Contemporary Theories on Peace and Conflict Resolution (POL-4040)

Classroom: Tureaud Hall (213)  
Class Time: 3:00 p.m. – 4:20 p.m.  
Office Hours: W 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., or by appt.  
Website: www.darrellezell.com

Professor: Dr. Darrell Ezell  
Office: 208-C Stubbs Hall  
Email: dezell2@lsu.edu

Course Description

Nonviolence is not merely a personal virtue. It is also a social virtue to be cultivated like other virtues. – Mahatma Gandhi

“We are not to simply bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice, we are to drive a spoke into the wheel itself.” – Dietrich Bonhoeffer

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” Martin Luther King, Jr.

Conflict analysis and resolution is now a global activity and concerns engaging both academics and practitioners in finding durable solutions to the most pressing conflicts in the twenty-first century. This course overviews the interdisciplinary field of conflict analysis and resolution in terms of theory, research and practice. Current perspectives, assumption and models are covered as well as contending approaches to conflict intervention. The analysis of conflict includes consideration of underlying sources, the multiplicity of cause and dynamics leading to manifest expression and escalation, and the strategic choices made by adversaries.

This course will acquire subject-specific knowledge and understanding of theories and concepts of peace and conflict and their application to global, regional and local contexts. Several current developments will be addressed as case studies. Two major regional case studies we will cover this semester will include analyzing ethnic-conflict in East Africa and state/non-state actor peacemaking in South Asia.

Required Text:


Recommended Readings:


- Conflict Resolution Information Source. "Tools and Conflict Resolution Information" (available through http://www.crinfo.org/index.jsp)
Course Design:

This is a 4000 level special topics course which students are expected to participate actively in both reacting to assigned reading and engaging in the interactive discussion that build on the readings. Each class session covers a designated topic based on a set of readings and most will engage members of assigned in-class Consulting Teams (working as co-presenters to bring forward some of the basic themes and initial reaction to the readings). Class discussions and weekly outlines will be uploaded to Moodle.

To increase understanding of conflict analysis and resolution, class members will form small Consulting Teams, who will choose contemporary regional conflict scenarios (ethnic-centric, religious, political, etc.). The conflict scenario will be analyzed in terms of the nature of the conflict, and recommended intervention by the Consulting Team that could be carried out to de-escalate and resolve it. The objective is to add greater meaning to the readings through a sequenced, in-depth case analysis of a specific, current situation represented in the literature and other sources.

Course Requirements

Grades will be determined on the basis of the student’s performance on the following:

- **Participation (10%)** — Over the course of the semester, you are required to participate both in and outside of class. Evaluation of participation will be based largely on student interaction as members of in-class Consulting Teams, who are expected to provide guidance and debate with each other on best approaches to de-escalate and resolve conflicts. Participation on this semester’s two Team Case projects will determine individual participation grades. It is expected that each student is respectful to fellow Consulting Team members and puts forth an equal efforts on all assignments. A team captain will be assigned at the beginning of the semester to delegate responsibilities and lead team members.

- **Consulting Team Case Analysis (30%)** — Each Consulting Team will make two brief (20 min.) presentations during the term, one on the causes and manifestation of the conflict, and the other on recommended intervention measures to address the conflict. This sequential and collaborative case analysis is designed to sensitize members to the challenges and benefits of working with a professional team, and to deepen members understanding of the course material by application to a concrete situation. Each member is expected to contribute to all of the team’s activities and is expected to take part in the delivery of both presentations. Each Consulting Team is responsible for designating a team captain to delegate research responsibilities. Presentations will be assessed on clarity, style and creativity, and reports will be assessed on clearness, organization and substance.

- **Reflection Articles (20%)** — You are required to submit four (4) reflection papers on an article related to a contemporary conflict issue. Your submission must include a (single) title page and a two hundred word double-spaced reflection about the conflict issue. The article must be properly cited at the top of the reflection page in accordance to your MLA or Chicago style handbook. You may choose from a range of online sources (CNN, NYTTimes, Enduring America, Al-Jazeera, Foreign Affairs, or the Council on Foreign Relations). **No credit will be given for late submissions.**

- **Midterm and Final Exams (40%)** — Take home exams will be used to assess class member’s comprehension of and ability to apply the ideas represented in the readings and seminar discussions. Both exams will consist of five questions worth 20 pts. The Final exam will be structured much like the midterm. It will be due the last week of the term and students have one week to complete the exam.
Policies

- Please be sure to arrive on time to class.

- All assignments are due on the due dates. There are no exceptions. Please visit the LSU student handbook regarding missed classes.

- If you have any questions/concerns about assignments, grades, presentations, etc., please see me during my scheduled office hours or make an appointment.

- **Statement on Academic Integrity/Academic Misconduct:** I expect that all work you turn in will be your own. Plagiarism (representing someone else’s work as your own) **WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.** Be sure to cite any source from which you take material, including websites. If you are not sure what constitutes plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask.

- All LSU students are expected to have read and be familiar with the LSU Code of Student Conduct. According to university policy, “Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give an unfair academic advantage to the student...” (Sec 5.1, C of the LSU Code of Student Conduct). For further information, please consult the LSU Code of Student Conduct at [http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs](http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs).

- **Students with Disabilities:** If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a Coordinator in the Office of Disability Services so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive your Accommodation Letters, please meet with someone in that office to discuss the provisions of those accommodations as soon as possible.

- It is your responsibility to get in touch with me if you have any questions. If an event arises that you think will impact your success in this course, please get in contact with me as soon as possible. It is much easier for me to work with you during the semester than after the final grades have been submitted.

Reading Assignments

August 21, 23
**First Week:** (Review Syllabus, Learning Goals, Assign Consulting Teams) (Conflict Videos: Domestic and International Conflict)

*Introduction to Conflict Resolution: Concepts and Definitions*
Ramsbotham, pp. 3-25

August 28
*Conflict Resolution: Origins, Foundation and Development of the Field*
Ramsbotham, pp. 35-62

August 30
*Measuring Conflict*
Ramsbotham, pp. 63-93

September 4, 6
*Understanding Contemporary Conflict*
Ramsbotham, pp. 94-122

Understanding Moral Conflict
B. Pearce and S. Littlejohn, pp. 29-47
*(Assign Regional Conflict Analysis Cases to Consulting Teams)*

September 11

Preventing Violent Conflict
Ramsbotham, pp. 123-145

Mara Roberts, Conflict Analysis of the 2007 Post-election Violence in Kenya


*(First Reflection due)*

September 13, 18

Containing Violent Conflict: Peacekeeping
Ramsbotham, 147-170

The Somalia Case: UN Success and Failure in Somalia
http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/Missions/unosomi.htm
http://www.unher.org/pages/49e483ad6.html

September 20, 25

Ending Violent Conflict: Peacemaking
Ramsbotham, 171-197

(Case TBA)

*(Second Reflection due)*

September 27

Peacebuilding at the United Nations
Ramsbotham, pp. 227-245

An Agenda for Peace (New Definitions and Strategies)

October 2, 4

Reconciliation: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Birmingham Case (1963)
Ramsbotham, pp. 246-261

Birmingham Racial Segregation Ordinance

Letter from a Birmingham Jail

Videos:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDmWYcN8apM&feature=related
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_eWSVjEBfyS
Eyes on the Prize 04:
The Birmingham Case: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-0ID37bq8YI&feature=related
Nonviolence is the most Powerful Weapon:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74XJJ3Tq5ew&feature=related

*In-class presentations (Consulting Teams—Oct 2 & 4: Evaluation Reports)*

October 9, 11

**MID TERM WEEK**

_Terror and Conflict Resolution_
Ramsbotham, pp. 265-292

_Culture, Religion and Conflict Resolution_
Ramsbotham, pp. 265-292

*Enriching Post-secular Discourse in Faith Diplomacy*
Darrell Ezell, pp. 67-81

(Third Submission Due—Oct. 11)
(Take Home Midterm Due Oct. 11 by 4 pm)

October 16

TBA

October 18

Fall Break (No Class)

October 23, 25

_Conflict Resolution in Pop culture_
Ramsbotham, 347-358

*(Fourth Reflection due—Oct. 25th)*

October 30, Nov 1

_Managing Linguistic Interactivity (The Communication Perspective)_
Ramsbotham, pp. 374-395

~~(On MOODLE)~~

_Reshaping the Communicative Context_
Darrell Ezell, Chapter 7 (Beyond Cairo: U.S. Engagement with the Muslim World, Palgrave Macmillan)

_Toward a Post-secular communicative Framework_
Darrell Ezell, Chapter 8 (Beyond Cairo: U.S. Engagement with the Muslim World, Palgrave Macmillan)

November 6, 8

_Conflict Resolution: Theories and Critiques_
Ramsbotham, pp. 396 – 413

November 20

TBA
November 22  Thanksgiving Break
November 27, 29  (Second Presentations by Consulting Teams: Recommendations)
December 4, 6  Final Exam Week (Take Home Final Due—TBA)