International Conflict (INTL3400)  
Spring 2018  
Meets: M/TH 11.45-1.25

### Overview

This course takes you on a global journey, examining conflict with an emphasis on those characterized by violence. We begin by familiarizing ourselves with the conceptual territory, discussing issues and ideas related to conflict, peace and terrorism. Our academic excursion then takes us to Rwanda where we shed light on the horrors of genocide, sexual violence and “justice.” Next, we travel to the United States where we delve into indigenous peoples and human rights by surveying the situation of American Indians and settler colonialism. From there, we move to the state of Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, analyzing issues connected to occupation, resistance, borders and barriers. Then, we are off to Chechnya (in Russia) where we assay the intersection of human rights, terrorism, counterterrorism and forced disappearances. We end the semester in Northern Ireland, which endured decades of violence and now struggles to build peace.

### Learning Objectives

At the end of this course, you should understand and be able to thoughtfully discuss:

- Concepts related to conflict, with an emphasis on violent, intrastate conflicts;
- The significance of context, empathy, choices and constructed narratives in understanding different types of conflicts and responses to them;
- The importance of terminology as applied to actors and actions;
- The roles of grievances, motivations and goals in fomenting (and ending) conflict;
- The importance of human rights in fomenting (and ending) conflict;
- The value of comparative case studies (within and beyond a conflict); and,
- The impact of conflict on proximate victims and survivors within a conflict zone and in broader global contexts.

### Skills

By the conclusion of the term, you will have had the opportunity to:

- Improve critical thinking, reading and writing abilities;
- Enrich your understanding of how to conduct research utilizing diverse perspectives;
- Develop your public speaking and presentation skills; and,
- Enhance your ability to engage collaboratively in group work.
Learning and Evaluation

Course Materials

- This course actively uses our Blackboard (BB) page. Weekly readings and other course documents are posted there.
- In addition to the BB readings, you are asked to read Elizabeth Dauphinee’s *Politics of Exile*, available at the book store (or online).
- Finally, as a student of international affairs, you need to be aware of the daily headlines (and beyond) from an authoritative news source such as the *New York Times* or *Washington Post*.

Grading

Grading is based on an A - F scale. To earn an “A,” you need to do excellent work - not just turn in something that meets the basic criteria of the assignment. A “B+” is very good work, a “C” OK, but it does not exhibit excellence, and so on.

Attendance and Participation – 10 points

- Attendance is required. If you need to miss class due to illness or emergency, notice should be given by email before the class. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to connect with a classmate and go over the material.
- **Students who miss more than TWO class meetings, without compelling reasons and appropriate notice, may not pass the class.** Documentation of the cause for missing class may be required.
- Attendance also requires showing up on time, prepared for class and staying for the entire class. It also means being mentally present and attentive.
- Your success in this course is aided by your participation. Participation is based on your thoughtful and constructive contributions to the class discussions on a regular basis. Note that the point is not to put you on the spot, but rather to get you to become actively involved in *your* education. If you are not normally “chatty” in class, please feel free to be in touch (ideally early in the course) so we can work together to get you involved.

Conflict Analysis Assignments

"*For each assignment that follows, you will receive a more detailed instruction sheet.*

1. **Opposition/non-state actor profile – 23 points:** This is a research paper (5 pp, double-spaced (DS)), written as if you are a communications officer for the first group/state actor from your conflict.

2. **State advisor memo – 23 points:** You are a policy advisor to the specified state government directly impacted by, and dealing with the entity, you profiled in the first paper. This paper (also 5 pp, DS) advises your state about how to best deal with the group or state from the first paper.

3. **Conflict - group presentation 8 points:** You work for “Transformation International” (TI), a fictitious NGO providing options to actors engaged in violent conflict. Your group will provide a ten-minute presentation, offering a brief overview of your conflict (less than 3 minutes), then focusing on recommendations about how to transform (sustainably) the conflict away from violence. Oral presentation time must be divided (relatively evenly) amongst all group members.

**Politics of Exile Discussion Group (8 points)**

Groups of 3-5 students will arrange a time to meet with me, via a Doodle poll, in the latter half of the term for approximately 45 - 60 minutes. During this time, **you** will lead a thoughtful and substantive discussion of Elizabeth Dauphinee’s *Politics of Exile*.

Final Exam (28 points)

This will be an essay and short answer exam that covers the material from the term including lectures/discussions, readings, and in-class video clips and films. Note that you will be asked to cite to specific modules and readings.
How to Make the Most of Our Class

- In addition to the learning objectives and skills stated above, the goals for this class include creating a positive, constructive and engaging environment in which we can grapple with and learn about some very difficult issues related to conflict. To do this, we use readings (from a range of sources), images, video clips, films and lots of discussion.
- To make the most of our 100 minute sessions, note that the readings are meant to be done before class - they are preparation for our discussions. These readings serve as a foundation upon which we will build our in-class lectures and discussions. Note that while I don’t assume any prior knowledge of conflict or the countries we “visit,” I do assume you’ve done the readings.
- The due dates (listed below in the schedule) are to help you to plan your fall semester. If you have concerns about your papers in advance of the deadline, please see me sooner rather than later, so that you make the most of each assignment.
- Remember to use the assignment sheets for each paper - they will be handed out in class as we progress through the term and will be posted on Blackboard.
- Optional drafts of papers are welcome. Practice (writing!) and feedback are two of the best ways to improve. This class provides both. If you are turning in a draft of a paper, the due date is listed in the schedule below. Drafts need not be complete papers – they can be an outline or a section of a paper.
- Note that the group presentation will require coordination outside of the classroom. If your group is having difficulty getting together or a member isn’t “showing up,” let me know and we’ll try to remedy the situation.

Other Important Bits

- All assignments must be proofread and generally free of typographical errors.
- All assignments must:
  - Use Times New Roman font, sized 11 point.
  - Use 1” (inch) margins.
  - Not have extra spaces between paragraphs.
  - Be paginated.
  - Contain your name, the date, and the assignment on a title page (not included in page limits)
- Research papers must use either Chicago endnote citation and a bibliography OR MLA parenthetical citation and a bibliography.
- Anything that is not a common fact requires a citation.
- All quotations require citation.
- Your work should be thoughtfully organized and thoroughly researched.
- All questions or concerns about your writing are welcome and encouraged.
- Assignments will be turned in via email (unless otherwise announced) and in the form of an attached Word (NOT PDF) document in the following sample format:
  - Barack O.Talibanprofile.doc (using your name and topic)
- Late assignments: work not turned in at the designated time/date (and in the specified manner) will be reduced by 10% per day. Papers later than three days will not be accepted.
- Comments appear on your work; grades are available on Blackboard.
- Laptops, e-tablets or phones may not be used during class. If you are seen using these devices your participation grade may be diminished
Module 1: Violence, Villains and Peace

This module introduces the study of conflict, offering an overview of some key terms, concepts and questions. It emphasizes the importance of terminology, because what we call things matters, and spotlights the challenges of terrorism.

"By refusing to abide by a wall, map, property line, border identity document, or legal regime, mobile people upset the state’s schemes of exclusion, control, and violence. They do this simply by moving."
Reece Jones, Violent Borders

"It is worth remembering that state responses to terrorism almost certainly do more to shape the world and its politics than do non-state terrorist acts themselves."
Richard English, Does Terrorism Work?

Monday, 8 January
❖ On the agenda: Welcome
   ○ Introductions, to each other, to our course

Thursday, 11 January
❖ On the agenda: The Study of Conflict
   ○ Why do we study conflict?
   ○ How do we think about conflict?
   ○ Why does terminology matter?
   ○ Conflict group selections announced
   ○ Review paper no. 1 assignment
❖ Required reading:
   ○ “Armed Conflicts” (Themner and Wallenstein) (13 pp)
   ○ “Introduction” (chapter excerpt, Demmers) (17 pp)

Monday 15 January – No Class

Thursday, 18 January
❖ On the agenda: Conflict Transformation and Peace
What is peace?
What is conflict transformation?
Researching conflict

Required reading:
“Introduction: Geographical Approaches to Peace” (Williams et al) (20pp)
“Conflict Transformation” (chapter excerpt, Lederach) (approx. 11 pp)

Monday 22 January
On the agenda: Conflict and Terrorism: What We Call Things Matters
Who is a terrorist?
What is terrorism?
Required reading:
“The Study of Terrorism” (Jenkins) (5pp)
“Terrorism – How to Respond (chapter excerpt, English) (17 pp)

Thursday, 25 January
On the agenda: Conflict and the Trouble with Terrorism
What are some of the key issues raised by terrorism (and state responses thereto)?
Required reading:
“Introduction” (Elden) (20 pp)
“The Psychology of Terrorism” (Kruglanski and Fishman) (19 pp)

Optional Resources for Further Exploration
United Nations Human Rights – Office of the High Commissioner,
Articles in Critical Terrorism Studies (an academic journal).
Module 2: Genocide, (In) Justice and Rwanda

This module examines the 1994 genocide in Rwanda by first introducing the concept of genocide and its associated legal regime. We look at how the genocide unfolded and zoom in on the use of sexual violence during the conflict and some of the ways it was addressed in the aftermath. The module concludes by assaying the binary categories of victims and survivors, here in the wake of a genocide.

“This should never happen to anybody. History has a way of repeating itself, don’t allow it. By remembering me, you remember all those innocent victims.
Moving forward and forgetting what happened is forgetting me.
Then there will be no reason for me to live.
I live to bear witness, to tell my testimony.”
Uyisenga, survivor of the Rwandan genocide (SURF)

Monday, 29 January
❖ On the agenda: Genocide and Rwanda
   o What is genocide?
   o How does genocide unfold?
   o How did it unfold in Rwanda?
❖ Required reading:
   o The Genocide Convention (5 pp)
   o “The Eight Stages of Genocide” (Stanton) (7 pp)
   o “The Rwandan Genocide” (HRW) (17 pp)

Tuesday, 30 January
❖ Due:
   o Optional draft of paper no. 1 by email by 11pm by email as an attached Word doc.

Thursday, 1 February
❖ On the agenda: Genocide, Gender and (In)Justice in Rwanda
   o How was sexual violence used in the perpetration of Rwanda’s genocide?
   o What were the consequences?
   o Who is a victim? A survivor? A perpetrator? Are they mutually exclusive?
   o How does this naming and categorization impact peacebuilding efforts?
Required reading:
- “Without These Women” (Koomen) (25 pp)
- “Portraits of Reconciliation” (Hugo and Dominus) (online photo essay)
- “Rwanda and the NY Times…” (Vijayan) (blog post)

Optional Resources for Further Exploration
Module 3: This Land Is Our Land – American Indians and the Legacy of Settler Colonialism

Module 3 examines conflicts, historic and contemporary, involving indigenous peoples in the United States. Here, we emphasize human rights, how (and what) we remember and “forget.” We highlight the legacy of experiences including residential boarding schools and wrestle with use of “Indian” sports mascots.

“[A great general has said that the only good Indian is a dead one, and that high sanction of his destruction has been and enormous factor in promoting Indian massacres. In a sense, I agree with the sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, and save the man.”]

Colonel Richard Pratt, U.S. Army, 1892

Monday, 5 February

◆ On the agenda: Indigenous Peoples and Conflict in the United States
  ◦ Who are indigenous peoples in the United States?
  ◦ What are the historical frames through which we view this conflict (and why)?
◆ Required reading:
  ◦ “Introduction – This Land” (chapter excerpt, Dunbar-Ortiz) (13 pp)
  ◦ Selected essays from Rethinking Columbus (see BB for specifics; 15 pp)

Thursday, 8 February

◆ On the agenda: Indigenous Peoples and the Legacy of Settler Colonialism in the United States
  ◦ What is the legacy of settler colonialism in the United States?
  ◦ How do contemporary representations of American Indians impact perceptions of “us” and “them”?
◆ Required reading:
  ◦ Boarding School Abuses (Smith) (13 pp)
  ◦ Harmful “Indian” Mascots (NCAI) (read to page 16)

Monday, 12 February

◆ On the agenda: Indigenous Peoples, Conflict and Human Rights
  ◦ What are human rights?
  ◦ How does the international human rights system address indigenous peoples?
How does this connect to the experiences of American Indians?

**Required reading:**
- “The UN Human Rights System – How to Make It Work for You” (UN) (pp. 1-10)
- Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- *In the Light of Justice* (chapter 3 excerpt, Echo-Hawk) (11 pp)

**Tuesday, 13 February**

**Due:**
- Paper no. 1 by email by 11pm by email as an attached Word doc.

**Optional Resources for Further Exploration**
Module 4: Barriers to Conflict Transformation – Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories

Often characterized as a religious conflict or as one stemming from ancient hatreds, this module aims to challenge some of these oversimplifications. Toward this end, we will look at issues of territory and (in)security to better understand the roles they play in fomenting conflict and impeding its transformation away from violence and toward sustainable peace.

“A View [of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict] from Mars”

“The Martians make a visit to Earth. When they get there, everyone on the planet is in a huge meeting. ‘What are they doing?’ say the Martians. ‘They’re discussing Peace in the Middle East,’ says one of the Three Wise Persons. ‘Hands up, everyone who wants Peace in the Middle East,’ says the Chairman. Everyone at the meeting raises a hand. ‘Now, hands up, everyone who knows how to accomplish it,’ says the Chairman. Nobody raises a hand.”

Margaret Atwood, published in Ha'aretz

Thursday, 15 February

- On the agenda: Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories – Narratives of Land and Belonging
  - What are the historic and contemporary roots of this conflict?
  - How do narratives, constructed over time and space, shape perceptions of “us” and “them?”
  - Review paper no. 2 assignment

- Required reading:
  - “Palestine and Israel – a Primer” (Beinin and Hajjar) (12 pp)
  - “Contested Narratives” (Dajani) (8 pp)

Monday, 19 February – No Class

Thursday, 22 February

- On the agenda: Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories – (In)Security in Gaza
  - What is the situation in the Gaza Strip, and how does it impact the conflict?
  - Who are Hamas (and why do they matter to the conflict and the potential peace)?

- Required reading:
  - “Gaza Ten Years Later” (UN) (26 pp)
  - “Hamas – Talk to Them,” (Gunning) (7 pp)

Monday, 26 February

- On the agenda: Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories: (De)Humanizing the “Enemy”
  - In-class film viewing

- Required reading:
  - “Terrorism, Signaling…” (Hoffman) (33 pp)
Thursday, 1 March

- On the agenda: Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories: (Un)Settling the Land
  - What are settlements?
  - Why is Israel constructing them?
  - What are the implications for the conflict? For conflict transformation?

- Required reading:
  - “Implications of Settlements” (UNHRC) (25 pp)

Monday, 5 March – No Class – Spring Break

Thursday, 8 March – No Class – Spring Break

Monday, 12 March

- On the agenda: Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories: The In(Security)Barrier
  - What is the security fence?
  - How does the fence alter the political geography of the conflict?
  - Why does what we call it (security fence vs. the wall) matter?

- Required reading:
  - “Five Years after the ICJ Opinion” (UNOCHA) (25 pp as described on BB)
  - “The West Bank Wall” (Jones et al.) (7 pp)

Tuesday, 13 March

- Due:
  - Optional draft paper no. 2 by email by 11pm by email as an attached Word doc.

Optional Resources for Further Exploration

Module 5: “Terrorism,” Counter-terrorism and Human Rights in Chechnya

In module 5, we explore conflict in Chechnya, a region in Russia’s North Caucasus. We seek to understand how historic and contemporary state violence towards the Chechens how it has shaped relations between the state and periphery. In so doing, we pay particular attention to forced disappearances. Additionally, we “meet” some of Russia's human rights defenders – those seeking to spotlight violence in search of justice and protecting victims and survivors.

“Corner the bandits in the outhouse and wipe them out. There's nothing left to discuss.”
Vladimir Putin

“They call us terrorists, but you would become a terrorist too if you lost your mother, your sisters, your nieces and nephews, your whole family to those animals who bomb everyone.”
Chechen fighter

Thursday, 15 March
✦ On the agenda: Russia and Chechnya – Narratives of Violence
  o What are the historic and contemporary contexts of this conflict?
  o How do narratives, constructed and connected over time and space, shape Russian and Chechen understandings of the “other?”
✦ Required reading
  o “Prisoners of the Caucasus” (King and Menon) (9pp)
  o “The Deportations” (DeWaal and Gall) (8 pp)
  o “The Conflict in Chechnya” (UK Parl. Briefing) (6pp)

Monday, 19 March
✦ On the agenda: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Context
  o How have terrorism and counterterrorism been used in this conflict?
What are the consequences of these choices?

**Required reading:**
- "The War on Terror and the Chechen Conflict" (Cornell) (16 pp)
- "Placing Blame - Making Sense of Beslan" (O'Tuathail) (11 pp)
- *A Small Corner of Hell* (Politkovskaya, chapter excerpt) (7 pp)

**Tuesday, 20 March**

**Due:**
- Paper no. 2 by email by 11pm by email as an attached Word doc.

**Thursday, 22 March**

**On the agenda: Human Rights, the Disappeared and the Defenders**
- How have human rights violations (spotlighting the disappeared) shaped people’s experience with the conflict?
- What role have human rights defenders played, and how has the state responded?
- Review group presentation assignment

**Required reading:**
- "Her Own Death Foretold" (Politkovskaya)
- "Anna Politkovskaya and Ramzan Kadyrov" (Pohl) (9 pp)
- "Ten Years with Anna Politkovskaya" (Katzarova) (6 pp)
- "Natalia Estemirova - Champion of Chechens" (Amnesty) (6 pp)

**Optional Resources for Further Exploration**
Module 6: The Divided Kingdom – Northern Ireland and the UK

In our final module, we focus on the conflict in Northern Ireland. In seeking to understand this conflict trajectory, we look at the impact of specific events such as Bloody Sunday, the importance of placing them in their proper context, and assaying their longer-term impact. We conclude by exploring transformative efforts and impediments thereto.

“We accepted the myth that we could not live together in peace partly because we knew no better and partly because we were afraid to contradict the mythmakers.”
Father Des Wilson.

Monday, 26 March
❖ On the agenda: Northern Ireland – A Day in the Life of a Conflict: Bloody Sunday
  o In-class film viewing
❖ Required reading:
  o “Set the Truth Free” (BST) (10 pp)
  o “Getting It Wrong” (Thornton) (33 pp)

Thursday, 29 March
❖ On the agenda: Northern Ireland – State of Insecurity
  o What were the consequences of Bloody Sunday – that day and for the conflict in the near- and long-term?
  o What is the broader conflict context?
  o How have the various communities been impacted by violence?
❖ Required reading:
  o “Background to the Conflict” (chapter excerpt) (McEvoy) (23 pp)
  o “The Troubles Is My Life” (chapter excerpt) (Fay and Smith) (13 pp)

Monday, 2 April
❖ On the agenda: Northern Ireland – From Sunday to Friday
  o What is the Good Friday Agreement (and how did we get there)?
❖ Required reading:
  o The Good Friday Agreement (a thorough skim)
  o “To Cherish a Just and Lasting Peace” (Adams)
Thursday, 5 April

- On the agenda: Northern Ireland – Barriers and Bridges to Peace
  - How do we understand Northern Ireland today (and why does it matter)?
  - What are the impediments to transforming this conflict more sustainably away from violence?
  - How do “peace walls” impact those efforts?

- Required reading:
  - “People in Conflict in Place: The Case of Northern Ireland” (Douglas and Shirlow) (4 pp)
  - “Geographies of Conflict and Post-Conflict in Northern Ireland” (McDowell and Shirlow) (8 pp)
  - “The Problem with Northern Ireland’s Peace Walls” (Gormley-Heenan and Byrne) (4 pp)

Optional Resources for Further Exploration
- Peter Shirlow and Kieran McEvoy, Beyond the Wire (book)

Wrapping things up...

Monday, 9 April

- On the agenda
  - Group presentations

Thursday, 12 April (our last class)

- On the agenda:
  - Group presentations (if necessary)
  - Disseminate and discuss final exam
  - Wrap up our term!

Thursday, 19 April

- Due: Final exam by email by noon as an attached Word doc.
Help and Resources

- If you have questions about the class, content or assignments, please talk with me, either after class (when I usually have a few minutes), during office hours, or via email. I can also be available by appointment.
- Please know that if you are overwhelmed - by something in or out of the class - again, please talk with me - I can only help you if I know there's a problem.
- Other resources:
  - Northeastern University Writing Center: http://www.northeastern.edu/english/writing-center/
  - Northeastern University Library Subject Librarian for International Affairs Roxanne Palmatier, phone: (617) 373-4968 / email: r.palmatier@neu.edu
  - Websites for citation:
    - Chicago Manual of Style (available for purchase or via the library), http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html
    - MLA Handbook (available for purchase or via the library), http://www.mlahandbook.org/fragment/public_index;jsessionid=CC8CCD2448AF643DA353E514B43B24EB
    - Northeastern Library, http://library.northeastern.edu/get-help/citations-bibliographies

Academic Integrity

You are responsible for being familiar with and complying with Northeastern's Academic Integrity Policy (http://www.northeastern.edu/osccr/academic-integrity-policy/). Violations include but are not limited to: plagiarism, fabrication, cheating, and unauthorized collaboration. The link provides more details about what constitutes a violation, along with examples, as well as possible academic sanctions you may incur if you do not comply. Additionally, it leads you to a very helpful citation and academic integrity checklist. If you have any questions about this, please be in touch.

Contact Information & Office Hours

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