option for students who want to try out a very practical conflict resolution technique. If this option is chosen, students are required to attend all seven of the scheduled dialogue sessions and actively participate. Students are expected to

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Maryann Cusimano-Love (Catholic University).

document their experiences in their dialogue groups through a blackboard journal, and collaborate as a group on a short in-class presentation on dialogue as an intervention. The blackboard journals and presentation and will be assessed on clarity and organization, depth and quality of analysis.

**Mid-Term Exam (30%):** This exam will include all of the material in the course covered to date. The content will be based on required readings, lecture material, in-class presentations and discussions. It will be a take-home exam due on Blackboard by 5pm on Friday October 14, 2011.

**Simulation Analysis (Take-home final) (35%):** On November 29 we will run a multi-party mediation simulation in class. You are required to participate in the simulation, and write an eight to nine page analysis of the simulation experience (double-spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins; bibliography is required and in addition to page count). In your written analysis you are to assess the in-class experience using the theories and readings we have covered in class. For example, what strategies did the mediators employ? How did they compare with those discussed in the readings (Fisher & Ury, Bercovitch & Houston, Pruitt and Kim, etc.)? Were they effective? What caused the conflict to escalate or de-escalate during the simulation? How do these fit with d'Estree's article on escalation? Or, Lederach's chapter on conflict dynamics? Your paper will be graded based upon clarity and organization, depth and quality of analysis, appropriateness and accuracy of concept applications, and use of evidence from the in-class experience to support your analysis. The simulation analysis paper is due on Blackboard by 2:15 pm on December 13.

## Grade Range & Course Policies

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A = 100-95	B+ = 89-85	C+ = 76-73	D = 65-63	F = 59 and below
A- = 94-90	B = 84-81	C = 72-69	D- = 62-60	
	B- = 80-77	C- = 68-66		

**Blackboard:** Students are required to access the course Blackboard website, which contains links to the course readings, important class announcements, internet links, the syllabus, and other relevant material. You can reach the course website from [www.american.edu/blackboard](http://www.american.edu/blackboard). It is the student's responsibility to be informed of changes in reading requirements and schedule. This is best accomplished by checking the Blackboard website regularly. I will update the syllabus as the class progresses.

**Assignments:** There will be no makeup exams, nor will paper deadlines be waived without a written medical note. Assignments will be due at the start of class on the due date unless otherwise noted. Papers that are late will incur a 1/3 mark deduction (e.g. a B+ will become a B) if they are handed in late in-class, and a further penalty of 5% deduction per day late. Mark penalties will be assigned for incorrect format and length.

**Classroom Environment:** Class sessions will consist of a mix of lectures, discussions and exercises. We will engage in numerous hands-on group activities, such as simulations and

small group analysis, as well as larger group discussions. I expect you to be active and engaged participants. This requires you to have read the assigned readings for each class, and to be willing to share your analysis, knowledge and insights, as well as engage with your classmates' ideas. The rationale for interactive learning rests on the finding that students learn far more from actively engaging with the material, talking and listening to each other than they do from listening passively to a lecturer. Further, students remember what they learn in those settings better than they do with lectures.

Please make every effort to arrive in a timely fashion (i.e., a few minutes early) so as to respect our time together. Please turn off all cellular telephones, pagers, or similar electronic devices prior to the start of class unless it is an emergency (and then only in silent mode). In sum, please be respectful of everyone in our learning community.

Unless a requirement of medical necessity (in which case you need to bring a note and meet with me), laptops will only be allowed in class when we do group case work on pre-assigned days, and if your group needs a laptop for your presentation.

## **Emergency Preparedness for the Disruption of Classes**

In the event of an emergency, American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of an emergency, students should refer to the AU Student Portal, the AU Web site ([www.prepared.american.edu](http://www.prepared.american.edu)) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/ college-specific information.

For this course, if the university closes some course requirements will be adapted, and we will utilize blackboard extensively as a platform to provide the basic structure for our class, assignments and group discussions.

## **Course Schedule**

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**August 30, Week 1: Introduction and Overview – Visions and Challenges of Peace**

Key Question: How do we define peace?

Introductions, review syllabus and course; conceptions of peace; develop list of possible cases for case study teams.

Required Readings

- P. Freire “The Pedagogy of the Oppressed” AtP, pp.160-166
- David P. Barash “Human Rights” AtP, pp.176-185

**September 6, Week 2: Conflict and War**

Key Questions: How do we define war and conflict? What do we learn about conflict from Benson, Alepho and Benjamin? What different perspectives we might take on understanding conflict and war?

Form conflict analysis case groups.

Required Readings

- Deng, Deng and Ajak They Poured Fire on Us from the Sky. Read the introduction, Part I and II. (Read Parts III and IV as well if you have time!)

CONFLICT ANALYSIS

**September 13, Week 3: Causes of Conflict – Nature and Nurture**

Key Questions: Is aggression innate or learned? How is aggression related to conflict and war? What is the function of groups in fueling conflict and war?

Required Readings

- Freud, “Why War?” AtP, pp.9-13
- Lorenz, “On Aggression” AtP, 14-19
- Mead, “Warfare is only an Invention” AtP, 20-24
- Hedges, “War is a force that Gives us Meaning” AtP, 24-26
- Janis, “Victims of Groupthink” AtP, 31-37
- Do preliminary research into your conflict case – identify the main actors and get a basic understanding of the history of the conflict.

Recommended: Check out the on-line blackboard external link: Personal Conflict Styles Inventory and see what it says about how you tend to approach conflict!

**September 20, Week 4: Causes of Conflict – Socio-economic Disparity and Nationalism**

Key Questions: What are larger systemic causes of conflict? What role does economic disparity play? What about nationalism?

Required Readings

- Galtung, “A Structural Theory of Imperialism” AtP, pp.44-46
- Boulding “National Images and International Systems” AtP, pp.47-51
- Ted Robert Gurr “Minorities and nationalists,” in (2003) C. Crocker, F. O. Hampson and P. Aall (Eds) Turbulent Peace, pp.163-188. (Blackboard)

- Frances Stewart and Graham Brown. “Motivations for Conflict: Groups and Individuals” in (2007) *Leashing the Dogs of War*. C. Crocker, F.O. Hampson and P. Aall (Eds), pp.219-241.
- Read more about your conflict case and be ready to do in-class work on the causes of conflict in your case. Which theories do you find most applicable to your case? What is the evidence that supports your analysis?

### September 27, Week 5: Causes of Conflict Applied

Key Question: How do the theories of conflict help us to understand complex, real-world conflicts?

First three **group presentations** analyzing causes of conflict.

#### Required Readings

- Deng, Deng and Ajak [They Poured Fire on Us from the Sky](#). Finish reading the book if you haven't already.
- International Crisis Group's 2010 interactive media report on southern Sudan at: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/multimedia/interactive-preventing-implosion-in-sudan.aspx>
- IRIN News. July 8, 2011. Beyond the euphoria of Southern independence. <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportID=93178>

### October 4, Week 6: Stakeholder Analysis

Key Question: Who are primary stakeholders? Secondary stakeholders? How do we differentiate between positions, interests and needs for primary stakeholders? Who are the stakeholders in your conflict? (primary, secondary) What are their respective positions, interests and needs? What are the relationships between the stakeholders?

#### Required Readings

- Ho-Won Jeong, “Understanding Conflict and Conflict Analysis”, Chapter 2 (pp.20-40). (Blackboard)
- Listen to the podcast on stakeholders on Blackboard before class
- Research the groups in your conflict. Find out as much as you can about them (E.g. how long have they been around? Who are their leaders? What are their support bases? Have the groups changed in the last 5-10 years?)

### October 11, Week 7: Additional Factors in Conflict – Gender, Religion, Culture TBD

Possible Key Questions: What stereotypes operate with respect to men and women's roles in conflict and peace? Are these problematic? Is religion only a source of conflict and violence? Can it also be a source of peace? What is the role of culture in conflict? How much does culture matter? How does it affect interventions?

Three **group presentations** on stakeholders in the conflict cases.

#### Required Readings

- TBA – focus dependent on class vote

**October 14 – Take Home Exam DUE on Blackboard by 5pm on Friday October 14**

### **October 18, Week 8: Conflict Escalation and Conflict Systems**

Key Questions: Do conflicts progress in a predictable fashion? If so, what are key features of conflict escalation? How do conflicts change things?

#### Required Readings

- Tamara Pearson d'Estrée (2008) "Dynamics" in S. Cheldelin, D. Druckman and L. Fast (Eds) Conflict, pp.71-89. (Blackboard)
- John Paul Lederach (1997). "Process: the dynamics and progression of conflict" in Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies, pp.63-71 (Blackboard).
- Find particular incidents that set-off escalation in your case and be prepared to do in-class work applying the models of escalation.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION INTERVENTIONS

### **October 25, Week 9: Conflict Interventions –Mitigation, Resolution, Transformation**

Key Questions: What is the range of interventions that occur in conflicts? What types of international interventions produce negative peace?

Three **group presentations** on conflict dynamics in the conflict cases.

#### Required Readings:

- Dean Pruitt & Sung H. Kim (2004) Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate and Settlement, Chapter 11. (Blackboard)
- Osgood "Disarmament demands GRIT" AtP 78-82
- Schell, "A Powerful Peace" AtP 89-91
- Fasulo "An Insider's Guide to the UN" AtP, 106-112

### **November 1, Week 10: Negotiation**

Key Questions: What is the difference between position-based and interests-based bargaining? How can we achieve integrative solutions? Will this produce positive or negative peace?

#### Required Reading:

- Roger Fisher and William Ury (new editions edited by Patton) Getting to Yes (yes, read the whole book – it's an easy read).

#### Recommended Reading:

For stories on how culture affects negotiations read: Raymond Cohen (2001) "Negotiating across cultures" in C. Crocker, F.O. Osler and P. Aall (Eds) Turbulent Peace, pp.469-481.

### **November 8, Week 11: Mediation**

Key Questions: What is mediation? How is it different from negotiation? Will this produce positive or negative peace? How is mediation used within peace processes?

Three **group presentations** on interventions in the conflict cases.

#### Required Readings:

- Review Pruitt and Kim's chapter assigned during week 9.
- Jacob Bercovitch and Allison Houston. (1996) "The study of international mediation: theoretical issues and empirical evidence" in Bercovitch (Ed) Resolving International Conflicts: the theory and practice of mediation, pp. 1-35 (Blackboard)
- Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse & Hugh Miall (2005) Contemporary Conflict Resolution, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Chapter 7: "Ending Violent Conflict: Peacemaking". (Blackboard)

### **November 15, Week 12: Nonviolence**

Key questions: What is nonviolence based upon? Why engage in nonviolence according to the different authors? How is it supposed to work according to Sharp?

#### Required Readings:

- King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" AtP, 171-176
- Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience" AtP, 192-197
- Gandhi, "Ahimsa, or the Way of Nonviolence" AtP, 205-212
- Tolstoy, "Letter to Ernest Howard Crosby" AtP, 197-201
- Sharp, "Civilian Resistance as a National Defense" AtP, 212-218

Video excerpts (in-class): "Bringing Down a Dictator"

### **November 22 – Tuesday classes are cancelled**

### **November 29, Week 13: Complex Mediation Simulation**

- Note: Two volunteers are needed to lead the mediation team in this simulation. The mediation team leaders meet with me in advance to structure the mediation process.
- The simulation will be handed out the class before – please read in advance and bring your role and the background context to class with you

### **December 6, Week 14: Bringing it All Together**

#### Required Reading:

- Victoria Bonney, "Antiwar activists, where are you?" ATP, pp.282-283.
- Desmond Tutu, "No future without forgiveness," ATP, pp.277-282.
- Dalai Lama, "A human approach to world peace," ATP, pp.266-271.

#### Recommended Reading:

- William Ury (2000) The Third Side: Why we Fight and How we can Stop, pp.2-26. New York: Penguin Books.

**Final Exam: Simulation Analysis due on Blackboard by 2:15 pm on December 13, 2011**