Course Title

War and Peace:

Sources of Conflicts and International Conflict Resolution in the 20th and 21st Centuries

Course Number
POL-UA.9994D01

Spring 2020

Syllabus last updated on: 29 Jan 2020

Lecturer Contact Information
Dr. Carsten Wieland

Course Details
Wednesdays, 10:00am to 12:45pm

Location: Rooms will be posted in Albert before your first class. Please double check whether your class takes place at the Academic Center (BLAC – Schönhauser Allee 36, 10435 Berlin) or at St. Agnes (SNTA – Alexandrinenstraße 118-121, 10969 Berlin).

Prerequisites
none

Units earned
4

Course Description
How do conflicts emerge and how can they be resolved? What tools and institutions exist to mediate a conflict? How have conflicts changed throughout time? What challenges are we facing today?

In this course, we will look at factors of conflict such as ethno-nationalism, geo-political rivalries and social grievances. Students will also discuss the current trend of conflicts and possible solutions. We will look at case studies and attempts of international mediation efforts either by states, international organizations or NGOs, and discuss successes and failures thereof.

The course will unite academic and practical experiences in politics and diplomacy. Apart from accomplishing the necessary reading to acquire knowledge in this field, students will have the opportunity to work with creative means of expression, take part in and run simulation games, debate in class, and embark on field trips to relevant actors of “political Berlin.”
It is expected that students keep up with international news. At the beginning of each session, there will be space to discuss pressing international developments and the different methods of reporting on conflicts. The course may be adjusted to address important current events.

**Course Objective**
- Acquire knowledge of dynamics of international politics and conflicts -
- Understand theoretical concepts of triggers of tension and conflict -
- Acquire knowledge about tools of diplomacy, mediation and conflict resolution -
- Gain first-hand insights into practical politics and diplomacy -
- Advance research skills and sharpen ability to analyze and interpret political events -
- Enhance creative thinking and acting in political environment -
- Foster critical thinking and autonomous application of concepts to other cases -
- Train debating and argumentation, as well as mediation skills in class -
- Train producing readable, concise and precise texts

**Assessment Components**

1. Oral participation in class 20%
2. Class Presentation & Discussant Responses 20%
3. Assignment I: Midterm Exam 30%
4. Assignment II: Final Essay 30%

(1) Regular and quality participation in discussions constitutes an important component of course activities and makes up a significant portion of student grades. You will have the opportunity to further explore the course subject, seek clarification, express your views, and engage in peer discussion.

(2) Each student will present at least one text in class, and others will be assigned to take turns in responding to the input as discussants before opening the floor to the entire class for discussion. A presentation should not be longer than 20 minutes. The discussant's contribution may be not more than 15 minutes.

(3) The mid-term exam is a test of 90 minutes on the substance of issues discussed, presented and analyzed during the entire course.

(4) The final essay is an elaborate presentation of and reflection on a problem, case or context of free choice (max 20 pages, 12 pt. Times New Roman). Please contact the course instructor in time to discuss your approach and choosing of the topic.

Failure to submit or fulfill any required component may result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

**Required Text(s)**
All required readings are available in NYU Classes.

Additional press articles will be added throughout the semester.
Please follow this link for the NYU Berlin Library Catalogue or the link on NYU Berlin's website (Academics/Facilities & Services).

Internet Research Guidelines
To be discussed in class.

Session 1 – 5 Feb 2020
Introduction, International Challenges

Introduction to the course: Students present themselves, their motivations and expectations. Discussion of key issues, presentation of the course, its learning outcomes, the skills that will be acquired by students and the assessments that are required from students.

Overview of international developments relevant to geopolitical questions and sources of tensions. Discussion of pressing international conflicts: The recent escalation between the US and Iran. Students are invited to contribute with media articles and bring forward questions and comments about those developments.

Session 2 – 12 Feb 2020
Nationalism(s) and Conflict

This session is dedicated to the phenomenon of nationalism in its different forms. Are human-beings part of “imagined communities” or of an inevitable and inescapable objective ascription that leads them into conflicting political interests? Some theoretical knowledge is needed to apply to different case studies later on.

Readings:
- Carsten Wieland: Nation State by Accident: The Politicization of Ethnic Groups and the Ethnicization of Politics: Bosnia, India, Pakistan, New Delhi 2005, pp.33-80

Recommended Readings:
Session 3 – 19 Feb 2020

Sources of Conflict I: Ethno-Nationalism and the case of Former Yugoslavia

The goal of this session is to learn more about the different dynamics that led to military escalation at the heart of Europe at the end of the 20th century, right after the Fall of the Berlin Wall – a paradox to the proclaimed “end of history” and the hope for a prevailing “paradigm of democracy and liberalism”.

Readings:

Recommended Readings:

Session 4 – 26 Feb 2020

Sources of Conflict II: Ethno-Nationalism and the Israeli-Palestinian Question

Before the Arab Spring and other wars pushed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict almost to the margins of current events, this core international problem was long considered the “mother of all conflicts” and the reason for tensions in the Middle East and beyond. However, these complex circumstances remain an unresolved time-bomb. What do we need to know to understand this historic confrontation between two peoples on a tiny space? What are the regional and international implications of this conflict today?

Readings:
- Dennis Ross: The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East
Recommended Readings:

- Uri Ben-Eliezer: War over Peace. One Hundred Years of Israel's Militaristic Nationalism, Berkeley 2019, esp. chapters 1, 2 (https://www-degruyter.com.proxy.library.nyu.edu/view/product/547375)


- Gert Krell, Shadows from the Past, the Nazi Regime, the Holocaust, and Germany's Relationship towards the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, HSFK Working Papers, Nov 2015, pp.1-24 (https://www.hsfk.de/fileadmin/HSFK/hsfk/publikationen/PRIF_WP_26.pdf)

- Carsten Wieland: Thousand Years of Nation-building? Ancient Arguments for Sovereignty in Bosnia and Israel-Palestine, in: Wiener Schriften für Internationale Politik, 10-2005, pp.81-100 (http://carstenwieland.de/mediapool/74/746018/data/nationalism_conflicts/Thousand_Years_of_Nation-building_Ancient_Arguments_for_Sovereignty_in_Bosnia_a_1_.pdf)
Excursion I: German Institute for International and Security Affairs (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik) SWP

This session will explore the world of political analysis and thinking in the service of German politics and diplomacy. SWP is the largest public think tank in Germany. It analyzes the world’s conflicts and challenges, produces recommendations for German decision-makers, publishes articles and organizes conferences, some of which are semi-public, some of which take place behind closed doors with relevant stakeholders.

Address of the venue: SWP, Ludwigkirchplatz 3-4, 10719 Berlin

Session 6 – 11 Mar 2020

Sources of Conflict III: Arab Spring and the Wars in Syria and Beyond

A recent phenomenon that created new hope for political change but also instability in the entire Middle East became known as the “Arab Spring”. Even today, unrest in the streets of Arab states has flared up again. Social grievances play a large part in these upheavals, but also ideology and the interest of foreign powers in proxy wars. The developments resulting from the Arab Spring have also split the international community and paralyzed the UN Security Council.

Readings:
- Carsten Wieland: Syria - A Decade of Lost Chances: Repression and Revolution from Damascus Spring to Arab Spring, Seattle 2012, pp.265-287

Recommended Readings:
- David McMurray/Amanda Ufheil-Somers (eds.): The Arab Revolts: Dispatches on Militant Democracy in the Middle East, Bloomington 2013
- Christopher Phillips: The Battle for Syria: International Rivalry in the New Middle East, New Haven/London 2016
Session 7 – 18 Mar 2020
Midterm exam

Spring Break – 23 to 27 Mar 2020

Session 8 – 01 Apr 2020
Conflict Resolution I: Preventing a Civil War (Simulation Game)
In this session, students will study a complex scenario of an emerging conflict. Subsequently, they will be assigned roles of different key players and interact with each other. A mediator and his team will confront local and regional actors in order to prevent an escalation of violence and a full-fledged civil war.

Readings:

Course material on the simulation game.

Session 9 – 08 Apr 2020
Exploration I: Finding Traces of Nationalism and Conflicts in Berlin
Students will be out in the streets of Berlin in order to identify, capture and analyze living examples of nationalism and potential conflicts in the city. The results of the work can be compiled as texts, audios or videos (or any other form that can be discussed with the course instructor). The findings should be embedded in the analytical framework acquired in the previous sessions, presented and critically discussed with the fellow students in the following class.

Session 10 – 15 Apr 2020
No session!
Make-up day: Lunchtime, Tuesday 5 May 2020, 1:45pm to 3pm (Room BLAC 101) on “75th anniversary of the end of World War II”.

Session 11 – 22 Apr 2020
Exploration II: Presenting Traces of Nationalism and Conflicts in Berlin
In this session, students will present their findings from session 5 to the class. The results of each student or group will be discussed in the analytical framework of the course. The exchange will also look at questions such as modernity and nationalism as well as possible problems or dangers of the findings. Students are encouraged to enrich their own contributions with material that they find in the media or in other public sources.

Session 12 – 29 Apr 2020
Conflict Resolution II: Challenges of the UN Mediation in Syria (Stop-and-Go Exercise)

The Syrian conflict emerged during the Arab Spring but has taken a very different road compared to other Arab countries, sliding into one of the most brutal, complex and violent conflicts of recent times. The fighting has turned into a regional proxy war with many actors, has fragmented the Syrian territory and the participants inside and outside Syria. It has caused a humanitarian disaster and a large refugee crisis that has spilled over into European politics and societies.

Amidst this complex scenario, what can a conflict mediation look like? Four UN Special Envoy[s] for Syria have tried their best to stop or at least contain the war, but have failed. This session will look into mediation design, actors, approaches and lessons learned from a practical perspective of the Geneva Talks. Conceived as a stop-and-go exercise, students will follow a hands-on presentation of events, in which they will have to jump in at various moments to come up with ideas of their own about how to resolve a deadlock.

Readings:
- Lakhdar Brahimi/Salman Ahmed: The Seven Deadly Sins of Mediation
- Muriel Asseburg/Wolfram, Lacher/Mareike Transfeld: Mission impossible? UN Mediation in Libya, Syria and Yemen, SWP Berlin, October 2018, pp.7-14, 28-43
  (https://www.ipinst.org/2016/03/un-mediation-syrian-crisis)

Session 13 – 06 May 2020
Excursion II: German Foreign Office

This session is dedicated to getting to know the machine room of German diplomatic engagement in the world, especially in conflict areas and with regard to conflict prevention and mediation.

Address of the venue: Auswärtiges Amt, Kurstraße 36, 10117 Berlin

Session 14 – 13 May 2020
Conflict Resolution III: Local Mediation among Communities in the Balkans

This session will be led by guest lecturers from the Berlin Center for Integrative Mediation. In their work on the ground in Serbia and Kosovo, these experts have collected first-hand experience of mediation at the local level. They have tried to
bridge gaps between ethno-national groups, attempted to find creative solutions, common projects and identities for the inhabitants of villages and towns in the formerly embattled areas. Many practical examples of this work will complement the analytical frame of conflict resolution.

Readings:

Session 15 – 20 May 2020
Final paper due

Classroom Etiquette
None.

Suggested Co-Curricular Activities

NYU will commemorate the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II with an excursion to Potsdam open to all. For more information, see the Berliner Brief and Student Events Calendar.

Your Lecturer
Dr. Carsten Wieland is a German diplomat, senior UN consultant, Middle East and conflict expert with high-ranking mediation experience.

In 2014 and from 2016 till November 2019, he served with three UN Special Envoys for Syria as Senior Expert for Intra-Syrian Talks and political advisor. During that time he was also a Fellow at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP). Dr. Wieland had worked in the Syria team of the Foreign Office in Berlin and as director of the German Information Center for the Arab World in Cairo.

Dr. Wieland has published numerous articles and books, among others on Syria, nationalism, ethnic conflicts in the Balkans and in South Asia, on Islamism and secularism. He is a guest professor at the Universidad del Rosario in Bogotá after having worked as the country representative of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Colombia between 2006 and 2008.

In 2006 he was a fellow at the Public Policy Institute at Georgetown University, Washington, DC. Before that, he worked for the Goethe Institute in Cairo and Munich. A journalist by training, he reported from the United States, the Middle East, and Latin America as a foreign correspondent for the German Press-Agency (DPA). In 1994, he worked as a freelance journalist in Sarajevo during the Bosnian War.

Dr. Wieland studied history, political science and philosophy at Humboldt University in Berlin,
Academic Policies

Assessment Expectations

Grade A: The student makes excellent use of empirical and theoretical material and offers well-structured arguments in their work. The student writes comprehensive essays/answers to exam questions and their work shows strong evidence of critical thought and extensive reading.

Grade B: The candidate shows a good understanding of the problem and has demonstrated the ability to formulate and execute a coherent research strategy.

Grade C: The work is acceptable and shows a basic grasp of the research problem. However, the work fails to organize findings coherently and is in need of improvement.

Grade D: The work passes because some relevant points are made. However, there may be a problem of poor definition, lack of critical awareness, poor research.

Grade F: The work shows that the research problem is not understood; there is little or no critical awareness and the research is clearly negligible.

Grade Conversion
Your lecturer may use one of the following scales of numerical equivalents to letter grades:
A = 94-100 or 4.0  
A- = 90-93 or 3.7  
B+ = 87-89 or 3.3  
B = 84-86 or 3.0  
B- = 80-83 or 2.7  
C+ = 77-79 or 2.3  
C = 74-76 or 2.0  
C- = 70-73 or 1.7  
D+ = 67-69 or 1.3  
D = 65-66 or 1.0  
F = below 65 or 0

Attendance Policy
Participation in all classes is essential for your academic success, especially in courses that meet only once per week. Your attendance in both content and language courses is required and will be checked at each class meeting. As soon as it becomes clear that you cannot attend a class, you must inform your professor by e-mail immediately (i.e. before the start of your class). Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, Moses Center accommodations, religious observance or emergencies. Your professor or NYU Berlin's administration may ask you to present a doctor's note or an exceptional permission from NYU Berlin's Director or Wellness Counselor as proof. Emergencies or other exceptional circumstances must be presented to the Director. Doctor's notes need to be submitted to the Academics Office, who will inform your professors. Doctor's notes need to be from a local doctor and carry a signature and a stamp. If you want the reasons for your absence to be treated confidentially, please approach NYU Berlin's Director or Wellness Counselor.

Unexcused absences affect students' grades: In content courses each unexcused absence (equaling one week's worth of classes) leads to a deduction of 2% of the overall grade and may negatively affect your class participation grade. In German Language classes two or three (consecutive or non-consecutive) unexcused absences (equaling one week's worth of classes) lead to a 2% deduction of the overall grade. Three unexcused absences in one content course and five unexcused absences in your German language course may lead to a Fail in that course. Being more than 15 minutes late counts as an unexcused absence. Furthermore, your professor is entitled to deduct points for frequent late arrival or late arrival back from in-class breaks. Please note that for classes involving a field trip, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student's responsibility to arrive in time at the announced meeting point.

Exams, tests and quizzes, deadlines, and oral presentations that are missed due to illness always require a doctor's note as documentation. It is the student's responsibility to produce this doctor's note and submit it to the Academics Office; until this doctor's note is produced the missed assessment is graded with an F and no make-up assessment is scheduled. In content classes, an F in one assignment may lead to failure of the entire class.

Regardless of whether an absence is excused or not, it is the student's responsibility to catch up with the work that was missed.
Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays
Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent due to religious observance should notify their lecturer AND NYU Berlin's Academics Office in writing via e-mail one week in advance. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Academics Office will schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments. Please note that an absence is only excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. See also University Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

Late Submission of Work
(1) Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor.

(2) Late work should be submitted in person to the lecturer or to the Academics Office, who will write on the essay or other work the date and time of submission, in the presence of the student. Another member of the administrative staff may also personally accept the work and will write the date and time of submission on the work, as above.

(3) Work submitted late receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100 point scale for each day it is late (excluding weekends and public or religious holidays), unless an extension has been approved (with a doctor's note or by approval of NYU Berlin's administration), in which case the 2 points per day deductions start counting from the day the extended deadline has passed.

(4) Without an approved extension, written work submitted more than 5 days (excluding weekends and public or religious holidays) following the submission date receives an F.

(5) End of semester essays must be submitted on time and before the end of the semester. Without an approved extension, work submitted after the end of the semester receives an F.

(6) Students who are late for a written exam have no automatic right to take extra time or to write the exam on another day.

(7) Please remember that university computers do not keep your essays - you must save them elsewhere. Having lost parts of your essay on the university computer is no excuse for a late submission.

Provisions for Students with Disabilities
Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980 or see their website for further information.
**Plagiarism Policy**
The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. Proper referencing of your sources avoids plagiarism (see as one possible help the NYU library guide to referencing styles.

NYU Berlin takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form.

Note that some assignments in the course may be checked for plagiarism by using TurnitIn or other another software designed to detect offences against academic integrity.

It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you MUST inform your professor.

For a summary please follow the link to NYU Global's academic policies.