Instructor: Dr. Kyle Beardsley  
kyle.beardsley@duke.edu

Class time:  
Class location:  
Office hours:  
Dr. Beardsley’s Office location: Gross Hall 204H

Overview:  
This course will consider the roots of global conflict and the various means that actors try to resolve their disputes. A large component of the course will be focused on understanding the theories behind war initiation and termination, paying special attention to how actors interact with one another strategically. The students will learn both how to conceptualize conflict situations and about how actors practically go about resolving their disputes in the international system.

The course assignments have a heavy emphasis on writing. A primary goal for this course is to develop strong writing skills in a variety of contexts. The assignments are meant to expose students to a number of different types of writing that they are likely to encounter in academia or the policy community. The assignments thus include a research essay of an ongoing conflict, a policy memo that reflects on a simulation of a peace process, and an op-ed essay, in addition to an essay prompt on the final exam. Students will have the opportunity to revise their work after receiving comments (except for the final exam). We will also spend much time throughout the course discussing best practices of writing in the social sciences, and we will take a look at examples of strong and weak writing.

The students are required to do ALL the assigned reading and be prepared to participate in class. This will demand a substantial time commitment, but it will also help the students cultivate an ability to efficiently parse out the important content of scholarly work. To concretely engage the course concepts, we will also rely on in-depth case studies of historical conflicts and group simulations of present conflicts.

Grading:  
3-part study of an ongoing conflict (60% total)  
1) Argument essay on the origins and barriers of the conflict (6-8 pages, 20% for the 1st draft, 10% for the revised draft)  
2) Policy memo on a simulation of a track-2 peace process (3-4 pages, 10% for the 1st draft, 5% for the revised draft)  
3) Op-ed/blog post on recommendations for the resolution of conflict (3-4 pages, 10% for the 1st draft, 5% for the revised draft)  
Final exam (30%)  
In-Class Participation (10%)

Students must register with the Office of Disability Services to receive accommodations. Papers will receive a 2-point (out of 16) grade deduction for each day late. All work must be the original work of the student, with no assistance from any other individuals. Materials must be
appropriately referenced. Any Duke Community Standard violations will be prosecuted. The grading scale and the grading standards that I apply can be found at the back of this syllabus.

Study of an Ongoing Conflict:

Throughout the course, students will work on a study that relates to the analysis of an ongoing conflict in three separate writing assignments. After the students receive feedback on their first submissions, they will turn in a revised version due one week after the original versions are returned. Each paper must be the sole authorship of a single student, and there should be no collaboration on how to apply course concepts to the conflict. Students will first form groups of 2-4 and choose an ongoing conflict to study. The conflict chosen should have a number of “sides” equal to the number students in the group. The assignments are as follows:

1) Argument essay on the origins and barriers of the conflict (7-8 pages):
In the first paper, students will examine the principal origins of the conflict and the barriers to efficient conflict resolution. The students will identify what specific barrier or barriers to peace exist and use details from the conflict’s history to support the arguments. Students will be assessed based on their understanding of the conflict, the quality of the background research, and the ability to apply the course material to explain the existence and persistence of the conflict. Only books, journal articles and periodicals are acceptable as sources, and students should make reference to at least 7 scholarly books and journal articles in this section (periodicals do not count toward that total).

The style of this paper should be that of an argument essay for academic and legal audiences. This should include a short introduction that previews the overall argument, separate sections (and sub-sections as appropriate) that take up more specific arguments, and a brief conclusion that summarizes the essay and considers what unanswered questions remain that future research might consider. The arguments offered can touch on both what has caused the conflict and what can be ruled out as a cause (especially if it is a common conflict cause that conventional wisdom has misapplied to this case). The bulk of the material used to back up the arguments will be historical details that confirm the plausibility of the argument, with some appeals to the viewpoints offered by scholars on the subject. The Duke Writing Studio has a helpful guide for argument essays: [http://twp.duke.edu/uploads/media_items/argument-essay.original.pdf](http://twp.duke.edu/uploads/media_items/argument-essay.original.pdf). Citations should conform to The Chicago Manual of Style’s guidelines for in-text, author-date references. All papers should be double spaced and turned in via upload to Sakai.

2) Policy memo on a track-2 simulation of a peace process (3-4 pages):
In the groups formed at the beginning of the semester, students will represent one side of the chosen conflict and simulate a track-2 peace process. The purpose is to test different negotiation strategies and help one another better understand the dynamics of the specific conflict. The groups will determine the form of outcome from their negotiations, which can include war, full agreement, partial agreement or stalemate. Each student will then write an individual policy memo that summarizes the group negotiations, describing what proposals were made, accepted, or rejected.

This memo will be written from the perspective of a person involved in track-2 negotiations to members of her country’s leadership. The memo will also include recommended policy actions that follow from the simulated negotiations. If the simulations were productive, then the memo should have concrete recommendations to help make the actual peace talks more productive. If the simulations were not productive, the memo should warn the leadership of specific pitfalls and suggest alternative tactics that might be tried. Students will be evaluated on their ability to
understand their side’s perspectives, their ability to concisely describe the proceedings, and their ability to communicate actionable policy recommendations. In the summary of the group negotiations, the students should provide some justification for why the actions that they took were consistent with the preferences of their side in the conflict. The Duke Writing Studio has a helpful guide for constructing policy memos: http://twp.duke.edu/uploads/media_items/policy-memo.original.pdf. Unlike the argument essay, citations should be contained in footnotes, again using The Chicago Manual of Style’s guidelines but with footnote references. All papers should be double spaced and turned in via upload to Sakai.

3) Op-ed/blog post on recommendations for the resolution of conflict (3-4 pages):
The final component of the study of an ongoing conflict is to write an op-ed/blog piece that recommends strategies for the disputing parties to move toward future resolution. The arguments should be based on the real-world conflict and not the simulation in part 2. This piece should be written for the general public and thus contain a brief summary of the important issue, as well as brief overviews of the relevant course concepts that are used in the argumentation. Students are encouraged to draw parallels to other analogous conflict situations that we covered in class. Students will be evaluated on the ability to apply course concepts to their chosen conflict, as well as on the clarity of their arguments, which must have a logical flow from one point to the next. The Duke Writing Studio has a helpful guide for constructing op-ed posts: http://twp.duke.edu/uploads/media_items/op-ed-1_original.pdf. Citations should be embedded in hyperlinks to the articles/books. All papers should be double spaced and turned in via upload to Sakai.

Final Exam:

Students will have an essay prompt to complete during their final exam. To do well on the essay, the students must follow all the directions on the prompt. At a minimum, the students must draw from the relevant material in the assigned readings and lectures. The most successful essays will be those that are able to speak to the overarching themes that connect the lectures and readings together. The quality of the writing must also be excellent. The essay will draw on the entire range of material covered in the course. The exam is closed-notes and closed-book.

In-Class Participation:

Students should come to each class prepared to discuss that day’s reading. An important part of the engagement of the material will be via in-class discussion, and students will not do well on this component of their grade unless they participate in the discussions. Students that do not feel comfortable participating can submit questions to the professor in advance of the class meeting times. These questions are helpful and can be used to help structure the discussion portions of the class.

Extra Credit:

Extra credit can be earned through participation in the political science experimental subject pool. Students will need to participate in 2 hours of Political Science Research Pool (PSRP) studies over the course of the semester to receive a 2% extra credit toward their final grade. More information about this option is available at: http://www.duke.edu/web/psrp. Students wishing to participate should register at the start of the semester at: http://duke-psrp.sona-systems.com.

Texts:
Some of the texts can be found as part of the *Understanding War and Peace* e-textbook. These chapters can be purchased ($2.99 each) and downloaded to be read by a Kindle app (free) or device. All other texts are either available online via the library’s website or will be provided on the course's Sakai site.

**Schedule:**

**I: Foundations of Conflict**

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<th>Date</th>
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| 29 Aug | **Introduction and Overview of Conflict in the International System**  
| 5 Sep  | **War as a Bargaining Problem**  
Reading: Dan Reiter. 2018. Bargaining and war. [https://www.understandingwarandpeace.com/](https://www.understandingwarandpeace.com/) (purchase the chapter)  
| 12 Sep | **Vulnerability and Mistrust**  
Reading: Kathleen Cunningham. 2018. Civil wars. [https://www.understandingwarandpeace.com/](https://www.understandingwarandpeace.com/) (purchase the chapter)  
| 19 Sep | **Audience and Leader Constraints**  
Michael Horowitz. 2018. Leaders, institutions, and foreign policy. [https://www.understandingwarandpeace.com/](https://www.understandingwarandpeace.com/) (purchase the chapter) |

**II: Bilateral Approaches to Manage and Resolve Conflict**

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| 26 Sep | **Deterrence**  

**Argument Essay due**

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| 3 Oct  | **Finding Mutually Satisfying Alternatives with Track 1 and Track 2 Diplomacy**  

10 Oct **Non-Violent Resistance**


**Argument Essay Revision due**

17 Oct **Transitional Justice and Reconciliation**


**III: Multilateral and Third-Party Approaches**

24 Oct **International Institutions**


Charter of the United Nations

**Simulation Memo due**

31 Oct **Legal Dispute Resolution**


7 Nov **Mediation**

Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson and Pamela Aall. 2018. Mediation in the emerging international environment: From hierarchy to improvisation (available on Sakai)

Simulation Memo Revision due

14 Nov  
**Peacekeeping**


28 Nov  
**Peacebuilding**


Op-ed/Blog due

5 Dec  
**Humanitarian Intervention**

Reading: Bellamy, Alex J. 2014. From Tripoli to Damascus? Lesson learning and the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect. *International Politics* 51(1): 23-44.


Final Exam: 16 December (Sunday) at 2:00pm; Op-ed/Blog Revision due
GRADING SCALE:

All work will be evaluated on a 16-point scale, which is an expanded 4-point scale.

[15-16] -- A
[14-15) -- A-
[13-14) -- B+
[11-13) -- B
[10-11) -- B-
[9-10) -- C+
[7-9) -- C
[6-7) -- C-
[2-6) -- D
[0-2) -- F

GRADING STANDARDS:

The following standards will be applied to the evaluation of assignments in the class.

A   Exceptional Performance.
    Consistently outstanding work on all course-related tasks at a level that distinguishes the student from other members of the class. A comprehensive and incisive command of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. A frequently demonstrated exceptional capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking. The ability to master and integrate large amounts of factual material and abstract theories. An outstanding ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

A-  Excellent Performance.
    Consistently strong work on all course-related tasks. A comprehensive command of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. A clearly demonstrated capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking. Understands well and can integrate the relevant factual and theoretical material central to the course. A strong ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

B+  Very Good Performance.
    Consistently above average work on all course-related tasks. A very good grasp of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. A generally demonstrated capacity for original, creative, critical, and logical thinking. A very good command of factual and theoretical material, and some capacity to integrate the two. A solid ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

B   Good Performance.
    Good and generally consistent work on all course-related tasks. A general understanding of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. Modest evidence of the capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking. A good understanding of factual and theoretical material, but limited evidence of the capacity to integrate the two. A basic ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.
**B-  Satisfactory Performance**

Satisfactory work on course-related tasks. A reasonable understanding of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. An infrequently demonstrated capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking. Understands at a basic level the facts and theories related to the course, but demonstrates weak integration skills. A limited or inconsistent ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

**C+/C/C-  Adequate Performance**

Adequate performance on course-related tasks. An understanding of the basic elements of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. A rarely demonstrated capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking. An inability to go beyond a recitation of basic factual material related to the class. Demonstrated weaknesses in the ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

**D/D+  Minimal Passing Performance.**

Barely acceptable work on course-related tasks. A generally superficial and often inconsistent familiarity with the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. A failure to demonstrate the capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking related to course content. An uneven understanding of basic factual material related to the course; no evidence of fact/theory integration. Demonstrates significant gaps in the ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

**F  Unacceptable Performance**

Fails to meet minimum course expectations. Unable to understand even the most basic elements of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. Demonstrates an inability to engage in coherent written or oral discussion of course material. Does not satisfy specific course expectations with respect to attendance, deadlines, participation, etc.