

Political Science 458: International Conflict Management & Resolution

Spring 2017 — University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Instructor

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Course Information

Meeting Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30-10:45

Classroom: Murray 201

Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:00-2:00 (or by appointment)

Course Description

This course is an advanced seminar on the management and resolution of international and civil conflict. How and why do states decide to resolve their conflicts, or the conflicts of others? When are conflict and war amenable to the opportunity for management? What determines intervention and mediation strategies for third parties, and why do attempts at conflict resolution so frequently fail? In this course the student will be exposed to theoretical and empirical investigations into these questions, learning about the occurrence and success (or failure) of conflict management through an analytical as well as historical lens.

The course presupposes basic familiarity with international politics as taught at the level of POLI 150 (Introduction to International Relations), and is designed to complement the material taught in POLI 457 (International Conflict Processes). The emphasis will be on developing your analytical capacity to examine arguments. The ability to memorize factual material is taken for granted, but it is not the primary goal of the course. Please note that this is *not* a current events course. Current events will be incorporated when relevant to learning about and evaluating the theories and empirical investigations at hand, but they are just tools for learning.

Grading

Class Participation	15%
Midterm	20%
Paper	20%
Project	20%
Final Exam	25%

Class Participation

The majority of the class will be devoted to discussions of scholarly readings. The class will proceed in a seminar format, with as little lecturing as possible. You are expected to have read the assigned material when we discuss it in class. I (and you) will ask questions, and the class will be responsible for providing the answers. Students should feel free to ask questions and debate the topics at hand. There are no wrong questions (well...not many), and you are strongly encouraged to participate even if you found the readings difficult or problematic. Part

of what I want you to practice is the art of deciphering analytical work, so I do not begin the course with the assumption that you understand everything you will read on the syllabus. The participation grade evaluation will be based on the quantity *and quality* of comments and questions and demonstration of knowledge of the course material. Attendance *per se* will not be evaluated, but if you are not in class you cannot participate. We will also break into active learning sessions several times throughout the semester to apply the skills you are acquiring to the study of a particular puzzle in international conflict management or resolution. Your enthusiasm and attention in these sessions directly impacts your participation score.

Paper

During the semester you will be responsible for writing one paper (15-25 pages, double-spaced, 11pt font, 1 inch margins) that addresses a topic in conjunction with the course readings and additional research. I will give you a list of possible questions/topics that you could address in your paper. You should not feel constrained by these prompts. If you have a different idea for a paper that addresses the relevant readings, contact me and we can work something out. The paper will be worth 20% of your total grade. Note: you do not have to agree with the author(s) or assume that they have accomplished what they have set out to do. The paper is due at the end of the semester, but you may turn it in any time after the eighth week of class.

Project: Applying What You Know

In the last month of the semester, we will take the theoretical and empirical work that we've been learning and apply it to three broad types of conflicts associated with conflict resolution and management: War, Intervention and Peacekeeping, and Post-War Politics. For each type, I will assign two small groups (for a total of six groups). Each group will identify a historical case within that conflict type, and use the theories and knowledge we have gathered throughout the semester to help the class understand what happened (or is happening), what types of conflict management approaches have been implemented (if any), and why have these approaches succeeded or failed to resolve the conflict. Your presentation and accompanying documentation will be worth 20% of your total grade.

As you all know by now, group projects pose a unique set of challenges (a.k.a., collective action problems). To assist you in managing the group throughout the semester, we will form these groups early, and write up group contracts that specify the expectations and requirements of the group. The contract must include an expulsion clause that specifies when and why a group member may be expelled from the group.

Exams

In addition to the paper and project, there will be a midterm (20%) and a final exam (25%). The exams will require you to step back and process the material in the course beyond the individual contributions of each reading. Mere demonstration of knowledge of the material will be regarded as an average performance. To excel on the exam you will have to demonstrate an ability to synthesize and analyze the material relevant to the questions on the test.

Course Materials

The following books are available in the UNC Bookstore. All other readings are available electronically via the UNC library e-journals and e-resources databases.

- Gourevich, Philip. 1999. *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families* Macmillan. ISBN: 978-0312243357

- Reiter, Dan. 2009. *How Wars End* Princeton University Press. ISBN: 978-0691140605
- Fortna, V. Page. 2008. *Does Peacekeeping Work?: Shaping Belligerents' Choices after Civil War* Princeton University Press. ISBN: 978-0691136714

Class Schedule

Part 1: Why We Should Care About Conflict Resolution

Week One: Introduction

Week Two: Why We Study Conflict Resolution

- Gourevitch: *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families*
- [Frontline Interview of Philip Gourevitch](#)
- [BBC: Rwanda's Untold Story](#)
- Christian Davenport and Allan Stam. 2009. [What Really Happened in Rwanda?](#)

Part 2: Understanding Conflict Resolution in Interstate War

Week Three & Four: How Wars End

- Gleditsch, Pinker, Thayer, Levy and Thompson. 2013. [The Forum: The Decline of War](#) *International Studies Review* 15: 396-419.
- Book: Dan Reiter, *How Wars End* (Week Three: Chapters 1-3, Week Four: Chapters 4-6, 9, 10)

Part 3: Conflict Management and Resolution in the Absence of Total War

Week Five: Conflict Management Basics

- Bercovitch, Jacob and Gerald Schneider. 2000. [Who Mediates? The Political Economy of International Conflict Management](#), *Journal of Peace Research* 37(2): 145-165.
- Andy Owsiak. 2014. [Conflict Management Trajectories in Militarized Interstate Disputes : A Conceptual Framework and Theoretical Foundations](#), *International Studies Review* 16: 50-78.
- Barbara Walter, 2009. [Bargaining Failures and Civil War](#) *Annual Review of Political Science* 12: 243-261
- Molly Melin, 2014. [Commitment Problems: Understanding Variation in the Frequency of International Conflict Management Efforts](#) *International Negotiation* 20: 221-256

Week Six: Intervention

- Gareth Evans and Mohamed Sahnoun. 2002. [The Responsibility to Protect](#), *Foreign Affairs*, Nov/Dec.
- Gent, Stephen E. 2008. [Going in When it Counts: Military Intervention and the Outcome of Civil Conflicts](#). *International Studies Quarterly* 52(4): 713-735.
- Gent, Stephen E. 2007. [Strange Bedfellows: The Strategic Dynamics of Major Power Military Intervention](#). *Journal of Politics* 69(4): 1089-1102.

Week Seven: Midterm and Group Projects

- Feb. 21: Group Project Work (in class)
- Feb 23: No Class (ISA Conference), Study Guide Distributed

Week Eight: Mediation and The Challenges of Negotiating Settlements

- Feb 28: Midterm
- Isak Svennson. 2007. [Mediation with Muscles or Minds? Exploring Power Mediators and Pure Mediators in Civil Wars](#), *International Negotiation* 12: 229-248.
- Desirée Nilsson. 2008. [Partial Peace: Rebel Groups Inside and Outside of Civil War Settlements](#), *Journal of Peace Research*, 45(4):479-495.
- NOTE: *Papers may be turned in anytime after March 2*

Part 4: Keeping the Peace**Week Nine: Conflict Resolution and Maintaining the Peace**

- Caroline Hartzell, Mathew Hoddie, and Donald Rothchild. 2001. [Stabilizing the Peace After Civil War](#). *International Organization* 55 (1):183-208.
- Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler and Mans Soderbom. 2008. [Post-Conflict Risks](#), *Journal of Peace Research*, 45(4):461-478.
- Alexander Downes, 2004. [The Problem with Negotiated Settlements to Ethnic Civil Wars](#). *Security Studies* 13 (4):230-279.
- Michaela Mattes and Burcu Savun. 2009. [Fostering Peace After Civil War: Commitment Problems and Agreement Design](#), *International Studies Quarterly* 53: 737-759.

Week Ten: SPRING BREAK**Week Eleven & Twelve: Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution Success**

- Book: Page Fortna: *Does Peacekeeping Work?: Shaping Belligerents' Choices after Civil War*
- Kyle Beardsley and Kristian Gleditsch, 2015. [Peacekeeping as Conflict Containment](#). *International Studies Review* 17: 67-89.

Week Thirteen: The Price of Peace

- Jonathan Tepperman. 2002. [Truth and Consequences](#). *Foreign Affairs*. 81 (2): 128-145.
- Jack Snyder and Leslie Vinjamuri. 2003. [Trials and Errors: Principle and Pragmatism in Strategies of International Justice](#). *International Security* 28 (3):5-44.
- Kathryn Sikkink and Carrie Booth Walling. 2007. [The Impact of Human Rights Trials in Latin America](#). *Journal of Peace Research* 44 (4):427-445.
- Bronwyn Anne Leebaw. 2008. [The Irreconcilable Goals of Transitional Justice](#), *Human Rights Quarterly* 30(1): 95-118.

Part 6: Applying Theories to History**Week Fourteen**

- Groups 1 & 2 will present their findings.
- Groups 3 & 4 will present their findings

Week Fifteen

- Groups 5& 6 will present their findings
- Followup Discussion on projects 1-6

Week Sixteen: Wrap Up

- **Wrap-up:**
- Conflict Mediation Simulation
- Mediation Simulation (continued) & Wrap-Up ***Paper Due April 27***

Final Exam: May 5, 8:00–10:00am