HSPS and H&P TRIPOS
PART IIB 2024-5

Pol 12 - The Politics of Conflict and Peace

Course Organisers

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Outline of the Course

This paper explores issues of conflict and peace in contemporary international politics, with a particular focus on conflict, peace and migration in the Global South. It considers competing theories and claims about the causes of conflict and the relationship between conflict, development, migration and other international processes. It analyses the range of responses to conflict and how they are justified, and focuses on contests over the meanings and practices of peace and peacebuilding. The possibilities and limitations of international law and institutions, including the United Nations, in managing or ending conflict and maintaining peace are highlighted throughout the paper.

The paper pays particular attention to the connection between local, national, regional and international politics, economy and society. It looks at the ways in which regional and international dynamics may have a bearing on conflict and peace. What is the relationship between seemingly ‘local’ conflicts and the wider political structures in which they are embedded? How do international institutions, laws, and programmes respond to conflict? What are the benefits and limits to existing approaches to peace and conflict? Is the state the primary actor in conflict and in its resolution? How can we best understand the multiple layers of conflict and how they interact? Why do people migrate and what are the challenges they face? How is political agency exercised?

Aims and Objectives

• to explore a range of ways of understanding possible connections between conflict and peace
• to provide a framework for thinking about the causes of conflict and the connections between local, regional and international institutions, law, and processes
• to understand theories of mobility and migration, and how migration is governed
• to gain detailed knowledge of conflict and peace in at least one region
• to encourage critical reflection of theoretical assumptions regarding conflict, and peacebuilding, and policy packages
to teach students how to read closely primary texts such as international treaties, resolutions and official reports

The paper is taught by lectures, seminars, and supervisions, as explained below.

Lectures

In Michaelmas, we will have 10 lectures. These lectures will explore the origins and nature of contemporary conflict, the relationship between international laws and conflict, one specific transnational dynamic (migration) and one case study (the Rohingya crisis). We begin by discussing the contested meanings and dynamics of concepts of security, war, and conflict, and how scholars study them. We then turn to the relationship between international law, institutions, the state and conflict. Four lectures follow on mobility and migration, including the governance of migration and the politics of camps. Finally, we will have two lectures on the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar to illustrate some of concepts and dilemmas raised in the course so far.

In Lent, we will have 10 lectures focussing on peace and peacebuilding. We will start by questioning the concept of peace, and we will critically assess the institutions, ideas and practices underlying peacebuilding efforts. The next lecture will focus on different international and regional actors and their strategies and normative agendas, including China and other ‘new’ actors in peacebuilding. Next, we discuss different ‘responses’ to conflict, including the politics of humanitarian assistance, governance and democratisation, security reform, justice and reconciliation, and post-war economies. The final lecture discusses the possibilities and limits of building peace and transnational advocacy.

In Easter term we will one revision lecture (and one revision supervision, see below).

Seminars

We will have two seminars, one in Lent and one in Easter to discuss key overarching concepts and readings in greater depth.

The Lent seminar will focus on concepts, measurement, indicators and methods in conflict, peace and migration studies.

The Easter seminar will be a revision class where we will discuss implications and ‘alternative’ ideas and practices of peace.

For both seminars, students should submit two questions sparked by the readings.

Supervisions and Assessment

Students will have 5 supervisions spread over Michaelmas and Lent terms, and 1 revision supervision in Easter term. For four of these (as agreed with your supervisor), students should hand in 4 essays of approximately 2000 words. For the remaining fifth supervision, students are not required to write an essay but should submit an essay outline and be prepared to discuss the topic and readings in supervision.

The Easter term revision supervision will be used discuss a mock exam answer essay.

This paper is assessed by an undivided examination paper, from which students should answer three questions. Students can also find previous examination papers and reports on Moodle but please note that some topics change every year. A recent past exam paper can be found at the end of this guide; others can be found on Moodle.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Michaelmas Term lectures (check dates below, as we won’t have lectures every Tue/Thu)</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Tuesdays (weeks 1-8) 4-5pm  Room SG2, Alison Richard Building  
| Thursdays (weeks 2-8) 4-5pm  Room S1, Alison Richard Building |
|  
| Giovanni Mantilla:  
Conflict, International Law & Institutions  
1. Introduction: conflict and peace (Oct 15)  
2. Defining and studying contemporary conflict dynamics (Oct 17)  
3. International law of armed conflict, justice, and peace I (Oct 22)  
4. International law of armed conflict, justice, and peace II (Oct 24)  
Marthe Achtenich: Migration  
5. Migration, Mobility, and Journeys (Oct. 29)  
6. Migration, Governance, and Borders (Oct. 31)  
7. Migration, Health, and Economy (Nov. 5)  
8. Migration and immobility (Nov. 7) |
| Farhana Rahman:  
Lectures on the Rohingya Crisis as a case study  
Rohingya Lecture 1: Forced Migration and Rohingya Refugees (Nov 19)  
Rohingya Lecture 2: Gender, Identities, and Rohingya Refugee Subjectivities (Nov. 21) |

| Lent lectures:  
Mondays 3-4pm, room SG2 ARB  
Wednesdays 10-11, room SG2 ARB  |
| Lent Seminar  
Room 119 ARB |
| Easter term  
Revision lecture and seminar  
Lecture  
Revision lecture  
Monday 5 May, 3-4pm  Room SG2 |

| Devon Curtis  
Peace:  
1. The history of peace studies (Jan 27)  
2. What is peacebuilding? (Jan 29)  
3. Who keeps the peace and why? (Feb 3)  
4. Politics of humanitarian assistance (Feb 5)  
5. Gender, conflict and peace (Feb 10) |
| Seminar 1  
Concepts, methods, measurement  
Group 1  
Thurs 6 Feb, 1-3pm  
Group 2  
Thurs 6 Feb, 3-5pm  
Group 3  
Fri 7 Feb, 10.30-12.30 |
Readings and Course Materials

Both the University Library and the Seeley library hold most of the items listed here. Much of the literature also exists in college libraries. Most of the material is available on-line. Students should make sure that they know how to access journal material through the University Library ejournals portal. Many items that are not available in online journals or as e-books are on the library moodle site (i.e. some book chapters).

Please note that although this paper guide is very long, students are not expected to do ALL the readings.

Please note also that many of the readings contain reference to, or descriptions of, violence and suffering in different forms, including sexual violence and death.

For each lecture, we clarify which are the core required readings and which are suggested readings. The suggested readings in each section is for students who wish to go into more depth on a particular topic.

Lecture powerpoints will be uploaded to the POL 12 Moodle website.

General Readings

These are general readings that deal with the main themes in this paper. They are not required but we encourage you to read them at some point in the year.


Murad Idris, War for Peace: Genealogies of a Violent Ideal in Western and Islamic Thought, Oxford University Press 2018.

LECTURE READING LIST

MICHAELMAS TERM - Conflict: Causes, “Solutions” and Dynamics

Lecture 1: Introduction: Conflict and peace


Suggested Readings:


Lecture 2: Defining and studying contemporary conflict dynamics. [There will be seminar in LT about this topic to remember to refer to these readings for that too!]


Suggested Readings:


Pamina Firchow, Reclaiming Everyday Peace: Local Voices in Measurement and Evaluation after War, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018

Suda Perera, Bermuda triangulation: embracing the messiness of researching in conflict, Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding, 11 (1), 2017


**Lecture 3: How does international law regulate violence, war, and conflict?**


Suggested readings:


Lecture 4: How does international law regulate war and conflict? II


‘Mistakes’ in War: Watch the Lecture Video Recording by Prof. Oona Hathaway (Yale Law School) at the Cambridge University Lauterpacht Centre for International Law: https://upload.sms.cam.ac.uk/media/4618321. The lecture is based on this paper by Hathaway and Khan, which you may read if you wish to: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4799550

**Suggested readings:**


**Lecture 5: Migration, Mobility and Journeys**


**Suggested Readings**


**Lecture 6: Migration, Governance and Borders**


**Suggested Readings:**


**Lecture 7: Migration, Health and Economy**


Suggested Readings


Lecture 8: Migration and Immobility


Suggested Readings:


Lectures 9 and 10 on the Rohingya Crisis as a case study

Despite significant trends in the effects of forced migration on various groups, there still remains a substantial lack of current knowledge on the everyday lives and subjectivities of the Rohingya community – particularly Rohingya women. In 2017, an escalation of violence in Rakhine State in Myanmar – where the Rohingya largely resided – reached a tipping point, with horrific reports of murder, kidnapping, and rape, resulting forced displacement to Bangladesh and a major humanitarian crisis. This module will explore forced migration processes more generally, and the reasons behind the Rohingya refugee crisis specifically. It will highlight the importance of the role of gender in forced migration and the ways in which Rohingya gender identities, roles, and relations have been affected as a result of displacement. Through the lived experiences and everyday negotiations of Rohingya refugee women, we will problematize deeply embedded gender ideologies regarding women’s place in settings after forced migration.

Lecture 9: Forced Migration and Rohingya Refugees

Core readings

Farhana Afrin Rahman. (forthcoming Sept. 2024) After the Exodus: Gender and Belonging in Bangladesh’s Rohingya Refugee Camps. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Chapters: 1, 2, 3)


Suggested readings


Lecture 10: Gender, Identities, and Rohingya Refugee Subjectivities

Core readings

Farhana Afrin Rahman. (forthcoming Sept. 2024) After the Exodus: Gender and Belonging in Bangladesh’s Rohingya Refugee Camps. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Chapters: 4, 5, 6, 7)


Suggested readings


**LENT TERM - Peacebuilding**

**Lecture 1. Introduction: peace studies**

How did peace studies evolve as a distinct area of study? What are the key methodological and theoretic commitments in the field of peace studies, and how have these changed over the past sixty years? How does peace studies relate to the study of international relations?


**Suggested readings**


**Lecture 2. What is peace? What is peacebuilding?**

What is peace? Who are ‘peacebuilders’? Can you measure peace? What kinds of goals, interests and assumptions are held by different peacebuilding organisations, and what happens when their visions clash? Is peacebuilding intervention a form of domination? Is there an international peacebuilding ‘culture’?


**Suggested readings**


Michael Banks, ‘Four conceptions of peace’ in Dennis Sandole and Ingrid Sandole-Staroste (eds), *Conflict Management and Problem-Solving* (Pinter, 1987) [M]


Short video on ‘Everyday peace indicators’ (Roger MacGinty and Pamina Firchow)

**Cases:**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar 1: Concepts, Definitions and Measurement (Lent Term)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seminar readings</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*1) Chris Cramer, <em>Civil War is not a Stupid Thing: Accounting for Violence in Developing Countries</em>, Hurst Publishers, 2006. [Read: Ch. 2: Categories, Trends and Evidence of Violent Conflict]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*2) Sally Engle Merry, The Seductions of Quantification: Measuring Human Rights, Gender Violence and Sex Trafficking, University of Chicago Press, 2016. [Read: Ch 1: A World of Quantification]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Lecture 3: Who ‘keeps’ the peace and why?
Is the use of force necessary to bring about peace/stability? How has UN peacekeeping evolved? Do ‘new actors’ in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, such as China, approach conflict and peace in different ways?


Suggested readings


Case readings

China:


Regional organisations:

Thierry Tardy, Hybrid Peace Operations: Rationale and Challenges, Global Governance, Vol 20, no 1, 2014


Reports:


Lecture 4: The politics of humanitarian assistance
Is the work of humanitarian aid agencies based on altruism? Is it possible for humanitarian
relief to be neutral? What are the politics of humanitarianism and how has this changed over the last fifty years? What are the consequences of framing populations as ‘victims’?


See also related blog posts including:


Degan Ali and Marie-Rose Romain Murphy, ‘Black Lives Matter is also a reckoning for foreign aid and international NGOs’ blog Open Democracy, 19 July 2020.

Michael Barnett and Peter Walker, ‘Regime change for humanitarian aid: How to make relief more accountable’, Foreign Affairs, July-August 2015.


Mary Anderson, Do No Harm: How Aid can Support Peace or War. (Lynne Rienner, 1999). Chapter 4.


Suggested readings


Devon Curtis, “Politics and humanitarian aid: debates, dilemmas and dissension”,


Alex de Waal, Democratizing the Aid Encounter in Africa’ *International Affairs*, Vol 73, No. 4, October 1997.


**Lecture 5, Gender: Conflict and Peace**

*How is the production of conflict and violence gendered? Should sexual violence in war be treated differently to other forms of violence? To what extent is ‘patriarchy’ relevant to understanding political violence and possibilities for peace? What does a gendered approach to peacebuilding entail?*


Carol Cohn (ed) *Women and Wars*. Polity Press 2013. [ch. 1]


Suggested readings


Cases:

Dara Cohen, ‘Female Combatants and the Perpetration of Violence: Wartime Rape in the Sierra Leone Civil War’, World Politics, 65(3), 2013, 383-415


Anne-Kathrin Kreft, Civil society perspectives on sexual violence in conflict: patriarchy and war strategy in Colombia, International Affairs, Volume 96, Issue 2, March 2020, Pages 457–478

Lecture 6: Negotiations, mediation and peace agreements

Are peace negotiations best understood as an exercise in bargaining between belligerents? On what basis are participants in peace negotiations chosen? Why do peace agreements so often break down? Is it possible for outsiders to ‘manage spoilers’ in peace processes?


**Suggested readings**


*Introductory/general readings on mediation:*

Jacob Bercovitch, Mediation and Conflict Resolution, *The SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution*, Bercovitch, Kremenyuk, Zartman (eds), 2009


Sean William Kane, Making Peace When the Whole World Has Come to Fight: The Mediation of Internationalized Civil Wars, *International Peacekeeping*, 2020

*On specific aspects of mediation*


**Other aspects of peace agreements and peace processes**


- Richard Betts, ‘The Delusion of Impartial Intervention’ *Foreign Affairs*, November-


Also: podcasts:
The Mediator’s Studio (from Humanitarian Dialogue Centre),
https://www.hdcentre.org/osloforum/podcasts/
There are a number of excellent interviews with mediators on this site.

IPI youtube video on ‘Women mediators: Connecting Local and Global Peacebuilders’ (with Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini and Theresa Whitfield).


**Lecture 7: The Politics of Governance: Democratisation and the governance of divided societies**

*Is there an immediate trade-off between democracy and order in highly divided countries emerging from civil war? Is it possible for outsiders to ‘institutionally engineer’ states and societies in order to reach desired outcomes? When, if ever, is partition necessary? Are certain kinds of institutions more conducive to peace?*

Anna Jarstad and Timothy Sisk (eds), *From War to Democracy: Dilemmas of Peacebuilding* (Cambridge University Press, 2008). (see chapter 4)


**Suggested readings**


pp. 221- 260 [M]


-Phil Roeder and Donald Rothchild, eds., Sustainable Peace: Power and Democracy After Civil Wars (Cornell University Press 2005). [Chapter 1 on M]


-David Campbell, National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity and Justice in Bosnia (University of Minnesota Press, 1998) esp chaps 1 and 7. [M-ch. 1]

Lecture 8: Security: Ex-Combatants and DDR

Is security and stability the first priority for peacebuilding? Are there tensions between stabilization operations and sovereignty and if so, can these be resolved? Do disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes achieve their objectives?

Mats Berdal and David Ucko, ‘Introduction to the DDR Forum: Rethinking the


**Suggested readings**


Paul Jackson, Shivit Bakrania, Is the Future of SSR non-linear? *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 2018


Lilli Banholzer, *When do disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes succeed?* GerMan Development Institute, Bonn, 2014.


**Cases:**


-Christopher Blattman and Jeannie Annan, ‘Child Combatants in northern Uganda: Reintegration Myths and Realities’ in Robert Muggah (ed), *Security and Post-Conflict Reconstruction*, (London: Routledge, 2008). (also see other chapters for other cases).


**Official documents and reports:**


**Lecture 9: Society: Justice and post-war reconciliation**

Can there be anything more than a victor’s justice after conflict? Who benefits from international courts? Is there a trade-off between reconciliation and justice? Do truth commissions succeed in uncovering the truth? How can the transnational dimensions of conflict be addressed in post-war justice and reconciliation initiatives?


Rosemary Nagy, “Transitional Justice as a Global Project: Critical Reflections”, *Third*


Suggested readings


Cases


And response: Alex de Waal, Writing Human Rights and Getting it Wrong, http://bostonreview.net/world/alex-de-waal-writing-human-rights


Mike Kaye, “The Role of Truth Commissions in the Search for Justice, Reconciliation


**Lecture 10: Economy: Post-War Economic Policies and Development**

*To what extent are the governments of countries emerging from conflict constrained in their economic choices? When is post-conflict reconstruction assistance helpful? Which development models are chosen and why?*


**Suggested readings**


Tobias Ide and al, ‘The past and future(s) of environmental peacebuilding’ *International Affairs*, 97(1), January 2021 (see also other case study articles in the special issue)

Mary Anderson, *Do No Harm: How Aid can Support Peace or War*. (Lynne Rienner, 1999).


**EASTER TERM**

There will be one revision lecture, one revision supervision, and one revision seminar.

**Seminar 2: Are there alternatives to international peacebuilding and statebuilding? (Easter Term)**

**Seminar readings:**

**Seminar assignment:** Please send in two questions/ideas sparked by the readings to Devon Curtis at least 12 hours before the seminar

**And for further reflection:**
*Pol Bargué-Pedreny (2019) Resilience is “always more” than our practices: Limits, critiques, and skepticism about international intervention, Contemporary Security Policy.


Short video on ‘Everyday peace indicators’ (Roger MacGinty and Pamina Firchow)

**Supervision Questions (TO BE UPDATED)**

**Michaelmas supervisions (TBC)**

**Conflict Studies and Dynamics**

**Migration**
1. How does the categorization of migrants by different actors shape their mobilities?
2. Bordering practices shape contemporary migration. Critically discuss.
3. How does the migrant body become a site of governance?
4. What role does immobility play in migrants’ journeys?

**Lent supervisions**
1. To what extent do peace operations reflect the global balance of power?
2. Does greater local accountability lead to more effective humanitarianism?
3. How does patriarchy influence peacebuilding?
4. What are the consequences of more inclusive peace negotiations?
5. Can institutional design minimise the likelihood of a recurrence of conflict in divided societies?
6. Do post-war security and justice objectives sometimes contradict one another?
7. Is economic development an antidote to violent conflict?

**Seminar 1:** How do debates over definitions and measurement affect the study of comparative political violence and peace? **(Lent)**

**Seminar 2:** Are there alternatives to peacebuilding and state-building? **(Easter)**
POL16 Examination 2022 (PLEASE NOTE that some topics have changed this year which means the exam paper will change to include them)

The Politics of Conflict and Peace

Candidates should answer three questions.

1. Do ideas of war shape ideas of peace?

2. What are the effects of globalisation on conflict? Answer with reference to at least one way in which the University of Cambridge or the City of Cambridge is linked to violent conflict.

3. Are ‘fragile’ states more vulnerable to gendered violence?

4. If environmental change AND/OR global health pandemics are viewed as potential threats to security, does that lead to more promising avenues for peacebuilding?

5. Has the proliferation of actors involved in peace interventions meant that the local dimensions of conflict are more likely to be addressed?

6. To what extent is the logic of humanitarian assistance similar to the logic of liberal peacebuilding?

7. Why do peace negotiations sometimes exclude representatives of ethnic groups and genders?

8. Do the consequences of power-sharing agreements show the limits of institutional engineering?

9. Will disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes always fail if the economic interests of former combatants are not prioritised?

10. Is tackling economic inequality always a key feature of post-conflict justice?

11. Does continued violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo show that there is no solution to the problem of conflict?

12. To what extent is displacement central to the everyday politics of violence in Colombia?

Other past examinations and examiners’ reports can be found on Moodle.