

**POLSCI 428S**  
**International Conflict Resolution**  
**Fall 2021**

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**Overview:**

This course will consider the roots of interstate and intrastate conflict and the various means that actors try to resolve their disputes. A large component of the course will be focused on understanding the theories behind the initiation and termination of armed violence, paying special attention to how actors interact with one another strategically. The students will learn both how to conceptualize armed conflict situations and about how actors practically go about resolving their disputes.

The course assignments have a heavy emphasis on writing. A primary goal for this course is to develop strong writing skills in a variety of contexts. The assignments are meant to expose students to different types of writing that they are likely to encounter in academia or the policy community. The assignments thus include an argument essay, a policy memo that reflects on a simulation of a peace process, an op-ed essay. Students will have the opportunity to revise their work after receiving comments. We will also spend much time throughout the course discussing best practices of writing in the social sciences, and we will take a look at examples of strong and weak writing.

The students are required to do ALL the assigned reading and be prepared to participate in class. This will demand a substantial time commitment, but it will also help the students cultivate an ability to efficiently parse out the important content of scholarly work. To concretely engage the course concepts, we will also rely on in-depth case studies of historical conflicts and group simulations of present conflicts.

**Grading:**

3-part study of an ongoing conflict (90% total)

- 1) Argument essay on the origins and barriers of the conflict (8-12 pages, 30% for the 1<sup>st</sup> draft, 15% for the revised draft)
- 2) Policy memo on a simulation of a track-2 peace process (20% for the 1<sup>st</sup> draft, 10% for the revised draft)
- 3) Op-ed/blog post on recommendations for the resolution of conflict (15%)

Participation (10%)

Students must register with the Office of Disability Services to receive accommodations. Papers will receive a 2-point (out of 16) grade deduction for each day late without prior approval of an extension. All work must be the original work of the student, with no assistance from any other individuals. Materials must be appropriately referenced. Any Duke Community Standard violations will be prosecuted. The grading scale and the grading standards that I apply can be found at the back of this syllabus.

### Study of an Ongoing Conflict:

Throughout the course, students will work on a study that relates to the analysis of an ongoing conflict in three separate writing assignments. For the first two assignments, students will receive feedback on their first submissions, and they will turn in a revised version due one week after the original versions are returned. Each paper must be the sole authorship of a single student, and there should be no collaboration on how to apply course concepts to the conflict. Students will first form groups of 2-4 and choose an ongoing conflict to study. The conflict chosen should have a number of “sides” equal to the number students in the group. The assignments are as follows:

#### *1) Argument essay on the origins and barriers of the conflict (8-12 pages double spaced):*

In the first paper, students will examine the principal origins of the conflict and the barriers to efficient conflict resolution. The students will identify what specific barrier or barriers to peace exist and use details from the conflict’s history to support the arguments. Students will be assessed based on their understanding of the conflict, the quality of the background research, and the ability to apply the course material to explain the existence and persistence of the conflict. Only books, journal articles and periodicals are acceptable as sources, and students should make reference to at least 10 scholarly books and journal articles in this section (periodicals do not count toward that total).

The style of this paper should be that of an argument essay for academic and legal audiences. This should include a short introduction that previews the overall argument, separate sections (and sub-sections as appropriate) that take up more specific arguments, and a brief conclusion that summarizes the essay and considers what unanswered questions remain that future research might consider. The arguments offered can touch on both what has caused the conflict and what can be ruled out as a cause (especially if it is a common conflict cause that conventional wisdom has misapplied to this case). The bulk of the material used to back up the arguments will be historical details that confirm the plausibility of the argument, with some appeals to the viewpoints offered by scholars on the subject. The Duke Writing Studio has a helpful guide for argument essays: <https://twp.duke.edu/sites/twp.duke.edu/files/file-attachments/argument-essay.original%281%29.pdf>. Citations should conform to *The Chicago Manual of Style*’s guidelines for in-text, author-date references. All papers should be double spaced and turned in via upload to Sakai.

#### *2) Policy memo on a track-2 simulation of a peace process (6-8 pages double spaced):*

In the groups formed at the beginning of the semester, students will represent one side of the chosen conflict and simulate a track-2 peace process. The purpose is to test different negotiation strategies and help one another better understand the dynamics of the specific conflict. The groups will determine the form of outcome from their negotiations, which can include war, full agreement, partial agreement or stalemate. Each student will then write an individual policy memo that summarizes the group negotiations, describing what proposals were made, accepted, or rejected.

This memo will be written from the perspective of a person involved in track-2 negotiations to members of their country’s leadership. The memo will also include recommended policy actions that follow from the simulated negotiations. If the simulations were productive, then the memo should have concrete recommendations to

help make the actual peace talks more productive. If the simulations were not productive, the memo should warn the leadership of specific pitfalls and suggest alternative tacks that might be tried. Students will be evaluated on their ability to understand their side's perspectives based on engagement with scholarly sources, their ability to concisely describe the proceedings, and their ability to communicate actionable policy recommendations. In the summary of the group negotiations, the students should provide some justification for why the actions that they took were consistent with the preferences of their side in the conflict. The Duke Writing Studio has a helpful guide for constructing policy memos: <https://twp.duke.edu/sites/twp.duke.edu/files/file-attachments/policy-memo.original.pdf>. Note that the policy memo should include a short executive summary (not to be confused with your detailed summary of the negotiations) of the memo (oftentimes, this is the only thing that policy makers read). Citations should be contained in footnotes, using *The Chicago Manual of Style's* guidelines with footnote references. All papers should be double spaced and turned in via upload to Sakai.

3) *Op-ed/blog post on recommendations for the resolution of conflict (600-800 words):* The third component of the study of an ongoing conflict is to write an op-ed/blog piece that recommends strategies for the disputing parties to move toward future resolution. The arguments should be based on the real-world conflict and not the simulation in the earlier assignment. This piece should be written for the general public and thus contain a brief summary of the important issue, as well as brief overviews of the relevant course concepts that are used in the argumentation. Students are encouraged to draw parallels to other analogous conflict situations that we covered in class. Students will be evaluated on the ability to tie together course concepts across the entire semester, as well as on the clarity of their arguments, which must have a logical flow from one point to the next. The Duke Writing Studio has a helpful guide for constructing op-ed posts: <https://twp.duke.edu/sites/twp.duke.edu/files/file-attachments/op-ed-1.original.pdf>. Citations should be embedded in hyperlinks to the articles/books. All papers should be double spaced and turned in via upload to Sakai.

#### Participation:

Students should come to each class prepared to discuss that day's reading. An important part of the engagement of the material will be via in-class discussion, and students will not do well on this component of their grade unless they participate in the discussions. Students that do not feel comfortable participating can submit questions to the professor in advance of the class meeting times. These questions are helpful and can be used to help structure the discussion portions of the class. Students who cannot attend class because of illness, Covid-related isolation or participation in Duke-related activities, can use Zoom to attend the class virtually. Please note that in-person attendance is encouraged to make the most of in-class discussion, and the class sessions will not be recorded.

#### Texts:

Please purchase the following text: *International Conflict Management* by J. Michael Greig, Andrew P. Owsiak, and Paul F. Diehl.

Some of the texts can be found as part of the *Understanding War and Peace* e-textbook. These chapters can be purchased (\$2.99 each) and downloaded to be read by a Kindle app (free) or device.

All other texts are either available online via the library's website or will be provided on the course's Sakai site.

### Resources on Campus

The **Academic Resource Center (ARC)** offers free services to all students during their undergraduate careers at Duke. Services include Learning Consultations, Peer Tutoring, Learning Communities, ADHD/LD Coaching, Outreach Workshops, GRE/MCAT Prep, Study Connect, and more. Because learning is a process unique to every individual, we work with each student to discover and develop their own academic strategy for success at Duke. Contact the ARC to schedule an appointment. Undergraduates in any year, studying any discipline can benefit!

CONTACT INFO:

[arc.duke.edu](http://arc.duke.edu)

theARC@duke.edu

919-684-5917

211 Academic Advising Center Building, East Campus – behind Marketplace.

Students might also find the resources at the **Thompson Writing Program** helpful. Students can schedule an appointment to discuss ways to improve as a writer at <https://twp.duke.edu/>.

### Schedule:

#### I: Foundations of Conflict

##### 8/24 Introduction and Overview of Conflict in the International System

Reading: Pettersson, Therése, Shawn Davies, Amber Deniz, Garoun Engström, Nanar Hawach, Stina Högladh, Margareta Sollenberg, and Magnus Öberg. "Organized violence 1989–2020, with a special emphasis on Syria." *Journal of Peace Research* (2021)

##### 8/31 War as a Bargaining Problem

Reading: Dan Reiter. 2018. Bargaining and war.  
<https://www.understandingwarandpeace.com/> (purchase the chapter)

Kathleen Cunningham. 2018. Civil wars.  
<https://www.understandingwarandpeace.com/> (purchase the chapter)

Fearon, James D. "Rationalist explanations for war." *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995): 379-414.

##### 9/7 Vulnerability and Mistrust

Reading: *International Conflict Management*, chs. 1 & 2

Walter, Barbara F. "The critical barrier to civil war settlement." *International Organization* 51, no. 3 (1997): 335-364.

Dan Reiter. 2018. International alliances.  
<https://www.understandingwarandpeace.com/> (purchase the chapter)

9/14 **Audience and Leader Constraints**

Reading: Chris Gelpi. 2018. Public opinion and conflict.  
<https://www.understandingwarandpeace.com/> (purchase the chapter)

Michael Horowitz. 2018. Leaders, institutions, and foreign policy.  
<https://www.understandingwarandpeace.com/> (purchase the chapter)

Croco, Sarah E. "The decider's dilemma: Leader culpability, war outcomes, and domestic punishment." *American Political Science Review* 105, no. 3 (2011): 457-477.

## II: Approaches to Manage and Resolve Conflict

9/21 **Intervention**

Reading: *International Conflict Management*, ch 3.

Bellamy, Alex J. 2014. From Tripoli to Damascus? Lesson learning and the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect. *International Politics* 51(1): 23-44.

Downes, Alexander B., and Jonathan Monten. "Forced to be free?: Why foreign-imposed regime change rarely leads to democratization." *International Security* 37, no. 4 (2013): 90-131.

9/28 **Negotiations**

Reading: *International Conflict Management*, ch 5.

Lederach, John Paul. "The origins and evolution of infrastructures for peace: A personal reflection." *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 7.3 (2012): 8-13.

Mattes, Michaela, and Jessica LP Weeks. "Hawks, doves, and peace: an experimental approach." *American Journal of Political Science* 63, no. 1 (2019): 53-66.

10/12 **Mediation**

Reading: *International Conflict Management*, ch 6.

Kyle Beardsley. 2018. Third Party Peacemaking and Peacekeeping. <https://www.understandingwarandpeace.com/> (available on Sakai)

Svensson, Isak. "Who brings which peace? Neutral versus biased mediation and institutional peace arrangements in civil wars." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53, no. 3 (2009): 446-469.

### 10/19 **Sanctions**

Reading: *International Conflict Management*, ch 4.

Drezner, D.W., 2011. Sanctions sometimes smart: targeted sanctions in theory and practice. *International Studies Review*, 13(1), pp.96-108.

Bapat, Navin A., and T. Clifton Morgan. "Multilateral versus unilateral sanctions reconsidered: A test using new data." *International Studies Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (2009): 1075-1094.

### **Argument Essay due**

### 10/26 **Formalized Agreements, Institutions and Organizations**

Reading: Axelrod, Robert and Robert O. Keohane. Achieving cooperation under anarchy: Strategies and institutions. *World Politics* 38(1): 226-54.

Charter of the United Nations

Mattes, Michaela, and Burcu Savun. "Information, agreement design, and the durability of civil war settlements." *American Journal of Political Science* 54, no. 2 (2010): 511-524.

### 11/2 **Legal Approaches**

Reading: *International Conflict Management*, ch 7.

Gent, Stephen E. and Megan Shannon. 2010. The effectiveness of international arbitration and adjudication: Getting into a bind. *The Journal of Politics* 72(2): 366-380.

Powell, Emilia Justyna, and Sara McLaughlin Mitchell. "The International Court of Justice and the world's three legal systems." *The Journal of Politics* 69, no. 2 (2007): 397-415.

### **Argument Essay Revision due**

### 11/9 **Peace Operations**

Reading: *International Conflict Management*, ch 8.

Autesserre, S., 2017. International peacebuilding and local success: Assumptions and effectiveness. *International Studies Review*, 19(1), pp.114-132.

Hultman, Lisa, Jacob Kathman, and Megan Shannon. "United Nations peacekeeping and civilian protection in civil war." *American Journal of Political Science* 57, no. 4 (2013): 875-891.

11/16  
Reading: **Intersection of Approaches**  
*International Conflict Management*, ch 9.

Pruitt, L.J., 2013. All-female police contingents: Feminism and the discourse of armed protection. *International Peacekeeping*, 20(1), pp.67-79.

Howard, Lise Morjé, and Alexandra Stark. "How civil wars end: The international system, norms, and the role of external actors." *International Security* 42, no. 3 (2018): 127-171.

### Simulation Memo due

11/23  
Reading: **Transitional Justice**  
Hall, Jonathan, Iosif Kovras, Djordje Stefanovic, and Neophytos Loizides. "Exposure to violence and attitudes towards transitional justice." *Political Psychology* 39, no. 2 (2018): 345-363.

Dancy, Geoff, Bridget E. Marchesi, Tricia D. Olsen, Leigh A. Payne, Andrew G. Reiter, and Kathryn Sikkink. "Behind bars and bargains: New findings on transitional justice in emerging democracies." *International studies quarterly* 63, no. 1 (2019): 99-110.

Krcmaric, Daniel. "Should I stay or should I go? Leaders, exile, and the dilemmas of international justice." *American Journal of Political Science* 62, no. 2 (2018): 486-498.

11/30:  
Reading: **Non-Violent Dispute Resolution**  
King, Jr., Martin Luther. 1963. Letter from Birmingham jail.  
<http://www.uscrossier.org/pullias/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/king.pdf>

Stephan, M.J. and Chenoweth, E., 2008. Why civil resistance works: The strategic logic of nonviolent conflict. *International security*, 33(1), pp.7-44.

Cunningham, Kathleen Gallagher, Marianne Dahl, and Anne Frugé. "Strategies of resistance: Diversification and diffusion." *American Journal of Political Science* 61, no. 3 (2017): 591-605.

### Simulation Memo Revision due

**12/11: Op-ed due by 7:00pm**

**GRADING SCALE:**

All work will be evaluated on a 16-point scale, which is an expanded 4-point scale.

[15-16] -- A  
[14-15) -- A-  
[13-14) -- B+  
[11-13) -- B  
[10-11) -- B-  
[9-10) -- C+  
[7-9) -- C  
[6-7) -- C-  
[2-6) -- D  
[0-2) -- F

**GRADING STANDARDS:**

The following standards will be applied to the evaluation of assignments in the class.

**A** Exceptional Performance.

Consistently outstanding work on all course-related tasks at a level that distinguishes the student from other members of the class. A comprehensive and incisive command of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. A frequently demonstrated exceptional capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking. The ability to master and integrate large amounts of factual material and abstract theories. An outstanding ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

**A-** Excellent Performance.

Consistently strong work on all course-related tasks. A comprehensive command of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. A clearly demonstrated capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking. Understands well and can integrate the relevant factual and theoretical material central to the course. A strong ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

**B+** Very Good Performance.

Consistently above average work on all course-related tasks. A very good grasp of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. A generally demonstrated capacity for original, creative, critical, and logical thinking. A very good command of factual and theoretical material, and some capacity to integrate the two. A solid ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.



**B Good Performance.**

Good and generally consistent work on all course-related tasks. A general understanding of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. Modest evidence of the capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking. A good understanding of factual and theoretical material, but limited evidence of the capacity to integrate the two. A basic ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

**B- Satisfactory Performance**

Satisfactory work on course-related tasks. A reasonable understanding of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. An infrequently demonstrated capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking. Understands at a basic level the facts and theories related to the course, but demonstrates weak integration skills. A limited or inconsistent ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

**C+/C/C- Adequate Performance**

Adequate performance on course-related tasks. An understanding of the basic elements of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. A rarely demonstrated capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking. An inability to go beyond a recitation of basic factual material related to the class. Demonstrated weaknesses in the ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

**D/D+ Minimal Passing Performance.**

Barely acceptable work on course-related tasks. A generally superficial and often inconsistent familiarity with the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. A failure to demonstrate the capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking related to course content. An uneven understanding of basic factual material related to the course; no evidence of fact/theory integration. Demonstrates significant gaps in the ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

**F Unacceptable Performance**

Fails to meet minimum course expectations. Unable to understand even the most basic elements of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. Demonstrates an inability to engage in coherent written or oral discussion of course material. Does not satisfy specific course expectations with respect to attendance, deadlines, participation, etc.