

**Conflict 732**  
**Conflict and Development**  
**Spring 2012**

**David Alpher, Ph.D.**

**Wednesdays, 4:30-7:10pm Founder's Hall, 320**

There is long-standing consensus among scholars, practitioners and policymakers that deprivations and inequalities arising from economic, political, and socio-cultural conditions can be significant drivers of violent social conflict. Of course, the corollary to this consensus is that effective strategies that remove these deprivations and reduce these inequalities inherently contribute to a stable, positive peace. That is, peace and development are understood to be interdependent and mutually reinforcing discourses wherein sustainable and just development cannot flourish without the conditions of peace and a lasting and just peace cannot flourish without sustainable development.

In recent years the clarity of this assumption has been challenged on multiple fronts. There is growing recognition that the implementation of development policies can themselves exacerbate deprivations and inequalities and serve as a significant source of conflict. While some scholars believe that these problems are simply 'growing pains' for the development field and will eventually either work themselves out on their own or perhaps be socially engineered away, other scholars believe that it is in the very nature of development to produce conflict, and as a result, they argue for a reconsideration of the relationship of development with conflict and peace; indeed, many argue for a reconsideration of the entire practice of development. These schools of thought, which themselves are characterized by multiple and often conflicting positions, are indicative of the deep divisions within the discourse(s) of development—a concept which is afforded far more coherence in the media than exists in practice or theory.

In this course, we will begin by exploring the recent historical evolution of the theory and practice of development, to gain a common starting point for understanding of the field. We will deepen our understanding of the salient interactions and relationships by examining programs specifically designed to resolve, manage or otherwise work with conflict; by examining programs which have had (through accident or design) an ancillary effect on conflict although this was not their stated intent; and by examining critical theories of development and the negative effects that development can have on conflict when "done badly." Thus we will arrive at a three-dimensional understanding of the interactions between development and conflict as well as the recent expansion of the development discourse to include such issues as human security, human rights, and civil society.

**Instructor and Office Hours**

This section of the course is taught by David Alpher. He can be reached at [dalpher@gmu.edu](mailto:dalpher@gmu.edu), or in an emergency at 703-380-5755. His office hours are after class and by appointment; he is available to discuss the course or other matters of interest.

## **Grading and Related Matters**

Grades in this course will be based on three major components. The first will be a take-home mid-term (35%). The second will be a final research paper (40%). Finally, participation will count 25%, reflecting its importance to the course. In order to receive a passing grade, it is necessary to attend classes prepared to discuss the week's reading. Late papers will be graded down one full grade increment for each day or part of a day that the paper is late, unless the student furnishes written documentation of the medical or family emergency which made timely completion of the work impossible. Please note that it is S-CAR policy to refuse to grant grades of Incomplete for reasons other than documented medical or family emergencies. (For more information about grading, please look at the statement on academic standards in the S-CAR Handbook and GMU's Honor Code.)

Required reading materials are mandatory. The instructor will facilitate discussions in class based on the assumption that all students have read and reflected on all the required reading. Further reading materials are optional yet useful for students to deepen their understanding of the particular subjects under study. In addition, students are encouraged to follow and critically examine daily news reports on current events related to social conflict, for they will be discussed in class to supplement the assigned reading materials.

University requirements are listed immediately below in language suggested by the Provost's Office. We will take time in the first class to discuss any questions that you may have about this material, including questions about plagiarism.

### **Academic integrity:**

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). 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 to follow at all times 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 talk with the professor.

S-CAR 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. S-CAR's policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace or substitute for it.

### **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

contact 703-993-3642 or 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 contact us at wcenter@gmu.edu or call: 703-993-4491. GMU email accounts: Students must activate their GMU email accounts to receive important University information, including messages related to this class.

### **Office of Disability Services:**

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. Hht://ods.gmu.edu

### **Course Materials:**

The required articles and book chapters in this course will be delivered to students via email or placed on the ICAR Community Forum (<http://icarcommunity.ning.com>), or will be available at the John Burton Library. This will be communicated at least one week prior to each successive class.

Required reading materials are mandatory. Recommended materials are optional but very useful for students wishing to deepen their understanding of the subjects under study. In addition, students are strongly encouraged to follow and critically examine daily news reports on current events related to social conflict; they will be discussed in class to supplement the assigned reading materials.

### **Required texts:**

Development as Freedom, Amartya Sen (1999)

White Man's Burden, Michael Easterly (2007)

The End of History and the Last Man, Francis Fukuyama (2006)

The Bottom Billion, Paul Collier (2007)

Theories of Development, second edition; Peet, Richard and Hartwick, Elaine (2009)

Do No Harm, Mary Anderson (1999)

Other reading will be taken from documents online.

In each class session, students will be responsible for finding and reading at least one article, research paper, program description or other piece of work which can be used to apply the theory to practice.

### **Course Structure**

In broad outline, we will cover the subject matter from four points of view:

1. Theories and critical theories of development, in order to give ourselves a deep background in the theoretical and policy intent behind the practice of development work
2. Theory and practice in which the stated intent of the practice is to have a direct effect on conflict dynamics
3. Theory and practice which has effect on conflict despite the stated intent being something else
4. What happens when things go wrong?

In order to help students assess the practical strengths and limitations of the theories discussed, we will incorporate a series of case studies within the course. We will also stress examples from our collective experience and from current news. The intended direction of thought for each week will be discussed in the previous week.

The midterm paper will focus on the students' critical understanding of the theory and policy thus far. The student may pick any aspect of said theory and practice to focus attention on, as long as it is approved by the instructor.

The final paper may be one of two things. The student may either study the theory critically and advance his or her own theory of the interrelationship between development, peace and conflict, or a specific aspect therein; or may choose to interview a field practitioner about a specific project and use the interview(s) to examine a program in light of course and outside research.

### **Schedule of classes and assignments**

#### ***Week 1 1/25: Introduction to the course***

This session will offer an overview of the course and explore why we need to study social theory for conflict analysis and resolution.

No required reading

#### **Week 2 2/1: Background theory I**

Required reading:

Peet and Hartwick, part 1

2010 United States National Security Strategy  
([http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss\\_viewer/national\\_security\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf))

USAID Policy Framework 2011-2015  
([http://www.usaid.gov/policy/USAID\\_PolicyFramework.PDF](http://www.usaid.gov/policy/USAID_PolicyFramework.PDF))

### **Week 3 2/8: ...II...**

Required reading:

2005 Paris Declaration on country-owned development

2011 QDDR

The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency (USAID)

### **Week 4 2/15: ... and III**

Required reading:

Paul Collier, The Bottom Billion

### **Week 5 2/22: critical theory**

Required reading:

Peet and Hartwick, parts 2 and 3

### **Week 6 2/29: Development and peace I**

Required reading:

Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom, chapters 1-6

Midterm topics must be approved by this date

**Week 7 3/7: ...II...**

Required reading:

Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom, chapters 7-12

**Week 8: *Midterm due, no required reading***

**Week 9 3/14:**

Spring break, no class

**Week 10 3/21: ...and III**

Required reading:

Francis Fukuyama, The End of History and the Last Man

**Week 11 3/28: Development and conflict I**

Required reading:

Michael Easterly, White Man's Burden chapter 1 and parts 1 and 2

**Week 12 4/4: ...II...**

Required reading:

Michael Easterly, White Man's Burden parts 3 and 4

**Week 13 4/11: ...and III**

Required reading:

Mary Anderson, Do No Harm

STUDENT RESEARCH PAPER TOPICS MUST BE APPROVED BY THIS DATE

**Week 14 4/18:**

**Student researched reading/TBD**

**Week 15 4/25:**

**Student researched reading/TBD**

**Week 16 5/2**

**Last day of class, review and questions**

**EXAM DUE SUNDAY MAY 13 MIDNIGHT**