Political Science: Introduction to Peace Studies
Spring 2009
Tuesday & Thursday, 8am-9:20am
Wooten Hall 215

Prof. Idean Salehyan
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Office hours: Tuesdays 9:30am-12pm or by appointment.

This course will cover topics related to peace, conflict, and social justice. Students will gain a broader understanding of the causes of political violence and its resolution. Issues of social justice and human rights will also be addressed. Students will develop an understanding of normative/ethical theories as well as empirical social science research on conflict and peace. This class will prepare students for additional coursework in Peace Studies.

Reading Materials (available at the UNT bookstore):


4. Other readings will be posted on Blackboard/Web CT (http://ecampus.unt.edu/), these are marked “WEB” below. Note that the course website will ONLY be used for posting supplemental readings. I will not be communicating with students this way. You can also find many of these readings through scholar.google.com or www.jstor.com.

5. You are expected to follow contemporary news stories on international events related to peace and conflict. Excellent news sources include the New York Times: www.newyorktimes.com and the BBC: http://news.bbc.co.uk/.

Assignments:

*Midterm and Final Exams* (30% of grade, EACH). There will be a midterm and a final exam. Both will be taken in class and are non-cumulative. These exams will require you to write short essays on selected questions. Study guides will be distributed a week before these exams to help you prepare; I highly encourage you to form study groups with your classmates. You must bring your own bluebooks.

Midterm exam, March 10.
Final exam, May 12.

*News Summaries* (20% of grade). You are required to keep up with current news events related to peace, conflict, and social justice issues around the world. You should regularly read the world news section of major news sources such as the New York Times, and especially focus on crisis areas. During the semester must turn in two news summaries (approx 800-1,000 words each), which detail the who, what,
where, when, and why of an ongoing story. Detailed instructions on this component of your grade will be distributed in a separate handout.

Summary 1 due March 10.
Summary 2 due May 5.

Reaction Essays and Discussion (20% of grade). Finally, attendance at all classes and reading the required texts for the current unit is very important. On selected days (indicated in the schedule, below) you will be required to write a short reaction essay (approx 600-800 words) to a given question. In these essays, you should respond to the articles for that week, indicating which points you agree or disagree with and why. You are encouraged to freely express your opinion on these topics and must be respectful of other student’s views.

*It is very unlikely that I will change a grade unless there was a blatant error. If you did poorly on an assignment, I would be happy to discuss ways you can improve next time.

CLASS SCHEDULE

1. COURSE OVERVIEW, WHAT IS PEACE? (Jan 20)

2. ETHICAL ISSUES: IS VIOLENCE EVER JUSTIFIED? (Jan 27).
   - Martin Luther King, Jr. “Letter from Birmingham Jail.”:
     http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html
   - Nelson Mandela, “I am Prepared to Die.” (WEB)

Reaction Essay 1, due on (1/29). Question: Is violence ever justified? When? For what purposes?

3. IS VIOLENCE INHERENTLY HUMAN? (Feb 3)
   - Green, Russell. Human Aggression. Chapter 1. (do not read preface, unless you really want to) (WEB)

4. INTERNATIONAL WAR (Feb 10)
   - Bremer chapter in Vasquez, “What do we know about war?” (WEB)

5. A MORE PEACEFUL WORLD? (Feb 17)

Reaction Essay 2, due on Feb 19. Question: Is war becoming obsolete? Why has there not been a major World War since 1945? What explains the persistence of smaller-scale conflicts?

6. CIVIL WAR (Feb 24)
   - Collier et al. Breaking the Conflict Trap. Overview and chapters 3&4

7. CIVIL WAR (March 03)
• Salehyan & Gleditsch. “Refugees and the Spread of Civil War” (WEB)
• Rotberg, Robert. “Failed States in a World of Terror.” (WEB)

8. CIVIL CONFLICT RESOLUTION (March 10)
• Collier, et al. *Breaking the Conflict Trap.* Chapters 5&6
• Walter, Barbara. “Designing Transitions from Civil War.” (WEB)

--Midterm exam, Tuesday, March 10. News summary #1 due--

--SPRING BREAK: READ ISHMAEL BEAH BOOK, *A LONG WAY GONE*—

9. SOCIAL EFFECTS OF WAR (March 24)
• Beah, *A Long Way Gone.* Come prepared to discuss this book on Thursday, March 26.

10: INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM (March 31)
• Hoffman, Bruce. “Rethinking Terrorism and Counterterrorism Since 9/11.” (WEB)
• Gerges, Fawaz. “Is Political Islam on the March?” *Christian Science Monitor*  
• Abou El-Fadl, Khaled. “Terrorism is at Odds with Islamic Tradition.” *Los Angeles Times.*  
• Pipes, Daniel. “Aim the War on Terror at Militant Islam.” *Los Angeles Times*  

Reaction Essay 3 due, April 2. What are the roots of terrorism? How can the U.S. and the international community best address the problem of terrorism?

11. UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS (April 7)
• Keck and Sikkink. *Activists Beyond Borders.* Chapter 1.
• Donnelly, Jack. “Cultural Relativism and Universal Human Rights.” *Human Rights Quarterly.* (WEB)
• The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: [http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html](http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html)

12. UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS (April 14).
• Keck and Sikkink. *Activists Beyond Borders.* Chapters 2, 3, Conclusion.

13. ISSUES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE: POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT (April 14)
• Pogge, Thomas “World Poverty and Human Rights.” (WEB)
• Mathias Risse. “Do We Owe the Global Poor Assistance or Rectification?” (WEB)
• Sachs, Jeffrey. “The Development Challenge” (WEB)

Reaction essay 4 due, April 16. What should we do for the world’s poor? What moral obligations do wealthy countries have to address world poverty?

15. CONCLUSION AND REVIEW

--Papers due Tuesday, May 5--

FINAL EXAM, MAY 12, 8am