Class time: Tuesdays, 5:30-8:30 PM  
Room: TBC  
Instructor: Dr. Megan Bradley  
Office hours: Tuesdays 4:00-5:00, Wednesdays 5:00-6:00, Room 327A  
Note: No office hours during reading week.  
Email address: mbradley@ustpaul.ca, mebradley@gmail.com  

Course description  

How do we understand conflict? When, why, and how does non-violent conflict turn (or return) to violence? How do we respond to conflicts in ways that contribute substantively and sustainably to social justice? These are core questions in the field of peace and conflict studies, and are essential to understanding the connections and disconnections between conflict theory and peacebuilding practice in a violence-prone world. Students will be prepared to critically engage these questions when they have completed this course.

Drawing on a wide range of disciplinary perspectives, this course explores different theoretical approaches to understanding the origins, emergence, conduct and resolution of conflict. It also examines different perspectives on the meaning of social justice and the pursuit of justice in the aftermath of violence. The course focuses primarily on conflicts within and between groups which are characterized by violence and militarization – though it also seeks to understand the linkages between “non-violent” and “violent” conflict, or the preconditions which predispose or precipitate the use of violence in response to social, economic and political problems.

There are other courses in the MA in Conflict Studies program which delve more deeply into some of the topics included in this reading list (e.g., Identity-Based Conflict, the Political Economy of Conflict, and Gender and Conflict). This course seeks to set these topics within the broader context of other major approaches and developments in the field of peace and conflict studies.

Learning objectives and approach  

This course is organized in three parts:

- Part I: Introduction to social justice and post-conflict justice
- Part II: Theoretical approaches to understanding conflict
- Part III: Social and post-conflict justice revisited

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand a range of approaches to explaining the emergence, meaning and resolution of conflict;
- Appreciate and engage in debates on social justice and post-conflict justice;
- Critically analyze different approaches to understanding conflict (e.g. approaches drawn from political science, economics, social psychology, philosophy, anthropology, sociology);
- Develop and present persuasive oral and written arguments on the issues discussed in class.

The teaching and learning methods that will be used to achieve these objectives include:

- Class and small group discussions;
- Student presentations;
- Written assignments; and
- Extensive reading and guided independent secondary research.
This is a seminar course, and will not involve extensive lecturing from the instructor. Students must be prepared to play an active role in mastering the literature and concepts presented in the course.

**Required readings**

Required readings are identified below and collated in the course pack, available for purchase at Rytec Printers, 404 Dalhousie Street, Tel: (613) 241-2679. Key texts will also be available on reserve at the Saint Paul University library. Optional readings and additional resources are also suggested below.

**Important dates**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>13 September</td>
<td>Course begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 October</td>
<td>Reading week—No class</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 November</td>
<td>Deadline for confirmation of research paper topic (by email)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 December</td>
<td>Last class (final papers due)</td>
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**Assignments and evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Participation in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32%</td>
<td>Discussion papers (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Group facilitation of seminar</td>
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<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>Research paper</td>
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Further information on the assignments and evaluation criteria is available at the end of the syllabus.

**Program**

**Part I: Introduction to social justice and post-conflict justice**

**Class 1: Tuesday 13 September 2011**

*Introduction to course*
- Students’ and professor’s expectations
- Course approach (Emphasis on student participation, multi- and inter-disciplinary approach)
- Format and logistics
- Class topics, presentations and assessment

**Class 2: Tuesday 20 September 2011**

*Social justice: Conceptualizations and implications for understanding conflict*

*Key themes*
- Conceptions of social justice
  - Looking beyond distributive justice?
- Alternatives to social justice: The decent society?

*Required reading*

*Optional reading and additional resources*
Class 3: Tuesday 27 September 2011
Philosophical perspectives on violence, war and justice

Key themes
• Philosophical reflections on the purpose and limits of war
  o Realism as political philosophy
  o Modern conceptions of the legitimacy and purpose of war (Responsibility to protect)
• Just war theory

Required reading

Optional reading and additional resources
• Carl von Clausewitz (1968) On War.
• Joseph Masiuilli, “From a Culture of Violence to a Culture of Peace: Evolving Cosmopolitan Politics and Ethics,” in Keating and Knight (eds.), Building Sustainable Peace.

Class 4: Tuesday 4 October 2011
Post-conflict justice

Key themes
• Conceptualizing justice in post-conflict contexts
  o Jus post bellum
• Transitional justice and reconciliation
• Reparations politics

Required readings
• Rama Mani (2002) Beyond Retribution: Seeking Justice in the Shadows of War, Chapter One: “The three dimensions of justice” and Chapter Six: “Recapturing justice from the shadows of war”.

Optional reading and additional resources
ECS 5302: Approaches to Conflict and Social Justice


Part II: Theoretical approaches to understanding conflict

Class 5: Tuesday 11 October 2011

Anthropologies of violence*

Key themes
- Anthropological/ethnographic perspectives on power and violence
- Ethnographic analysis of conflict
- Anthropology of genocide

Required reading

Optional reading and additional resources

Class 6: Tuesday 18 October 2011

Sociology of fear and violence*

Key themes
Sociological conceptions of fear, repression and violence

Required reading
• Selections from Juan E. Corradi, Patricia Weiss Fagen and Manuel Antonio Garreton (eds.) (1992) Fear at the Edge: State Terror and Resistance in Latin America:
  o Juan E. Corradi et al., “Fear: A Cultural and political Construct”
  o Norbert Lechner, “Some People Die of Fear: Fear as a Political Problem”

Optional reading and additional resources

Class 7: Tuesday 1 November 2011
“Political” approaches, Part I: Conflicts between groups, and the state in conflict*

Key themes
• Introduction to major approaches to conflict in political science
• Ethnic and identity-based conflict
  o Rivalry and competition between groups
• The state as an actor in conflict
  o Weak states, state failure
  o Peacebuilding and statebuilding

Required reading

Optional reading and additional resources
Introduction, causes of war
Conflict between groups
• Oliver McTernan (2003) Violence in God’s Name: Religion in an Age of Conflict.

Statebuilding, peacebuilding

Class 8: Tuesday 8 November 2011
“Political” approaches, Part II: Rational choice, game theory, and limits to rational choice approaches*

Note: Deadline for confirmation of topic for final paper with instructor.

Key themes
• Rational choice
• Game theory (prisoner’s dilemma, etc.)
• Limits to rational choice approaches (e.g. decision-making in Cuban Missile Crisis)

Required reading

Optional reading and additional resources
• Robert Jervis (1976) Perception and Misperception in International Politics.

Class 9: Tuesday 15 November 2011
Political economy of violence*

Key themes
• Economic agendas in civil wars
• Transforming war economies
• Natural resources and conflict economies
• Privatization of military force

Required reading
ECS 5302: Approaches to Conflict and Social Justice


Optional reading and additional resources

Class 10: Tuesday 22 November 2011
Psycho-social dimensions of violent conflict*

Key themes
- Psychoanalytical perspectives on conflict
- Approaches to conflict from social psychology
- Psychology of genocide

Required reading

Optional reading and additional resources
• Judith Herman (1992) Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror.

Class 11: Tuesday 29 November 2011

Gender and conflict

Key themes
• Gendered analyses of conflict and security
• Sexual and gender-based violence
• Approaches to conflict in feminist theory

Required reading

Optional reading and additional resources
ECS 5302: Approaches to Conflict and Social Justice

- Rebecca Grant (1992) “The Quagmire of Gender in International Relations,” in *Gendered States*.

Part III: Social and post-conflict justice revisited

Class 12: Tuesday 6 December 2011
Conflict and justice revisited

Note: Final papers due.

Key themes
- Transitional justice: Taking stock
  - From transitional justice to social justice?
- Bridging normative and empirical approaches to conflict studies research?

Required reading

Course Assignments and Evaluation Criteria

Participation in class (10%)
The active participation of all students is essential to a successful seminar. Participation will be assessed on the basis of:
- Regular presence in class
- Demonstrated preparation (required readings done, questions prepared on each reading)
- Contribution to discussion
- Active participation in class activities
- Encouragement of participation of other students

Discussion papers (32%)
Students will choose four seminar classes (other than the one they will facilitate) and write a discussion paper on the theme of the class, drawing on the required readings for the chosen class. Discussion papers should be a minimum of 3 pages long and a maximum of 4 pages long, typed in 12-point font, doubled-spaced with standard margins. Discussion papers should be submitted at the beginning of the class for which they are prepared.

The discussion paper should succinctly summarize and critically engage with the main arguments advanced in at least two of the required readings for the chosen class. Do the authors successfully defend their arguments? What questions do the readings raise? Are there important issues related to the seminar theme that the readings do not address? If so, students may use the discussion papers as an opportunity to begin formulating their own ideas and questions on these issues. Students may draw on the optional reading or other sources in the discussion papers, but are not required to do so.

Please note: Because the discussion papers are intended to facilitate the student’s participation in the seminar, the late submission of discussion papers will be penalized at a rate of 20% per day.
Break-down of marks
5 points Effective communication of ideas
- Clear and logical organization of ideas/structure
- Clear explanations of key concepts
- Style, grammar and spelling

10 points Analysis (critical engagement with readings)
- Accurate expression of key arguments raised in selected reading
- Compelling analysis of authors’ arguments and approaches
- Identification of insightful questions raised by the readings

Group facilitation of seminar (25%)
Students will be responsible for designing and facilitating (in coordination with the instructor) an entire seminar class. This will be a group activity and students are encouraged to be creative in the means they use to present information and encourage class participation and discussion. Each student-led seminar should include class participation and/or small-group activities of at least one hour in duration. 15 minutes at the end of each student-led seminar will be devoted to questions from the professor/a discussion led by the professor, and completion of feedback forms (see below).

Classes 5-10 may be led by student groups.

The student-led seminars should make use of the assigned reading for the class. The group may wish to add extra readings. If this is the case, these should be made available electronically at least one week in advance.

Each group will consist of approximately four students. At least ten days before the students present the seminar they have designed, a minimum of two members of the group must meet with the instructor (during office hours, unless otherwise arranged) to discuss the team’s plans.

A laptop and projector for powerpoint presentations will be available. If other equipment is required, this must be confirmed with the instructor at least one week in advance.

Group members will all receive the same mark. Group members will be expected to carry out a short evaluation of their own work. In addition, all members of the class will complete short evaluations of each student-led seminar. The self-evaluations and peer evaluations will inform the instructor’s determination of the final mark for each group.

Break-down of marks
10 points Effective communication of ideas
- Logical organization of ideas/structure
- Clear explanations
- Relevant examples
- Appropriate use of visual or oral learning aids, and creative learning techniques
- Ability to engage with the class

15 points Understanding of topic, analysis and argument
- Explanation of relevant terms and socio-political contexts of any case studies, examples, etc.
- Explanation of principal debates (theoretical, empirical)
- Critical engagement with the relevant literature
- Articulation and defence of clear, insightful arguments, and/or stimulation of debate around different approaches to the issue under discussion
- Relevance and analytical depth of discussion questions
ECS 5302: Approaches to Conflict and Social Justice

Research paper (33%)

Deadline: 5:30 PM, 7 December 2011

The final paper should be a maximum of 3,500 words (approximately 14 pages), excluding footnotes and bibliography. The topic must be different than that chosen for your presentation. Topics best suited to this assignment are those that engage with at least one of the approaches to conflict discussed in class, and/or explore relevant issues of social justice. Students must confirm their topic with the professor by email by 15 November 2011.

Students are required to type their text in 12-point font with standard margins. Please double-space the text. Use single spacing for block quotations, footnotes and other reference notes, appendices and the bibliography.

References and citations must follow a standard academic format.

The final paper must:
- Define the key terms used in the paper
- Explain the principal theoretical and conceptual debates related to the topic
- Situate the topic in the context of the country or community studied (if applicable)
- Critically engage with the relevant academic literature
- Advance a clear argument effectively supported by empirical research and/or theoretical analysis

Break-down of marks
7.5 points Effective communication
- Clear and logical organization of ideas
- Pertinent examples
- Style, grammar and spelling
- Referencing according to academic conventions

7.5 points Understanding and application of key relevant theories and literature
- Critical analysis of relevant theoretical, conceptual and practical debates and perspectives
- Critical analysis of relevant academic literature

15 points Analysis and argument
- Clear articulation of student’s position
- Effective support provided for argument
- Quality of conclusions and/or recommendations

General instructions and policies for written assignments

Late policy
Written work (short essays and research proposal) is due at the start of class on the specified due dates. Late papers will be subject to a 10% penalty per day, starting with the due date, except in exceptional cases, with the professor’s prior agreement. Please note that late discussion papers will be subject to a 20% penalty per day. Extensions will not be granted on the day an assignment is due, except in case of medical or family emergency, accompanied by appropriate documentation.

Language
As per university policy, written assignments may be submitted in French or English. Lectures and class activities will be conducted in English, given that this is the language of instruction for the course.

Format and style
ECS 5302: Approaches to Conflict and Social Justice

Students are required to type their text in 12-point font with standard margins. Please double space the text. Use single spacing for block quotations, footnotes, appendices and bibliographies.

References and citations must follow a standard academic format. Please consult style manuals and/or the University of Ottawa’s Writing and Style Guide for general advice: http://www.sciencessociales.uottawa.ca/guide-en.asp.

Academic fraud

Any person found guilty of academic fraud will be subject to severe sanctions. Some examples of academic fraud include:

- plagiarism or cheating of any kind;
- submitting work of which the student is not the author, in whole or in part (except for duly cited quotations or references);
- presenting research data that has been falsified or concocted in any way; and
- submitting, without written prior approval from the professors concerned, the same work for more than one course.

If you require further information, please consult the Saint Paul University and University of Ottawa websites, particularly the following links:
http://www.ustpaul.ca/HumanSciences/academicRegulations_graduate_e.asp#Fraud
http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/info/regist/fraud_e.html
http://www.uottawa.ca/plagiarism.pdf

Note: This syllabus draws on Approaches to Conflict and Social Justice courses taught at Saint Paul University by Prof. Ken Bush and Prof. Jean-Francois Rioux. Copies of syllabi from other courses are on file with the professor for consultation by students looking for additional suggestions on helpful literature.