

PS 3171: International Conflict Management & Resolution

Instructor: Rob Williams
 Department of Political Science
 Washington University in St. Louis
 Fall 2019

Meetings: Tuesday, Thursday 10:00-11:30, Seigle Hall 002

Contact Information

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Office Hours

Tuesday 2:00-3:30, Wednesday 2:00-3:30
 And by appointment

1 Course Description

This course is an advanced seminar on the management and resolution of international and civil conflict. How and why do states decide to resolve their conflicts, or the conflicts of others? When are conflict and war amenable to the opportunity for management? What determines intervention and mediation strategies for third parties, and why do attempts at conflict resolution so frequently fail? We will engage with theoretical and empirical investigations into the strategic incentives of governments, rebels, and other non-state actors to lay down weapons and commit to peace. The emphasis will be on developing students' analytical capacity to examine arguments and using these skills to analyze real world conflicts in light of our theoretical understanding of conflict resolution.¹

1.1 Changes to the Syllabus

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus at any point in the semester. If the syllabus changes, I will inform you in class and via email. An updated syllabus will be posted on Canvas.

2 Course Requirements and Grading

Your grade for the course will be determined by performance in six areas: class participation, response memo, midterm exam, research paper, group project, and project presentation.

2.1 Grades

Final grades for the course will be based on the following scale. I reserve the right to make adjustments to individual grades based on overall performance in the course and/or extenuating circumstances. There will be *no* extra credit provided.

- | | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| • A: 93-100 | • B: 83-86 | • C: 73-76 | • D: 63-66 |
| • A-: 90-92 | • B-: 80-82 | • C-: 70-72 | • D-: 60-62 |
| • B+: 87-89 | • C+: 77-79 | • D+: 67-69 | • F: 59 or below |

¹This syllabus draws on material from [Mark J.C. Crescenzi](#) and [Lindsay Reid](#).

2.2 Course Grade Breakdown

The proportion of each assignment as part of your overall grade is as follows:

- Class Participation 10%
- Response Memo 10%
- Midterm Exam 20%
- Research Paper 30%
- Group Project 20%
- Group Presentation 10%

2.3 Class Participation (10%)

The majority of the class will be devoted to discussions of scholarly readings. The class will proceed in a seminar format, with as little lecturing as possible. You are expected to have read the assigned material when we discuss it in class. I (and you) will ask questions, and the class will be responsible for providing the answers. Students should feel free to ask questions and debate the topics at hand. There are no wrong questions, and you are strongly encouraged to participate even if you found the readings difficult or problematic. Part of what I want you to practice is the art of deciphering analytical work, so I do not expect you to understand everything you will read on the syllabus. The participation grade evaluation will be based on the quantity *and quality* of comments and questions and demonstration of knowledge of the course material. Attendance *per se* will not be evaluated, but if you are not in class you cannot participate. We will also break into active learning sessions several times throughout the semester to apply the skills you are acquiring to the study of a particular puzzle in international conflict management or resolution. Your enthusiasm and attention in these sessions directly impacts your participation grade.

2.4 Response Memo (10%)

At some point during the semester, you will write a 500 word response memo on the readings for a given week. This memo should (briefly) summarize the readings, before spending the majority of its space evaluating their content. Are the arguments in each article persuasive? Why or why not? How do the articles connect to broader themes within the course? Examples can be found on Canvas under the Files tab. **The memo may be written for any class meeting between week 5 and week 12 that has multiple readings.**

2.5 Midterm Exam (20%)

In addition to the paper and project, there will be a midterm exam. The exams will require you to step back and process the material in the course beyond the individual contributions of each reading. Mere demonstration of knowledge of the material will be regarded as an average performance. To excel on the exam you will have to demonstrate an ability to synthesize and analyze the material relevant to the questions on the test.

2.6 Research Paper (30%)

During the semester you will be responsible for writing a 5,000 word research paper that addresses a topic in conjunction with the course readings and additional research. I will give you a list of possible questions/topics that you could address in your paper. You should not feel constrained by these prompts. If you have a different idea for a paper that addresses the relevant readings, contact me and we can work something out. **Papers are due by 5pm, Friday, December 13.**

2.7 Group Project (20%)

In the second half of the semester, we will take the theoretical and empirical work that we've been learning and apply it to ongoing global events associated with conflict, conflict resolution, and/or conflict management. For this assignment you will form into small groups and operate as a foreign policy advisory team. Each team will identify an ongoing case within the scope of our course, and use the theories and knowledge we have gathered throughout the semester to help the class understand what happened (or is happening), what types of conflict management approaches have been implemented (if any), and why have these approaches succeeded or failed to resolve the conflict. Your team will develop a policy brief, complete with an executive summary and policy recommendations.

2.8 Group Presentation (10%)

In addition to the policy brief, your team will make a presentation to the class summarizing your main findings and recommendations. The format of this presentation will be announced later in the semester.

3 Expectations and Resources

3.1 Communication, Office Hours, Questions About Grades

I am very happy to meet with students outside of class time. Whether it be to discuss concerns about the course or questions about the material, please feel free to stop by Seigle Hall 251 during my office hours (Tuesday 2:00-3:30, Wednesday 2:00-3:30). If you are unable to meet during my office hours, please email me to set up a time to talk. Email is the best way to reach me. Please note that email is only for brief communications. If you have longer questions, come to my office hours or schedule a meeting with me.

If you disagree with the grade you earned on an assignment, you must submit a memo (hard-copy, in-person) outlining the specific reasons why you believe the grade should be changed. I will then re-grade the assignment. Your grade may go up, stay the same, or even go down, so please consider whether you truly think the original grade was unreasonable. I will not answer any questions about grades until 48 hours after I have returned a graded assignment.

3.2 Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should (1) contact **Disability Resources** and (2) send an email to me indicating the need for accommodation and what type during the first week of class.

3.3 Academic Integrity

According to Washington University's **Undergraduate Student Academic Integrity Policy**, "In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged, and work that is presented as original must be, in fact, original." I treat all suspected instances of academic dishonesty very seriously.

3.4 Collaborative Group Membership

As you all know by now, group projects pose a unique set of challenges, a.k.a. collective action problems. To assist you in managing the group throughout the semester, we will form these groups early, and write up group contracts that specify the expectations and requirements of the group. At the end of the semester you will complete self and peer evaluations of your group's performance, and I will take these evaluations into account when grading group work. If problems within the group do arise, I encourage you first to discuss them openly and honestly among yourselves to see if some resolution can be found. If problems persist, please contact me.

3.5 Mental Health Services

Life at WashU can be complicated and challenging. You might feel overwhelmed with work, experience anxiety or depression, or struggle with relationships or family responsibilities. **Mental Health Services** provides *confidential* support for students who are struggling with mental health and emotional challenges. Please do not hesitate to contact MHS for assistance — getting help is a smart and good thing to do.

4 Course Materials

The following books are available in the University Bookstore. All other readings are available electronically via link in this syllabus or library e-journals and e-resources databases.

- Gourevich, Philip. 1999. *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda*. New York: Picador.
- Reiter, Dan. 2009. *How Wars End*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Fortna, V. Page. 2008. *Does Peacekeeping Work? Shaping Belligerents' Choices after Civil War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

These books will be referred to by their authors' last names throughout the rest of this syllabus.

5 Schedule

All readings are due the day of class listed. In-class activities are denoted **in bold**.

5.1 Why We Should Care About Conflict Resolution

Week 1: Why We Study Conflict Resolution

- 8/27
 - Introduction
- 8/29
 - **No class meeting (APSA)**

Week 2: What do we Really Know?

- 9/3
 - Gourevitch
 - **Gourevitch Frontline Interview** (optional)

- 9/5
 - Davenport, Christian and Allan C. Stam. 2009. “What Really Happened in Rwanda.” *Pacific Standard*.
 - Galtung, Johan. 1969. “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research.” *Journal of Peace Research* 6(3): 167-191.

5.2 Understanding Conflict Resolution in Interstate War

Week 3: How Wars End

- 9/10
 - Regan, Patrick M. 2014. “Bringing peace back in: Presidential address to the Peace Science Society, 2013.” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 31(4): 345-356.
- 9/12
 - Reiter, Ch. 1-3

Week 4: From Theory to Empirics

- 9/17:
 - Reiter, Ch. 4-6
- 9/19:
 - Reiter, Ch. 9, 10

5.3 Conflict Management and Resolution in Intrastate War

Week 5: Barriers to Settlement in Conflict

- 9/24
 - Bercovitch, Jacob and Gerald Schneider. 2000. “Who Mediates? The Political Economy of International Conflict Management.” *Journal of Peace Research* 37(2): 145-165.
 - Owsiak, Andrew. 2014. “Conflict Management Trajectories in Militarized Interstate Disputes: A Conceptual Framework and Theoretical Foundations.” *International Studies Review* 16: 50-78.
- 9/26
 - Walter, Barbara. 2009. “Bargaining Failures and Civil War.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 12: 243-261.
 - Melin, Molly. 2014. “Commitment Problems: Understanding Variation in the Frequency of International Conflict Management Efforts.” *International Negotiation* 20: 221-256
 - Fazal, Tanisha. 2018. “Religionist Rebels & the Sovereignty of the Divine.” *Daedalus* 147(1): 25-35

Week 6: Military Intervention

- 10/1
 - Evans, Gareth and Mohamed Sahnoun. 2002. “The Responsibility to Protect.” *Foreign Affairs*, Nov/Dec.
 - Gent, Stephen. 2008. “Going in When it Counts: Military Intervention and the Outcome of Civil Conflicts.” *International Studies Quarterly* 52(4): 713-735.
- 10/3

- Gent, Stephen. 2007. “Strange Bedfellows: The Strategic Dynamics of Major Power Military Intervention.” *Journal of Politics* 69(4): 1089-1102.
- Biddle, Stephen. 2018. “Building Security Forces & Stabilizing Nations: The Problem of Agency.” *Daedalus* 146(4): 126-138.

Week 7: Taking Stock

- 10/8
 - Prepare for in-class group project work
- 10/10
 - **Exam**

Week 8: Mediation

- 10/17
 - Isak Svensson. 2007. “Mediation with Muscles or Minds? Exploring Power Mediators and Pure Mediators in Civil Wars.” *International Negotiation* 12: 229-248.
 - Nilsson, Desirée. 2008. “Partial Peace: Rebel Groups Inside and Outside of Civil War Settlements.” *Journal of Peace Research* 45(4):479-495.

5.4 Keeping the Peace

Week 9: Conflict Resolution and Maintaining the Peace

- 10/22
 - Hartzell, Caroline, Mathew Hoddie, and Donald Rothchild. 2001. “Stabilizing the Peace After Civil War: An Investigation of Some Key Variables.” *International Organization* 55 (1):183-208.
 - Collier, Paul, Anke Hoeffler, and Mans Soderbom. 2008. “Post-Conflict Risks.” *Journal of Peace Research* 45(4):461-478.
- 10/24
 - Downes, Alexander. 2004. “The Problem with Negotiated Settlements to Ethnic Civil Wars.” *Security Studies* 13 (4):230-279.
 - Mattes, Michaela and Burcu Savun. 2009. “Fostering Peace After Civil War: Commitment Problems and Agreement Design.” *International Studies Quarterly* 53: 737-759

Week 10: Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution Success

- 10/29
 - Fortna, Ch. 1-3
- 10/31
 - Fortna, Ch. 4-7

Week 11: The International Community’s Track Record

- 11/5
 - Gowan, Richard and Stephen John Stedman. 2018. “The United Nations & Civil Wars.” *Daedalus* 147(1): 171-84
 - Guehenno, Jean-Marie. 2018. “The International Regime for Treating Civil War, 1988-2017.” *Daedalus* 147(1): 185-96
- 11/7
 - **No class meeting (Peace Science)**

- Tepperman, Jonathan. 2002. "Truth and Consequences." *Foreign Affairs* 81 (2): 128-145.

5.5 What Success Looks Like

Week 12: The Price of Peace

- 11/12
 - Reid, Lindsay. 2017. "Finding a Peace that Lasts: Mediator Leverage and the Durable Resolution of Civil Wars." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61(7): 1401-1431.
 - Beardsley, Kyle. 2008. "Agreement without Peace? International Mediation and Time Inconsistency Problems." *American Journal of Political Science* 52(4): 723-740.
- 11/14
 - Sikkink, Kathryn and Carrie Booth Walling. 2007. "The Impact of Human Rights Trials in Latin America." *Journal of Peace Research* 44 (4):427-445.
 - Leebaw, Bronwyn Anne. 2008. "The Irreconcilable Goals of Transitional Justice." *Human Rights Quarterly* 30(1): 95-118.
 - Prorok, Alyssa K. 2017. "The (In)compatibility of Peace and Justice? The International Criminal Court and Civil Conflict Termination." *International Organization* 71(2): 213-243.

Week 13: Gender and Political Representation

- 11/19
 - Hartzell, Caroline A. and Matthew Hoddie. 2015. "The Art of the Possible: Power Sharing and Post-Civil War Democracy." *World Politics* 67(1): 37-71.
 - Matanock, Alia M. 2017. "Bullets for Ballots: Electoral Participation Provisions and Enduring Peace after Civil Conflict." *International Security* 41(4): 93-132.
- 11/21
 - Hughes, Melanie M. and Aili Mari. 2015. "Civil War and Trajectories of Change in Women's Political Representation in Africa, 1985-2010." *Social Forces* 93(4): 1513-1540.
 - Shair-Rosenfield, Sarah and Reed M. Wood. 2017. "Governing Well after War: How Improving Female Representation Prolongs Post-conflict Peace." *The Journal of Politics* 79(3): 995-1009.

5.6 Applying Theories to History

Week 14: Getting Hands On

- 11/26
 - **Post-Conflict Simulation**

Week 15: What Have we Learned?

- 12/3
 - **Group Presentations**
- 12/5
 - **Group Presentations**
 - **Project due**