

CONF 340: Global Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Spring 2013

4:30 pm - 7:10 pm Thursday

Enterprise Hall 174

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COURSE OUTLINE

This course is designed to help students enhance their understanding of the issues and sources of conflicts in many parts of the world. It will orient students toward models and conceptual tools needed to understand the causes and processes of conflict that originates from political struggle, insecurity, economic disparity or environmental degradation. The class will examine both actors and structures involved in shaping and transforming political, economic and social forces. Students will be encouraged to apply their knowledge of conflict dynamics and resolution to the analysis of the global dimensions of conflict.

The root causes of conflict in a global context are examined in terms of the uneven impact of economic development and suppression of ethnic, gender and other group rights. Overall, economic deprivation, cultural differences, ethnic struggle, and ecological crisis will be some of the most important topics for the class. The format of this course will consist of lectures, discussion based on reading assignments, class presentations, and exercises. In assisting students in building their ability to develop independent thinking and a critical knowledge base, CONF 340 relies on an interactive class environment.

REQUIREMENTS

Exams will provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of key concepts and theories. The midterm will constitute 20% of the course grade; the final will count for 25%. The research paper and its presentation in class constitute 35% of the total course grade. The term paper will be due on May 2nd. The remaining 20% of the grade comes from class participation. More details about the assignments will be discussed in class.

Missing more than three classes will lead to a lower letter grade; the absence of more than four classes can result in the failure of the course; exceptions are recognized for personal illness, family or other emergencies. Class attendance does not simply mean the physical presence in class. Lower grade or even failure of the course can incur if a student is frequently engaged in personal computing or other private activities instead of paying attention to the flow of the class.

Permission for late submission of assignments and a grade of "incomplete" for the course will be given only in cases of personal illness or immediate family crisis. Late papers will receive penalized points.

Midterm/Final Exams (20% and 25% respectively): The best way to prepare for your midterm and final exams is to read your reading assignments prior to the class and pay attention to what concepts and theories are mentioned and discussed more in depth in class. The exams are designed to help you grasp basic understanding of conceptual approaches to conflict analysis in the way to help you develop an intellectual map that guide you in real world conflict situations. Given the limited length of the exam, you will be asked to synthesize theoretical ideas learned in class.

Class Participation (20%): Your class participation grade will be based on how thoroughly you have prepared for each class. That means that you have to keep the reading assignments and should be able to answer questions asked by the instructor in class. If you feel that you do not have enough opportunity to talk in class, you can use class break or an opportunity to talk to your instructor. You are always welcome to approach the instructor with any questions or ideas which you want to dwell more on.

Research Paper (35%): It requires your independent research on the topic given in the class. You can negotiate a specific topic within a generally identified area. Grading will be based on both the quality and quantity of research that is evidenced in your paper. You will be asked to make a presentation on your topic toward the end of the semester (5%). 30% is allocated to your written paper.

REQUIRED READINGS

Jeong, Howon (2008) *Understanding Conflict and Conflict Analysis*, London: Sage

Tubten Khetsun, 2008. *Memories of Life in Lhasa Under Chinese Rule*. New York: Columbia University Press

Jeong, Howon (2005) *Peacebuilding in Post-conflict societies*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner

Course Schedule

Week 1 (1/24): Introduction: Course Overview

Week 2 (1/31): Conflict Mapping

Jeong, Howon (2008) *Understanding Conflict and Conflict Analysis*, chapters 1-2

Class Discussion:

'An Afghan Soldier's Journey From Ally to Enemy of America'
http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/04/world/asia/afghan-soldiers-journey-from-friend-to-killer-of-americans.html?hp&_r=0

'An American NGO ... in North Korea'
<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/12/an-american-ngo-in-north-korea/266269/>

Week 3 (2/7): Conflict Situations and Sources
Understanding Conflict and Conflict Analysis, Chapters 3-4

Recommend Reading:

John W. Burton, 'Peace Begins at Home'
http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol6_1/Burton.htm

Class Discussion:

'Obama's 'kill list' is unchecked presidential power'
http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/obamas-kill-list-is-unchecked-presidential-power/2012/06/11/gJQAHw05WV_story.html?tid=pm_opinions_pop

'U.S. drone targets in Yemen raise questions'
http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-drone-targets-in-yemen-raise-questions/2012/06/02/gJQAP0jz9U_story_1.html

Week 4 (2/14) Asymmetric Conflict
Tubten Khetsun, *Memories of Life in Lhasa Under Chinese Rule*

While reading the book, please consider such questions as 'what kind of approach do we need in understanding this conflict?', 'what kind of understanding of the conflict could we forge from the author's experience of living under an oppressed rule that does not recognize both physical security, material well-being and self-identity?'

Week 5 (2/21): Conflict Process and Linkage

Understanding Conflict and Conflict Analysis, chapters 5-6

Class Discussion:

'Facing the French, Mali Rebels Dig In and Blend In'
http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/16/world/africa/mali-islamists-dig-in-for-a-long-military-struggle.html?hp&_r=0

'Islamists promise fight across Sahara, but response disjointed'
<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/2013/0117/Islamists-promise-fight-across-Sahara-but-response-disjointed?nav=87-frontpage-entryLeadStory>

Week 6 (2/28): Conflict System and Escalation
Understanding Conflict and Conflict Analysis, Chapter 7-8

Week 7 (3/7): Midterm

Week 8 (3/14): Spring Break

Week 9 (3/21): Conflict De-Escalation and Termination
Understanding Conflict and Conflict Analysis, Chapters 9-11

Recommended Reading

John W. Burton 'Conflict Resolution and the Human Dimension'
http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol3_1/burton.htm

The Dalai Lama, 'The Global Community and the Need for Universal Responsibility'
http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol7_1/Lama.htm

Week 10 (3/28): Peace Building
Peacebuilding in Post-conflict societies, chapters 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7

Week 11 (4/4): Integration: Conflict Dynamics and Resolution
Lecture

Week 12 (4/11): Individualized Research

Week 13 (4/18): Global Context of Conflict: Environmental Issues
Presentations

Week 14 (4/25): Global Environment
Presentations

Week 15 (5/2): The Final Paper Due

Week 16 (5/9) Final Exam

Final Exam

Honor Code

"All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. You can find a copy of the Honor Code at academicintegrity.gmu.edu. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review. With specific regards to plagiarism, three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor.

S-CAR requires that all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit a student's work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. S-CAR's policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace or substitute for it."