



MASARYK UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND EUROPEAN STUDIES
Spring 2020

NATIONS IN CONFLICT- Updated Syllabus

IRE223

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 13:30-14:30

Credits: 4 ECTS points

Course Description

This course will take the students through the history, realities and challenges pertaining to several of the most prominent armed conflicts of our time. Students will be exposed to multiple approaches and school of thoughts necessary in order to understand the complex nature of violent conflicts.

The course is composed of two parts: the first part will provide students with an introduction to the topic of conflicts in international relations. We will explore and discuss the nature of war and the factors used to define and characterize it. Upon discussion of the three levels of war and the unique issues encountered at each level, students will become familiar with elements of national power and their potential impact on strategy and the conduct of war. We will proceed by defining diverse types of armed conflicts and discuss various theories of conflict (what causes war?) and the various ways to terminate them.

In the second part of the course, students will be introduced to various historical and political trajectories of specific conflicts. Conflicts will vary in type, causes, time and location, and include The Balkan conflicts, 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland, The Syrian civil war (2011) and the Israeli Palestinian conflict. Upon presenting each conflict, we will turn to the analysis of the conflicting narratives of the parties involved, alongside the multi-layered effects of the conflicts (social, political, economic, etc.). Paying special attention to the offset of the

¹ You are always welcome to contact the lecturer via email! When you do, please be sure to include your name and the title of the course.

aforementioned conflicts, we will explore, explain and discuss politics, religion and nationalism.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

During the course, students would acquire knowledge concerning various theories, types, and underlying motivation for conflicts in international relations.

Upon completion of the course:

- Students would be able to critically engage with different theories of nationalism and ethnic conflict.
- Students will gain a solid understanding of various theories of conflicts, reasons for conflict offset and mechanisms of conflict resolution/de-escalation.
- Students will gain a solid understanding of the various actors and history of the main conflicts of our time.
- Students should be able to identify and discuss the major events and themes pertaining to each conflict.
- Students would possess basic skills and competences to analyse and discuss narratives and challenges faced by conflicting actors, people and societies.

Prerequisites

Proficiency in English to an academic standard. Background in the history and politics of the Middle East is helpful, but not required.

Course requirements

Students are required to **read the assigned literature**. While attendance is not mandatory, material covered in the lectures is part of the final exam and may not fully overlap with the assigned literature. Students are required to submit a **conflict report** (in groups). The course is concluded by a **final exam**.

***** Successful completion of the course requires the successful completion of ALL assignments.**

1. Mandatory Reading

Students are expected to read the assigned literature for each session. Lectures and literature must not fully overlap. Further reading is optional and meant to broaden students' horizons in specific topics mentioned in class. Active participation in class discussions is encouraged.

2. Conflict Report

Students will submit a short report, surveying one of the following conflicts:

1. The Argentine-British War of 1882
2. The Iraq-Iranian War (1980's)
3. The Gulf war (1991)
4. The Balkan Wars (1991-2001)
5. 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland (1968-1998)
6. The Syrian civil war (2011-)
7. The Israeli Palestinian conflict (1948-)
8. The armed conflict between NATO and Yugoslavia in 1999
9. The South African Border War (1966-1989)
10. Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (1988-)
11. The Independent Conflict in Catalonia
12. The Vietnam War (1959–1975)
13. Afghanistan War (2001-Present)

Reports will include a summarized historical background to the conflict, the main actors and motives for its onset, the way it was terminated (if applicable) and the current state of affairs. Students shall submit their reports in **groups of three** (1000-1500 words) or **four** (2000-2500 words). Students are welcome to suggest other conflicts for the assignment. Off-list conflicts should be discussed with the lecturer by week 4 (**March 12**). **Reports are to be submitted by May 15 (via IS)**. Reports will be evaluated based on the reports' grading scheme (attached).

Conflict reports will be graded according to the following category scale: "check plus" exceeds expectations; "check" satisfies expectations; "check minus" falls short of expectations but is minimally satisfactory; and 'F', either not acceptable or no submission.

3. Final Exam

An exam covering all lectures and required literature will be held at the end of the semester. The exam will be administered online, at 12:00 CET on June 4 (first sitting), July 9 (second sitting), and September 10 (third sitting). You need to write the exam only once! Choose the date which you favour, and register for the exam **in advance** using the IS. The exam is likely to be composed of open questions based on the course materials (required readings, PowerPoint presentations, hand-outs, narrated presentations and Zoom sessions). More information concerning the exam will be communicated via email towards the end of the semester.

Grades

This is a fail/pass course. A passing grade will be awarded to students who submitted a satisfactory report **and** received a passing grade in the conflict report **and** the final exam.

General Notes

This course is offered in English with all readings and discussions in this language. Don't worry if English is not your native language- minor linguistic errors will not affect the assessment of your work. However, you should be able to clearly communicate your ideas and arguments in English (academic level). Your **active participation** in class is **particularly valued**.

Important Deadlines:

- Topics lock-in for conflict reports => March 12
- Submission of conflict reports => May 15
- June 4 => Final Exam: First sitting
- July 9 => Final Exam: Second sitting
- September 10 => Final Exam: Third sitting

Detailed Course Plan

Session 1, February 20th: Introduction to the Course

Assigned Reading

Marc, A. Conflict and violence in the 21st century, current trends as observed in empirical research and statistics. World Bank Group

Session 2, February 27th: Introduction to Conflict Research

Introduction to the topic, main concepts and their definitions, conflict research, war and peace in International Relations

Assigned Reading

Bartos, J. O. & Wehr, P. 2002. Using Conflict Theory. Cambridge University Press, 1-11

Fukuyama, F. The End of History. In: Betts, R. 2008. Conflicts after the Cold war: arguments on cause of war and peace. New York: Columbia University, 6. – 17

Further Reading

Huntington, S. P. The Clash of Civilizations. In: Betts, R. 2008. Conflicts after the Cold war: arguments on cause so war and peace. New York: Columbia University, 34-52, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20045621?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

Gleditsch, N. P. (ed.) 2013. The Forum: The Decline of War. International Studies Review Vol. 15, 396–419.

Cashman, G. 2000. What Causes War. An Introduction of Theories of International Conflict. Lanham: Lexington Books, 1 – 13

Pinker, S. 2012. The Better Angel of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined. Penguin Books, 31-128

Session 3, March 5th: Theoretical Reflections of the Causes of Armed Conflicts I

What causes conflict? Biological and psychological theories, Marxist and neo-Marxist theories

Assigned Reading

Kříž, Z., & Urbanovská, J. (Eds.). (2014). Examining Armed Conflict: Theoretical Reflections on Selected Aspects. Masaryk University. 13-31

Further Reading

Cashman, G. (2013). What causes war?: an introduction to theories of international conflict. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Session 4, March 12: Theoretical Reflections on the Causes of Armed Conflicts II

What causes conflict? Liberal theory of the causes of war, systemic approaches (realism and neorealism), cyclical theories and historical-structural theory of war

Assigned Reading

Kříž, Z., & Urbanovská, J. (Eds.). (2014). Examining Armed Conflict: Theoretical Reflections on Selected Aspects. Masaryk University. 31-63

Further Reading

Waltz, K. N. 2000. Structural Realism after the Cold War. International Security, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Summer 2000), pp. 5–41

Mansfield, E. D – Snyder, J. 1998. Democratization and the Danger of War. In: Brown, M. E. Theories of War and Peace. Cambridge: MIT, s. 221-254.

Sørensen, G. 1992. Kant and Processes of Democratization: Consequences for Neorealist Thought Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 29, No. 4, 397-414, Sage, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/425541>

Session 5, March 19: De-escalation of Conflicts

Assigned Reading

Wall Jr, & Callister, (1995). Conflict and its management. *Journal of management*, 21(3), 515-558

Further Reading

Bartos, J. O. & Wehr, P. 2002. *Using Conflict Theory*. Cambridge University Press, 98–121

Zartman, I. W. (2015). *Preventing deadly conflict*. John Wiley & Sons

Helge Holtermann. Explaining the Development–Civil War Relationship Conflict Management and Peace Science, 29, 56–78. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0738894211430279>

Session 6, March 26: Conflict Resolution and Peace Building

Assigned Reading

Sinisa Vukovic, (2014) "International mediation as a distinct form of conflict management", *International Journal of Conflict Management*, Vol. 25 Issue: 1, pp. 61-80

Further Reading

Beardsley, K. (2013). Using the right tool for the job: Mediator leverage and conflict resolution. *Penn St. JL & Int'l Aff.*, 2, 57.

Karlsrud, J. 2015. The UN at war: examining the consequences of peace-enforcement mandates for the UN peacekeeping operations in the CAR, the DRC and Mali. *Third World Quarterly*, 36(1), 40–54

Knight, M. and Ö. A. 2004. Guns, Camps and Cash: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion of Former Combatants in Transitions from War to Peace. *Journal of Peace Research*, 41(4), 499–516. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343304044479>

No session on April 2nd => Time to write your reports and prepare for the Midterm exam

Session 7, April 9th: The Balkans War- Narrated Presentation

Assigned Reading

Finlan, A. (2014). The collapse of Yugoslavia 1991–1999. Bloomsbury Publishing. Pp 11-55.

Further Reading

Bieber, F. (2006). After Dayton, Dayton? The evolution of an unpopular peace. *Ethnopolitics*, 5(1), 15-31.

Devic, A. (1998). Ethnonationalism, Politics, and the Intellectuals: The Case of Yugoslavia. *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 375-409.

Gagnon Jr, V. P. (1994). Ethnic nationalism and international conflict: The case of Serbia. *International security*, 19(3), 130-166.

Dragovic-Soso, J. (2008). Why did Yugoslavia disintegrate? An overview of contending explanations. *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia's Disintegration*, 1-39.

Dyrstad, K. (2012). After ethnic civil war: Ethno-nationalism in the Western Balkans. *Journal of Peace Research*, 49(6), 817-831.

Session 8, April 16: 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland- Part I

Assigned Reading

Darby J. (2003) Northern Ireland: The background to the Peace Process (online text by CAIN Wed Services)

Further Reading

Gillespie G. (2009). The A to Z of the Northern Ireland Conflict. Scarecrow Press, 95 edition, 978-0810868823 (partly available online via google books)

Session 9, April 23: 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland- Part II Zoom Session

Assigned Reading

Tomlinson, M. (2012). War, peace and suicide: The case of Northern Ireland. *International Sociology*, 27(4), 464-482. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580912443579>

Further Reading

Shirlow P & Coulter C. (2014) Northern Ireland: 20 Years After the Cease-Fires, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 37:9, 713-719, DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2014.931224

Graham, B., & Nash, C. (2006). A shared future: territoriality, pluralism and public policy in Northern Ireland. *Political Geography*, 25(3), 253-278

Session 10, April 30: The Israeli Palestinian Conflict

Assigned Reading

Mahler, G. S. (2016). *Politics and government in Israel: the maturation of a modern state*. Rowman & Littlefield. Chapter 11.

Karsh, E. (2014). *Peace in the Middle East: the challenge for Israel*. Routledge. Introduction + Chapter 1.

Further Reading

Shapira, A. (2012). *Israel: A History*. Brandeis University Press, Chapter 19.

Berger M. ASSASSINATION IN ISRAEL; Yitzhak Rabin, 73, an Israeli Soldier Turned Prime Minister and Peacemaker, *The New York Times* Nov. 5, 1995.

Scham, P., Pogrud, B. and Ghanem A. (2013). Introduction to shared narratives--a Palestinian-Israeli dialogue. *Israel Studies*. 18.2 p1.

Session 11, May 7: The Syrian civil war Zoom Session

Assigned Reading

Syrian Civil War- Timeline and short history. Encyclopaedia Britannica online (2019)

Carpenter, T. G. (2013). Tangled web: The Syrian civil war and its implications. *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 24(1), 1-11.

Further Reading

Ahmed, S. S., & Shahabuddin, S. (2019). Syrian Civil War in International Perspective. *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs*, 2(1).

Karakus, D. C., & Svensson, I. (2017). Between the bombs: Exploring partial ceasefires in the syrian civil war, 2011–2017. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 1-20.

Ivanova, M. A. (2020). *Syrian Civil War: Global Impact and Implications for Neighboring Countries* (Doctoral dissertation, National Research University Higher School of Economics).

Session 12, May 14: Comparative Analysis, Concluding + Feedback : Zoom Session

Assigned Reading

Mitchell, T. G. (2000). *Native vs. Settler: Ethnic Conflict in Israel/Palestine, Northern Ireland, and South Africa* (No. 200). Greenwood Publishing Group, pages 1-15

Further Reading

Mitchell, T. G. (2000). *Native vs. Settler: Ethnic Conflict in Israel/Palestine, Northern Ireland, and South Africa* (No. 200). Greenwood Publishing Group (rest of the book).

Reports' grading scheme

	Check + (Excellent)	Check (Good)	Check - (satisfactory)	Fail
Overall Impression	Author directly addresses main question or issue and adds new insight to the subject which was NOT provided in class or the readings. The author has retained nearly all of the knowledge presented in class. One is able to synthesize this knowledge in new ways and relate to material not covered in the course.	Author competently addresses main question/issue but does not add much new insight into the subject. The author clearly learned a lot and is able to communicate the knowledge to others.	Author attempts to address main question/issue but fails. The author has retained some information from the course/readings/own research but does not fully understand its meaning/context and cannot clearly convey it to others.	Report does NOT address main question/issue, and it is obvious that author has not retained any significant information from the course/his research
Argument	Report contains a clear argument—the reader can easily follow the authors' train of thought and line of argumentation.	An argument is present, but reader must reconstruct it from the text.	Author attempts to make an argument (e.g., starts with a question/anecdote that is never put into context) but fails.	No attempt is made to articulate an argument.
Evidence and Counter-Evidence	Provides compelling and accurate evidence that convinces reader to accept main argument. The importance/relevance of all pieces of evidence is clearly stated. There are no gaps in reasoning—i.e., the reader does not need to assume anything or do additional research to accept main argument. The author considers the evidence, or alternate interpretations of evidence, that could be used to refute or weaken his/her argument, and	Provides necessary evidence to convince readers of most aspects of the main arguments. The importance/ relevance of some evidence presented may not be totally clear to the reader without additional research. Author acknowledges that counter-evidence/ alternative interpretations exists and lists them but does not effectively explain why the argument still stands.	Not enough evidence is provided to support author's argument/ evidence is incomplete, incorrect, or oversimplified. Information from lectures. Readings/additional sources is not effectively used. Author acknowledges some of the most obvious counter-evidence and alternative explanations but a comprehensive discussing is missing. There is little or no attempt made to respond to them.	Either no evidence is provided, or there are numerous factual mistakes, omissions or oversimplifications. There is little or no mention of information from lectures and readings. No acknowledgement of counter-evidence or alternative interpretations.

	thoughtfully responds to it.			
Sources and citing	Evidence is used from a wide range of sources (e.g. lectures, readings). Author also consults scholarly books, websites, journal articles, etc. not discussed in class. All evidence is properly cited in footnotes or endnotes.	Evidence is used from many sources, but author relies heavily on a more limited set of sources. If outside sources are used, they are primarily/non-scholarly (intended for a general audience) and/or web based. All evidence is cited in footnotes or endnotes, but there are some minor problems with completeness/format of some citations.	Does not use extensive sources (other than those provided in class/syllabus). Some pieces are unreferenced or inaccurately referenced, and there are problems with completeness and format of citations.	Only minimally uses new sources/relies exclusively on non-scholarly outside sources. No attempt is made to cite evidence.
Organization	Report contains an intro, main body and a conclusion. Introduction lays out main argument and gives an outline of what the reader can expect in the report. The conclusion brings everything together, acknowledges potential shortcomings of the paper, and gives the reader a sense of what further work might be done to advance the subject matter described in the paper.	Report contains an intro, main body, and a conclusion. The introduction lays out the main argument but gives the reader little idea of what to expect in the report. The conclusion summarizes the main argument and evidence but does not move beyond what has already been presented in the paper.	Report contains an intro, main body, and a conclusion. The introduction gives the reader an idea of what to expect in the paper but does not effectively lay out the main argument. It may begin with a set of rhetorical questions, or an anecdote that is never fully explained. The conclusion does little more than restate the introduction. Intro and/or conclusion may be too wordy or short.	Report has no clear organizational pattern.
Clarity and Style	All sentences are grammatically correct and clearly written. Technical terms and foreign words are always explained. All information is accurate and up to date. Paper has been spell-checked AND proofread and contains no errors.	All Sentences are grammatically correct and clearly written. The occasional word is misused. Technical terms and foreign words are usually, but not always, explained. All information is accurate and up to date. Paper has been spell-checked AND proofread, and	A few sentences are grammatically incorrect or not clearly written. Several words are misused. Technical terms and foreign words are rarely explained. Not all information is accurate and up to date. Paper has been spell-checked AND proofread, but still contains several errors. Reader's ability	Paper is full of grammatical errors and bad writing. Several words are misused. Technical terms and foreign words are rarely explained. Some info is not accurate/ up to date. Paper has

		contains no more than a few minor errors, which do not adversely affect the reader's ability to understand the report.	to understand report may be compromised by these errors.	not been spell-checked/proofread and contains numerous errors. Reader has a difficult time understanding report because of errors.
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Adapted from Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence, Carnegie Mellon University