INTRODUCTION TO PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES  
Polt 119/ Psych 118

Fall 2011

Tues/Thurs 11-12:15  
Severance 132B

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Course Description

This course will introduce students to the interdisciplinary field of Peace and Conflict studies. One of the main tenets of this course is that no one field of study can provide a complete understanding of the issues covered in this field. Consequently, in this course we will take multiple disciplinary perspectives as, for instance, we try to understand the factors that lead to human conflict and aggression, including those that are psychological, sociological, anthropological, environmental, political, economic, religious, and historical in nature. When examining conflict, our analysis will also range from the micro- or interpersonal-level to the macro- or international-level. Additionally, we will explore the potential links between issues of social and environmental justice and violent conflict, including the relationship between different forms of violence, such as structural versus episodic violence, and perceptions of injustice. Besides exploring the sources of conflict and aggression, however, this course will examine how nonviolent conflict can be used to right social wrongs. A major focus of the course will be to critically evaluate nonviolent means for resolving issues of injustice and conflict.

Class Format and Expectations

This course will combine both lecture and discussion. For this course to be successful, each person needs to: 1) faithfully read the assigned chapter(s) or article(s); and 2) be willing to discuss this material in class. The amount of reading will vary from week to week: sometimes less, sometimes more. In order to facilitate class discussion, you will be asked periodically to post regular comments on the reading to the Blackboard on-line discussion forum. (These are meant to be informal reflections; students will not be graded on the quality of their comments, provided they show some level of thoughtfulness and consideration of the readings).

There will be a midterm and a final exam. The midterm will occur on Thursday, October 20, while the final exam is scheduled for December 18. Both exams will be a combination of essays and short answers.
Given that this class is a broad overview of the field of peace and conflict studies, we will be moving rather quickly from topic to topic. To provide you with an opportunity to focus on a particular issue in more depth, you will be required to write either an experiential paper or a research paper. The experiential paper entails becoming involved in a community organization or project related in some way to the topic of this course. If you choose this option, you will need to write a brief (one-page) proposal, articulating how your involvement will relate to the goals of the course. This proposal should be presented to us by the end of September. If your proposal is accepted, you will then write a final paper describing the purpose of the group, your involvement with the group, and your reflections on the overall experience you had participating in the group. When reflecting on this experience, incorporate material from the lectures, readings, and/or class discussions.

If you decide to write a research paper, the intent is to enable you to learn more about a specific issue related to peace and conflict resolution. If you decide on this option, you will write a brief proposal articulating the nature of the paper, due by Friday, November 4. Regardless of the paper option you choose, the paper should not exceed 12 pages (not including references). The paper will be due by Friday, Dec. 2.

Grades will be determined as follows:
- Mid-term exam: 30%
- Final exam: 30%
- Paper: 25%
- Blackboard postings and attendance: 15%

Required Readings

There is one required book for this class:


In addition, there are a variety of additional readings that will be available on Blackboard. We will adhere to the schedule for the readings below as much as possible, and will let you know of any changes as we proceed.

Class Schedule

**Tu 9/6** Overview & Expectations

**Th 9/8** Why Study Peace & Conflict?
Reading: Cortright, Ch. 1


**Tu 9/13** An Introduction to the Field
Reading: Opotow, *Social Injustice*
Th 9/15  Are We Natural Born Killers (Part I)
Reading: Fry, Beyond War (selected readings)

Tu 9/20  Are We Natural Born Killers (Part II)
Reading: Kohn, On the Nature of Human Nature

Th 9/22  The State and WWI
        Hochschild, To End All Wars (selections)
        Stoessinger, Why Nations Go to War (Chapter 1)

Tu 9/27  The Causes of War, Idealism and Nationalism
Readings: Cortright, Ch. 3-4
        Kant, Perpetual Peace
        Boulding, National Images and International Systems

Th 9/29  The Political Economy of War (Part I)
Readings: Cortright, Ch. 5-6
        Eisenhower’s Farewell Address to the Nation,

[Experiential paper proposal due]

Tu 10/4  The Political Economy of War (Part II)
Readings: Galtung, A Structural Theory of Imperialism.
        Johnson, Sorrows of Empire, Prologue
        King Jr., Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam

Th 10/6  Causes of Aggression (Part I)
Readings: Fiske, Basic Human Needs
        Eidelson & Eidelson, Five Beliefs Leading to Intergroup Conflict

Tu 10/11 Causes of Aggression (Part II)
Readings: Moghaddam, The Staircase to Terrorism

Th 10/13  Pro- and Anti-War Propaganda
Reading: Grossman, On Killing (selections)

Tu 10/18 Anti-War Propaganda and Review for Midterm
Reading: Hedges, War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning, Introduction
        Cortright, Ch. 8 & 14
Th 10/20  Midterm

Fall Recess

Tu 11/1  WMD and Disarmament
Readings: Cortright, Ch. 7 & 15
Schultz, Perry, Kissinger, & Nunn, Toward a Nuclear-Free World.

Th 11/3  Post Cold War Conflicts
Readings: Kaldor, New and Old Wars, Introduction, ch. 5
Pape, Al Qaeda’s Smart Bombs.


Tu 11/8  Global Warming, Peak Oil, and Violence
Readings: Brown: The New Geopolitics of Food
Hare, A Safe Landing for the Climate
Kasser, Shifting Values in Response to Climate Change.

Th 11/10  The Challenge of Conflict Resolution
Readings: Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, Contemporary Conflict Resolution, Ch. 1
Kaldor, New and Old Wars, Ch. 6
Cortright, Ch. 13

Tu 11/15  History and Theory of Non-Violent Conflict (Part I)
Readings: Cortright, Ch. 10.
Thoreau, Civil Disobedience
King Jr., Letter from a Birmingham Jail.
Chenoweth and Stephan, Mobilization and Resistance: A Framework for Analysis

Th 11/17  History and Theory of Non-Violent Conflict (Part II)
Readings:
Popovic, Milivojevic, and Djinovic, Nonviolent Struggle: 50 Crucial Points

Tu 11/22 Non-Violent Conflict in Practice
Readings: Cortright, Ch. 12

Guest Speaker: Jim Bolton, Professor of Education, Director of the Peace Resource Center, Wilmington College.
Th 11/25  Thanksgiving

Tu 11/29  Non-Violent Conflict in Practice
Ferriss and Sandoval, *The Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and the Farmworkers Movement*, Ch. 5
Zunes, *Lessons and False Lessons from Libya*

Th 12/1  Thinking Strategically About Nonviolent Change
Guest Speaker: Randy Schutt, Vernal Education Project

[Paper due 12/2]

Tu 12/6  Gender & Peacemaking
Readings: Cortright, Ch. 11
Mortenson, *Stones into Schools* (selections)
Kristoff & WuDunn, *Half the Sky* (selections)
“Breaking New Ground: Feminist Peacemaking”

Th 12/8  Is the End of War Utopian?
Readings: Cortright, Ch. 16
Boulding, *Building Utopias in History*
Falk, *On Humane Governance*
Hochschild, *Bury the Chains*, introduction

Tu 12/13  Retrospective View and Review for Final

Final Exam: Sunday, Dec. 18, 9-11 am