



IREn5019 No War, No Peace: Unresolved Conflicts in the Caucasus

Syllabus
Fall 2023

Lecturer: Mgr. Zinaida Bechná, Ph.D.

Wednesdays: 10:00 – 11:40, U41

Office Hours: Office # 4.67, every Tuesdays 10:00 -11:00 and Wednesdays 13:00-14:00

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Goals and Objectives

The course is designed to familiarize students with unresolved conflicts in one of the most volatile regions of the world – the Caucasus. Armed conflicts in this region represent one of the biggest challenges that emerged with the break of the Soviet Union. Frozen conflicts in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh, Chechen wars, the Ingush-Ossetian conflict, along with the multi-ethnic clashes in Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria make incredibly complex and unique cases for the analysis. Patterns of political, economic, cultural discrimination, intensified by historical grievances, the effects of political transformation and economic development, national doctrines, the role of external actors, have all contributed to the no war no peace situation in this volatile region. That created a challenge for the conflict analysis and has led to the development of different interpretations emphasizing the role of weak states, economic depression, and external support.

The major objective of this course is to provide a **solid, elaborate picture of the conflict processes and mechanisms in the Caucasus region**. This small area has a high number of unresolved “frozen” conflicts, which might lead to an escalation in the future. In order to understand the logic of violence and trace the path of evolution of the life cycle of these conflicts, the course is based both **on theoretical with empirical knowledge**. The readings illustrate the variety of theoretical perspectives and data collection methods to study armed conflicts in general and the unresolved conflicts in the Caucasus region in particular.

One of the primary goals of this course is to develop the **analytical skills and practice critical analysis of the students**. In order to cultivate such skills students will be required to apply academic knowledge on to the actual situation in the ground. This will include **investigation of factors that affect conflict (re)escalation processes, the role of external actors, democratic development and possible ways for conflict resolution**.

Understanding the fragile peace arrangements or the reasons for the impossibility for resolution is significant. Studying the evolution of changing nature of these conflicts along with the packages of factors (both internal and external) that may

reignite large-scale violence, students will explore the possible ways of resolution of these conflicts in future.

Course goals

By the end of the semester, students will be able to identify, analyse and evaluate who were the conflict parties? What were the parties' incompatible goals, values and interests? What were the trigger events and issues at stake? How the conflicts evolved and why they have never been resolved?

The learning outcomes of the course will enable students upon completion to:

1. Engage critically with different theories of internal armed conflicts.
2. Obtain a broad knowledge of the conflict escalations process in the Caucasus region.
3. Acquire insights of how political developments, socio-economic process and systemic features resulted into the outbreak of violence.
4. Examine the nature of conflicts in the Caucasus with respect to factors that generates those conflicts and their change in time.
5. Acquire knowledge of international engagement towards conflict settlement and resolution in the Caucasus.

Plagiarism

Use of material written by another person without proper attribution of referencing the source is considered to be plagiarism. The Department of International Relations and European Studies adheres to the university's policy (<https://www.muni.cz/en/about-us/official-notice-board/plagiarism>). Violation of this policy will be addressed by the Disciplinary Commission. Plagiarism will receive no points and the final grade will be an F. In case of uncertainty about how to avoid plagiarism, please follow instructions mentioned on this link (<https://www.sv.uio.no/english/studies/resources/sources-and-references/>). Please follow this link to see one of the styles of citation:

<https://mve.fss.muni.cz/en/students/citations-and-standards>.

In case you still have questions, please consult me via email.

Requirements

- I Readings: The course syllabus provides **mandatory readings** below. Students are responsible for completing all of these **readings before every class** and coming to class prepared to discuss issues indicated for every session. Required readings for the course are to be found in Study Materials folder in the Information System.
- II **Argumentative essay**: there will be **three argumentative essay** during the semester. The length of the assignment should not exceed 5 000 characters and should be **uploaded to the IS folders before the deadline**. Each of the essay will be graded between 0 and **10 points**. Thus the students can obtain **up to 30 points**.
 1. Choose **one** of the conflicts in the Caucasus and explain what was the major causes of this conflict? Was the conflict ethnic/political/economic/territorial/? Why?
Due to: **12 November 2023**.

2. Based on comparison of Russian and Western engagement in the Caucasus conflicts explain *one* of the questions below:

A. How you assess the role of the EU in Nagorno Karabakh conflict? How you assess the role of Russia in Nagorno Karabakh conflict?

B. How do you assess the role of Russia in separatist areas Abkhazia and South Ossetia?

C. The EU's ambition to promote peace and stability into its neighbourhood has often stumbled upon division, short terms interests of its member states, lack of assertiveness and more decisive role in conflict resolution effort. What do you think about the potential of EU's crisis management activities in Georgia to backfire? Should the EU continue to build up its profile as a crisis manager in the South Caucasus or should it be more cautious?

Due to **3 December 2023**.

3. What could be done for conflict resolution in the Caucasus?

A. Choose one conflict and draw at list three policy recommendation for one of the actors involved in a conflict.

B. What is the impact of the war in Ukraine on the unresolved conflicts in the Caucasus (choose one case study).

Due to **17 December 2023**.

III. Final written test: **The final written** test will contain 10 open questions from the mandatory literature. You will have a maximum of 60 minutes to complete the written test and receive up to **30 points**. There will be several terms of final examination in the Information System.

IV. Final Grading: The maximum is 60 points; the minimum to complete the course is 35 points.

A 56 – 60 points

B 51 - 55 points

C 46 - 50 points

D 41 – 45 points

E 36 – 40 points

F less than 36 points.

To receive a final grade, students have to participate in class discussions, submit a sufficient number of Policy Papers and write the final written test base on mandatory literature (for details see above).

Class Schedule:

Week 1: *Introduction to the course goals and requirements (online-session)*
(20/9.2023).

Week 2: *Unresolved conflicts, Definitions and trends of different types of internal armed conflicts*(27/9.2023).

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Mandatory readings:

Morar, F. (2010): “The myth of “frozen conflict”: transcending illusive dilemmas”, *Concordiam: Journal of European Security and Defence Issues* 1(2):10–17.

Shevchuk, Z. (2014): “Towards the Typology of Armed Conflict,” chapter 3 in Kříž, Z. and Urbanovská, J.: *Examining Armed Conflict: Theoretical Reflections on Selected Aspects*, MUNI Press, pp: 87-114.

Week 3: *Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh* (27/9.2023).

Mandatory readings:

Broers, Laurence (2019): “Land for Peace,” chapter 8 in “Armenia and Azerbaijan, Anatomy of a Rivalry”, Edinburgh University Press, pp.: 276-316.

Erik Melander (2001): *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Revisited. Was the war Inevitable?*, *Journal of the Cold War Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2., pp:48-75.

James J. Coyle (2018): “Nagorno-Karabakh”, chapter 5 in “Russia’s Border Wars and Frozen Conflicts”, Palgrave, Macmillan , pp.: 207-256.

Thomas de Waal (2013): “Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan Through Peace and War,” chapter 19: “2001-2012: Deadlock and Estrangement,” New York: NYU Press, pp: 284 – 304.

Suggested readings:

Ozknan Behlul (2008): “Who Gains from the “No war No Peace” Situation? A Critical Analysis of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict”, *Geopolitics*, Vol 13 (3), pp: 572-599.

German, T. (2012): “The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia: Security issue in the Caucasus”, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 32, pp. 216-229.

Week 4: *Second Nagorno-Karabakh conflict* (11/10.2023).

Mandatory readings:

Bivainis, Andrius (2022): *Multi-dimensional assessment of the second-Karabakh War*, *Security and Defence Quarterly*, Vol.38.No.2. pp.51-61.

International Crisis Group (2021): “Post-war Prospects for Nagorno-Karabakh”, *Europe Report N.264*, Brussels, available at:

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/caucasus/nagorno-karabakh-conflict/264-post-war-prospects-nagorno-karabakh>

Suggested readings:

Leila Alieva (2020): “War in the Caucasus – Karabagh conflict: Why war?”, *International Institute for Peace*, available at:

<https://www.iipvienna.com/new-blog/2020/10/13/karabagh-conflict-why-war>

Gasparyan, Arsen (2019): "Understanding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict: domestic politics and twenty-five years of fruitless negotiations 1994-2018," *Caucasus Survey*, Vol. 7, No. 3., pp.: 235-250.

Gamaghelyan, Philip and Rummyantsev Sergey (2021): "The road to the Second Karabakh War: the role of ethno-centric narratives in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict," *Caucasus Survey*, pp.: 1-17.

Week 5: *Georgian conflicts I* (18/10.2023).

Mandatory readings:

Nodia, Ghia (1997): "Causes and Visions of Conflicts in Abkhazia," Berkley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies, Working Paper Series, pp.: 1-52.

Petersen, Alexandros (2008): "The 1992-1993 Georgia-Abkhazia War: A forgotten Conflict", *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 2., No.4. pp.: 187-199.

Week 6: *Georgian conflicts II* (25/10.2023).

Mandatory readings:

Felgenhauer, P. (2009): "After August 7: The Escalation of the Russia-Georgia War", chapter 9 in Cornell, S. E., Starr, S. F.: "The Guns of August 2008 Russia's War in Georgia", M. E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York. pp. 162-180.

Welt, Cory (2010): *The Thawing of a Frozen Conflict: The Internal Security Dilemma and the 2004 Prelude to the Russo-Georgian War*, *Europe-Asia Studies* Vol. 62, Issue 1, pp. 63-97.

Gearoid O Tuathail (2013): "Russia's Kosovo: A Critical Geopolitics of the August 2008 War over South Ossetia," *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, No.49 (6), pp.: 670-705.

Suggested readings:

Karagiannis, Emmanuel (2013): "The 2008 Russian-Georgian war via the lens of offensive Realism", *European Security*, Vol. 22, No. 1., pp.: 74-93.

Nodia, Ghia (2012): "The August 2008 war: main consequences for Georgia and its conflicts", *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 40. No.5., pp.: 721-738.

Shevchuk, Zinaida (2014): *The Evolving Nature of the Armed Conflict in South Ossetia: From "Frozen" to "Hot" and Back*, *Defence and Strategy*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 53-68.

Week 7: *Armed Conflicts in the Northern Caucasus: the Russian-Chechen armed conflicts* (1/11.2023).

Mandatory readings:

Kramer, Mark (2004): "The Perils of Counterinsurgency. Russian's War in Chechnya", *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 3., pp.: 5-63.

Souleimanov, Emil; Ditrych, Ondrej (2008): "The Internationalization of Russian-Chechen Conflict: Myths and Reality", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 60., No 7., pp.: 1199-1222.

Souleimanov, Emil and Aliyev Huseyn (2015): "Blood Revenge and Violent Mobilization: Evidence from the Chechen Wars", *International Security*, Vol.40, No.2, pp.: 158-180.

Suggested readings:

Tracey C. German (2003): "Russia's Chechen War", RoutledgeCurzon, Taylor&Francis Group, London and New York.

Lyall, Jason (2010): "Are Co-ethnics More Effective Counterinsurgents? Evidence from the Second Chechen War", *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 104., No 1., pp.: 1-20.

Marsh, Christopher, (2016): "The desecularization of conflict: the role of religion in Russia's confrontation with Chechnya, 1785-Today," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp: 66-79.

Week 8: *Armed Conflicts in the Northern Caucasus II* (8/11.2023).

Mandatory readings:

Cornell, E. Svante (2001): "Conflicts in the North Caucasus," chapter 6 in "Small Nations and Great Powers. A Study of ethnopolitical conflict in the Caucasus", London and New York, Routledge Curzon, pp.: 241-274.

Rezvani, Babak (2010): "The Ossetian-Ingush Confrontation: Explaining a Horizontal Conflict", *Iran and the Caucasus*, Vol. 14., pp.: 419-430.

Suggested readings:

Bruce, Robert and Kisriev, Enver (2009): "Conflict and Catharsis: Why Dagestanis Fought to Remain in Russia", chapter 6, in: "Dagestan. Russian Hegemony and Islamic Resistance in the Northern Caucasus", M.E. Sharpe, New York, London, pp.: 121-155.

Week 9: *No war no peace: De facto states of the Caucasus* (15/11.2023).

Mandatory readings:

Thomas de Waal (2020) : "Beyond Frozen Conflict. Scenarios for the Separatists Disputes of Eastern Europe", CEPS, Brussels, pp.159-227.

Suggested readings:

John O'Loughlin, Vladimir Kolossov and Gerard Toal (2015): "Inside the post-Soviet de facto States: A comparison of attitude in Abkhazia, Nagorny Karabakh, South Ossetia, and Transnistria," *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, Vol.55, No.5., pp: 423-456.

Week 10: *The Nexus of Great Power Game: the role of Russia in the Caucasian conflicts* (22/11.2023).

Mandatory readings:

Sushentsov, Andrey and Neklyudov, N (2020): “The Caucasus in Russian Foreign policy strategy”, *Caucasus Survey*, Vol.8. No.2. pp. 127-141.
Adnrás Racz (2021): “In Russia’s Hands”, Institute for Security Studies, Brief N.8. available at:
https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Brief_8_2021.pdf
Gerrits, A. WM, and Max, B. (2016): “Russian patronage over Abkhazia and South Ossetia: implications for conflict resolution,” *East European Politics* Vol. 32, no. 3, pp: 297-313.

Suggested readings:

Orhan Gafarli (2022): *Russia’s Role in the Karabakh Conflict*” chapter 15 in M.Hakan Yavuz, Michael Gunter: “The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict. Historical and Political Perspective”, Routledge: London.
Kazantsev, Andrei. A., Rutland, Peter, Medvedeva Svetlana. M and Safranchuk, Ivan. A. (2020): “Russia’s policy in the frozen conflicts” of the post-Soviet space: from ethno-politics to geopolitics,” *Caucasus Survey*, Vol. 8, No. 2., pp.: 142-162.
Russell, John (2006): “Obstacles to peace in Chechnya: What scope for international involvement?”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 58, No. 6., pp.: 941-964.

Week 11: *The Nexus of Great Power Game: the Western role in the Caucasian conflicts* (29/11.2023).

Mandatory readings:

International Crisis group (2023): “Averting a New War between Armenia and Azerbaijan, available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/caucasus/nagorno-karabakh-conflict/266-averting-new-war-between-armenia-and-azerbaijan>
Kornely Kakachia, Bidzina Lebanidze, Shalva Dzebisashvili (2020): "Game of (open) Doors: NATO-Georgian Relations and Challenges for Sustainable Partnership", Policy Paper No.18, Georgian Institute of Politics, pp. 1:22.
Thomas De Waal (2017): “Enhancing the EU’s Engagement with Separatist Territories”, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, pp.: 1-6.

Suggested readings:

Anar Valiyev: “Azerbaijan’s Policy Towards EU Integration: Unrecognized Strategic Partner”, in Kornely Kakachia, Stefan Meister, Benjamin Fricke (2018): “Geopolitics and Security. A New Strategy for the South Caucasus”, GIP, pp.128-153.

Whitman, R. (2011): Normative Power Europe. Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives, chapter 4 by Stewart. E.J.: Mind the Normative Gap? The EU in the South Caucasus, Palgrave, pp: 65 – 82.

Tsygankov, Andrei (2013): “The Russia-NATO mistrust: Ethnophobia and the double expansion to contain the “Russian Bear”.” Communist and Post-Communist Studies Vol. 46, Issue 1, pp. 179-188.

German, Tracey, C. (2007): “Visibly invisible: the EU Engagement in the Conflict Resolution in the South Caucasus”, European Security, Vol. 16, No 3, pp.: 357-374.

Week 12: The impact of Ukrainian crisis on the unresolved conflicts in the Caucasus (6/12.2023).

Mandatory readings:

Stawarz Pawel (2022): “Changing power dynamics and new geopolitical reality in the South Caucasus,” Military University of Technology, pp.85-94.

Ana Angduladze (2022): “Implication for Georgia of Russian Invasion of Ukraine: Time to Act?”, Policy Brief, N.40, Georgian Institute of Politics, pp.1-15, available at: <https://gip.ge/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Policy-Brief-40-1.pdf>

Week 13: Scenarios of conflicts in the Caucasus: is conflict resolution possible? (13/12.2023).

Mandatory readings:

Glantz Mary (2022): “Russia’s Ukraine War Could Offer Chance to Resolve South Caucasus Conflicts,” United States Institute of Peace, available at: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/05/russias-ukraine-war-could-offer-chance-resolve-south-caucasus-conflicts>

Stefan Wolff (2021): “Conflict – Solving Mechanisms and Negotiation Formats for Post-Soviet Protracted Conflicts: A Comparative Perspective”, SCEEUS Report, available at: <https://www.ui.se/globalassets/evenemang/bilder-till-programmen/sceeus/conflict-solving-mechanisms-and-negotiation-formats-for-post-soviet-protracted-conflicts-a-comparative-perspective-sceeus-hrs-no-5.pdf>

Suggested readings:

Machitidze Ivanna (2021): „Black Sea Security Under Strain: Why the Stakes Are Higher After Nagorno-Karabakh Ceasefire?“, Policy Paper No. 21, Georgian Institute of Politics.

Russell, John (2006): “Obstacles to peace in Chechnya: What scope for international involvement?”, Europe-Asia Studies, Vol. 58, No. 6., pp.: 941-964.

Whitman, Richard.G, Wolf, Stefan (2010): “The EU as a conflict manager? The case of Georgia and its implications”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 1., pp. 87-107.

Rotaru, Vasile (2018): “Russia, the EU and the Eastern Partnership: Building Bridges or Digging Trenches?”, Chapter 2: “EU-Russia Relations between the Cold War and Georgian War” , Columbia University Press, pp.: 39-63.

Hoch, T; Souleimanov E. and Baranec, T. (2014): Russia’s role in the official peace process in South Ossetia, *Bulletin of Geography, Socio- economic Series* Vol. 23, no. 23, pp: 53-71.