

# GLOBAL CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND RESOLUTION

## CONF 340.006

### SPRING 2012

---

Professor Thomas E. Flores  
Office: Truland 618 (Arlington)  
Phone: 703.993.9409  
E-mail: tflores2@gmu.edu

Meeting Time: Monday, 1:30 PM–4:10 PM  
Classroom: East Bulding 122  
Office hours: 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM,  
Robinson B 365. Also by appointment.

---

## Questions and Goals

*“It is not enough to end the war; we must build the peace. It is not enough to reject the dark past; we must build a bright future.”* – William J. Clinton at Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, July 30, 1999

Why are some countries more prone to violent conflict than others? Does democratization reduce the chance of violent conflict? Why do certain groups use terrorism to advance their aims? What are the best strategies for helping communities devastated by violence build a new peace?

These are but a small sample of the questions we will study this semester. In this class, we will study the causes and consequences of *global conflict* and how such conflicts can be resolved. By “global conflict,” I mean violence between and among governments (e.g., the government of France), non-state armed groups, which are sometimes trans-national (e.g., al-Qaeda). Thinking in these terms weakens if not demolishes the usual categorization of conflicts as *interstate* (*i.e.*, between two sovereign governments) and *intrastate* (*i.e.*, between a government and groups of its citizens). Instead, the conflicts we study nearly always involve shifting alliances of sovereign states, the United Nations, other international and regional organizations, non-government organizations, non-state armed groups, crime syndicates and still others. We will therefore attend carefully to the inter-connectedness of the causes, conduct, and effects of violent conflict around the world. However, despite the global nature of this class, we mainly focus on how to help individuals and communities end violence and resolve conflicts. This isn’t a class about countries — it’s a class about people.

The ultimate goal of this class is to introduce you to the wide array of interventions used to resolve conflicts around the world. A network of practitioners — ranging from the representatives of sovereign governments to non-governmental organizations and other private actors — use a wide array of methods (e.g., military force, aid, mediation, technical advice) to help parties to conflict resolve their differences. Why do outsiders get involved? Are they really necessary? Do outside interventions really *work*? That said, conflict *resolution* first requires conflict *analysis* — we must understand the why, when, and how of a particular global conflict before we can hope to resolve it. This class is therefore divided into two parts. First, we will use theory and evidence to delve into the causes and consequences of global conflict. Second, we will study the interventions practitioners use to manage global conflict.

## Details: Requirements, Grading, Etc.

*“I cannot give any scientist of any age better advice than this: the intensity of the conviction that a hypothesis is true has no bearing on whether it is true or not. . . . If an experiment does not hold out the possibility of causing one to revise one’s views, it is hard to see why it should be done at all.”* - P.B. Medawar

### Course Materials

*“Outside of a dog, a book is a man’s best friend. Inside of a dog, it’s too dark to read.”*  
- Groucho Marx

Readings for the course come in two forms. First, the following books are required. They are available for purchase at the Fairfax branch of the GMU Bookstore and via online booksellers. Please note that the book by Collier and his co-authors is available electronically on our Blackboard site, if you wish to save money:

- Ramsbotham, Oliver, Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall. 2011. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. 3rd Edition. Malden, MA: Polity Press. (“CCR” in reading list)
- Collier, Paul, et al. 2003. *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy*. Washington, DC: The World Bank Press and Oxford University Press. (“Collier” in reading list)

Second, other readings for the course are available electronically. These are marked “Online” in the reading list.

### Expectations: Hard Work, Reading, Thinking, Writing and Participation

*“The harder I work, the luckier I get.”* - Samuel Goldwyn

This class will set high expectations for your thinking, writing, and diligence. Setting low standards, in contrast, implies that you are capable of nothing better than mediocrity. Furthermore, in this class we will grapple with some of the foundational questions regarding why the world is the way it is and how we can better it. If these questions are not worth your full effort, then what is? This class represents an opportunity to investigate the world outside GMU and challenge your own preconceived notions of it — seize it.

I therefore would like to clarify precisely what this class will demand of you. By enrolling in this course, you agree to the following:

- You will attend every class and arrive on time; there are only fourteen meetings, so missing one means missing a big chunk of material. I will take attendance in every class. You are allowed to miss only one class meeting, regardless of the reason. After that one class, you will lose a half grade off your final grade per class missed. There are no exceptions to this policy. You will turn off *all* electronic devices, including laptops and cell phones. You will give class your full attention, taking notes and participating in class conversation.

- You will complete all readings *before* the class in question. I'll know if you haven't. *Do not fall behind — it will prove very difficult to catch up.* Read carefully and, above all, *think!* Take notes in preparation for assignments, review the discussion questions I will post online each week (see below), and prepare questions you wish to ask in class.
- I will expect you to participate in the intellectual life of our class. There are three ways you can do so:
  - *In class.* In general, I will only use about a third of our class time for lecture. Mostly, I will use a more Socratic approach — in other words, I will constantly pepper you with questions and ask your opinions regarding our subject material. I may call on you without warning. Be prepared — I will notice when you are not. I also expect that you will ask interesting questions, respond to others' questions and comments, etc. We will seek to achieve true class *discussion*. However, I value quality over quantity, so do not expect to speak up without having read and be rewarded for it.
  - *Online.* You are strongly encouraged to post to the online discussion boards throughout the semester. Each week, I will post discussion questions on the next week's reading. Up to the day of class, I expect you to respond to some of those discussion questions, ask questions of your own, and respond to each other. To reward hard work and discourage lazy comments, I'll evaluate your posts at the end of the term by grading the quality of your commentary, questions, and responses to your peers.
  - *In office hours.* I encourage you to come to office hours to review outstanding questions from class or readings, or get advice on your paper. If you cannot make office hours, you can e-mail questions to me and commence a conversation in that way. I'm also available for phone calls during the week; e-mail me to make some time.

## Assignments and Grading

There will be four components to your grade in this course:

- **Participation.** As discussed above, participation in class is required. I will evaluate your participation in class, online and in office hours. Participation will be worth **10%** of your grade.
- **Pop Quizzes** You will take five unannounced reading quizzes; in other words, there will be a pop quiz nearly every other week of class. Pop quizzes can happen during any class. The quizzes will consist of a series of questions on readings for that week and material from the week before. They will be relatively short (about 30 minutes) and largely consist of definitions of key terms and short answers. I will drop your lowest quiz grade. Each quiz will be worth 5% of your grade; together, the quizzes will be worth **20%** of your grade. There are no makeups for pop quizzes; if you miss one, you will receive a 0 for that quiz. If you miss one, your quiz grade will be the average of your three remaining quizzes; if you miss more than one, you cannot earn the full 20 points. There are no exceptions to this policy.
- **Midterm.** You will take an in-class midterm covering Weeks 1–6 on **March 5**. The midterm will consist of short and long essay questions. It will be worth **35%** of your grade. There are no makeups for the midterm; if you miss it, you will receive a 0 and cannot pass the class; if this occurs, you obviously should drop the class.

- **Final Paper.** You will write a medium-length paper (12–15 pages) in which you will analyze a single conflict of your choosing. The paper itself is due in class on **April 30**. It is worth **35%** of your grade. More information about your paper is forthcoming.

I understand that you are concerned about your grades and I will do everything in my power to help you succeed in this course. However, hard work alone is not sufficient for a superior grade — the hard work must show in the thinking and writing on the page. Generally, the median grade in this class is about a B– or C+. We will discuss standards for specific assignments when the time arrives, but the following is the expected grade distribution for the typical assignment.

- **A:** Truly outstanding work that shows creative original thinking, is nearly perfectly organized, and flawlessly written. This level of work forces me to think hard when I read it. Usually about 10% of the grade distribution.
- **B:** Good work with a strong argument, sound organization, and solid writing. There are some relatively minor flaws in one or more of these areas, although the work clearly shows potential for an A level grade. Clearly above or right at the mean. Usually about 30% of the grade distribution.
- **C:** About average or slightly below average. An overall solid job, but with more obvious organizational, interpretive, creative, and/or stylistic problems that permeate the paper. Usually about 35% of the grade distribution.
- **D:** Failing by a small margin. Serious flaws in every aspect of the work: a lack of understanding of some basic principles, poor organization, and writing that makes it difficult for me to understand the author. Salvageable, however, in that it's clear the author could turn the paper into a passing grade with more work. Usually about 20% of the grade distribution. Immediate meeting with me strongly encouraged.
- **F:** Unacceptable and/or incomplete. Having such serious deficiencies that the student would need to start over to earn a passing grade. Usually about 5% of the grade distribution. Immediate meeting with me required.

A word on extensions: **no**. Any assignment turned in late will be given a 0. There are no exceptions to this policy.

### **Honor Code and Plagiarism**

All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. You can find a copy of the Honor Code at [academicintegrity.gmu.edu](http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu) and it is reproduced here:

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code. Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

In this class, these requirements mainly pertain to your paper-writing. Plagiarism is the attempt, whether accidental or intentional, to present another's thoughts as your own. It includes but is not limited to the following acts: submitting a paper that someone else wrote; paraphrasing a sentence from another writer without proper citation; failing, even once, to place a quote in quotation marks; so riddling your paper with long quotes of another's work that your paper functionally ceases to be "yours;" etc. Note that plagiarism need not be intentional — on the contrary, most cases are the result of carelessness.

All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review. With specific regards to plagiarism, three fundamental and rather simple principles are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please contact me. The punishment for plagiarism ranges from automatic failure of this course to expulsion from the University, depending on the severity of the case.

ICAR requires that all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit a student's work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. ICAR's policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace or substitute for it.

I will circulate materials about avoiding plagiarism, which we will discuss in class.

### **English Language Institute**

The English Language Institute offers free English language tutoring to non-native English speaking students who are referred by a member of the GMU faculty or staff. For more information, visit <http://eli.gmu.edu/>, call 703-993-3642 or e-mail [malle2@gmu.edu](mailto:malle2@gmu.edu).

### **The Writing Center**

The Writing Center is a free writing resource that offers individual, group, and online tutoring. For general questions and comments, please visit <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>, e-mail [wcenter@gmu.edu](mailto:wcenter@gmu.edu), or call 703-993-4491.

## Course Outline

*“It is a nuisance, but God has chosen to give the easy problems to the physicists . . . Man is capable of producing more complex behavior than he is capable of understanding. ”*

- Charles Lave and James G. March

As discussed above, the course is divided into two parts. First, we will spend the first six weeks of the course defining what we mean by global conflict, examining the statistics of such conflicts over time, and studying theory and evidence that help us understand the causes and consequences of global conflict. The second part of the course examines the various tools international organizations and sovereign governments use to prevent violent conflict, manage violence while it is ongoing, and re-build societies torn apart by violent conflict.

### Part I. Global Conflict: Theories and Evidence

**Week 1 (1/23).** Syllabus, Logistics, and an Introduction

**Week 2 (1/30).** Human Security and Global Conflict Today

**Week 3 (2/6).** General Theories of Violent Conflict

**Week 4 (2/13).** Civil Conflict I: Politics and Economics

**Week 5 (2/20).** Civil Conflict II: Social Dimensions

**Week 6 (2/27).** Terrorism and Transnational Crime

**Week 7 (3/5).** In-class Midterm

**Spring Break (3/12).** No class

### Part II. Conflict Resolution in Global Conflict

**Week 8 (3/19).** Prevention and Peacekeeping I

**Week 9 (3/26).** Prevention and Peacekeeping II

**Week 10 (4/2).** Peacemaking

**Week 11 (4/9).** Post-war Transitions

**Week 12 (4/16).** Peacebuilding

**Week 13 (4/23).** Reconciliation

**Week 14 (4/30).** Conclusions

## Detailed Course Schedule

### Part I. Global Conflict: Theories and Evidence

#### Week 1. January 23. Syllabus, Logistics, and an Introduction

##### Readings:

- Powner, Leanne. 2007. "Reading and Understanding Political Science." Online.
- CCR, Chapter 1.

#### Week 2. January 30. Human Security and Global Conflict

##### Readings:

- *Human Security Report 2009/2010*, Overview (pp. 1–14), Part I (pp. 15–98), Part II (only pp. 105–109), Part III (pp. 154–187). Online.
- CCR, Chapter 3

#### Week 3. February 6. Some General Thoughts on Global Conflict

##### Readings:

- Jervis, Robert, 1978. "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* 30(2): 167–214. Only read pp. 167–186. Online.
- CCR, Chapter 4 — and reread Chapter 1
- Excerpts from Kant, *The Perpetual Peace*. Online.
- Doyle, Michael W., 1986. "Liberalism and World Politics," *American Political Science Review* 80(4): 1151-1169. Online
- Mansfield, Edward D. and Jack Snyder. 2007. "Turbulent Transitions: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War." (pp. 161–176)
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. "The Clash of Civilizations." *Foreign Affairs* 3: 22-49.
- Kinder and Kam, Excerpts from *Us Against Them*
- Greed vs. Grievance?

#### Week 4. February 13. Civil Conflict I: Politics and Economics

##### Readings:

- Collier, Chapters 1–3 (pp. 13–91).
- Giugale, Marcelo M., Oliver Lafourcade and Connie Luff, eds. *Colombia: The Economic Foundations of Peace*. Washington, DC: The World Bank. Chapter 1 (pp. 35–58). Online.

**Week 5. February 20. Civil Conflict II: The Human Dimension****Readings:**

- Re-read CCR, Chapter 4
- Bar-Tal, Daniel. 2000. "From Intractable Conflict through Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation: Psychological Analysis," *Political Psychology* 21(2): 351–365. Online.
- Beah, Ishmael. "A Long Way Gone," New York, NY: Sarah Crichton Books. Chapters 15–16 (pp. 126–151). Online
- Excerpts from *The Dispossessed*
- TBA

**Week 6. February 27. Terrorism and Transnational Crime****Readings:**

- CCR, Chapter 11 (pp. 249–264)
- Pape, Robert A. 2003. "The Strategic Logic of Terrorism." *American Political Science Review* 97(3): 343–361. Online.
- Savun, Burcu and Brian J. Phillips. 2009. "Democracy, Foreign Policy, and Terrorism." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(6): 878–904. Online.
- "Transnational Crime and Corruption." 2001. In *Issues in World Politics*, White, Brian and Michael Smith and Richard Little, eds. pp. 232–251.
- Paul B. Stares and Mona Yacoubian, "Rethinking the 'War on Terror': New Approaches to Conflict Prevention and Management in the Post-9/11 World"
- Materials on international piracy. Online.

**Week 7. March 5. In-Class Midterm**

No Class on March 12 (Spring Break)

**Part II. Conflict Resolution in Global Conflict****Week 8. March 19. Prevention and Peacekeeping I****Readings:**

- CCR, Chapters 5. Also review pp. 10–13 and 27–30.
- Excerpts from *Foreign Policy's* "2011 Failed States Index." Online.
- Collier, pp. 121–140.
- Case study reading



**Week 9. March 26. Prevention and Peacekeeping II****Readings:**

- United Nations. 1992. "An Agenda for Peace." Online.
- CCR, Chapter 6.
- Case study reading

**Week 10. April 2. Peacemaking****Readings:**

- CCR, Chapter 7.
- Walter, Barbara F. 1997. "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement," *International Organization* 51 (3), 335-364. Online.
- Collier, pp. 140–150.
- Case study reading

**Week 11. April 9. Post-War Transitions****Readings:**

- CCR, Chapter 8.
- Walter, Barbara F. 1999. "Designing Transitions from Civil War: Demobilization, Democratization, and Commitments to Peace", *International Security* 24 (1), 127-155. Online
- Case study reading

**Week 12. April 16. Peacebuilding****Readings:**

- CCR, Chapter 9.
- Collier, pp. 150–172.
- Paris, Roland. 2004. *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1–2 (pp. 13–51). Online.
- Case study reading

**Week 13. April 23. Reconciliation****Readings:**

- CCR, Chapter 10 (pp. 231–245).
- Re-read Bar-Tal piece from Week 5
- TBA

**Week 14. April 30. Conclusions (Final paper is due)****Readings:**

- None