

GLOBAL CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND RESOLUTION

CONF 340.003

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Meeting Time: Monday, 1:30 PM–4:10 PM
Classroom: 203 Innovation Hall
Office hours: 11:00 AM – 12:30 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 violent conflict than others? Does democratization reduce the chance of violent conflict? Why do certain groups use terrorism to advance their aims? What are the best strategies for helping communities devastated by violence build a new peace?

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 violence between and among governments, armed groups, and trans-national organizations. Thinking in these terms weakens if not demolishes the usual categorization of conflicts as *interstate* (*i.e.*, between two sovereign governments) and *intrastate* (*i.e.*, between a government and groups of its citizens). Instead, the conflicts we study nearly always involve shifting alliances of sovereign states, the United Nations, other international and regional organizations, non-government organizations, illegal armed groups, crime syndicates, and still others. We will therefore attend carefully to the inter-connectedness the causes, conduct, and effects of violent conflict around the world. However, despite the global nature of this class, we mainly focus on how to help individuals and communities end violence and resolve conflicts. This isn’t a class about countries, it’s a class about people.

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

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, if you wish to save money:

- 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. These are marked “Online” in the reading list.

Expectations: Hard Work, Reading, and Participation

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

This class will set high expectations for your thinking, writing, and diligence. Setting low standards, in contrast, implies that you are capable of nothing better than mediocrity. 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 — seize it.

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

- 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. You will give class your full attention. I will take attendance in every class. You are allowed to miss only one class meeting, regardless of the reason. After that one class, you will lose a half grade off your final grade per class missed. There are no exceptions to this policy.

- 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. We will seek to achieve true class *discussion*. 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 reading. 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. There are no makeups for pop quizzes; if you miss one, you will receive a 0. Therefore, if you miss one, your quiz grade will be the average of your three quizzes.
- **Midterm.** You will take an in-class midterm covering Weeks 1–6 on **October 18**. The midterm will consist of short and long essay questions. It will be worth **35%** of your grade. There are no makeups for the midterm; if you miss it, you will receive a 0 and cannot pass the class; if this occurs, I strongly recommend that you drop the class.
- **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-page discussion of your topic are due at the beginning of class on **November 1**. If you'd like me to read any portion of your

paper, it is due on **November 19**. Finally, the paper itself is due in class on **December 6**. It is worth **35%** of your grade. No late papers will be accepted. More information about your paper is forthcoming.

I understand that you are concerned about your grades and I will do everything in my power to help you succeed in this course. However, hard work alone is not sufficient for a superior grade — the hard work must show in the thinking and writing on the page. For a typical assignment, I expect the following grade distribution. Generally, the median grade in this class is about a 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 with more work. 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 and makeups are *never* granted.

Honor Code and Plagiarism

All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. You can find a copy of the Honor Code at academicintegrity.gmu.edu and it is reproduced here:

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, these 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;" etc. Note that plagiarism need not be intentional — on the contrary, most cases are the result of carelessness.

All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review. With specific regards to plagiarism, three fundamental and rather simple principles 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. If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please contact me. The punishment for plagiarism ranges from automatic failure of this course to expulsion from the University, depending on the severity of the case.

ICAR requires that all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit a student's work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. ICAR's policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace or substitute for it.

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

English Language Institute

The English Language Institute offers free English language tutoring to non-native English speaking students who are referred by a member of the GMU faculty or staff. For more information, visit <http://eli.gmu.edu/>, call 703-993-3642 or e-mail malle2@gmu.edu.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center is a free writing resource that offers individual, group, and online tutoring. For general questions and comments, please visit <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>, e-mail wcenter@gmu.edu, or call 703-993-4491.

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 (8/30). Syllabus, Logistics, and Global Conflict Today

Labor Day (9/6). No class

Week 2 (9/13). Human Security and Global Conflict

Week 3 (9/20). General Theories of Violent Conflict

Week 4 (9/27). Civil Conflict I: Politics and Economics

Week 5 (10/4). Civil Conflict II: Social Dimensions

Week 6 (10/12). Terrorism and Crime: **Tuesday meeting day, not Monday!**

Week 7 (10/18). In-class Midterm

Part II. Conflict Resolution in Global Conflict

Week 8 (10/25). Prevention and Peacekeeping I

Week 9 (11/1). Prevention and Peacekeeping II

Week 10 (11/8). Peacemaking

Week 11 (11/15). Post-war Transitions

Week 12 (11/22). Peacebuilding

Week 13 (11/29). Reconciliation

Week 14 (12/6). Conclusions

Detailed Course Schedule

Part I. Global Conflict: Theories and Evidence

Week 1. August 30. Syllabus, Logistics, and an Introduction

Readings:

- Powner, Leanne. 2007. "Reading and Understanding Political Science." Online.
- RWM, Chapter 1 (pp. 3–31).

No Class on 9/6 (Labor Day holiday)

Week 2. September 13. Human Security and Global Conflict

Readings:

- *Human Security Report 2005*, Parts I and II (pp. 13–98). Online.
- CHA, Chapter 3 (pp. 39–51)

Week 3. September 20. General Theories of Global Conflict

Readings:

- Jervis, Robert, 1978. "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* 30(2): 167–214. Only read pp. 167–186. Online.
- RWM, Chapter 4 (78–105), and re-read Chapter 1
- Excerpts from Kant, *The Perpetual Peace*. 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. September 27. Civil Conflict I: Politics and Economics

Readings:

- Collier, Chapters 1–3 (pp. 13–91).
- Giugale, Marcelo M., Oliver Lafourcade and Connie Luff, eds. *Colombia: The Economic Foundations of Peace*. Washington, DC: The World Bank. Chapter 1 (pp. 35–58). Online.

Week 5. October 4. Civil Conflict II: Social Dimensions**Readings:**

- Re-read RWM, Chapter 4
- *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
- Excerpts from *The Dispossessed*

Week 6. October 12. 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. Online.
- Savun, Burcu and Brian J. Phillips. 2009. “Democracy, Foreign Policy, and Terrorism.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(6): 878–904. Online.
- CHA, Chapter 24 (pp. 425–436)
- “Transnational Crime and Corruption.” 2001. In *Issues in World Politics*, White, Brian and Michael Smith and Richard Little, eds. pp. 232–251.
- Materials on international piracy. Online.

Week 7. October 18. In-Class Midterm**Part II. Conflict Resolution in Global Conflict****Week 8. October 25. Prevention****Readings:**

- RWM, Chapters 5 (pp. 106–131). Also review pp. 10–13 and 27–30.
- CHA, Chapters 6–7 (83–114).
- Excerpts from *Foreign Policy’s* “2009 Failed States Index.” Online.
- Collier, pp. 121–140.

Week 9. November 1. Peacekeeping (Paper topic is due!)**Readings:**

- United Nations. 1992. “An Agenda for Peace.” Online.
- RWM, Chapter 6 (pp. 132–158)
- CHA, Chapters 18 and 28 (pp. 319–334, 497–520)
- Add reading here?

Week 10. November 8. Peacemaking**Readings:**

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

Week 11. November 15. 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

November 19. Paper drafts due (optional)**Week 12. November 22. Peacebuilding****Readings:**

- RWM, Chapter 9 (pp. 215–230).
- Collier, pp. 150–172.
- 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 13. November 29. Reconciliation**Readings:**

- RWM, Chapter 10 (pp. 231–245).
- Bar-Tal, Daniel. 2000. “From Intractable Conflict through Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation: Psychological Analysis,” *Political Psychology* 21(2): 351–365.
- TBA

Week 14. December 6. Conclusions (Final paper is due)**Readings:**

- None