INTRODUCTION TO PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

M.A. Programme in Peace and Conflict Studies

PCS 501/INT 523_Fall 2019/2020

Lecturer: Dr. Ibrahim Can Sezgin
Class Time: Thursday 9:00-12:00
Location: Room SB102
Email: can.sezgin@asbu.edu.tr
Office Hours: Friday 10:00-12:30

Course Description

“So you want to win, or do you want peace?”
Martti Ahtisaari

This course serves as an introduction to the interdisciplinary and diverse field of Peace and Conflict Studies (PCS). It provides an overview of the contemporary approaches on a variety of topics relating to peace and conflict. The course not only examines the most significant concepts of peace, conflict, conflict analysis, and various types of violence, but also evaluates some of the important sub-fields of PCS including nonviolent resistance, peace education, reconciliation, conflict transformation, peace journalism, and conflict resolution.

The course is composed of three parts. The first portion, Definitions and Trends, aims to elucidate the guiding concepts and scrutinize the obstacles and opportunities of Peace and Conflict Studies. Furthermore, it provides students with a broad overview of contemporary global trends in peace and conflict.

The second portion of the course, Analysing Conflict, reviews a wide range of theories on the root causes and nature of the social conflict. It offers a set of tools for the analysis of various components to given conflicts. Throughout this section, we discuss how PCS can be applied for a better understanding of conflict outbreak, duration and dynamics.

The third part, Making Peace, undertakes a comprehensive review of the important components of peace-making. We primarily focus on the leading approaches, their insides and ongoing debates in the conventional PCS literature.

By the end of the course, students should feel confident when discussing the basic concepts of the PCS and analysing the approaches for nonviolent conflict transformation.
Objectives
The overarching course objective is for each student to
1. understand the principles of sound research in peace and social conflict.
2. identify the components of peace and conflict.
3. understand the compelling research problems in PCS.
4. be familiar with basic methods commonly used in PCS.
5. become sophisticated readers of academic literature in PCS.
6. appreciate and engage in theoretical and ethical debates on the conduct of PCS.

Requirements
Students are expected to complete all baseline readings assigned each week prior to coming to class in order to participate in a fruitful discussion. Extensions in all forms will be granted only for extraordinary circumstances by notifying me well in advance.

Grading
Students with module requirements (6 ECTS / 7.5 credits in the local system):
1. Regular participation: This course requires you to be active learners.
2. Reading of the literature (at least two articles for every meeting including preparation of three questions concerning the baseline (20 %) [see the ‘weekly questions’ template in the cloud!]
3. The assignment of the practice week. [see the ‘assignment’ template in the cloud!]
4. 20 to 30 min. presentation in a given meeting, and a hand-out (30 %) [see the ‘handout’ template in the cloud!]
5. Term-Paper_word count should be between 3500 and 4000 NOT including the bibliography (50 %) [see the ‘term-paper’ template in the cloud!]

*No Certificate for attendance is awarded.

Important Dates
the first meeting: September 26th
the creative week (no class): November 14th
the last meeting: December 26th
the deadline for paper submission: January 14th (until 5 pm)

Statement of Diversity
During this course, I strive to create a teaching and learning environment that supports diversity in all manifestations, including sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, social class, disability status, country and region of origin, and political orientation. I have zero tolerance for violations of this principle and have clear procedures for responding to such behaviour.
Course Outline & Readings

September 26th. Course orientation—Syllabus review, and Q & A.

**Part One. Definitions and Trends**
This part aims to elucidate the guiding concepts and scrutinize the obstacles and opportunities of Peace and Conflict Studies. Furthermore, it provides students with a broad overview of contemporary global trends in peace and conflict.

October 3rd. Defining peace.
*Baseline*

*Suggested further readings*

October 10th. Defining social conflict.
*Baseline*

*Suggested further readings*

October 17th. Understanding the trends in peace and conflict.
*Baseline*
Suggested further readings


Part Two. Analysing Conflict

This section reviews a wide range of theories on the root causes and nature of the social conflict. It offers a set of tools for the analysis of various components to given conflicts. Throughout this section, we discuss how PCS can be applied for a better understanding of conflict outbreak, duration and dynamics.

October 24th. Root causes: grievances and greed.

Baseline


Suggested further readings


October 31st. Conflict dynamics: intractability, escalation and de-escalation.

Baseline


Suggested further readings

November 7th. Engaging conflict: collective action and radicalization.

Baseline


Suggested further readings


November 14th. Practice Week

Assignment: You will submit two to three pages report. [see the ‘assignment’ template in the cloud!]

1. Pick one of the following movies and watch the movie carefully.
2. Inform yourself about the historical background of the conflict.
3. Concentrate on the time frame (specified period of time) of the conflict in the given movie.
4. Identify the main components of the conflict from the movie (actors, position differences, incompatible interests, conflict space, methods of conflictual interaction).
5. Compare your observations from the movie with the historical background information you collected.
6. Report if there are any mismatches, new findings, puzzling ideas or any confusing aspects.


Part Three. Making Peace

This part undertakes a comprehensive review of the important components of peace-making. We primarily focus on the leading approaches, their insides and ongoing debates in the conventional PCS literature.

November 21st. Non-violence.

Baseline


Suggested further readings

November 28th. Conflict transformation.

Baseline

Suggested further readings

December 5th. Reconciliation and transitional justice.

Baseline

Suggested further readings

December 12th. Peace education.

Baseline

Suggested further readings

December 19th. Peace journalism.

Baseline

Suggested further readings

**December 26th. Wrap up – Evaluation, round of feedbacks and Q & A.**

*No readings*