

A painting depicting a soldier in a helmet and a young girl in a white dress standing in front of a wall with graffiti. The soldier is in the center, wearing a helmet and a dark uniform. The girl is on the right, wearing a white dress and a dark jacket. The wall is covered in graffiti, including the word 'HARAM' in white and 'H' in red. The overall tone is somber and reflective.

INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT & COOPERATION

# SYLLABUS

SPRING 2023

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## International Conflict and Cooperation: Narratives of Peace, Conflict, and Justice

Code:	IR - 241
Term:	Spring 2023
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Mgr. Dagmar Kusá, PhD.
Form of study:	lecture + seminar

Course meets: Mo/Wed 13:00 – 14:30 **Learning Lab**

Contact: [kusa@bisla.sk](mailto:kusa@bisla.sk)

### Course objectives:

- To understand conflicts of identity from the perspective of a variety of disciplines,
- To understand the processes of identity construction, ethnic mobilization, and escalation of conflict,
- To be reflective of own identity, and broad social and historical contexts that have shaped it,
- To research the diverse solutions to end conflicts of violence and to rebuild the societies after a period of violent conflict
- To gain insight into and basic skills in conflict resolution and conciliation,
- To develop skills of independent research, presentation, and teamwork.

### Course Description

Are we born to fight, compete for resources and dominate or submit to dominance? Or are we wired to cooperate, be helpful and tolerant, resolve problems and prosper in peace? What drives people to commit mass scale atrocities? What is the best way to account with the violent past? What institutions serve best to heal divided societies?

This research-based seminar traces the theoretical foundations of conflicts rooted in identity (ethnic, religious, cultural, communal conflicts), including the process of a social construction of identity, relationship of history and memory, of language, narrative, and conflict, or the phenomenon of a cultural trauma in social discourse. The course examines various approaches towards conflict analysis and resolution and identifies approaches to conciliation in divided communities.

- 1) The first part of the course focuses on the theoretical foundations of identity and conflict, from theoretical underpinnings of human nature, to conflict understanding an analysis from individual to interpersonal and international levels.
- 2) In the second part, theory of conflict transformation and post-conflict conciliation are introduced and incorporated into case studies of countries which underwent or are undergoing the processes of post-conflict rebuilding of their societies,

including the processes of transitional justice, institutional redesign, presented by student research groups in the third part of the semester. We will consider approaches to and cases of conflict transformation on international, national, and local level from a variety of settings. Special attention will be given to the impact of colonialism, post-colonialism, and post-socialism on international conflict,

- 3) Throughout the semester, students work on research policy papers examining one policy aspect of post-conflict transition in a selected country, which will be analyzed, and steps of action recommended to a specific relevant policy stakeholder.

### Course Requirements:

This seminar requires substantial amount of reading each week, preparation for and active participation in the seminar discussions and interactions. The course is designed as a discussion-centered reading and research seminar, often taking a form of a flipped classroom. Students take part in co-creation of the content of the course.

It is thus essential to come prepared to class and take active part in the conversation.

#### 1. Participation 15%

Active participation in the seminar, informed discussion of the readings, engagement in activities. You will be expected to **have completed all the required readings before class** and to be prepared to discuss and critique the readings in the seminar.

#### 2. Oral presentations: 20%

Each student will **present at least two readings** over the course of the semester. Presentation should be concise and structured, summarizing the main idea of the text, key arguments, offer practical illustrations of those arguments, evaluation and critique, questions for discussion **Produce a one-page handout for your colleagues.**

**Excellent presentation will not rely on a single source**, but will utilize further knowledge, examples, and connections to other texts. **You will be expected to lead a portion of the seminar, and engage your colleagues in a discussion. It is essential that you consult your presentation with me at least one week ahead.**

#### 3. Short reflection papers: 20%

There will be four short reflection papers. As always, these are to be formatted and structured as essays, utilizing the required literature and sources found through independent research. Refer to the Written Assignment Guidelines (at the back of the syllabus) for detailed instructions.

#### 4. Literature Review: 10%

By the middle of the semester, you shall submit the literature review for your portion of the policy research case study. Literature review is a specific format of an essay, summarizing the answer of academic sources to your research question (in other words summarizing what

other authors had to say about your topic).

**5. Team Policy Research Reports – presentations 15%**

You will be working on a policy research case study in teams of four throughout the semester. In the second half of the semester, the teams will take turns in presenting their case study in class.

**6. Final Paper : 20%**

**POLICY RESEARCH PAPER:** Policy paper is an action-oriented research -- a situation and policy analysis with a mission. It is addressed to a specific national or international body to which the conflict you chose to analyze is relevant and which should be the one taking steps towards conflict resolution, conciliation, or community development that you will recommend. Your paper will focus primarily on the part that you have researched for your team presentation, but will include also elements researched by your teammates.

**Evaluation Criteria for Self-Assessment**

In this course, **you will not receive grades from me**. I will give you written feedback for all assignments, meet with you for consultations, answer your questions, give you pointers and suggestions, etc.

You will evaluate yourself on the basis of the progress you are making in various aspects of the course, related to the content as well as skills of critical thinking, textual analysis, writing, presenting, team projects, and your habits of learning.

**How it works:**

- At the end of this syllabus, you will find **Learning Standards** set for this course. Those will guide you in self-evaluation.
- At the beginning of the course, you will write a set of **your own learning objectives**, focusing primarily on the skills you wish to improve during the course of the semester. You will review these as we go, four times during the semester.
- You will write a brief structured **mid-term and final evaluation reflection**, which will be used during our consultation.
- I reserve the right to adjust the final grade in case of discrepancies, however always only after mutual discussion.

**Course Evaluation (%)**

A – excellent: 100-93%,  
B – very good: 92-84%,  
C – good: 83-74%,  
D – satisfactory: 73-63%,  
E – sufficient: 62-51%,  
Fx – fail: 50-0%.



## Policies

- **Attendance and participation**

Attendance of classes is mandatory. Maximum of four absences over the course of the semester is permitted – however, keep in mind that this includes sick days and unexpected situations.

- **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious violation of BISLA's code of conduct. Incidents of plagiarism will automatically result in the grade of Fx for the course and will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee. For information on what constitutes plagiarism, please consult BISLA Guidelines on plagiarism (posted on BISLA website) or check the [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#) for detailed suggestions and practice.

- You will work in teams on your policy research papers and are required to work together on those assignments. The short reflection. You may and are encouraged to utilize the assistance of the **BISLA LEARNING LAB** peer tutors to receive feedback on your written work, tips on structure, style, or the use of academic sources.
- Be courteous and switch your cell phones off. **Electronic devices are not permitted** in the classroom at all during midterm and final exams. If you have special needs and strongly prefer taking notes on your computer, consult me.

## THE READER: Required Readings

### ***Selected texts from:***

Tomasello, M. *Why We Cooperate?*

Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso: London, New York.

Alexander, J., Eyerman, R., Giesen, B., Smelser, N. J., & Sztopka, P. 2004. *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. University of California Press.

Hicks, D. 2011. *Dignity: The Essential role it plays in resolving conflict*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Mahmoud Mamdani: *Political Identity, Citizenship and Ethnicity in Post-Colonial Africa*

Frantz Fanon: *The Wretched of the Earth*

Power, S. *Problem From Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*.

Radstone and Hodgkin: *Regimes of Memory: An Introduction*

Aleida Assmann: *From Collective Violence to the Common Future: Four Models for Dealing with the Traumatic Past*

Botcharova: *Implementation of Track Two Diplomacy*

Martha Minow: *Breaking the Cycles of Hatred*

Jodi Halpern and H. M. Weinstein: *Rehumanizing the Other: Empathy and Reconciliation*

### **Recommended Readings:**

Assmann, J. *Collective Memory and Cultural Identity*. *New German Critique*, No. 65, Cultural History/Cultural Studies. (Spring- summer, 1995), pp. 25-133.

Brubaker, R. *Ethnicity Without Groups*.

Horowitz, D. L. 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. University of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles, London.

Radstone, S. & Schwarz, B. 2010. *Memory: Histories, theories, debates*. New York: Fordham

University Press.  
Sunny, R.G. Spring 2004. Why We Hate You : The Passions of National Identity and Ethnic Violence.  
Teitel, 2015. *Transitional Justice*.

## TOPICS and READINGS

### **Week 1-2: THEME 1: HUMAN NATURE**

Are we predestined to fight? Or are we born cooperative and corrupted toward conflict by society? Psychological and anthropological research of human nature, conflict, and peace currently offers more insight than ever before. But does it offer a uniform conclusion?

*Role play: The Ugli Fruit*  
*Non-violent communication workshop*

*Reading: Tomasello: Why We Cooperate? chapter 1*  
*Short film: The Stanford Prison Experiment and Milgram experiment*

*Reading: Tomasello, chapters 2 and 3 [READER]*  
*Short reflection paper (upload on Google Classroom)*

### **THEME 2: FRAMING CONFLICTS OF IDENTITY**

#### **Week 3: On identity: dignity, humiliation, and violence**

Constructivist approach to conflict and conflict transformation is centered around the individual, his or her contribution to and interpretation of the social reality and dependent on their mobilization within society. Human dignity is an emerging central concept in current literature on conciliation and human rights. Is it a passing fashion or a paradigmatic shift in international affairs and policy?

"It happened  
therefore it can  
happen  
again...it can  
happen, and  
everywhere."

Primo Levi Author and chemist



**Reading:**  
**Donna Hicks: A New Model of Dignity**  
**Michelle Maiese: Dehumanization and McRaney: Deindividuation [READER]**  
**Recommended: Rothman and Olson: From Interests to Identities: Towards a New Emphasis in Interactive Conflict Resolution - READER**

#### **Week 4: On Ethnic Identity, Nations and Nationalism**

What are the parallels between personal and collective identity? Is ethnicity in our blood, is it a birth right, a group trait, or a pure social construction? How did national imagination emerge and spread? What is the relationship between national and civic identity?

**Reading: Benedict Anderson ch. 1 and 2 [READER]**

**Short reflection paper on identity-based conflicts within your family.**

### **Week 5: THEME 3: ON CONFLICTS OF DE-COLONIZATION**

The origins of national consciousness in new nations, factors in the global spreading of nationalism.

Colonial state and its contribution to national imagination. The scramble for Africa and Congo at the center. Heritage of colonialism today.

**READING: Benedict Anderson: chapters 3, (4 opt.), 6**

***Movie: King Leopold's Ghost***

***Chimamanda Adichie: The Danger of a Single Story [Ted Talk] or transcript [MOODLE]***

### **Week 6: HISTORY AND MEMORY**

**Reading: Benedict Anderson: chapters 10, 11 [READER]**

### **Week 7: CULTURAL TRAUMA AND POLITICAL DISCOURSE**

Events or eras perceived as traumatic have a strong emotional impact in daily discourse and can complicate international relations.

What is a *cultural trauma*, can a trauma be experienced on a group level? How does cultural trauma get transmitted from generation to generation and what factors contribute to perceiving some events as traumatic, while others not?

**Reading: Jeffrey Alexander: Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma [READER]**

**Short reflection paper: census, map, and museum**

### **WEEK 8: READING WEEK**

### **THEME 4: TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE**

**Week 9: On genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity**

Why are so many leaders hesitant to use the G-word? Why is it often a punishable crime to murder one person, but acceptable to be responsible for the death of thousands? Why did it take so many decades for the international society to name the crime of genocide and for the states be willing to be bound by international legal norms on genocide?

**Reading: Samantha Power: Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide, chapters 2 and 3**

**Prepare and submit literature review for your Team Policy Research case study project**



## **Week 10: International mechanisms of Transitional Justice - from Nuremberg tribunals to ICC**

What is the nature and scope of international law dealing with war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide? What are some theoretical and practical successes and challenges in this field?

**Reading: Samantha Power: Problem from Hell, chapters 4 and 5**

## **Week 11: Conflict and transitional justice**

Why did it take 35 years for Cambodia to start addressing its past of the genocidal Khmer Rouge regime? How to arrive at justice in a country where thousands were complicit in murder, starvation, or torture? What are the impacts of dealing (and not dealing) with the past on present day society?

## **Week 12: Negotiating conflicts of identity**

### **On spoilers in the negotiation process: Conflict and transitional justice in Rwanda**

How much responsibility does international society bear towards people in countries ridden with violent conflict? How to bring about peace when there are actors who benefit from continuation of conflict?

**Role play: "On April 7, 1994 in Rwanda"**

**Movie: Shake Hands With the Devil**

**Reading: Samantha Power: Bystanders in Genocide**

## **Week 13: Components of conciliation and memory regimes**

On vengeance, forgiveness, and justice. The role of victimhood in prospects for conciliation. Establishment of memory regimes, their impact on quality of democracy in transition and after

**Reading: Radstone and Hodgkin**

## **Week 14: Resolving Conflicts of Identity: Secession, Partition, Power Sharing (and Power Dividing)**

After a prolonged violent conflict, should the conflicting parties go their separate way? Will that likely prevent conflict in the future? Or would such partition only inspire other ethnic and religious groups to seek self-determination? What are the basic institutional choices for a long-lasting peace? What is the role of international society in facilitating the process of transition?

**Reading: Kaufmann and Kumar**

## **Week 15: Competing needs: Land, identity, and power**

Does the Middle East Peace Process stand a chance of success in the coming years? How will the changing political culture in Israel impact its fate? What role does history and memory

play in the conflict and what role can it play in its conciliation? What does a solution look like from the point of view of state security? What would a human rights based approach suggest? How should the needs and interests, rights and claims be prioritized in the search for a solution?

More broadly, how will the climate shape the future of the

## **Conclusion**

Reading: Halpern and Weinstein: Rehumanizing the Other

**Finalization and submission of the team policy reports by June 2**

**If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.**

**Nelson Mandela**



# ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES



## LEARNING STANDARDS FOR THIS COURSE

You should think of placing yourself in a four-point scale:

- Mastery of the standard: you can demonstrate this standard consistently and do so well or very well. (In other words, your rock at x.)
- Meeting or nearly meeting the standard: you can demonstrate competence at this standard all or most of the time. (In other words, you occasionally rock at x.)
- Approaching the standard: you cannot do what is listed consistently, but you are closing in on being able to. (In other words, you do not quite rock at x, but with a little more hard work, you will in the future.)
- Not meeting the standard: you cannot demonstrate any or much mastery of this learning standard. (In other words, sadly, your skills with x cannot be described as rocking.)

### Textual Analysis Skills:

- Students should be able to read with understanding various texts in political science. They should be able to make an argument about the main topics citing specific evidence from the text.
- Students should be able to extract the main ideas and concepts from the texts and subsequently apply them in different situations.
- Students should be able to understand and remember the concepts even after some time after reading the texts.

### Writing Skills:

- Students should be able to compose an analytical paper that successfully argues a thesis that is connected to an assigned topic. Students should be able to remain focused on that argument throughout the paper.
- Students should be able to write with awareness of audience, including in their introductions and conclusions.
- Students should structure paragraphs around clear claims of arguments, supported by specific evidence from assigned texts, and followed through with an analysis.
- Students should be able to appropriately cite primary and secondary sources read in the course and complement them with academic sources found through own research.
- Students should be able to write in clear way, which is easy to follow by a reader.
- Students should learn to revise their work in response to the feedback.

### Content:

- Students should have a vocabulary appropriate for the study of international conflict and post-conflict processes (you will find a list of terms on Google Classroom).
- Students should develop understanding of historical background that formed the

nature of international conflict in the present day.

- Students should have an understanding of the main concepts from the assigned texts and be able to apply them critically.

### **Habits of learning:**

1. Reading/class preparation
  - Reading thoughtfully and carefully with understanding
  - Taking notes/markings texts
  - Finishing the reading before class
  - Being able to find help when struggling with understanding of the texts/assignments
2. Class engagement
  - Participating in discussion
  - Listening to and engaging with classmates
  - Coming to class prepared
  - Staying focused on the tasks assigned in class
  - Attendance and punctuality
  - Being active in team-work
3. Assignments
  - Completing assignments thoughtfully and carefully
  - Assignments follow directions and meet minimum requirements
  - Assignments turned in on time
  - Contribute an equal share of labour to the group project
    - o Share resources within group
    - o Help teammates to perform at an excellent level
    - o Take interest in the progress of the group, communicate with teammates regularly

## **ASSIGNMENTS:**

### **SHORT TEXT PRESENTATIONS**

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Each student will present **at least two topics/texts over the course of the semester**. These are founded on the text, but will also ask you to engage the text, find an example of issues it describes and draft questions for discussion – simply to do a bit of independent research as well. Presentation should be max. 15 mins long, with 10 minutes reserved for further discussion. Presentation should be concise and structured, summarizing the main idea of the text, key arguments, offer illustrations of those arguments, their evaluation and critique and questions for discussion.

You are expected to lead a short discussion with your colleagues after your presentation. If it helps your presentation, use PPT or equivalent and/or refer to your handout. **Produce a one page long, well-structured handout for your colleagues**, summarizing the main points and points and questions for discussion. Handout is not a narrative summary of the entire article, but rather a succinct presentation of the core arguments of the text. Offer a very brief

summary of the main idea at the beginning, a leading question. Use bullet points to list key arguments. Use visuals if possible (figures, images, tables, models...). If you are actually reading the syllabus and this instructions, please email me a picture of a flying piglet. You shall receive bonus points towards your course grade.

**Submit the handout via Google Classroom as well.**

At the end, **list points of critique and questions** for discussion.

An excellent presentation will **rely on more than one source**, apply the text to real life situations, use examples and illustrations, and engage students in discussion.

**NOTE: If you don't turn up for your presentation or you come unprepared, you will automatically receive 0 points on your presentation.** If you are sick or have an unexpected situation, let me know well ahead of the time (i.e. **more than 24 hours before**). Do not prepare your presentation one day before it is due.

You will have the topic assigned and the texts available since the first week of classes.

**SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT with me at least a week or two before** to go over your presentation plan.

## POLICY MEMO -- GUIDELINES

.....  
*Do you comprehensively understand the issue? **Can you identify two or three distinct positions on the issue?***

*Who is the **target audience of your policy memo**? Which specific official, institution-domestic or international will the memo be addressed to? Why them?*

*What evidence is likely to be effective with them?*

*Do you have **enough evidence** to support all elements of your paper? (to introduce and define the issue, to show the importance of the issue, to support your position, and to refute counter-arguments)*

*Do you have the range of evidence you need to support different points of your argument? Match evidence and sources to different points of your arguments.*

### TITLE

*Think of capturing the attention of your readers and communicating your position.*

*Write a draft title now and revise it after writing your paper.*

### SUMMARY

*Very clearly summarize, in as few sentences as possible, what the problem is, who the main stakeholders are, what is the proposed course of action and why.*

### BACKGROUND

*Provide an overview of the conflict*

### CONTENT AND IMPORTANCE OF THE ISSUE

*Framing and defining the issue: How will you introduce and define the issue? Define the problem or issue that your government or actor must address.*

#### **Stakeholders and Importance of the Issue:**

*How will you demonstrate the **relevance and urgency of the issue** for modern society? **Who and what are affected by this?** Which groups, individuals and communities are affected by the issues that you will be analysing? These groups are known as stakeholders. They may not*



be directly described in the task brief. For example, a brief about digital copyright law may not mention musicians or movie studios whose products are pirated online, but they are clearly affected by the policy under discussion.

- Research the ways that **these groups' goals and interests might be altered by the policies you are proposing**. Try to write out concise explanations of each group's goals and the things that they value.
- Research the ways that **organisations or communities** might change or adapt to upheavals in the societies in which they exist. Explain the circumstances in which these changes might take place. Next, consider other changes and transformations that these groups could undergo and summarise those in a similar way.
- What **evidence** will you use to support this section of your paper?
- Yes, you guessed it, if you are consulting these guidelines, I would like to know. There are multiple magnets on the third-floor refrigerator with funny or witty quotes on them. Email me one of those quotes of your own choosing.

## RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION OF YOUR POSITION

**Why is action necessary?** What will be the effect on stakeholder groups if your target audience does not try to challenge the status quo?

**Some things to consider:**

- Are stakeholder groups exposed to unjustifiable risks? Are the stake holders you have identified especially vulnerable?
- Are any of your stakeholders marginalized within society? Are they part of a highly privileged social group?
- Do your stakeholders have significant ties to political and policy making organizations that lie outside of the direct control of your government? (i.e. other states, NGOs, large businesses). If so, consider how these organizations relate to the stakeholder groups you are researching.
- What are the likely consequences of ignoring stakeholders' needs? Remember to write concise answers and to consider a range of alternative outcomes – never claim that one set of consequences is inevitable.

## PROPOSE A COURSE OF ACTION

**Position statement:**

***What is your position on the issue?*** Is it specific and clear? State it in one or two sentences.

**Propose a course of action:**

***What should be done to solve the problem?*** Consider the **broad approach and specific practical steps** or measures that need to be taken and by whom.

***Is the solution you propose feasible and implementable?***

**Reinforce your position:**

What points of your argument will you draw together to restate and reinforce your position?

- **Tie your policy response to the lead-in line** you used to introduce your memo. Explain briefly how it is consistent with the position you have taken on the issue and clearly state the outcome that your policy should bring about.
- **Clearly state which powers, agents and partners** your state/group will use to realise the policy you have described. Will the state have to create novel powers or new institutions to realise its goals?

- If your policy-making choices are relatively limited (signing or not signing a treaty, complaining to the ICJ or remaining silent), **justify your choice** by referring to your position statement and to the outcomes of any alternative choices.
- Consider the practical factors affecting your policy. **How hard will it be** for the state **to implement** your plan? What costs will the state have to pay? Is the state's ability to act or to extend its authority limited by laws or international agreements? **What will the political impact of your policy be?** How will the changes that you want the state to bring about affect its authority? What is the **political cost** of the policy?

## ARGUMENTATION AND EVIDENCE

The last section of your memorandum should prove **why your proposal will be effective**. Ask yourself why the policy you have designed will produce the outcomes that you claim it will have. If your policy responses are relatively limited, you should use this section to justify your choice by using a lot of your available word-count to explain why the decision that you support will have a positive impact on the state – explain, for instance, why development of integrated villages where former perpetrators and victims live together is a good long-term investment for the Rwandan government...

*What **evidence** will you use to support this section of your paper?*

*Make sure to very clearly summarize and list your action points (perhaps in bullet points) again towards the end of the memo to capture the attention of the targeted audience.*

### Closing remarks:

*Do you have an interesting reflection or question to close your paper? Does your paper go full circle from the opening to the ending?*

## SOURCES

Which published documents support your position, the solution you have proposed to the problem and the arguments you have used to demonstrate your policy's effectiveness? Remember, you need to use the APA embedded citation style.

Do you have a variety of type and sources of evidence to support your position?