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The Study of Peace: Proposing and Designing a Peace Studies Class for WWU

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The Study of Peace
Course Syllabus
Political Science Department
Clarice Ruhlin-Hicks

This course explores the field of peace studies, examining the state of peace and conflict in the world from the perspective of international relations and comparative politics. Is peace simply the absence of conflict? Are humans naturally drawn towards war? How do we achieve peace? Where has peace worked and where has it failed? What institutions or processes lead to or inhibit the establishment of peace? The course dives into conflict prevention, the erosion of peace, methods of conflict resolution and management, the issue of peacekeeping, and the process of peace building. Through group presentations, in-depth reading, and individual research, students will learn about the key concepts of peace studies and how they apply to modern and historical conflicts. The class will include various case studies and draw on numerous examples of peace processes and times of war in order to illustrate the complex nature of peace. While peace studies is an extremely interdisciplinary field, this course will focus primarily on its application in political science, specifically on intrastate and interstate conflicts and peace processes.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify key theories and concepts in peace studies and explain how they relate to theories in political science, including gendered conceptions of “peace” and “security.”
2. Identify key actors in the field of international peace studies, including NGOs, states, individuals, and others.
3. Demonstrate a general knowledge of the state of peace and conflict in the modern world.
4. Engage in independent research in the field of peace studies.
5. Demonstrate a knowledge of key case studies in the field of peace studies, and explain how they exemplify the outbreak of conflict, the installation of peace, and/or maintenance of peace.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of peace studies.

Course Materials:

Students are not required to purchase any outside material for this course, with the exception of one movie rental depending upon availability. All other readings and resources will be provided on Canvas.

Course Requirements:

1. Weekly Journal Entries

Students must complete a “journal entry” responding to the given prompt for that week. Journal entries should a) briefly summarize the assigned readings, and b) respond to all of

the questions in the prompt. Students may include quotes from the readings when relevant. At the end of their entry, students should create a list of 3 discussion questions that are relevant to the week's readings. These journal entries will be due on Sunday night prior to the beginning of the week in order to facilitate discussions in class and ensure that students have completed the assigned reading. Journal entries should be around 250-500 words in length. *Students may drop or choose not to complete two journal entries over the course of the quarter.* It is not necessary to notify the instructor of which entries you intend to drop; simply do not turn them in.

2. Participation and Attendance

It is expected that students come prepared to participate in class. Active participation in discussions is a key component of this course. Attendance is also very important, and students may miss up to 3 classes before their grade will be affected.

3. Group Presentation

Students will complete 1 presentation during the quarter in groups of 3-5 people. Students will be assigned to one of the topics listed below, unless a group feels strongly about presenting on another topic, in which case this can be discussed with the instructor. Students must complete a 20-30 minute presentation that covers the following aspects for their region: the social/political situation prior to the erosion of peace, efforts to prevent conflict, the erosion of peace, a description of the conflict, peace interventions or efforts in response to the conflict, resolution or lack of resolution to the conflict, and the current day effects and situation. This information can all be presented in powerpoint format. Students should include key concepts covered in the course and should connect their findings to material discussed in class and in the readings. Students should finish their presentations by introducing at least 2 questions to the class for further discussion, and they should be prepared to answer any other questions from the class or professor on their topic.

a. Presentation Topics:

- i. Rwanda
- ii. Sudan/South Sudan/Darfur
- iii. Cambodia
- iv. Afghanistan
- v. Bosnia and Herzegovina

Refer to this site for helpful information on some of these regions:

<https://www.beyondintractability.org/library/case-studies>

4. Research Essay

The final essay will build upon the group presentation completed earlier in the course, allowing students to do more in-depth research and compare their presentation topics to another region or state of their choosing. Students will create a research essay that compares and contrasts one of the following processes in two states, territories, or regions: a) the development of peace and resolution of conflict, b) the use and effects of

peacekeeping efforts, or c) the use of nonviolence. *The first region will be determined by the group presentation topic*; the second region is up to the student to choose. The essay should be well-researched, with a bibliography including at least 5 scholarly sources. At least 3 of these sources can be ones that students have previously used in the group presentation. The essay should have a clear introduction and conclusion, along with multiple body paragraphs explaining the situation in each of the regions chosen and how they are similar and different. The essay should be no more than 2,000 and no less than 1,500 words in length, double spaced.

5. Final Exam

The final exam will consist of around 30 multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short-answer questions drawing on the lectures, readings, and discussions from throughout the quarter. The exam will be taken in class. Students may use any notes they have taken throughout the course, but they must be on paper, as no use of computers, cellphones, or the Internet is permitted.

Course Schedule:

Week 1: What is Peace Studies?

In Class:

1. Go over class outline
2. Lecture #1: Defining Peace Studies and Measuring Peace

This lecture will delve into defining peace studies and peace, exploring the nuances of the two terms and what they signify. While this course focuses primarily on peace in the international realm, the lecture will provide a brief overview of peace studies at the individual, interpersonal, and community levels. It will emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of peace studies and briefly discuss how different disciplines approach and interact with the study of peace. It will also cover the history of peace studies and how it emerged as a field of study before discussing some key theories in peace studies, such as positive and negative peace. Finally, this lecture will briefly mention and explain some of the recent and ongoing conflicts in the world.
3. Discuss readings

Readings:

1. Katz, Neil H. "Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies." *JSTOR*, July 1989, www.jstor.org/stable/1046586.
2. **(read Chapter 1 only)**

Rosenberg, Marshall B. *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*. PuddleDancer Press, 2015.
3. Gleditsch, Nils, et al. "Peace Research – Just the Study of War?" *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 51, no. 2, 2014, pp. 145–158, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343313514074>.
4. Babbitt, Eileen, and Fen Osler Hampson. "Conflict Resolution as a Field of Inquiry: Practice Informing Theory." *International Studies Review*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2011, pp. 46–57, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2486.2010.00997>.
5. Bawer, Bruce. "The Peace Racket." *City Journal*, 2007, www.city-journal.org/article/the-peace-racket.

Assignments:

1. Journal Entry #1: How has the conception of peace changed over time? Define and explain the concepts of "negative peace" and "positive peace." What is Bruce Bawer's argument about peace studies? Explain.

Week 2: Humans and War

In Class:

1. Assign presentation topics and groups
2. Lecture #2: Defining War and Conflict

This lecture will focus on the absence of peace, establishing a definition of war and what it entails. It will outline different types of war, including interstate, intrastate,

diversionary, and guerrilla war. The lecture will briefly discuss some of the most common motivations for war and give some general statistics on war in the modern world to provide context for the remainder of the course. This lecture provides an overview of conflict to begin to understand when, where, and why peace is absent. Finally, this lecture will discuss some of the criticisms and shortcomings of peace studies, exploring why some scholars take issue with the field of study.

3. Discuss readings

Readings:

1. Ferguson, R. Brian. "War Is Not Part of Human Nature." *Scientific American*, 1 Sept. 2018, www.scientificamerican.com/article/war-is-not-part-of-human-nature/.
2. Pinker, Steven. "The Decline of War and Conceptions of Human Nature." *Harvard Library Office for Scholarly Communication*, 2013. dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/14117754/The%20Decline%20of%20War%20and%20Conceptions%20of%20Human%20Nature%20by%20S%20Pinker.pdf?sequence=1.
3. Dawson, Doyne. "The Origins of War: Biological and Anthropological Theories." *History and Theory*, vol. 35, no. 1, 1996, p. 1, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2505515>.
4. *Conflict Analysis Tools*, www.files.ethz.ch/isn/15416/CSPM%20Tipp%20Conflict%206.3.pdf. Accessed 31 May 2023.

Assignments:

1. Journal Entry #2: Give an overview of the arguments portrayed in the readings. Which do you find most compelling? Why? How does our perception of war change how we approach peace studies?

Week 3: Conflict Prevention

In Class:

1. Discuss readings
2. Lecture #3: Conflict Prevention, Levels of Analysis, and Alternatives to War

This lecture will explore how conflict prevention is defined. It will also discuss mechanisms that can be used to preserve peace and alternatives to war. This will be supported by case studies. Importantly, this lecture will provide an overview of the NGOs who focus on the prevention of conflict. The UN is particularly prominent in this context, and will be discussed more in depth. Finally, the lecture will examine individual, state and international levels of analysis with regard to peace studies, attempting to shed light on how conflict and war can be prevented at these various levels.

Readings:

1. Coleman, Peter T., and Douglas P. Fry. "What Can We Learn from the World's Most Peaceful Societies?" *Greater Good*, 7 June 2021,

greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/what_can_we_learn_from_the_worlds_most_peaceful_societies.

2. United Nations, director. *What Is Conflict Prevention? YouTube*, YouTube, 17 Mar. 2020,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=133&v=M83fUUEqA9g&embeds_uri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.un.org%2F&source_ve_path=MTM5MTE3LDIzODUx&feature=emb_title.
3. **(read pages 1-5 and 16-17, and choose one of the case studies to read)**
United Nations. *United Nations Conflict Prevention and Preventive Diplomacy in Action*, dppa.un.org/sites/default/files/booklet_200618_fin_scrn.pdf. Accessed 31 May 2023.
4. **(read pages 10-23)**
Matthews, Dylan. "War Prevention Works." *Peace Direct*, Sept. 2001,
www.peacedirect.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2011/01/War-Prevention-Works.pdf.
5. Evangelista, Matthew. *Coping with 9/11: Alternatives to the War Paradigm*, 16 June 2011,
watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2011/Coping%20with%20911.pdf.

Assignments:

1. Journal Entry #3: What are some of the characteristics of peaceful societies? What are some methods of conflict prevention that can be used to avoid war?
2. Bring notes from the case study you chose to examine in the UN Conflict Prevention and Preventive Diplomacy in Action reading. Be prepared to discuss what you found most noteworthy.

Week 4: The Erosion of Peace

In Class:

1. Lecture #4: The Erosion of Peace and International Responses

This lecture will discuss the moments when peace begins to erode and what surrounds the shift to conflict. It will focus on the role of nationalism and religion, among other factors, in the outbreak of conflict. The lecture will also examine the use and importance of propaganda in the disruption of peace and escalation of conflict.

Finally, it will explore the international responses to eroding peace, discussing when and how states and the international system address or intervene when conflict seems near.

2. Watch As We Forgive: <https://www.laurawatershinson.com/as-we-forgive>

Readings:

1. Blattman, Christopher. "The Five Reasons Wars Happen." *Modern War Institute*, 16 Oct. 2022, mwi.usma.edu/the-five-reasons-wars-happen/.

2. Taydas, Zeynep, and Dursun Peksen. "Can States Buy Peace? Social Welfare Spending and Civil Conflicts." *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 49, no. 2, 2012, pp. 273–287, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343311431286>.
3. Regan, Patrick M., and Daniel Norton. "Greed, Grievance, and Mobilization in Civil Wars." *JSTOR*, June 2005, www.jstor.org/stable/30045117.
4. Caprioli, Mary, and Peter F. Trumbore. "Rhetoric versus Reality: Rogue States in International Conflicts." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 49, no. 5, 2005, pp. 770–791, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002705279335>.

Assignments:

1. Journal Entry #4: Discuss how the movie portrays concepts we have discussed in the course. Choose at least 2 concrete examples from the movie to focus on. Briefly discuss some of the connections between the readings and the movie.

Week 5: Conflict Resolution and Management

In Class:

1. Lecture #5: Conflict Resolution and Management in the International System
This lecture will first look at how the international system has historically dealt with conflict resolution, and whether these efforts have led to successful resolution or not. It will describe methods of international conflict management, discussing how the international system engages with ongoing and ending conflicts. This will include a brief overview of international law and a discussion of the weaknesses and limited functionality of international law. Finally, the lecture will explore some alternatives to war that can be pursued in the process of conflict resolution.
2. Play Peacemaker Game: <http://www.peacemakergame.com>
3. Discuss readings

Readings:

1. Bercovitch, Jacob, and Patrick M. Regan. "The Structure of International Conflict Management: An Analysis of the Effects of Intractability and Mediation." *JSTOR*, Jan. 1999, www.jstor.org/stable/41852865.
2. Waterston, Elizabeth. "A Brief History of International Conflict Resolution: A European Viewpoint." *Medicine, Conflict and Survival*, vol. 15, no. 2, 1999, pp. 157–160, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13623699908409450>.
3. Kaufman, Stuart J. "Escaping the Symbolic Politics Trap: Reconciliation Initiatives and Conflict Resolution in Ethnic Wars." *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 43, no. 2, 2006, pp. 201–218, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343306060622>.

Assignments:

1. Journal Entry #5: What are some of the primary means of conflict resolution? In what instances has conflict resolution failed and succeeded?

Week 6: Presentation Week!

In Class:

2. Presentations
 - a. Presentation Topics:
 1. Rwanda
 2. Sudan/South Sudan/Darfur
 3. Cambodia
 4. Afghanistan
 5. Bosnia and Herzegovina

Refer to this site for helpful information on some of these regions:

<https://www.beyondintractability.org/library/case-studies>

Readings:

1. None for this week

Assignments:

1. Prepare and deliver presentation

Week 7: Peacekeeping

In Class:

1. Lecture #7: Peacekeeping and its Effects

This lecture will define peacekeeping, cover some of the criticisms of peacekeeping, and discuss the successes of the process. The lecture will focus on the UN and its peacekeeping efforts and initiatives, given that it is the principal peacekeeping actor in the international system. Finally, this lecture will discuss how the rise of terrorism has changed the way we approach peacekeeping and affected the maintenance of international peace and international cooperation.

2. Discuss readings

Readings:

1. Greig, J. Michael, and Paul F. Diehl. "The Peacekeeping-Peacemaking Dilemma." *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 49, no. 4, 2005, pp. 621–646, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2005.00381.x>.
2. Shannon Zimmerman, director. *Is the Future of Peacekeeping Peaceful?* YouTube, TEDxUQ, 2 Sept. 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=50CGTTeNtq8>.
3. UN Peacekeeping. *Under the Blue Helmet: Life as a UN Peacekeeper in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.* YouTube, YouTube, 29 May 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=140&v=MJ_bvC9Efuc&embeds_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.un.org%2F&source_ve_path=MjM4NTE&feature=emb_title.

4. Hegre, Håvard, et al. "Evaluating the Conflict-Reducing Effect of UN Peacekeeping Operations." *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 81, no. 1, 2019, pp. 215–232, <https://doi.org/10.1086/700203>.
5. EPON. "Are Un Peacekeeping Operations Effective, and If so, at What Exactly?" *EPON*, 9 July 2020, effectivepeaceops.net/news-item/are-un-peacekeeping-operations-effective-and-if-so-at-what-exactly/.
6. Walter, Barbara F. "Most People Think Peacekeeping Doesn't Work. They're Wrong." *World Bank Blogs*, 2 May 2018, blogs.worldbank.org/dev4peace/most-people-think-peacekeeping-doesn-t-work-they-re-wrong.

Assignments:

1. Journal Entry #7:
 - a. Describe some of the evidence/arguments *in favor of* and *against* peacekeeping and its effectiveness? How has peacekeeping changed over history?
 - b. Use this map to identify one current peacekeeping operation. Write a brief (½ page, double spaced) summary of this operation.
https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/where-we-operate?_gl=1%2A1pr2do%2A_ga%2AMzI5MzI3MjI0LjE2ODMwODUwOTk.%2A_ga_TK9BQL5X7Z%2AMTY4MzE1OTMxMy4xLjEuMTY4MzE1OTU0My4wLjAuMA.

Week 8: Peace Building

In Class:

1. Lecture #8: Peacebuilding and Gendered Approaches
 This lecture will define peacebuilding, focusing on the role of the UN in peacebuilding. It will also dive into gendered approaches to peace studies and peacebuilding. Finally, the lecture will discuss what social, cultural, economic, and other characteristics aid in the process of building peace, and how societies have exemplified these characteristics.
2. Discuss readings
3. Discuss research essay

Readings:

1. The British Academy. "The Role of Religion in Conflict and Peacebuilding." *The British Academy*, 2015, www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/conflict-stability-role-religion-conflict-and-peace-building/.
2. **(choose one case study to read and analyze)**
 Council on Foreign Relations. *Peace Processes Case Studies*, www.cfr.org/womens-participation-in-peace-processes/case-studies.
3. Peacebuilding Fund. *Thematic Review on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding Executive Summary*,

www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/gender_tr_-_executive_summary_-_eng.pdf.

Assignments:

1. Journal Entry #8: Choose one of the case studies from the Council of Foreign Relations' website. Analyze this case study, discussing what you found interesting and applying concepts and theories you have learned in the course.

Week 9: Peacebuilding and Interventions

In class:

1. Lecture #9: Institutions, Interventions, and Building Peace
This lecture will discuss the political institutions and organizations that establish a foundation for future peace in a society, touching democratic peace theory and other concepts. It will also examine conflict interventions by states, individuals, and other actors over time. It will return briefly to the topic of international law to discuss international courts and prosecution, focusing on a few key examples. This lecture will examine how we can prepare a society for peace after conflict. It will also discuss peace agreements, examining how they work and their effectiveness. Finally, this lecture will return to the course learning objectives and provide some final thoughts on the overall goals of the class. It will discuss how the class content has helped students reach the outlined learning objectives.
2. Discuss Readings
3. Work on final essay
4. Final exam review
5. Explore the evidence gap map: <https://gapmaps.3ieimpact.org/evidence-maps/building-peaceful-societies-evidence-gap-map>

Readings:

1. "Building Peaceful Societies: An Evidence Gap Map." *3ieimpact.Org*, www.3ieimpact.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Building-peaceful-societies-EGM-brief.pdf.
2. Aghion, Anne, director. *GACACA, Living Together Again in Rwanda?* *Vimeo*, 23 May 2023, <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/gacaca>. Accessed 31 May 2023.
3. Bell, Christine. "Peace Agreements: Their Nature and Legal Status." *American Journal of International Law*, vol. 100, no. 2, 2006, pp. 373–412, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0002930000016705>.
4. Bellows, John, and Edward Miguel. "War and Institutions: New Evidence from Sierra Leone." *American Economic Review*, vol. 96, no. 2, 2006, pp. 394–399, <https://doi.org/10.1257/000282806777212323>.

Assignments:

1. Journal #9: Drawing on the readings, what are some methods you would suggest to build a peaceful state? What power do institutions and peace agreements have on the process of peace?

Week 10: Research Papers and Final Exam

In Class:

1. Final Exam

Readings:

1. None

Assignments:

1. Submit Research Essay
2. Final Exam