

GLOBAL CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND RESOLUTION

CONF 340.003

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Meeting Time: Wednesday, 10:30 AM–1:10 PM
Classroom: Science and Tech I — 126
Office hours: 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM,
Robinson B 365. Also by appointment.

Questions and Goals

“It is not enough to end the war; we must build the peace. It is not enough to reject the dark past; we must build a bright future.” – William J. Clinton at Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, July 30, 1999

Why are some countries more prone to civil war than others? Is democracy truly pacifying or does it sometimes increase the risk of violence? What are the best strategies for helping communities devastated by violence recover, keep the peace, and find reconciliation? Why do certain groups use terrorism to advance their aims?

These are but a small sample of the questions we will study this semester. The purpose of this class is to study the causes and consequences of *global conflict* and how such conflicts can be resolved. By “global conflict,” I mean violent conflict involving governments, armed groups, and international organizations, as well as shifting alliances of all of these. Thinking in these terms weakens if not demolishes the usual categorization of conflicts as *interstate* (*i.e.*, between two governments) and *intrastate* (*i.e.*, between a government and groups of its citizens). Instead, as we will find, nearly all violent conflicts in the world today are *global* in nature. We will debate how political leaders use different tactics to secure domestic political support to wage international war, including by intervening in other countries’ civil wars. Similarly, belligerents in civil wars often sell diamonds or drugs on international markets, earning money to purchase arms from sympathetic countries or arms dealers halfway across the world. The classic dichotomy of conflict also omits what might be called *trans-national* conflicts, in which armed groups spanning national borders wage violent conflict in several different countries.

The ultimate goal of this class is to introduce you to the wide array of interventions used to resolve conflicts around the world. Practitioners representing governments and international organizations use military force, foreign and humanitarian aid, mediation, and technical advice to resolve conflicts around the world, but do such interventions really *work*? That said, conflict *resolution* first requires conflict *analysis* — we must understand the why, when, and how of a particular global conflict before we can hope to resolve it. This class is therefore divided into two parts. First, we will use theory and evidence to delve into the causes and consequences of global conflict. Second, we will study the interventions practitioners use to manage global conflict.

Details: Requirements, Grading, Etc.

“I cannot give any scientist of any age better advice than this: the intensity of the conviction that a hypothesis is true has no bearing on whether it is true or not. . . . If an experiment does not hold out the possibility of causing one to revise one’s views, it is hard to see why it should be done at all.” - P.B. Medawar

“The harder I work, the luckier I get.” - Samuel Goldwyn

Course Materials

Readings for the course come in two forms. First, the following books are required. They are available for purchase at the Fairfax branch of the GMU Bookstore and via online booksellers. Please note that the book by Collier and his co-authors is available electronically on our Blackboard site.

- Ramsbotham, Oliver, Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall. 2005. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. Malden, MA: Polity Press. (“RWM” in reading list)
- Crocker, Chester A., Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, eds. 2007. *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press. (“CHA” in reading list)
- Collier, Paul, et al. 2003. *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy*. Washington, DC: The World Bank Press and Oxford University Press. (“Collier” in reading list)

Second, other readings for the course are available electronically via our Blackboard site. These are marked “Online” in the reading list.

Expectations: Hard Work, Reading, and Participation

I have very high expectations of your effort level and performance in the classroom. I have found over time that students adjust their efforts to the standard set by their teacher. By setting low standards, I imply that you are capable of nothing better than mediocrity and I have too much respect for you to assume that. Furthermore, in this class we will grapple with some of the foundational questions regarding why the world is the way it is and how we can better it. If these questions are not worth your full effort, then what is? This class represents an opportunity to investigate the world outside GMU and challenge your own preconceived notions of it; I expect to seize that opportunity.

I therefore would like to clarify precisely what this class will demand of you. By enrolling in this course, you agree to the following or risk a low grade:

- You will attend every class and arrive on time; there are only fourteen meetings, so missing one means missing a big chunk of material. You will turn off all electronic devices, with the exception of your laptop and only then if used for class and the wireless connection is turned off. You will give class your full attention. I will take attendance in every class. Anything past one absence will begin to affect your grade. Excused absences will be granted rarely and only when requested more than 24 hours in advance, with nearly all excused absences requiring proof (e.g., a doctor’s note).

- You will complete all readings *before* the class in question. *Do not fall behind — it will prove very difficult to catch up.* Read carefully and, above all, *think!* Take notes in preparation for assignments, review the discussion questions I will post online each week (see below), and prepare questions you wish to ask in class.
- I will expect you to participate in the intellectual life of our class. There are three ways you can do so:
 - *In class.* In general, I will only use about a third of our class time for lecture. Mostly, I will use a more Socratic approach — in other words, I will constantly pepper you with questions and ask your opinions regarding our subject material. I may call on you without warning. Be prepared — I will notice when you are not. I also expect that you will ask interesting questions, respond to others' questions and comments, etc. However, I value quality over quantity, so do not expect to speak up without having read and be rewarded for it.
 - *Online.* You are strongly encouraged to post to the online discussion boards throughout the semester. Each week, I will post discussion questions on the next week's topic. Up to the day of class, I expect you to respond to some of those discussion questions, ask questions of your own, and respond to each other. To reward hard work and discourage lazy comments, I'll evaluate your posts at the end of the term by grading the quality of your commentary, questions, and responses to your peers.
 - *In office hours.* I encourage you to come to office hours to review outstanding questions from class or readings, or get advice on your paper.

Assignments and Grading

There will be four components to your grade in this course:

- **Participation.** As discussed above, participation in class is required. I will evaluate your participation in class, online and in office hours. Participation will be worth **15%** of your grade.
- **Pop Quizzes** You will take four unannounced reading quizzes. The quizzes will consist of a series of questions on readings for that week and material from the week before. They will be relatively short (about 30–40 minutes) and largely consist of definitions of key terms and short answers. I will drop your lowest quiz grade. Each quiz will be worth 5% of your grade; together, the quizzes will be worth **15%** of your grade.
- **Midterm.** You will take an in-class midterm covering Weeks 1–6 on **March 3, 2010**. The midterm will consist of short and long essay questions. It will be worth **35%** of your grade.
- **Final Paper.** You will write a medium-length paper (12–15 pages) in which you will analyze a single conflict of your choosing. Your topic and a one-paragraph summary of your progress are due at the beginning of class on **March 24, 2010**. If you'd like me to read a draft of any part of your paper, it is due on **April 21, 2010**. Finally, the paper itself is due on **May 3, 2010**. It is worth **35%** of your grade.

I know that many of you are concerned about your grades and I will do everything in my power to help you throughout the course. I will not saddle you with high expectations without sufficient support. However, as discussed above, I have high standards for your work. For a typical assignment, I expect the following grade distribution, with a mean grade of B- or C+:

- **A:** Truly outstanding work that shows creative original thinking, is nearly perfectly organized, and flawlessly written. This level of work forces me to think hard when I read it. Usually about 10% of the grade distribution.
- **B:** Good work with a strong argument, sound organization, and solid writing. There are some relatively minor flaws in one or more of these areas, although the work clearly shows potential for an A level grade. Clearly above or right at the mean. Usually about 30% of the grade distribution.
- **C:** About average or slightly below average. An overall solid job, but with more obvious organizational, interpretive, creative, and/or stylistic problems that permeate the paper. Usually about 35% of the grade distribution.
- **D:** Failing by a small margin. Serious flaws in every aspect of the work: a lack of understanding of some basic principles, poor organization, and writing that makes it difficult for me to understand the author. Salvageable, however, in that it's clear the author could turn the paper into a passing grade. Usually about 20% of the grade distribution. Immediate meeting with me strongly encouraged.
- **F:** Unacceptable and/or incomplete. Having such serious deficiencies that the student would need to start over to earn a passing grade. Usually about 5% of the grade distribution. Immediate meeting with me required.

We will discuss standards for specific assignments when the time arrives. Extensions are granted only in extreme cases such as illness or other family emergency and only where the student in question has established a track record of completing work on time. In most such cases, I will require certification of the situation. *A student's procrastination in completing his/her work is not a basis for an extension.*

Honor Code and Plagiarism

As a student in this course, you agree to abide by the George Mason University Honor Code, which is also available at academicintegrity.gmu.edu. The Honor Code reads as follows:

“To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code. Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.”

In this class, those requirements mainly pertain to your paper-writing. Plagiarism is the attempt, whether accidental or intentional, to present another's thoughts as your own. It includes but is not

limited to the following acts: submitting a paper that someone else wrote; paraphrasing a sentence from another writer without proper citation; failing, even once, to place a quote in quotation marks; so riddling your paper with long quotes of another's work that your paper functionally ceases to be "yours." Note that plagiarism need not be intentional; on the contrary, most cases are the result of lazy writing habits.

The punishment for plagiarism ranges from automatic failure of this course to expulsion from the University, depending on the severity of the case. In most cases, I will have no choice but to refer your case to the University Honor Committee.

I will circulate materials about avoiding plagiarism, which we will discuss in class.

Course Outline

"It is a nuisance, but God has chosen to give the easy problems to the physicists . . . Man is capable of producing more complex behavior than he is capable of understanding. "

- Charles Lave and James G. March

As discussed above, the course is divided into two parts. First, we will spend the first six weeks of the course defining what we mean by global conflict, examining the statistics of such conflicts over time, and studying theory and evidence that help us understand the causes and consequences of global conflict. The second part of the course examines the various tools international organizations and sovereign governments use to prevent violent conflict, manage violence while it is ongoing, and re-build societies torn apart from violent conflict.

Part I. Global Conflict: Theories and Evidence

Week 1 (1/20). Syllabus, Logistics, and Global Conflict Today

Week 2 (1/27). General Theories of Global Conflict

Week 3 (2/3). Interstate Conflict

Week 4 (2/10). Civil Conflict I: Politics and Economics

Week 5 (2/17). Civil Conflict II: Social Dimensions

Week 6 (2/24). Terrorism and Crime

Week 7 (3/3). In-class Midterm

Week 8 (3/10). No class: Spring Break

Part II. Conflict Resolution in Global Conflict

Week 9 (3/17). Prevention and Peacekeeping I

Week 10 (3/24). Prevention and Peacekeeping II

Week 11 (3/31). Peacemaking

Week 12 (4/7). Post-war Transitions

Week 13 (4/14). Peacebuilding

Week 13 (4/21). Reconciliation

Week 15 (4/28). Conclusions

Detailed Course Schedule

Part I. Global Conflict: Theories and Evidence

Week 1. January 20. Syllabus, Logistics, and an Introduction

Readings:

- RWM, Chapter 3 (pp. 55-77).

Week 2. January 27. Human Security and Global Conflict

Readings:

- *Human Security Report*, Parts I and II (pp. 3–97). Online.
- CHA, Chapters 2–3 (pp. 17–52)

Week 3. February 3. Interstate Conflict

Readings:

- Morgenthau, Hans J. 1978. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Fifth Edition, Revised, New York: Alfred A. Knopf. pp. 4-15. Online.
- Jervis, Robert, 1978. “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics* 30(2): 167–214. Only read pp. 167–186. Online.
- Doyle, Michael W., 1986. “Liberalism and World Politics,” *American Political Science Review* 80(4): 1151-1169. Online
- CHA, Ch. 10 (pp. 161–176).

Week 4. February 10. Civil Conflict I: Politics and Economics

Readings:

- Collier, Chapters 1–4 (pp. 13–118).
- Giugale, Marcelo M., Oliver Lafourcade and Connie Luff. *Colombia: The Economic Foundations of Peace*. Washington, DC: The World Bank. Chapter 1 (pp. 35–58). Online.

Week 5. February 17. Civil Conflict II: Social Dimensions**Readings:**

- RWM, Chapters 1, 4 (pp. 3–31, 78–105).
- *Human Security Report*, Parts III and IV (pp. 99–135). Online.
- Beah, Ishmael. “A Long Way Gone,” New York, NY: Sarah Crichton Books. Chapters 15–16 (pp. 126–151). Online
- TBA

Week 6. February 24. Terrorism and Transnational Crime**Readings:**

- RWM, Chapter 11 (pp. 249–264)
- Pape, Robert A. 2003. “The Strategic Logic of Terrorism.” *American Political Science Review* 97(3): 343–361.
- Savun, Burcu and Brian J. Phillips. 2009. “Democracy, Foreign Policy, and Terrorism.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(6): 878–904.
- CHA, Chapters 5 and 24 (pp. 67–82, 425–436)
- Materials on international piracy. TBA. Online.

Week 7. March 3. In-Class Midterm**Week 8. March 10. No Class: Spring Break****Part II. Conflict Resolution in Global Conflict****Week 9. March 17. Prevention and Peacekeeping I****Readings:**

- RWM, Chapters 5 and 6 (pp. 106–158). Also review pp. 27–30.
- Collier, pp. 121–140.
- CHA, Chapter 6 (83–94).
- Excerpts from *Foreign Policy’s* “2009 Failed States Index.” Online.

Week 10. March 24. Prevention and Peacekeeping II**Readings:**

- United Nations. 1992. "An Agenda for Peace." Online.
- CHA, Chapters 18, 25 and 28 (pp. 319–334, 437–454, 497–520)
- Lund, Michael S. 2005. "Greed and Grievance Diverted: How Macedonia Avoided Civil War, 1990–2001." In *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis*. Volume 2. Washington, DC: The World Bank. pp. 231–258. Online

Week 11. March 31. Peacemaking**Readings:**

- RWM, Chapter 7 (pp. 159–184).
- Collier, pp. 140–150.
- Walter, Barbara F. 1997. "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement," *International Organization* 51 (3), 335-364. Online.
- Synge, Richard. 1997. *Mozambique: UN Peacekeeping in Action: 1992–1994*. Washington, DC: USIP Press. 3–26, plus front matter. Online

Week 12. April 7. Post-War Transitions**Readings:**

- CHA, Chapter 21 (pp. 369–388)
- RWM, Chapter 8 (pp. 185–214)
- Walter, Barbara F. 1999. "Designing Transitions from Civil War: Demobilization, Democratization, and Commitments to Peace", *International Security* 24 (1), 127-155. Online
- Synge, Richard. 1997. *Mozambique: UN Peacekeeping in Action: 1992–1994*. Washington, DC: USIP Press. pp. 27–91. Online

Week 13. April 14. Peacebuilding**Readings:**

- RWM, Chapter 9 (pp. 215–230).
- Collier, pp. 150–172.
- Paris, Roland. 2004. *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1–2 (pp. 13–51).
- CHA, Ch. 33 (pp. 603–619)
- Synge, Richard. 1997. *Mozambique: UN Peacekeeping in Action: 1992–1994*. Washington, DC: USIP Press. pp. 92–144. Online.

Week 14. April 21. Reconciliation**Readings:**

- RWM, Chapter 10 (pp. 231–245).
- Lederach, Chapters 3–4 (pp. 23–61) Online.
- Backer, David. 2004. “Evaluating Transitional Justice in South Africa from a Victim’s Perspective.” *South African Initiatives Office Newsletter*. Fall 2004. Online.

Week 15. April 28. Conclusions**Readings:**

- TBA