

CONF 695.006
Ethics and Conflict

Thursdays at 4:30-7:10
Arlington: Founders Hall 312
Spring 2012

Dr. Daniel Rothbart
Professor of Conflict Analysis and Resolution
Office: S-CAR: Truland 701H
drothbar@gmu.edu
phone: 703-993-4474

Description:

In this exploration of the ethics of violent conflict, we address issues that are critical to our field—what is just and unjust, right and wrong, and good and bad before, during, after the occurrence of violent conflict.

First, what constitutes a just intervention in violent conflict? Just war theory addresses this question by offering normative criteria for a state's rightful use of force in settling disputes with another state. Are the criteria too lenient in giving states excessive flexibility to engage in immoral military campaigns, possibly Gulf War I? This question calls for attention to the pacifist arguments that are so important to contemporary conflicts. Alternatively, are the criteria too restrictive by failing to accommodate wars involving terrorist organizations [El Qaida] and wars to stop genocide violence [Rwanda 1994]. The right to protect the innocent [R2P] has become a cardinal doctrine of certain international bodies, such as the military engagement of NATO in Libya. Then, should international organizations intervene in other regions, such as DRC or Darfur?

Second, can wars be fought justly (or humanely), and if so, how? This question centers on the need to balance two moral imperatives—first, the obligation [moral, political, legal] of state militaries to protect their own forces during combat, and second, the moral imperative to act humanely towards the innocents of war—prisoners, children, and the infirmed. We give special attention to experiences of civilian noncombatants in modern warfare—their plight as unwilling 'participants' of war's tumult represents a major segment of modern warfare.

Third, in "post-conflict" settings, where the peace tends to be often precarious, fragile, and at times short, which peacebuilding programs are 'good' and which others are 'bad'? This question includes a range of moral quandaries for those engaged in peacebuilding—how to bring "justice" to a war-torn country, how to protect genuine reconciliation throughout society, and how to provide 'human security' to the innocents of war. The experiences of conflict resolution practitioners in Bosnia, Iraq, and Sudan will be given special attention.

Required Books:

1. David Campbell, Politics Without Principle: Sovereignty, Ethics, and the Narratives of the Gulf War. Lynne Rienner Publishers: boulder. 1993. ISBN: 1-5558-381-2 paper.
2. Charles Reed and David Ryall, eds., The Price of Peace: Just War in the Twenty-first Century. Cambridge UP. ISBN-13 978-0-521-67785 paper.
3. Richard J. Regan, Just War: Principles and Cases. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of American Press. ISBN 0-8132-0856-4. Paper
4. D. Rothbart, K. Korostelina, and M. Cherkaoui, eds., (co-edited), Civilians and Modern War: Armed Conflict and the Ideology of Violence, 2012, Routledge Press.
5. Hugo Slim, Killing Civilians: Method, Madness, and Morality in War. New York: Columbia University Press.

Teaching Technology: Blackboard

<https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>

username:

password:

Requires Reports, Articles, Chapters

Writings of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King:

Brosché and Rothbart, "Violence in Darfur," Violent Conflict and Peacebuilding: The Continuing Crisis in Darfur, Chapter 1.

Brosché and Rothbart, "Complementary Conflicts," Violent Conflict and Peacebuilding: The Continuing Crisis in Darfur, Chapter 2

Brosché and Rothbart, "Negotiating the Conflicts in Darfur" Violent Conflict and Peacebuilding: The Continuing Crisis in Darfur, Chapter 9.

Gareth Evans, "Responsibility to Protect" <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/key-issues/responsibility-to-protect.aspx>

"Pray the Women Back to Hell" Press Kit

Course Content and Readings

Week 1: January 26. Introduction

Unit I: The Rationale for War and Violent Conflict

Week 2: February 2. Nonviolence, Pacifism, and Morality

Writings of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King

Week 3: February 9. Justifying War

Regan, "Justifying War," Just War, Chapter 1

Regan, "the Just War Decision: Legitimate Authority," Just War, Chapter 2

Regan, "The Just War Decision: Traditional Just-Cause Considerations," Just War, Chapter 3

Week 4: February 16. Gulf War I

Richard E. Rubenstein, "The Role of Civilians in American War Ideology," Civilians and Modern War: Armed Conflict and the Ideology of Violence, Chapter 2.

David Campbell, Politics Without Principle, Chapters 1-5.

Week 5: February 23. Justifying Humanitarian Interventions

Regan, "The Just War Decision: Just Cause and Interventionist Wars," Just War, Chapter 4.

David Fisher, "Humanitarian Intervention," The Price of Peace, Chapter 6

Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Terrorism," The Price of Peace, Chapter 7

Gareth Evans, "Responsibility to Protect" <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/key-issues/responsibility-to-protect.aspx>

Unit II: Civilians in War

Week 6: March 1. Civilians in Limited War

Regan, "Just War Conduct," Just War, chapter 6.

Rothbart, Korostelina, and Cherkaoui, "The Place and Plight of Civilians in Modern War," Civilians and Modern War: Armed Conflict and the Ideology of Violence, Chapter 1

Week 7: March 8. Civilian Devastation

Slim, "Killing and Rape," and "Movement, Impoverishment, Famine, Disease and Distress," Killing Civilians, Chapters 2 and 3.

Brosché and Rothbart, "Violence in Darfur," Violent Conflict and Peacebuilding: The Continuing Crisis in Darfur, Chapter 1.

Week 8: March 22. Lessons from Lebanon and Gaza

Neta Oren, "Israeli Soldiers' Perceptions of Palestinian Civilians during the 2009 Gaza War," Civilians and Modern War: Armed Conflict and the Ideology of Violence, Chapter 7

Michael Gross, "Civilian Vulnerability in Asymmetric Conflict: Lessons from the Second Lebanon and Gaza Wars," Civilians and Modern War: Armed Conflict and the Ideology of Violence, Chapter 8

Terrence Kelly, "The just conduct of war against radical Islamic terror and insurgencies," The Price of Peace, Chapter 11

Week 9: March 29. Ideology of War

Slim, "Anti-civilian Ideologies," and "Civilian Ambiguity", Killing Civilians, Chapters 4 and 5

Week 10: April 5. International Media

Mohammed D. Cherkaoui, "Civilians Overshadowed by Soldiers: Faceless Victims of the Public Media Narrative" Civilians and Modern War: Armed Conflict and the Ideology of Violence, Chapter 9:

Mohammed D. Cherkaoui, "Civilians, Pundits, and the Mediatized Ideology" Civilians and Modern War: Armed Conflict and the Ideology of Violence, Chapter 10:

UNIT III: BUILDING A JUST PEACE

Week 11: April 12. The Continuing Crisis in Darfur

Brosché and Rothbart, "Complementary Conflicts," Violent Conflict and Peacebuilding: The Continuing Crisis in Darfur, Chapter 2:

Brosché and Rothbart, "Negotiating the Conflicts in Darfur" Violent Conflict and Peacebuilding: The Continuing Crisis in Darfur, Chapter 9.

Week 12: April 19. Protecting Civilians

Slim, "Promoting Civilian Protection," Killing Civilians, Chapter 7.

Week 13: April 26. Women Peacemakers

"Pray the Women Back to Hell: The Story of Leymah Gbowee" Press Kit

Week 14: May 3. Truth and Justice

Mary Kaldor, "From just war to just peace," The Price of Peace, Chapter 14

Michael Miklaucic, "The Price of Justice," Civilians and Modern War: Armed Conflict and the Ideology of Violence, Chapter 13.

Course Requirements:

Each class session will include a discussion component that calls for active participation. Of course, regular attendance is expected.

The course grade will be determined by evaluation of three exams, each addressing the primary topics, themes, and information for a particular unit.

1. Exam #1 will be distributed week 5 [February 23] and returned the following week, March 1. 25% of course grade.
2. Exam #2 will be distributed week 11 [April 5] and returned the following week on April 12. 25% of course grade.
3. Concept Paper: Paper on a moral concept. Due Week 13: April 26. 25% of course grade
4. Exam #3: distributed week 14 [May 3] and returned May 10. 25% of course grade.

HONOR POLICY

GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct.

Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using MLA or APA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.