

GLOBAL CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND RESOLUTION

CONF 340.001

SPRING 2015

1 Professor Flores' Information

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Lecture: Tuesday, 10:30 AM–11:45 AM,
East Building 122
Office hours: Immediately after lecture until
1:00 PM, Starbucks in Northern Neck

2 Questions and Goals

“I do not question that loving one’s oppressors . . . may be the most difficult attitude to achieve. But is it the way of the universe that retaliation, hatred, and revenge only continue the cycle and never stop it.” – Maha Ghosananda

Why does conflict more likely occur in some places and times and not others? 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. In this class, we will study the causes and consequences of *global conflict* and how such conflicts can be resolved. By “global conflict,” we mean violence between and among states (e.g., Mexico); non-state armed groups, which are sometimes trans-national (e.g., ISIL); and international organizations (e.g., the United Nations). Thinking in these terms weakens if not demolishes the usual categorization of conflicts as *interstate* (*i.e.*, between two sovereign states) and *intrastate* (*i.e.*, between a state and groups of its citizens). Indeed, the conflicts we study nearly always involve shifting alliances of sovereign states, international and regional organizations, non-government organizations, non-state armed groups, and crime syndicates. We will therefore attend carefully to the inter-connectedness of the causes, conduct, and effects of violent conflict around the world.

The ultimate goal of this class is to introduce you to the wide array of interventions used to resolve conflicts around the world. A network of practitioners (e.g., representatives of sovereign governments, the United Nations, and non-governmental organizations) use a wide array of methods (e.g., mediation, advice, youth programs, military force, aid) to help parties to conflict resolve their differences. Why do outsiders get involved? Do outside interventions really *work*? But 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.

3 Details: Requirements, Grading, Etc.

“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

3.1 Course Materials

“Outside of a dog, a book is a man’s best friend. Inside of a dog, it’s too dark to read.”

- Groucho Marx

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. 2011. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. 3rd Edition. Malden, MA: Polity Press. (“CCR” 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 and will be available on our Blackboard page.

Each week, we will provide discussion questions to help guide your reading. They will usually be posted on Wednesday (i.e., six days before the next class).

3.2 Class Time

As noted above, lectures will meet on Tuesdays from 10:30 AM until 11:45 AM in East Building 122 and will be followed by office hours with Professor Flores. In lecture, Professor Flores will introduce the main concepts and questions in the week’s readings.

Discussion sections (labeled “recitation sections” in Patriot Web) will meet on Thursdays from 10:30 AM until 11:45 AM. Your discussion leaders are S-CAR PhD students in whom I have complete confidence; we will work closely together as a team to prepare each week’s teaching plan. In discussion sections, teaching assistants will fill in key details not covered in lecture through hands-on-learning and in-depth class discussion.

The teaching assistants and their assigned sections and classrooms are as follows:

Teaching Assistant	E-mail	Number	Room
Wilfredo Torres	wtorres@masonlive.gmu.edu	302	Innovation Hall 316
Patrick Hakizimana	ghakizim@masonlive.gmu.edu	303	Robinson Hall B 204
Jason Reader	jreader@masonlive.gmu.edu	304	Music/Theater Building 1008

3.3 Expectations: Hard Work, Reading, Thinking, Writing and Participation

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

We will set high expectations for your thinking, writing, and diligence – because we know you are capable of meeting them. 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.

We 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 lecture and discussion section and arrive on time; we will move quickly, so missing just one means missing a big chunk of material. Attendance will be taken in every class meeting after the first lecture. You are allowed to miss only one lecture and one discussion section, regardless of the reason. After that, you will lose a half grade off your final grade per class missed. There are no exceptions to this policy. In lecture, you are encouraged to bring your laptop, but you should only use it for class purposes. You will give class your full attention.
- You will complete all readings for the week before Tuesday’s lecture. We’ll know if you haven’t. *Do not fall behind — it will prove very difficult to catch up.* Read carefully and, above all, *think!* Take notes in preparation for assignments and prepare questions you wish to ask in class.
- You *will* participate in the intellectual life of our class. There are three ways you can do so:
 - *In discussion section.* Discussion sections are not lectures; rather, they will require you to participate actively in class. Be prepared — your discussion leader will notice when you are not. We will seek to achieve true class *discussion and participation*.
 - *In lecture.* With nearly 50 students in lecture, we won’t be able to encourage the kinds of discussion you will have in section. Yet you shouldn’t be surprised if Professor Flores does ask a question for your response. If you have a question, are horribly confused, or notice that Professor Flores is on fire, you should definitely raise your hand to answer questions. We’ll also experiment with using the “Office Hours” tool in Blackboard (under “Collaboration”) to solicit questions, answer questions, and feedback during lecture and throughout class.
 - *Online.* You are strongly encouraged to e-mail your discussion leader and Professor Flores questions throughout the semester.
 - *In office hours.* You should come to office hours or make meetings with Professor Flores and/or your TA to review outstanding questions or get advice on your paper. When I’m in office hours, I’ll use the “Office Hours” tool on our Blackboard site to answer questions if they come in and especially at key points (e.g., before exams).

3.4 Assignments and Grading

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

- **Participation.** As discussed above, participation in class is required. Professor Flores and your discussion leader will evaluate your participation in class, online and in office hours. Participation will be worth **10%** of your grade.
- **Hourly Exams.** You will take two in-class exams. The first will cover Weeks 1–6 on **March 3** and the second will cover Weeks 8–12 on **April 21**. Each is worth **25%** of your grade; they collectively are worth **50%**. The exams will consist of short and long essay questions. There are no makeups for either exam; if you miss one, you will receive a 0 and likely will not be able to pass the class. *We will not have discussion section on March 5 or April 23 to allow your discussion leaders to begin grading the exams.*
- **Conflict Analysis Memoranda.** You will write a series of **four** short (2 pages, single-spaced) memoranda that draw on current news on global conflict over the course of the semester. You can choose which weeks to write a memorandum. Each memo should first *brief* the reader on current developments in the conflict in question and then *analyze* the conflict in light of theories of global conflict. Each is worth **10%** of your grade; they are collectively worth **40%**. Memoranda are due on Tuesdays. More information on this assignment is forthcoming.

Your TA, under the supervision of Professor Flores, will be responsible for grading your assignments.

We understand that you are concerned about your grades and we will do everything in our 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. The typical grade in this class is about a B-. We will discuss standards for specific assignments when the time arrives, but the following is the expected grade distribution for the typical assignment.

- **A:** Truly outstanding work that shows creative original thinking, is nearly perfectly organized, and flawlessly written. This level of work forces us to think hard when we 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 your TA 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 your TA and Professor Flores required.

A word on extensions: **no**. Any assignment turned in late will be given a 0. There are no exceptions to this policy.

3.4.1 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.

S-CAR 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. S-CAR'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.

3.4.2 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.

3.4.3 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.

4 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 (I’m sure they meant “people” instead of “man”)

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 by violent conflict.

Week 1 (1/20, 1/22). Syllabus, Logistics, and Introduction

Part I. Global Conflict: Theories and Evidence

Week 2 (1/27, 1/29). Is Our World More or Less Peaceful?

Week 3 (2/3, 2/5). Five ‘Big’ Ideas on Global Conflict

Week 4 (2/10, 2/12). The Political Economy of Civil Conflict

Week 5 (2/17, 2/19). The Psychological and Social Dimensions of Civil War

Week 6 (2/24, 2/26). Terrorism

Week 7 (3/3). First Hourly Exam (no class on 3/5)

Spring Break (3/10, 3/12). No class

Part II. Global Conflict: Practice and Resolution

Week 8 (3/17, 3/19). Conflict Prevention and Management

Week 9 (3/24, 3/26). Peacemaking

Week 10 (3/31, 4/2). Post-war Transitions

Week 11 (4/7, 4/9). Peacebuilding

Week 12 (4/14, 4/16). Reconciliation

Week 13 (4/21). Second Hourly Exam (no class on 4/23)

Week 14 (4/28, 4/30). Conclusions

5 Detailed Course Schedule

5.1 Part I. Global Conflict: Theories and Evidence

5.1.1 Week 1. January 20, 22. Syllabus, Logistics, and an Introduction

Readings:

- CCR, Chapter 1
- This column: <http://www.vox.com/2015/1/7/7500705/college-advice>

5.1.2 Week 2. January 27, 29. Is Our World More or Less Peaceful?

Readings:

- CCR, Chapter 3
- Excerpts from *Human Security Report 2013*. Online.

5.1.3 Week 3. February 3, 5. Five ‘Big’ Ideas on Global Conflict

Readings:

- Realism
 - Jervis, Robert, 1978. “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics* 30(2): 167–214. Concentrate on pp. 167–186. Online.
- Liberalism
 - Kant, Immanuel. Excerpts from *Perpetual Peace*. Online.
 - Russett, Bruce and John Oneal, *Triangulating Peace*, pp. 15–42. Online
- Marxism
 - Balibar, Étienne. 2010. “Marxism and War.” *Radical Philosophy* 160: 9-17. Online.
- The clash of civilizations
 - Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. “The Clash of Civilizations.” *Foreign Affairs* 3: 22-49. Online.
- Basic Human Needs and Protracted Social Conflict
 - CCR, Chapters 1, 4, and 19.

5.1.4 Week 4. February February 10, 12. The Political Economy of Civil War**Readings:**

- Why does civil war happen? A debate.
 - Collier et al, Chapters 3-4.
 - Re-read CCR, Chapter 4
 - Stewart, Frances. “Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: An Introduction and some Hypotheses.” Online.
- The conflict trap: war and economic development
 - Collier et al, Chapters 1-2

5.1.5 Week 5. February 17, 19. The Psychological and Social Dimensions of Civil War**Readings:**

- TBA

5.1.6 Week 6. February 24, 26. Understanding Terrorism**Readings:**

- CCR, pp. 79–84 and 283–292
- Pape, Robert A. 2003. “The Strategic Logic of Terrorism.” *American Political Science Review* 97(3): 343–361. Online.
- Abrahms, Max. 2008. “What Terrorists Really Want.” *International Security* 32 (4), pp.78-105. Online
- Lee, Alexander. 2011. “Who Becomes a Terrorist? Poverty, Education, and the Origins of Political Violence.” *World Politics* 63 (2), pp. 203-245. Online
- Tessler, Mark and Michael Robbins. 2007. “What Leads Ordinary Arab Men and Women to Approve of Terrorist Acts Against the United States?” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51(2): 305-328. Online.
- Kam Cindy D. and Donald R. Kinder. 2007. “Terror and Ethnocentrism: Foundations of American Support for the War on Terrorism” *Journal of Politics* 69(2): 320–338. Online.

5.1.7 Week 7. March 3. First Hourly Exam**5.1.8 No class on March 5, 10 or 12 (Spring Break)****5.2 Part II. Global Conflict Resolution****5.2.1 Week 8. March 17, 19. Conflict Prevention and Management****Readings:**

- Overview
 - CCR, Chapters 5-6. Also review pp. 10–32.
 - Collier, pp. 121–140.
 - United Nations. 1992. “An Agenda for Peace.” Online.
- Problem-solving
 - Kelman, Herbert C. 2010. “Interactive Problem Solving: Changing Political Culture in the Pursuit of Conflict Resolution.” *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 16(4): 389–413. Online.
- Case study reading: Kenya’s 2008 elections (TBA). Online.

5.2.2 Week 9. March 24, 26. Peacemaking**Readings:**

- Overview
 - CCR, Chapter 7.
 - Collier, pp. 140–150.
- The credible commitment problem
 - Walter, Barbara F. 1997. “The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement,” *International Organization* 51 (3), 335-364. Online.
- Case study reading on Colombia’s peace process (TBA). Online.

5.2.3 Week 10. March 31, April 2. Post-War Transitions**Readings:**

- Economic reconstruction
 - CCR, Chapter 8
 - Collier, pp. 150–172.
- United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs)

- CCR, Chapter 6
- Re-read Walter from Week 9
- Fortna, Virginia Page, Chapter 4 from *Does Peacekeeping Work?*. Online.
- Autesserre, Séverine, Chapter 1 of *The Trouble with the Congo*. Online.

5.2.4 Week 11. April 7, 9. Peacebuilding

Readings:

- Overview
 - CCR, Chapter 9.
 - Re-read Collier, pp. 150–172.
 - Re-read Autesserre from Week 10
- Democratic/Liberal Peacebuilding
 - Review readings from Week 3 on democracy and conflict
 - Paris, Roland. 2004. *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 2, and 9. Online.
- Gender and peacebuilding
 - Pankhurst, Donna. 2008. “The Gendered Impact of Peace.” In *Whose Peace? Critical Perspectives on the Political Economy of Peacebuilding*. Edited by Michael Pugh, Neil Cooper and Mandy Turner. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan. Online.

5.2.5 Week 12. April 14, 16. Reconciliation

Readings:

- General introduction
 - CCR, Chapter 10.
 - Re-read Bar-Tal piece from Week 5
- Problem-Solving
 - Kelman, Herbert C. 2010. “Interactive Problem Solving: Changing Political Culture in the Pursuit of Conflict Resolution.” *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 16(4): 389–413. Online.
 - Fisher, Ronald J. 2010. “Challenges of power asymmetry and justice for problem-solving workshops.” *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict* 3(3): 145–161. Online.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commissions
 - “What is Transitional Justice?” Online.
 - Avruch, Kevin. 2010. “Truth and Reconciliation Commissions: Problems in Transitional Justice and the Reconstruction of Identity.” *Transcultural Psychiatry* 47(1); 33–49.

- Sarkin, Jeremy. 2001. “The Tension Between Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda: Politics, Human Rights, Due Process, and the Role of the Gacaca Courts in Dealing with the Genocide.” *Journal of African Law* 45(2): 143-172. Online.

- Gender in reconciliation

- Theidon, Kimberly. 2009. “Reconstructing Masculinities: The Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Former Combatants,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 31(1): 134. Online.

5.2.6 Week 13. April 21. Second Hourly Exam (no class on April 23).

5.2.7 Week 14. April 27, 30. Conclusions (no reading)