Diplomacy and Negotiation: Conflict Resolution in the Middle East

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Course Description

International negotiation has become the most widely used means of conflict management in international affairs. Negotiations of international significance are today conducted not only between individual states, but also within and beyond them. At the same time negotiation practice itself is undergoing much change with changing patterns of conflict and intervention, new urgent issues on the global agenda, new actors and new emerging norms.

This course provides an overview of negotiation and conflict resolution theories and practices of international importance – bilateral, regional and multilateral. The emphasis is on different approaches/aspects to understanding what drives the negotiation process and explains the outcome. Why do some negotiations succeed, while others keep failing? Why do some peace settlements succeed while others fail? We will examine not only the official negotiation process but also the important functions of pre-negotiation, second-track diplomacy and post-agreement negotiations concerned with implementation and compliance.

While we will give many examples from various civil and international conflicts, our main focus will be on two regional conflicts – Cyprus and the Arab-Israeli conflict. There will also be guest lectures on some of the issues covered in class.

Readings

I hope you find these books interesting and useful beyond the purpose of reading them for this class. The books are relatively ‘skinny’ so I think it’s sensible.

Required Texts


Keep up with the assigned readings. I hope you find them varied and interesting. In such a course it is almost impossible to assign readings that ALL students will find interesting, but I hope that that the diverse articles and large range of topics will cover at least some of each student’s interests. The lectures will build partly on the readings, but not only on them, and I will add lots of information from additional sources. Therefore
for those who hope that one day at the end of the summer session will be enough to make up for the whole semester – you may be unpleasantly surprised.

**Evaluation**

Your grade will be based on the following:

1. Attendance and participation – 20%
2. Midterm – 30%
3. Simulation exercise – 50% (comprised of preparation, performance, and 2-3 pages final report)

The class will combine lectures with ample opportunity for discussion of various theoretical approaches, policy issues, and trends in defense and national security policies. Informed discussion based on the readings and thoughtful consideration of the issues is encouraged; there are no right or wrong answers on these topics (nor do I claim to have such knowledge of the future), but there are informed and uninformed answers. You are encouraged to think about questions, puzzles, and issues that you find interesting while reading the weekly selections and prior to class.

The participation grade is good mainly for “brownie points.” If you end up anywhere near the borderline on grades and your involvement in discussions has convinced me you know more than was reflected in your written work, I will adjust the grade accordingly. Informed discussion cannot hurt your grade. Remember – we are talking about BORDERLINE cases. This does not substitute for satisfactory/good written work.

**Warnings**

1. A student CANNOT receive a passing grade for the course if she/he has not taken all exams.

2. I think I am a reasonable person, and will work with you if you have a learning disability, family emergency, or illness. In general, I expect at least a week advance notification that you will miss an exam. I will arrange for you to make up the work in a timely manner. If you are physically unable to contact me in advance (e.g., if you wake up extremely ill), you must contact me (via e-mail or phone) as soon as possible and then bring some form of verification from a physician. Failure to take an exam without appropriately notifying me will result in zero credit for that exam.

3. Violations of policies on academic misconduct, including but not limited to giving or receiving unauthorized assistance on exams or assignments and plagiarism, will be treated VERY seriously. Assignments involving academic misconduct will receive a zero, and further sanctions will be imposed. Never underestimate your professor’s (and TAs’) intelligence, creativity, and resourcefulness!!!!!
**Course Schedule**

This is a detailed, though tentative, schedule. We’ll see how we make progress and adjust the readings accordingly. However, I’ll make every effort to follow the schedule. Moreover, though the emphasis in the course is, as mentioned earlier, on the conflicts in Cyprus and the Arab-Israel conflict, we will give brief examples from Nicaragua (1988-90), El Salvador (1989-91), Guatemala (1990-92 and subsequent years), Haiti (1990-93), Nagorno-Karabakh (1992), East Timor (1975-82 and 1992-99), Cambodia (1992-99), The Papua New Guinea island of Bougainville (1995-98), Burma/Myanmar (1993-), Afghanistan (1999-2008), Bangladesh (2008-09), Bosnia, Kosovo, Georgia, Kashmir, Western Sahara, Sudan and Burundi.

**Class 1** – what’s the class about, requirements, the readings, background, framework…

Mediation as a term indicating not only mediation in its strict international legal sense but as third party non-judicial involvement in the peaceful resolution of disputes of an, internal or international nature. Defining and differentiating between international and internal conflicts. The UN role in dealing with conflicts, relevant UN Charter provisions and its evolution through the practice of its principal organs.

**Class 2** – Mapping the field – Part I

B+J – pp. 1-16


*Questions to think about:* What do we mean by mediation? Is it practice art or science? Can mediation be studied systematically? What are the differences between structuralist and social-psychological approaches to mediation? Can these be integrated? How has the field of conflict resolution changed over time?

**Class 3** – Mapping the field – Part II

B+J – pp. 19-31, 47-60

Background on Diplomacy – pp. 3-27 and 61-97 from Bjola and Kornbropst (eds), 2013, *Understanding International Diplomacy: Theory, Practice, and Ethics* Routledge
How is mediation different from other forms of non-militarized peace building and conflict resolution? What advantages and disadvantages does each bring? Under what circumstances would you anticipate each of these approaches would be likely to succeed? How does third-party bias or impartiality influence the conduct of each type of third-party intervention discussed?

**Class 4 – Conditions for mediation success**

B+J – pp. 32-46

*Case:* Camp David accords

*Questions to think about:* What constitutes mediation success? Was Camp David a success? What about Haig’s mediation activities over the Falkland-Malvinas islands? What accounts for the lack of successful mediation in Cyprus? What unanswered questions about mediation do these examples raise for you?

William Quandt, 1986, “Camp David and Peacemaking in the Middle East”, *Political Science Quarterly* 101(3): 357-77


**Class 5 – Mediated national integration after protracted civil conflict**

*Questions to think about:* Who were the main conflicting parties? When did the conflict begin? What major issues were at stake? When did mediation occur? Who were the principle mediators? What form(s) did the mediation activity take? Were there any key turning points in the mediation process? Was the mediation “successful”? By what criteria? How do various authors explain the success or failure of the mediation activities? What role, if any, did international law play? What role, if any, did mediation play in the implementation of the mediated agreement? What hypotheses about mediation does this case suggest? Are there any general lessons or insights you can gain from this case?

*Case:* Cyprus

The Cyprus book….

**Class 6 – Choosing the Mediator**

Mediation by the UN, other international and regional organizations, a State or group of States or an NGO. Their respective advantages and disadvantages. The central role of the UN in the resolution of conflicts and its relevance today. Should the UN have the right of
first refusal or be the last resort? Mediation by four or more hands. The relationship between the UN Secretary-General’s good offices and the inter-governmental organs of the UN. Human rights, early warning and conflict resolution.


**Class 7 – Qualities of the Mediator – Leadership Theories**

Qualities of the mediator. Speaking frankly to the parties. Developing an understanding of the culture and mentality of the parties. Avoiding or dampening diplomatic tendency towards excessive optimism. Avoiding equidistance where it does not exist. Redressing the imbalance between the parties. The role of NGOs and civil society. Distinguishing impartiality or objectivity from neutrality. Should the mediator pursue objectives of his/her own? Distinguishing mediation from fact-finding.


**Midterm!!!!!!!**

**Class 8 – When to Mediate?**

Waiting for the parties to ask for mediation or actively seeking their consent. Preventive Diplomacy and its application. The ripeness factor. Windows of opportunity. Modalities in mediating internal conflicts. Resolving conflicts revolving around demands for self determination or self-governance. Negotiating with armed groups.

Readings – B+J – pp. 87-100


**Class 9 – Deadlocks in International Negotiation**

Class 10 – Direct vs Indirect Talks + Negotiations with Terrorists

Direct v. indirect talks as mediation techniques. Ensuring the involvement of key decision-makers. Presenting proposals during the mediation process. Informal meetings with the parties. Gaining the trust and/or respect of the parties. Avoiding developing partisanship towards the party ideologically or culturally closer to the mediator. Carrots and sticks. Lack of leverage with one or both of the parties. Developing incentives and disincentives. Coordination with Development and Humanitarian agencies.

Reading chapters from Zartman + Faure (eds), 2011, *Engaging Extremists: Trade Offs, Timing, and Diplomacy* USIP Press

Final Simulation Exercise