M.A. Program in  
Peace and Conflict Management Studies  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
Theories and issues in intergroup conflict: A multi-disciplinary perspective  

Fall Semester, 2011-2012, Wednesday 12-4 pm

Instructor: Dr. Keren Sharvit  
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Course Description:

This is a core course intended to lay the foundations for studying inter-group conflicts of different levels. Inter-group conflicts have been studied by scholars from different disciplines, who offer differing perspectives on similar issues. In this course we will survey different approaches, and will also compare, contrast and relate them to each other in an attempt to arrive at an integrative understanding of the issues at hand. To allow such comparison and integration, the course is arranged by themes that recur in the scholarly literature about conflicts rather than by scholarly discipline. Throughout the course, we will use examples from actual cases of inter-group conflicts in various regions of the world.

Course requirements:

1. Required reading (11%) – Students are expected to:
   (a) Read all the required reading items for each class (items marked with * below)  
   (b) Actively participate in class discussion of the reading materials  
   (c) Submit approximately one page of your thoughts and responses to the reading materials to the instructor by email no later than 8:30 pm on Tuesday. There is no need to summarize the reading materials; I already know what is in them. I am interested in your original thoughts as you read through them. Your reactions will not be graded for the quality of their contents; you fulfill the requirement simply by submitting. To aid the writing of the response paper, some guiding questions will be posted on the course’s website. Note: Failure to submit 3 or more response papers without a valid excuse will result in an incomplete grade, regardless of the other grade components.

2. Class presentation (19%) – Every week starting on the 4th week of classes, a student or team of students (depending on class size) will present a real-world case of intergroup conflict and analyze it according to the week’s theme. Suggested cases for each week appear below, but the students are free to choose other cases in consultation with me. Students are especially encouraged to choose cases from their countries of origin, which may not be known worldwide. On the week of your presentation, you are exempt from submitting a response paper.

3. Final paper (70%) – Analysis of a real case of inter-group conflict according to at least 3 of the themes discussed in the course. The case can be one of those presented in class or a different one. Approximately 10 pages double spaced (including a brief history of the conflict).
Schedule of classes:

*Week 1: Introduction, some basic definitions*

*Week 2: Realistic approaches to conflict*


*Week 3: Rational choice approaches to conflict*


*Week 4: Perceptions and conflict*


*Suggested cases for presentation: Cold war (U.S.-U.S.S.R.), U.S.-Iraq*

*Week 5: Identity and conflict*


Suggested cases for presentation: Northern Ireland, South Africa

**Week 6: Class conflict and inequality**


Suggested cases for presentation: El Salvador, Korea

**Week 7: Collective action and rebellion**


Suggested cases for presentation: Algerian independence, Basques in Spain

**Week 8: Ethnicity and conflict**


Suggested cases for presentation: Cyprus, Balkans

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**Week 9: Culture and conflict**


Suggested cases for presentation: Kashmir (India-Pakistan), Lebanon civil war

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**Week 10: Extreme violence in conflict: Terrorism**


Suggested cases for presentation: Sri Lanka, Al Qaeda vs. the West

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**Week 11: Extreme violence in conflict: Genocide**


Suggested cases for presentation: Rwanda, Sudan

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**Week 12: Intractable conflict** (no class meeting on this week, presentation will take place on week 13)


Suggested cases for presentation: Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Chechnya

*Week 13: Ethics and justice in conflicts*


Suggested cases for presentation: East Timor, Ethiopia-Eritrea