

Conflicts of identity: theories and processes of conciliation

Code:	IR - 241
Term:	Spring 2017
ECTS credits:	6
Lessons per week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Mgr. Dagmar Kusá, PhD.
Form of study:	lecture + seminar

Course meets: Mo and Wed 10:30-12:00 in Tatarka Room

Contact: kusa@bisla.sk

MOODLE: kabinet.bisla.sk/moodle

Goals:

- To understand conflicts of identity from the perspective of a variety of disciplines
- To understand the processes of identity construction, ethnic mobilization, and escalation of conflict
- To be reflective of own identity
- To research the diverse solutions to end conflicts of violence and to rebuild the societies after a period of violent conflict
- To gain insight into and basic skills in conflict resolution and conciliation
- To develop skills of independent research, presentation, and teamwork

Course Description

Are we born to fight, compete for resources and dominate or submit to dominance? Or are we wired to cooperate, be helpful and tolerant, resolve problems and prosper in peace? What drives people to commit mass scale atrocities? What is the best way to account with the violent past? What institutions serve best to heal divided societies?

This research-based seminar traces the theoretical foundations of conflicts rooted in identity (ethnic, religious, cultural, communal conflicts), including the process of a social construction of identity, relationship of history and memory, of language, narrative, and conflict, or the phenomenon of a cultural trauma in social discourse. The course examines various approaches towards conflict analysis and resolution and identifies approaches to conciliation in divided communities.

The first part of the course focuses on the theoretical foundations of identity and conflict. In the second part, theory of conflict transformation and post-conflict conciliation are introduced, and incorporated into case studies of countries which underwent or are undergoing the processes of post-

conflict rebuilding of their societies, including the processes of transitional justice, institutional redesign, presented by student research groups in the third part of the semester. We will consider approaches to and cases of conflict transformation on international, national, and local level from a variety of settings, with focus on Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Israel. Throughout the semester, students work on research policy papers examining one policy aspect of post-conflict transition in a selected country, which will be analyzed and steps of action recommended to a specific relevant policy stakeholder.

Course Requirements:

This seminar requires substantial amount of reading each week, preparation for and active participation in the seminar discussions and interactions. The course is designed as a discussion-centered reading and research seminar. Students take part in co-creation of the content of the course. It is thus essential to come prepared to class and take active part in the conversation.

1. Participation 15%

Active participation in the seminar, informed discussion of the readings, engagement in activities. You will be expected to **have completed all the required readings before class** and to be prepared to discuss and critique the readings in the seminar.

2. Oral presentations: 20%

Each student will present at least two readings over the course of the semester. Presentation should be concise and structured, summarizing

- the main idea of the text,
- key arguments,
- offer practical illustrations of those arguments,
- evaluation and critique,
- questions for discussion

Produce a one page handout for your colleagues.

Excellent presentation will not rely on a single source, but will utilize further knowledge, examples, and connections to other texts. **You will be expected to lead a portion of the seminar, and engage your colleagues in a discussion. It is essential that you consult your presentation with me at least one week ahead.**

NOTE: If you do not turn up for your presentation or if you come unprepared, it will automatically result in 0 points for the presentation. If you are unable to come, let me know well ahead of time (i.e. not on the night before the presentation is due) so that we can adjust the schedule accordingly.

3. Short reflection papers: 20%

There will be three short reflection papers. As always, these are to be formatted and structured as essays, utilizing the required literature and sources found through independent research.

Refer to the Weekly Assignment Guidelines for detailed instructions.

4. Literature Review: 10%

By the end of the Reading Week, you shall submit the literature review for your portion of the policy research case study. Literature review is a specific format of an essay.

5. Team Policy Research Reports – presentations 15%

Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Israel

You will be working on a policy research case study in teams of four throughout the semester. In the second half of the semester, the teams will take turns in presenting their case study in class.

6. **Final Paper :** **20%**

POLICY RESEARCH PAPER: Policy paper is an action-oriented research -- a situation and policy analysis with a mission. It is addressed to a specific national or international body to which the conflict you chose to analyze is relevant and which should be the one taking steps towards conflict resolution, conciliation, or community development that you will recommend. Your paper will focus primarily on the part that you have researched for your team presentation, but will include also elements researched by your teammates.

In the final policy research paper:

- **Utilize the readings from this course** and include additional literature you have found through original research for the literature review.
- Include a section **explaining the background** to the conflict,
- **Explain who are the stakeholders in the conflict,**
- **Evaluate policies** or steps taken by the international society and domestic actors to resolve the conflict and establish peace, and
- **Propose steps of action to a concrete political body** (to which you are addressing your policy report).
- **For more detailed guidelines, see separate handout.**

Policies

• **Attendance and participation**

Attendance of classes is mandatory. Maximum of four absences over the course of the semester is permitted – however, keep in mind that this includes sick days and unexpected situations.

• **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious violation of BISLA's code of conduct. Incidents of plagiarism will automatically result in the grade of Fx for the course and will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee. For information on what constitutes plagiarism, please consult BISLA Guidelines on plagiarism (posted on your MOODLE course site) or check the [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#) for detailed suggestions and practice.

- You will work in teams on your policy research papers and are required to work together on those assignments. The short reflection. You may and are encouraged to utilize the assistance of the **BISLA Writing Lab** peer tutors to receive feedback on your written work, tips on structure, style, or the use of academic sources.
- Be courteous and switch your cell phones off. **Electronic devices are not permitted** in the classroom at all during midterm and final exams. If you have special needs and strongly prefer taking notes on your computer, consult me.

Required Readings

Selected texts from:

Tomasello, M. *Why We Cooperate?*

Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso: London, New York.

Alexander, J., Eyerman, R., Giesen, B., Smelser, N. J., & Sztompka, P. 2004. *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. University of California Press.

Hicks, D. 2011. *Dignity: The Essential role it plays in resolving conflict*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Power, S. *Problem From Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*.

Rothman, J. 1997. *Resolving Identity-Based Conflict: In Nations, Organizations, and Communities*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers

Ezrahi, Y. *Rubber Bullets: Power and Conscience in Modern Israel*

Recommended Readings:

Assmann, J. Collective Memory and Cultural Identity. *New German Critique*, No. 65, Cultural History/Cultural Studies. (Spring- summer, 1995), pp. 25-133.

Brubaker, R. *Ethnicity Without Groups*.

Horowitz, D. L. 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. University of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles, London.

Radstone, S. & Schwarz, B. 2010. *Memory: Histories, theories, debates*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Suny, R.G. Spring 2004. *Why We Hate You : The Passions of National Identity and Ethnic Violence*.

Teitel, 2015. *Transitional Justice*.

Course Evaluation (%)

A – excellent: 100-93%,

B – very good: 92-84%,

C – good: 83-74%,

D – satisfactory: 73-63%,

E – sufficient: 62-51%,

Fx – fail: 50-0%.

TOPICS and READINGS

1. February 20 Introduction

Mo: Introduction to conflict of identities in the world, division of tasks

Wed: ROLE PLAY: The Ugli Fruit

Reading: Tomasello: Why We Cooperate? chapter 1

2. February 27 and March 1

ON HUMAN NATURE

Are we predestined to fight? Or are we born cooperative and corrupted toward conflict by society? Psychological and anthropological research of human nature, conflict, and peace currently offers more insight than ever before. But does it offer a uniform conclusion?

Short film: The Stanford Prison Experiment and Milgram experiment

Reading: Tomasello, chapters 2 and 3 [READER]

WED: Presentation: Frans de Waal: Peacemaking among Primates

Short reflection paper due on Wednesday (upload on Moodle)

3. March 6 and 8 FRAMING CONFLICTS OF IDENTITY

On identity: dignity, humiliation, and violence

Constructivist approach to conflict and conflict transformation is centered around the individual, his or her contribution to and interpretation of the social reality and dependent on their mobilization within society. Human dignity is an emerging central concept in current literature on conciliation and human rights. Is it a passing fashion or a paradigmatic shift in international affairs and policy?

Reading:

Donna Hicks: *A New Model of Dignity*

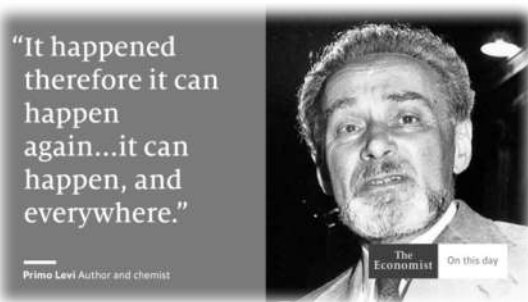
Michelle Maiese: *Dehumanization* and McRaney: *Deindividuation* [READER]

Recommended: Rothman and Olson: *From Interests to Identities: Towards a New Emphasis in Interactive Conflict Resolution* - READER

Presentation:

Linda Hartling: *Humiliation: Real Pain, a Pathway to Violence* and D. Lacey:

Primo Levi: *The Gray Zone and Shame (from the Drowned and the Saved)*



4. March 13 and 15

FRAMING CONFLICTS OF IDENTITY

On Ethnic Identity, Nations and Nationalism

What are the parallels between personal and collective identity? Is ethnicity in our blood, is it a birth right, a group trait, or a pure social construction? How did national imagination emerge and spread? What is the relationship between national and civic identity?

Reading: Benedict Anderson ch. 1 and 2 [READER]

Recommended: *Laitin and Fearon: Ethnic Violence and Social Construction of Identity* [MOODLE]

WED Presentations:

Jeremy King: Making Budweisers into Czechs and Germans

Eric Hobsbawm: The Invention of Tradition

Rogers Brubaker: Ethnicity Without Groups

Short reflection paper on identity-based conflicts within your family.

Due on Wednesday: upload on MOODLE and bring a printout to class

5. March 20 and 22

ON CONFLICTS OF DE-COLONIZATION

The origins of national consciousness in new nations, factors in the global spreading of nationalism. Colonial state and its contribution to national imagination. The scramble for Africa and Congo at the center. Heritage of colonialism today.

Reading: Benedict Anderson: chapters 3, (4opt.), 6

Movie: *King Leopold's Ghost*

Chimamanda Adichie: *The Danger of a Single Story* [Ted Talk] or transcript [MOODLE]

WED Presentations:

Mark Twain: King Leopold Soliloquy

Chinua Achebe: Things Fall Apart

Barbara Kingsolver: The Poisonwood Bible

Joseph Conrad: The Heart of Darkness

6. March 27 and 29 ON HISTORY AND MEMORY IN CONFLICT ESCALATION AND CONCILIATION

Memory's relation to the past is an embrace...ultimately emotional, not intellectual ~D. Bailyn
"The past is never dead. It's not even past." ~ W. Faulkner

Reading: Benedict Anderson: chapters 10, 11 [READER]

Presentations:

Jan and Aleida Assmann: Collective Memory

S. Connerton - Seven types of forgetting

7. April 3 and 5

CULTURAL TRAUMA AND POLITICAL DISCOURSE

Events or eras perceived as traumatic have a strong emotional impact in daily discourse and can complicate international relations.

What is a *cultural trauma*, can a trauma be experienced on a group level? How does cultural trauma get transmitted from generation to generation and what factors contribute to perceiving some events as traumatic, while others not?

Reading: Jeffrey Alexander: Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma [READER]

Presentations:

Natan Kellerman: Transmitted Trauma

Dan Sperber: Epidemiology of Representations

Short reflection paper due on Saturday

8. April 10 and 12

TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

On genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity

Why are so many leaders hesitant to use the G-word? Why is it often a punishable crime to murder one person, but acceptable to be responsible for the death of thousands? Why did it take so many decades for the international society to name the crime of genocide and for the states be willing to be bound by international legal norms on genocide?

Raphael Lemkin and the century of genocide -- from Armenian Genocide to Nuremberg and beyond.

Reading: Samantha Power: Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide, chapters 2 and 3

9. April 17 and 19



10. April 24 and 26

Transitional Justice

International mechanisms of Transitional Justice - from Nuremberg tribunals to ICC

What is the nature and scope of international law dealing with war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide? What are some theoretical and practical successes and challenges in this field?

Reading: Samantha Power: Problem from Hell, chapters 4 and 5

WED Presentations:

Scheffer: All the Missing Souls

Martha Minow: *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence*

11. May 1 and 3

May 1: STATE HOLIDAY

Conflict and transitional justice in Cambodia.

Why did it take 35 years for Cambodia to start addressing its past of the genocidal Khmer Rouge regime? How to arrive at justice in a country where thousands were complicit in murder, starvation, or torture? What are the impacts of dealing (and not dealing) with the past on present day society?

WED: Team CAMBODIA Presentation

Reading: Ciorciari and Ramji-Nogales: Lessons from the Cambodian Experience

Movie: *The Killing Fields*

Recommended literature: Loung Ung: *First They Killed My Father*

Francois Bizot: *The Gate*

Nic Dunlop: *The Lost Executioner*



12. May 9 and 10

Negotiating conflicts of identity

Tue May 9: Monday schedule of classes!

On spoilers in the negotiation process: Conflict and transitional justice in Rwanda

How much responsibility does international society bear towards people in countries ridden with violent conflict? How to bring about peace when there are actors who benefit from continuation of conflict?

The Rwandan genocide and its lessons 21 years later. State's efforts to design long-lasting peace

TUE Presentations: Steven Stedman: *Spoilers in the Peace Process*.

Robert Putnam: *Domestic Linkages; The Logic of Two-Level Games*

Reading: Samantha Power: *Bystanders in Genocide*

WED: ROLE PLAY: ON APRIL 7, 1994

Movie: *Shake Hands With the Devil*

13. May 15 and 17

MON: TEAM RWANDA PRESENTATION

Movie: *Shake Hands With the Devil*

If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.

Nelson Mandela



WED: Resolving Conflicts of Identity: Secession, Partition, Power Sharing (and Power Dividing)

After a prolonged violent conflict, should the conflicting parties go their separate way? Will that likely prevent conflict in the future? Or would such partition only inspire other ethnic and religious groups to seek self-determination? What are the basic institutional choices for a long-lasting peace? What is the role of international society in facilitating the process of transition?

Reading:

Presentations:

Chaim Kaufmann: Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars

Radha Kumar: The Troubled History of Partition

14. May 22 and 24

MON: TEAM ISRAEL PRESENTATION

Competing needs: Land, identity, and power in Israel and Palestine



Does the Middle East Peace Process stand a chance of success in the coming years? How will the changing political culture in Israel impact its fate? What role does history and memory play in the conflict and what role can it play in its conciliation? What does a solution look like from the point of view of state security? What would a human rights based approach suggest? How should the needs and interests, rights and claims be prioritized in the search for a solution?

Reading: Rubber Bullets [READER]

Recommended literature:

Anthony Lemon: Involuntary Incorporation: the case of Israel. In: M. Chisholm and D. M. Smith: Shared Space, Divided Space: Essays on Conflict and Territorial Organization.

Joseph Agassi: Liberal Nationalism: Towards an Israeli National Identity

WED: TEAM BOSNIA PRESENTATION

15. May 29 and 31

Conclusion

Reading: Halpern and Weinstein: Rehumanizing the Other

Finalization and submission of the team policy reports