

BA Program

Conflict Resolution & Strategies for Peace

Professor: Mónica Dias

Winter Semester 2025/26 (5 ECTS)

PROGRAM

It is clear that we live in turbulent times and that a negotiated conflict settlement often leads to a turbulent peace. This peace is not an end state in itself but needs to be nurtured into its next phase: a stable, functioning government, society and culture in which conflicts are settled through negotiation rather than through violence. (Crocker, 2001)

Human nature has a propensity for conflict as well as a need for peace. As Immanuel Kant suggested, we are characterized by an ‘unsociable sociability’ (1784) that urges us to compete aggressively as we fight to become taller and stronger and to cooperate and conciliate in order to guarantee our development in a prosperous environment. Here we should take into account that “conflict” does not necessarily mean aggression nor war, but that it represents, in general, inner and outer tensions or confrontations that can be dealt with in multiple ways – open and direct aggression or even war being only the most extreme and violent forms of conflictual response. Curiously, conflict transformation through negotiation and non-violent means is, in fact, much more common in human relationships than war, but as we are so focused on violence, peace is often either invisible or taken for granted. If we look closer, we realize that conflict transformation can be observed in all cultures and societies, and in small or big, simple or complex communities alike, although it might be obtained in very different ways.

If peace can be defined as conflict transformation, we should analyze, firstly, what this means and how it can be achieved, and secondly, if there are (political and social) core rules that facilitate this process. Although there are undeniably many roads that lead to this concept of a fruitful peace, it seems to us that the present political developments carry new and unprecedented challenges for conflict resolutions and peace strategies. In order to win peace today, new paths in conflict resolution must be imagined and pursued. The critical approaches of Johan Galtung and Dieter Senghaas, as well as the established experience of the United Nations give an important contribution to this quest, but it is crucial to look ahead and learn with the groundbreaking insights of “peacemakers” such as Paul Lederach or Desmond Tutu to consolidate the roads to peace.

In an interconnected and complex world of new turbulences and new wars sustainable peace cannot be build outside the conflict paradigm that characterizes human existence, but rather as the competence to find ways to attenuate the intensity and the expression of conflict and to engage in permanent negotiation and imagination towards reconciliation. The Seminar will debate the possibility of peace building in a world of war and globalized geopolitical (dis-)order and present the most recent findings in conflict resolution, as well as discuss strategies for peace in the turbulent 21st century.

Besides the readings and the discussion of different theoretical approaches, as well as contact with most important tools for conflict resolution, we will also have opportunities for practical exercises and a workshop.

CORE BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BROWN, M., Lynn-Jones, S. & Miller, S. (Eds.). (1996) *Debating the Democratic Peace*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- COSER, Lewis. (1957). Social Conflict and the Theory of Social Change. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 8(3), 197-207.
- CROCKER, Chester A. (2001), *Turbulent Peace. The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press.
- HUNTINGTON, Samuel (1996), *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York: Simon & Schuster.
- MÜNKLER, Herfried (2005), *The New Wars*, London: Polity.
- GALTUNG, J. (1969). Violence, peace, and peace research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167-191.
- Howard, M. (2002). *The invention of peace*. London, UK: Profile Books.
- LEDERACH, JP. (1995). *Preparing for peace: Conflict transformation across cultures*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- (1997). *Building peace: Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies*. Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace.
- LEVINGER, Matthew. (2018) *Conflict Analysis. Understanding Causes. Unlocking Solutions*, Washington D.C.:United States Institute of Peace
- RAMSBOTHAM, Oliver et al (2011) *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, Cambridge: Polity Press

COMPLEMENTARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aron, R. (1962). *Paix e Guerre entre les Nations*. Paris, France: Calmann-Lévy.
- van Creveld, M. (1991). *The transformation of war*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Dietrich, W. (2012) *Interpretations of peace in history and culture*. England, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Doyle, M. (1997). *Ways of war and peace: Realism, liberalism, and socialism*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton.
- Doyle, M. (1983a, Summer). Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs Part 1. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 12(3), 205-235.
- Doyle, M. (1983b, Autumn). Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs Part 2. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 12(4), 323-353.
- Doyle, M., & Sambanis, N. (2006). *Making war and building peace: United Nations Peace Operations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- JARSTAD, Anna K. e Timothy D. Sisk (ed.) (1991), *From War to Democracy*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

KALDOR, Mary (2001), *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

KALYVAS, Stathis N., Ian Saphiro et. al. (ed.) (2008), *Order, Conflict & Violence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

REED, C and D. Ryall (ed.) (2007), *The Price Of Peace: Just War In The Twenty First Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

SLAUGHTER, Anne-Marie (2005), *A New World Order*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

WALZER, Michael (2006) [1977], *Just and Unjust Wars*, New York: Basic Books.

During the seminar, the students will be given specific complementary working materials in pdf format.

METHODOLOGY AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA*

Teaching: Theoretical-practical approach

Attendance and Participation in Seminar Work (Readings & comments)** 20%

Portefólio on case study (with report) in groups of 2 20%

Test 1 (Quizz) 10%

Final Test 50%

* This methodology was developed for an optional seminar with up to 24 participants. In case the number of students increases considerably, minor changes might be necessary for a fair evaluation.

**For each working session, the different reading assignments will be previously announced and all students are expected to prepare these texts in order to participate in the following analysis and discussion.

***Plagiarism excludes the student from evaluation / from the Seminar (and Program).

**** Enjoy Peace: Leave your cell phones out of this Seminar. They are not allowed in class.