HSPS and H&P TRIPOS
PART IIB 2021-22
Pol 16 The Politics of Conflict and Peace

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Please wear face coverings for all lectures and seminars.

Note: If you are unable to attend a lecture in person, you are welcome to join on zoom. Lectures will be recorded, but seminars will not be.

Outline of the Course

This paper explores issues of conflict and peace in contemporary international politics, with a particular focus on conflict and peace in the global south. It considers competing theories and claims about the causes of conflict and the relationship between the state, conflict, development 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 institutions, including the United Nations, in 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? Do institutions and programmes responding to conflict reproduce and reflect a state-centric system? 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? How is political agency exercised?

In Michaelmas, the lectures explore the origins and nature of contemporary conflict, and the relationship between conflict, the state, and the global system. We begin by discussing the contested meanings of concepts of security, war, and conflict, and how these are measured. We then turn to the relationship between globalization, the
state and conflict. Next, we will focus on a number of competing theories and claims about the causes and dynamics of conflict, looking at the state, health and the environment, economies, identities, and gender.

We will also have lectures on two case studies to illustrate ideas, approaches, and practices of conflict and peace in diverse settings around the world. One case study will focus on contests over ideas of conflict and peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the African Great Lakes region. The focuses on Afro-Colombians and displacement in Colombia’s internal conflict. Students are expected to become highly familiar with one of these case study regions.

In Lent, the lectures will focus 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.

Throughout Michaelmas and Lent we will have seminar classes to discuss some of the key overarching readings. In Michaelmas there will be one seminar on questions of concepts, measurement and indicators, and one seminar on local (ie Cambridge’s) connections to global conflict(s). In Lent there will be a seminar class on ‘alternative’ ideas and practices of building peace.

In Easter term there will be one revision lecture, one revision seminar, and one revision supervision

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 processes
- 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 available models and policy packages
- to teach students how to read closely primary texts such as international treaties, resolutions and official reports

Teaching and Assessment

In Michaelmas, students will have 2 thematic supervisions and 2 seminars. Students will be allocated a supervisor at the beginning of Michaelmas term. For each supervision, students should prepare a 2000-2500 word essay. For the first
**seminar**, students should submit two questions sparked by the readings. For the **second seminar**, students will be asked to prepare a presentation. Details are in the relevant section of this paper guide.

There will also be **one supervision on the case study material**. Students taking to Congo option can choose whether they will do this at the end of Michaelmas term or beginning of Lent term. Students taking the Middle East or Colombia options will do this early in Lent.

In Lent, students will have **2 thematic supervisions and 1 seminar** (as well as the case study supervision if they did not do this in Michaelmas). For each supervision, students should write a 2000-2500 word essay. For the **Lent seminar**, students should write a one paragraph reaction to the readings.

**Please note:** Students are scheduled to hand in 5 supervision essays throughout the year (4 thematic supervision questions, 1 case study question).

In Easter term, we will have one revision lecture, one revision seminar, and one revision supervision

This paper is assessed by an **undivided** three-hour examination paper, from which students should answer three questions. **At the end of the paper guide, there are some past examination papers and an examiners’ report but please note that some topics change every year.** Students can also find other previous examination papers and examiners’ reports on moodle.

**Movie nights**
There are many movies and documentaries that are relevant to the themes we cover in POL 16. If there is enough interest, we will organise a few movie club nights to discuss a movie from the list, including movies related to the case studies.

**The practice of conflict and peace: Guest lectures**
There will be two guest lectures from policy practitioners, to discuss what these ideas and theories look like from the vantage point of policy-makers.

**Doug Chalmers** (former Lt Gen in the UK military) will discuss ‘Conflict in practice: A military view’ 15 November

**Katrin Wittig** (Political Affairs Officer, Office of the Special Adviser to the United Nations SRSG in MINUSMA, Mali) will discuss ‘Peacebuilding in practice’ 7 March
## Michaelmas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict: Causes, dynamics, consequences</th>
<th>Case studies (D Curtis, G Torino)</th>
<th>Seminars</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mon and Tues 11am-noon</td>
<td>DR Congo in the African Great Lakes (D Curtis)</td>
<td>Seminar 1 (week 2) Concepts/ measurement/ indicators</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Introduction: conflict and peacebuilding 11 Oct (Pitt Building-Bentley room)</td>
<td>1. Background: 2 Nov (Hopkinson lecture theatre, new museums site)</td>
<td>In Emmanuel College, Harrod’s room Group 1 Mon 18 Oct, 3-5pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Defining and measuring conflict, war and security 12 Oct (Biffen lecture theatre, Downing site)</td>
<td>2. Post-colonial politics and conflict 9 Nov (Biffen lecture theatre, Downing site)</td>
<td>Group 2 Tues 19 Oct, 1:30-3:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Globalisation, economies and contemporary conflict 18 Oct (Pitt)</td>
<td>3. Intervention and peace 16 Nov (Hopkinson lecture theatre, New Museums site)</td>
<td>Group 3 Tues 19 Oct, 4-6pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The state and conflict 19 Oct (Hopkinson lecture theatre, new museums site)</td>
<td>Colombia: internal conflict and displacement (G Torino)</td>
<td>Group 4 Wed 20 Oct, 1-3pm ARB room 138</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Poverty and inequality and conflict 26 Oct (Biffen lecture theatre)</td>
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<td>Group 1 Mon 29 Nov, 3-5pm</td>
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<td>7. Identities: Ethnicity, religion and conflict 1 Nov (Pitt- Bentley room)</td>
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<td>Group 2 Tues 30 Nov, 1:30-3:30</td>
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<td>8. Gender: Masculinities, patriarchy and conflict 8 Nov (Pitt- Bentley)</td>
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<td>Group 3 Tues 30 Nov, 4-6pm</td>
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**Note:** In Michaelmas, students will have 2 thematic supervisions and 2 seminars. They may also have 1 case study supervision (but they may do this early in Lent instead).
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<tr>
<th>Lent lectures: Peacebuilding (D Curtis)</th>
<th>Lent Seminars</th>
<th>Easter term</th>
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<tr>
<td>11am-noon, Mondays and Tuesdays</td>
<td>Seminar 3 (week 7)</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
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<td>Mondays: Pitt Building, Darwin Room</td>
<td>Alternatives to PB and Statebuilding</td>
<td>Revision lecture</td>
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<td>Tuesdays: Hopkinson Lecture Theatre</td>
<td>Group 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Introduction: peace studies</td>
<td>24 Jan</td>
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<td>2. What is peacebuilding?</td>
<td>25 Jan</td>
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<td>3. Who keeps the peace and why?</td>
<td>31 Jan</td>
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<td>4. Politics of humanitarian assistance</td>
<td>1 Feb</td>
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<td>5. Negotiations, mediation and peace agreements</td>
<td>7 Feb</td>
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<td>6. Governance: Democratisation and the governance of divided societies</td>
<td>8 Feb</td>
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<td>7. Security: Ex-combatants and DDR</td>
<td>14 Feb</td>
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<td>8. Society: Justice and reconciliation</td>
<td>15 Feb</td>
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<td>9. Economy: Post-conflict economic policies and development</td>
<td>21 Feb</td>
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<td>10. Limits and alternatives to PB</td>
<td>22 Feb</td>
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<td>11. Peacebuilding in practice- guest lecture</td>
<td>28 February- on ZOOM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>Mon 7 Mar, 3-5pm</td>
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<td>Group 2</td>
<td>Tues 8 Mar, 10-noon</td>
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<td>Group 3</td>
<td>Tues 8 Mar, 3-5pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>Wed 9 Mar, 1-3pm, ARB room 138</td>
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<td>Group 1</td>
<td>Mon 2 May</td>
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<td>Group 2</td>
<td>Tues 3 May</td>
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<td>Group 3</td>
<td>Tues 3 May</td>
<td>3-5pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>Wed 4 May</td>
<td>3-5pm</td>
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**Note:** In Lent, students will have 2 supervisions (and a third supervision on a case study if they did not do this in MT) and 1 seminar. In Easter students will have one revision supervision and one revision seminar.
Supervision Questions

Michaelmas Term (choose 2)
1. Is war always caused by the pursuit of economic gain?
2. Does the concept of ‘state fragility’ add anything to our understanding of conflict?
3. What is the relationship between violent conflict and health AND/OR environmental issues?
4. If poverty and inequality are increasing, should we expect to see more violent conflict?
5. When does ethnicity become relevant in conflict?
6. Does conflict subvert or reinforce gender dynamics?

Case study supervision (either MT or LT) (choose 1)
1. Do international peace interventions in the DR Congo rely on accurate understandings of conflict in the country?
2. Is armed conflict in the Middle East a cause or a consequence of climate change related factors? Answer with reference to at least two separate conflicts in the region.
3. What is the relationship between race, ethnicity and displacement in Colombia and why is that important to understand the politics of conflict in the country?

Lent supervisions (choose 2)
1. Do new actors in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, such as China, reinforce or challenge traditional peace intervention practices?
2. Is humanitarian assistance in conflict settings ethical?
3. Is increased inclusion more conducive to sustainable peace? Answer with reference to peace negotiations OR post-war governance institutions or BOTH.
4. Why do some ex-combatants return to fight, despite disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes?
5. Does post-conflict justice always benefit the powerful?
6. Who sets the priorities for economic reconstruction after violent conflict?

Seminars (see sections in the paper guide for readings and seminar assignments):

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

Seminar 2: How is Cambridge implicated in global conflict?

Seminar 3: Are there alternatives to peacebuilding and statebuilding?

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 (ie- some book chapters).

Books and articles that are strongly recommended are indicated with an asterisk (*). Please note that although this paper guide is very long, students are not expected to do ALL the readings. The list of further readings (items without an asterisk) in each section is for students who wish to go into more depth on a particular topic. Several lecture topics also include a ‘case’ section to highlight the lecture theme in one or two cases. If you are doing a supervision essay on a topic, I would suggest that you read at least one case study reading. Also, many of the same readings are relevant for different sections of the paper, so they will turn up in multiple sections of the paper guide.

Lecture powerpoints and recordings will be placed on the POL 16 Moodle website.

**General Readings**

These are general readings that deal with the main themes in this paper. I would encourage you to read all of them at some point in the year.


**MICHAELMAS TERM**

**Conflict: Causes and Dynamics**

*Lecture 1: Introduction: Conflict and peacebuilding*

What are the key themes of the course? How can we think about these different levels of analysis in thinking about conflict and peace, and what are the interactions between these levels? What is the role of the state? What is the role of ‘outside’ actors in war and peacebuilding?

Lecture 2: Defining and Measuring Conflict, War and Security

What are the differences between ‘conflict’, ‘war’, ‘violence’, peace? Who uses them, and for what purposes? How, if at all, should these phenomena be measured and compared? Should scholars prioritise one of them for research? Why did the term ‘human security’ emerge and to what extent does it represent an alternative to state security or international security?

Please also see Seminar 1 box below for assignment and discussion

*Chris Cramer, Civil War is not a Stupid Thing: Accounting for Violence in Developing Countries, Hurst Publishers, 2006. [M: Ch. 2: Categories, Trends and Evidence of Violent Conflict]

*Sally Engle Merry, The Seductions of Quantification: Measuring Human Rights, Gender Violence and Sex Trafficking, University of Chicago Press, 2016. [M: Ch 1: A World of Quantification]


*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


*Report on Global Peace 2020:*


http://search.lib.cam.ac.uk/?itemid=|eresources|218247


http://search.lib.cam.ac.uk/?itemid=|eresources|218247


**Human Security (and debates):**


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**Seminar 1: Concepts, Definitions and Measurement**

**Seminar readings**

*1) Chris Cramer, *Civil War is not a Stupid Thing: Accounting for Violence in Developing Countries*, Hurst Publishers, 2006. [Read: Ch. 2: Categories, Trends and Evidence of Violent Conflict]*

*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]*


You also may want to glance through this report:


Seminar assignment:
After you have done the four readings, please write two questions or observations that have been sparked by one or more of the readings. Please email these to your seminar leader at least 12 hours before your seminar.

Lecture 3: Globalisation, economies and contemporary conflict
Do the wars of the last three decades represent change from or continuity with historical patterns? How has ‘globalisation’ affected the nature and conduct of political violence, and in what dimensions? Who are the beneficiaries of conflict? What are the broader structures of production and profit in which violent conflicts are embedded? What are the implications of global war industries for our understanding of the dynamics of conflict?

Essay question: Is war always caused by the pursuit of economic gain?

*David Keen, Complex Emergencies, Chapter 2 (London: Polity, 2007)


Paul Collier (2000) ‘Doing Well out of War: an Economic Perspective’ in Mats Berdal and David Malone, Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars. (Lynne Rienner, Boulder). This a readable, non-technical exposition of Collier’s thinking. See also the various articles by Collier and Hoeffler that give a more detailed account of their quantitative methodology, for example:


Campaign Against Arms Trade www.caat.org.uk: some useful research and arguments on their website.


**Cases**


-David Keen *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone*. James Currey, 2005.


**Lecture 4. The State and Conflict**

What does it mean to say a state is ‘failed’ or ‘collapsed’? What are the political implications of the term? Is the state ever a marginal actor in conflict?

**Essay question:** Does the concept of ‘state fragility’ add anything to our understanding of conflict?


Christopher Cramer *Civil War is not a Stupid Thing*, chapter 6, ‘Passionate interests’.


Reports:
*Fund for Peace, The Fragile States Index 2020, particularly section on ‘Indicators’
https://fragilestatesindex.org/

Rethinking State Fragility, British Academy Report, 2015 - download report from:
http://www.brit.ac.uk/intl/rethinking-state-fragility.cfm

United States Agency for International Development, Fragile States Strategy (2005),

Department for International Development (DFID), Why we need to work more effectively in fragile states, 2005


Cases


Tiitmamer, Nhial "The flaws in Kate Almquist Knopf’s call for trusteeship in South Sudan”. The Sudd Institute Policy Brief, 18 October 2016.
At: https://www.suddinstitute.org/assets/Publications/5809bbc36cf6b_TheFlawsInKateAlmquistKnopfsCall_Full.pdf


**Lecture 5: Social factors: Health and the environment**

Do particular kinds of endowments or scarcity lead to particular patterns of violence? Is there a relationship between health and conflict? Should environmental degradation be perceived as a threat to security?

**Essay question:** What is the relationship between violent conflict and health AND/OR environmental issues?

**Health:**


*Clare Wenham, The oversecuritization of global health: changing the terms of debate, International Affairs, Volume 95, Issue 5, September 2019, Pages 1093–1110, [https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz170](https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz170)


Kathryn Bouskill and Elta Smith, Global Health and Security: Threats and Opportunities, Rand Corporation: December 2019


**Reports and other media**


**Environment/Resources:**


Tobias Ide et al. ‘The past and future(s) of environmental peacebuilding’, *International Affairs*, 97: 1, 2021.


(Also browse other articles in this edition of *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*.)


Marc Levy, Testimony on House Committee on Homeland Security, 8 July 2015 (on climate change and security)


**Lecture 6: Social factors: Poverty and inequality**

*Do poverty, inequality and economic marginalisation lead to rebellion? How do socio-economic issues become politicised? How do development processes interact with conflict?*

**Essay question:** If poverty and inequality are increasing, should we expect to see more violent conflict?


*World Development Report, 2011, Conflict, Security and Development

Wayne Nafziger, Frances Stewart and Raimo Vayrynen (eds), *War, Hunger and Displacement: The Origins of Humanitarian Emergencies* (Oxford University Press, 2000),


Karim Bahgat et al, Inequality and Armed Conflict: Evidence and Data, Background Report for the UN and World Bank study on Development and Conflict Prevention, 2017.


**Cases:**


**Lecture 7: Identities: Ethnicity, religion and conflict**
What is the role of identity in conflict? Which particular interactions produce ‘ethnic’ or ‘religious’ violence? Is ‘ethnic conflict’ a misleading term? What is the role of national identity in driving conflicts today? How do armed groups seek legitimacy for their struggles?

**Essay question: When does ethnicity become relevant in conflict?**


Stathis Kalyvas (2006), The Logic of Violence in Civil War, (Cambridge University Press) [Introduction].


Vigdis Broch-Due (ed) (2005), Violence and Belonging: The Quest for Identity in Postcolonial Africa. (Routledge, Abingdon) (Intro)


Cases:


Fotini Christia, ‘Following the Money: Muslim versus Muslim in Bosnia’s Civil War’. Comparative Politics, Volume 40, Number 4, July 2008, pp. 461-480(20)

Kamala Visweswaran (ed), (2013) Everyday Occupations : Experiencing Militarism in South Asia and the Middle East, De Gruyter Online (eBook). (on politics of identity under military occupation in different conflict areas)

Lecture 8: Gender: Masculinities, Patriarchy and Conflict

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 conflict?

Essay question: Does conflict subvert or reinforce gender dynamics?


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


Carlo Koos, ‘What do we know about sexual violence in armed conflicts? Recent empirical progress and remaining gaps in peace and conflict research’ GIGA working paper No. 275, June 2015.


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


**Seminar 2: Cambridge in Conflict: The Global-local Dimensions of Conflict**

**Seminar readings**

Glance through the following articles for ideas about the ways in which the local and global connect, then do your own research for the assignment below


**Seminar assignment:**
This seminar will consist of student presentations, so please be prepared to present your work (you can use powerpoint, or just present). You will conduct research into one way in which Cambridge connects to global conflict. Examples include: conflict resources in your mobiles such as coltan, the arms trade, the illegal drugs trade, war memorial sites in Cambridge, war objects and statues. You may do the presentation on your own or in a group of 2 or 3.

CASES:

Case study: The Democratic Republic of the Congo in the African Great Lakes region (D Curtis)

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is often represented as a site of brutal violence, and it is known for its experiences of conflict, high levels of sexual violence, ‘resource wars’ and other forms of atrocities. The DRC has suffered from repeated cycles of violence, and, at times, has been labelled a ‘failed state’. This option will allow students to better understand the violence in the DRC and the surrounding region, and the ways in which local, regional and international drivers of conflict interact. It will question whether the media and policy depictions of conflict in the DRC adequately capture the complexity of politics in the region and the reasons for violence and peace. The module will explore the historical underpinnings of violence in the DRC and how these are connected to wider international processes. The last lecture focuses on responses to conflict in the DRC. It will explore the impact of different peacebuilding initiatives along with the assumptions guiding these peacebuilding activities and transnational activist campaigns.

Essay question: Do international peace interventions in the DR Congo rely on accurate understandings of conflict in the country?

Lecture 1: A brief history of the region

I would suggest starting with Hochschild’s book. It is an excellent introduction to international involvement in the Congo, and provides a gripping account of the colonial period. It will be useful for you to skim at least one of the books outlining the history of the broader Great Lakes region – perhaps Prunier, Lemarchand, or Reyntjens. These are very detailed books- you are certainly not expected to know all these details, but it will be useful to you to have a broad understanding of background history.

On Congolese history, Young and Turner’s book is a classic, which deals with the colonial underpinnings of conflict in the Congo. Dunn specifically addresses the representation of Congo’s past and present. Nzongola-Ntalaja’s book is good on the end of the Mobutu period and attempts at democratisation. Deibert is a journalist and his book offers an introduction to Congo. Williams addresses the period of the
immediate post-independence period in Congo, and the UN peacekeeping mission from 1960-64. The Stearns book is very good on the more recent Congo wars and Berwouts examines conflict in Congo since the 2000s.

**Regional Histories (skim through one of these in order to understand regional background)-you do not need to know all the detail**


**History of Congo**


*Kevin Dunn, *Imagining the Congo: The International Relations of Identity*, (Palgrave 2003). [http://search.lib.cam.ac.uk/?itemid=%7Ceresources%7C70190](http://search.lib.cam.ac.uk/?itemid=%7Ceresources%7C70190)


Lecture 2: Conflict and international relations
There are contrasting arguments accounting for violence in the DRC. Clark’s edited volume provides a good overview of the regional political dynamics in the 1990s. Explanations for conflict in the DRC tend to focus on economic factors (Nest et al., Kabamba, Samset), local political issues (Vlassenroot, Jackson, Autesserre), politics and regional connections (Stearns, Reyntjens). Some authors also focus on the interaction of these factors (Raeymaekers). There is an excellent blog that students will find interesting for an analysis of current events: http://congoresearchgroup.org/

http://search.lib.cam.ac.uk/?itemid=%7Ceresources%7C83632


*All the President’s Wealth: The Kabila Family Business, Congo Research Group, July 2017, https://allthewealth.congoresearchgroup.org/dist/assets/all-the-presidents-wealth-ENG.pdf


The Dark Side of Congo’s Cobalt Rush, New Yorker, May 2021,
https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/05/31/the-dark-side-of-congos-cobalt-rush


UN Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of DR Congo, Final Report (16 October 2002), at: http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/AllDocsByUNID/706b89b947e5993dc1256c590052b353


Lecture 3: Peacebuilding and transnational advocacy
The DRC has been the focus of a number of international peacebuilding initiatives and advocacy campaigns. International campaigns have targeted conflict minerals, sexual violence, and environmental conservation. Seay and Baaz/Stern discuss the
limitations of these campaigns. A number of authors provide more general critiques of peacebuilding strategies in the DRC. For instance, Autesserre has written extensively on this topic.


Making ends meet around Virunga: https://cartoonmovement.typepad.com/Making%20ends%20meet%20around%20virunga.pdf


Jeffrey Herbst and Greg Mills, “There is No Congo” Foreign Policy, 18 March 2009; See reply by Timothy Raeymaekers, “Who Calls the Congo”


The ‘Silent Voices’ Bukavu Series blog posts are an excellent collection of reflections on conducting research in the DRC, especially by Congolese researchers: [https://www.gicnetwork.be/silent-voices-blog-bukavu-series-eng/](https://www.gicnetwork.be/silent-voices-blog-bukavu-series-eng/)

See, for instance, articles by Emery Mudinga, Précieux Mwaka, Anuarite Bashizi, Stanislas Baganda

**Case study: Climate Change, Geopolitics and Conflict in the Middle East**

This option has been cancelled- but keeping the readings in case anyone is interested…

Generally, both environmental and political science scholarship has failed to keep pace with the real-world urgency of climate change and its related effects in the Middle East. This has begun to change, as scholars and policymakers turn their attention to a region where climate change is likely to impact states and societies sooner and with potentially more grave consequences than other parts of the world. Through an interdisciplinary approach, this module will explore why the contemporary Middle East is highly vulnerable to the myriad effects of climate change and global warming and what this means for the region’s states and societies.

**Lecture One: Natural resources and the natural world in the Middle East and North Africa**

What are the specific vulnerabilities of the region as they relate to climate change, global warming, extreme temperatures, and water shortages? How does looking at the environmental histories of the region inform our understanding of today’s environmental challenging? Focusing on the conceptual lens of ‘scarcity’, this lecture will introduce and explore longstanding ideas and forms of visual representation related to the Middle East and its environmental history. How has the region been historically depicted in colonial and post-colonial texts and what are some of the implications for understanding the challenges facing the Middle East today? What are the advantages and limitations of applying the tools and concepts of climate change to understanding current crises?

Lecture Two: Water, War and Climate Change

What is the extent of environmental damage caused by human factors such as war-making and armed violence at both local and transnational levels? How much of the multisided Syrian war can be explained by drought and overpopulation? This lecture will explore climate change as a driver and consequence of some of the region’s most devastating conflicts, especially as they relate to water scarcity in Egypt, Iraq and Ethiopia, while also drawing links with the concept and scholarship on human security.


**Lecture Three: Dystopian Futures?**

Turning to a range of interdisciplinary sources for inspiration, this final lecture considers possible sustainability solutions and proposals to ameliorate the deteriorating effects of climate change in the Middle East. We will consider local policy initiatives undertaken by regional states, such as Saudi Arabia’s ‘Middle East Green Initiative’ and the need for regional cooperation to develop adaptation and mitigation policies. The second part of the lecture considers a different source of solution-seeking that lies in the worlds of art, Gulf Futurism and climate fiction (or environmental literature) created by writers from the Arab world that warn against dystopian futures in the Middle East.


On Gulf Futurism:


Literature that deals with the environment, scarcity, and conflict:

*The Solar Grid* by Egyptian writer/artist Ganzeer (Muhammad Fahmy). Available for purchase only here: https://thesolargrid.net/ (can try to get chapters for anyone interested).
Cities of Salt by Abdelrahman Munif. For a review, see https://thewire.in/books/abdelrahman-munif-cities-of-salt

Case study: Latin America: The banality of displacement: Afro-Colombians and the everyday spatial politics of Colombia’s internal conflict
(Giulia Torino)

War in Colombia has usually been associated with – and normalised as – the deadly convergence of state, paramilitary, guerrilla, and narcotraffic forces that shaped the country’s internal conflict for half a century. What if, however, we shifted that narrative through a critical approach informed by structural racism, coloniality, and modern development? This lecture and supervision material explore the relationship between conflict, racism, ethnicity, and displacement in Colombia, which hosts the second highest number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world. Among them, Afro-Colombian communities have been disproportionately affected. Working through the notion of banality – conceived here both as ordinariness and as a lack of critical thinking – we will interrogate the “banality of displacement” through a qualitative and ethnographic approach to the everyday politics, mundane spaces, and ordinary practices of the internal conflict. In doing so we shall problematise the normalisation of violence across both rural and urban territories, on the one hand, and the invisibilisation of racism, on the other hand, asking how the two imbricate in the making of Colombia’s (post-)conflict.

Supervision essay question: What is the relationship between race, ethnicity and displacement in Colombia and why is that important to understand the politics of conflict in the country?

Readings:


Espinosa Espinosa, Aarón, Jorge Alvis Arrieta, and Gina Ruz Rojas. ‘Cultural damage and reparation of victims in the Colombian armed conflict. The case of the black peasant community of San Cristóbal (Montes de María – Colombia)’, Social Identities (2021), 27:4.


Suggested films:

Arango García, Juan Andrés. La Playa D.C. Bogotá: Cineplex, 2012. [film] (Spanish with English subtitles)

Pérez, Camilo y Andrés García C. Con la casa en el hombro. Medellín: Instituto de Estudios Regionales, 2010. [documentary] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwJ_KFMmW6I> (Spanish with Spanish subtitles)


Suggested (NOT mandatory) readings in Spanish for anyone who happens to speak Spanish:


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?


*Bukavu Series: Invisible Voices in the Production of Knowledge

Peter Wallensteen, Peace Research, London: Routledge, 2011. [Intro]
http://search.lib.cam.ac.uk/?itemid=%7Ceresources%7C83625

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’?


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:

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?

Essay: Do new actors in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, such as China, reinforce or challenge traditional peace intervention practices?


*Mateja Peter and Cedric de Coning (eds), United Nations Peace Operations in a
Changing World Order, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019 (open access online). See chapters on Africa and UN Peace Operations; the European Union and UN Peace Operations, China and UN Peacekeeping.


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’?

**Essay question: Is humanitarian assistance ethical?**

*Larissa Fast and Christina Bennett, ‘From the ground up: it’s about time for local humanitarian action’ London: Overseas Development Institute Report, May 2020,*
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’ blogpost Open Democracy, 19 July 2020.


*-Mary Anderson, Do No Harm: How Aid can Support Peace or War. (Lynne Rienner, 1999). [M: ch. 4]


David Kennedy, The Dark Sides of Virtue: Reassessing International Humanitarianism


David Shearer, “Aiding or Abetting? Humanitarian Aid and Its Economic Role in Civil War”, in Mats Berdal and David Malone, Greed and Grievance, Lynne Rienner 2000. (eBook)


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


-David Campbell, National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity and Justice in Bosnia (University of Minnesota Press, 1998)


Lecture 5: 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?

Essay: Is increased inclusion more conducive to sustainable peace? Answer with reference to peace negotiations OR post-war governance institutions or BOTH.


Introductory/general readings on mediation:
Jacob Bercovitch, Mediation and Conflict Resolution, The SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution, Bercovitch, Kremenyuk, Zartman (eds), 2009


On specific aspects of mediation


Julia Palmiano Federer, Julia Pickhardt et al., Beyond the Tracks? Reflections on Multitrack Approaches to Peace Processes, HD/CSS/Swisspeace/FBA, 2019


Other aspects of peace agreements and peace processes


**Cases**


Also: podcasts:
The Mediator’s Studio (from Humanitarian Dialogue Centre),
[https://www.hdcentre.org/osloforum/podcasts/](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 6: 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?

Essay: Is increased inclusion more conducive to sustainable peace? Answer with reference to peace negotiations OR post-war governance institutions or BOTH.

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


Radha Kumar, “The Troubled History of Partition,” Foreign Affairs, (Vol. 76, No. 1,
January-February 1997).


-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 7: 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?

Essay: Why do some ex-combatants return to fight, despite disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes?

*Mats Berdal and David Ucko, ‘Introduction to the DDR Forum: Rethinking the Reintegration of Former Combatants’ International Peacekeeping, Vol 20, No. 3, 2013. See also case study articles in same issue


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.

Claire Duncanson, Gender and Peacebuilding. Polity Press, 2016. (see pp 116-123)


**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 8: 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?

**Essay: Does post-conflict justice always benefit the powerful?**


Cases

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


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Lecture 9: Economy: Post-Conflict 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?

Essay: Do peacebuilding programmes address the economic dimensions of conflict?


*Oliver P. Richmond, Audra Mitchell (eds), Hybrid forms of peace: from everyday agency to post-liberalism, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, esp ch. 1 and 2, [M: ch 1]


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).


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**Official documents:**

OECD, Concepts and dilemmas of statebuilding in fragile situations: From fragility to resilience, 2008  


**Lecture 10: The Possibilities and Limits of Peacebuilding, Statebuilding and Transnational Advocacy**

What accounts for the success and failure of advocacy campaigns? Is there a trade-off between integrity and influence? Do international campaigns buttress or marginalize local political agency? Are there alternatives to peacebuilding and statebuilding?

*Alex de Waal (ed), *Advocacy in Conflict: Critical Perspectives on Transnational Activism*, Zed Books, 2015. [see especially ch. 2: M]*


**Limits:**


Nehal Bhuta, ‘Democratisation, state-building and politics as technology’ in The Role of International Law in Rebuilding Societies after Conflict, edited by Brett Bowden, Hilary Charlesworth and Jeremy Farrall, Cambridge University Press, 2009  


Alternatives?


Cases
http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/the_next_20/2016/09/kony_2012_quickly_became_a_punch_line_but_what_if_it_did_more_good_than.html


### Seminar 3: Are there alternatives to international peacebuilding and statebuilding?

**Seminar readings:**


**Seminar assignment:** Please write a one paragraph reaction to the readings and send to your seminar leader 12 hours before the seminar.

### Revision- there will be a revision lecture and seminar in Easter term.
More details will follow.


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

**Past POL16 Examination 2021**

**Conflict and Peacebuilding**

1. Is violent conflict best conceptualised as a problem that can be measured and fixed by outsiders?

2. What, if anything, is lost in approaches that focus on the economic beneficiaries of conflict and peace?
3. If every conflict has international dimensions, does peacebuilding require local campaigns? Answer with reference to at least one way in which Cambridge is implicated in global conflict.

4. What are the consequences of viewing socio-economic inequalities as potential threats to security? Answer with reference to one or more of the following: environment, health, poverty.

5. Is it possible to predict the role of ethnicity in violent conflict?

6. Is the distinction between ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ refugees inevitable, given the politicisation of humanitarian assistance?

7. Is it possible for peace operations to address patriarchy as a feature of conflict?

8. Can peace negotiations address the problem of ‘state fragility’?

9. Is the (re)-integration of ex-combatants into political and security institutions at national and community levels compatible with justice?

10. To what extent can conflict and peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo be attributed to the nature of institutions?

11. Is it likely that the Kurds in Iraq and/or Syria will declare independence in the next ten years? Answer with reference to historical and contemporary examples of Kurdish independence or autonomy attempts.

12. Is violence in Latin America a question of the absence or presence of the state?

Past examiners’ report
Pol. 16 2020-21

Despite the difficult year we have all had, and the fact that most of the teaching for POL 16 was online, we were very impressed with the examinations. Thirty-nine candidates wrote the exam for this paper. Five candidates received first class marks from both markers, with three of those candidates receiving marks above 75. Another twelve candidates received first class marks from one examiner and 2.1 from the other examiner, with nine candidates receiving an average mark of 70 or above. One candidate received a 2.2 mark from both examiners. The remaining 21 candidates received 2.1 marks.

We were very pleased to see that so many of the answers thoughtfully engaged with the precise questions, and many candidates showed an ability to develop well informed arguments. We were impressed by the way in which some candidates make intelligent connections between different parts of the course. The best scripts were clear, interesting, and persuasive, drawing upon relevant evidence and
examples. Many candidates used the literature effectively and we were pleased that candidates drew from literature across the different sections of the paper guide. Some of the strongest examination answers skilfully assessed claims made by different authors and/or policy documents. Weaker answers suffered from some of the usual shortcomings: a lack of engagement with the specific question, an unclear argument, a failure to acknowledge or discuss counter-arguments, and insufficient evidence or examples.

Each question was attempted by at least one candidate. The most popular question was Q1, which was attempted by 18 candidates. Many of the answers for this question were excellent and demonstrated a wide range of knowledge. No two answers were alike, and there were outstanding answers that challenged different aspects of the question. The answers to Q2 were more mixed. Some answers went off track with unfocused debates about the ‘new wars’ literature, while others provided insightful arguments. Q3 was the least popular question. Only one candidate attempted this question, but they provided a first-class answer focusing on the arms industry. Q4 was a new topic this year and some candidates responded thoughtfully. Others, however, focused on whether these factors were security threats, rather than answering the question about the consequences of viewing them as such. There was a big spread of marks on Q5. The weaker answers provided pre-packaged answers on ethnicity and conflict, with several candidates discussing the instrumentalization of ethnicity by elites. Stronger answers went farther, and engaged with the question of prediction. Q6 also had a fairly wide spread of marks, mostly due to whether or not a candidate sustained a coherent argument. Several candidates (12) attempted Q7 and generally the answers were well done. There were some outstanding answers that demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of patriarchy and the difficulties of addressing it through existing institutional structures for peace operations. Several candidates discussed how peace operations themselves are structured by patriarchy. On the other hand, candidates had more difficulty with Q8 and Q9. In both cases, some candidates struggled to respond to part of the question. In Q8 for instance, there was a temptation to discuss whether or not state fragility was a helpful term, without engaging sufficiently with the question on peace negotiations. The answers to the case study questions (Q10-11-12) were generally good, with the very best answers successfully linking conceptual arguments with the case, and showing a detailed knowledge of the empirical material.

We were pleased that so many candidates came up with such thoughtful, interesting arguments and that they were able to flexibly connect material and insights from different parts of the paper.

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