**Conflict Assessment: Theory and Practice**

Course number GLOB1-GC 2005, 3 Credits

*There are no prerequisites for this course.*

 **Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies**

M.S. in Global Affairs Program

 New York University

 **Instructor:** Todd Walters

Email: JW5224@nyu.edu

Tel: 978.270.9356

Office Hours**:** By appointment on Fridays; scheduled via email,
held via Zoom

 **Fall 2020**

**Intensive Weekend 1**

**September 12**

Session 1 - 10am-12:40pm

Lunch - 12:40pm-1:40pm

Session 2 - 1:40pm-4:20pm

**September 13**

Session 3 - 10am-12:40pm

Lunch - 12:40pm-1:40pm

Session 4 - 1:40pm-4:20pm

Tuesdays - 5 Zoom Video Classroom Sessions - 6:30-9:10pm

Session 5 - **September 22**

Session 6 - **September 29**

Session 7 - **October 6**

Session 8 - **October 13**

Session 9 - **October 20**

,

**Intensive Saturday**

**October 24**

Session 10 - Saturday: (10am-12:40pm)

Lunch - 12:40pm-1:40pm

Session 11 - Saturday - (1:40pm-4:20pm)

Tuesdays - 3 Zoom Video Classroom Sessions - 6:30-9:10pm

Session 12 - **November 3**

Session 13 - **November 10**

Session 14 - **November 17**

**Course structure/method**

This course will utilize the online platform, [Zoom](https://zoom.us/), NYU Classes and Albert. We will have two intensive online weekends on September 12, 13 and October 24; and we will have 8 online sessions on Tuesday nights from 6:30-9:10pm. All online sessions require students connect from a quiet workspace on a reliable internet connection (your connection is your responsibility).

*Total Cost of Required Readings: $35.18*

Communication Policy

All students must communicate with faculty using their NYU email address or through the NYU classes platform. Email (JW5442@nyu.edu) will be the best method of reaching me. I will make every effort to reply to any questions or concerns expressed through email within 24 hours. In the event of an emergency, please feel free to text or call my cell phone anytime before 11 p.m. at 978.270.9356.

Course Description

International actors take many different approaches to learning about conflicts. Practitioners use various methods to help them formulate policies and practices aimed at addressing conflicts in order to maximize opportunities for preventing or alleviating crises. Scholars study conflict cases in order to develop new knowledge and theories about violent conflict, its causes, and possible responses to it, and sometimes contribute this knowledge directly to organizations working in settings of violent conflict. This course examines how international actors – both practitioners and scholars – approach research and analysis of conflict-affected settings using an approach commonly referred to as conflict assessment.

Actors that frequently use conflict assessment include United Nations agencies, national government departments, bilateral donors, and NGOs in an attempt to analyze conflicts and the interaction between conflict dynamics and their own engagement in given countries or regions. This course will explore how different research techniques and analytical frameworks can be used to assess the interactions between peacebuilding and development interventions and existing conflict factors and dynamics. Emphasis will be placed on understanding the core concepts and the skills and approaches needed to successfully carry out meaningful conflict assessments; and then to identify the appropriate intervention, policy or programmatic, based on the assessment.

**Rationale for the Course**

The linkages between conflict and peacebuilding, international development, and humanitarian interventions are marked by great complexity. These interventions have the potential to transform conflict into a constructive force by strengthening mechanisms and resources in order to manage or resolve differences, enhance systems that may lead to positive change, or to address factors that are causing tensions and that could lead to destructive outcomes. In addition, research has shown that development and humanitarian interventions have the capacity to exert negative and harmful impacts on conflict dynamics, deepening cleavages that exist in societies and exacerbating inter-or intra-group tensions.

Conflict assessment is the application of analytical tools to identify factors that intensify conflict, to understand the interaction between different factors and actors in conflict, and to gauge the potential for conflict to become destructive and lead to violence. These tools can be used by development and humanitarian organizations through strategic planning in order to identify opportunities for initiatives that explicitly can address conflict factors and incorporate peacebuilding aims into their objectives. They can be utilized to make course corrections in ongoing programs, particularly when the context changes within which the program is being implemented. They also can be used to assess the impact of already-designed or implemented development, humanitarian and peacebuilding programs or projects on existing conflict factors and dynamics. Finally, they can be utilized as part of an ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation framework, by establishing a baseline analysis and monitoring how it changes over time.

Conflict assessment is also one approach for integrating conflict sensitivityinto a broad range of development, humanitarian and peacebuilding initiatives, whether they are being implemented in a location where destructive conflict is occurring or whether they have an explicit intention to contribute to conflict transformation and prevention of future violence. Upon completion of the course, students will have an understanding of the application of a conflict sensitive approach, and the ways in which conflict assessment is developed, implemented, utilized and why.

**Why this course is important**

Understanding a conflict before taking action to address it, is a primary responsibility of policymakers, diplomats, activists, and development actors, along with other stakeholders. Misled interventions inadvertently may feed underlying causes of conflict or strengthen actors using violent means, and create new opportunities for violence. On the other hand, well-conceived and thoughtful interventions may contribute to reductions of conflict factors that may help de-escalate deadly violence.

**This online seminar focuses on:**

* Understanding the concept of conflict assessment, its development, and implementation
* Exploring different research methods that can be used in conflict assessment
* Analyzing conflict: causes, actors, dynamics, and triggers
* Identifying and responding to conflict: indicators, data sources, and programmatic responses
* Writing and editing a conflict assessment of a specific conflict, and working to share it with the class via an oral presentation
* Developing policy or program implementation recommendations for different actors (international organizations and agencies, governments, NGOs, businesses, etc.)
* Role Play - A pitch to a donor or policy-maker advocating for a specific policy change or program funding.

**Course Objectives**

These areas of focus are translated into five course objectives:

1. To develop a firm understanding of the concept and practice of conflict sensitivity
2. To learn methodological and analytical skills needed to assess conflicts
3. To develop in-depth knowledge about a specific conflict case
4. To gain experience with the process of conflict assessment as part of the broader practice of peace and conflict research, and to enhance research skills (with a particular focus on the practical application of these skills)
5. To learn how to evaluate the effectiveness of peace and conflict research and to encourage learning and skill refinement through peer review.

**Seminar Assignments**

**Online asynchronous discussion forum posts - written** **(20 points)**

Each student will break down and summarize one reading in a discussion board post - over the course of the semester. Please refer to the schedule of readings and prioritize three that you would like to break down, and submit to the instructor by the start of Session 3. Instructor will assign readings by the end of Session 4 based on your priorities, ensuring each student has one of their top three choices (10 points).

Reading Summary posts are due by Monday Midnight the day before it will be discussed in class.

Each student will respond to five Questions of the Week (QoTW) in an online discussion board post (in no more than 500 words). Each student will reply to two fellow students posts to each of the five QoTW (in no more then 100 words); and each student will respond to replies to their five QoTW posts from two fellow students (10 points). These posts encourage students to reflect on the material and link it to examples from life experiences and think critically about another’s perspective and identify poignant follow up questions to pose.

QoTW posts will be assigned on Tuesday at the end of class, must be uploaded by midnight Friday, and responses must be written by midnight Sunday, and replies must be written by noon on Tuesday before class.

QoTW to be assigned after session 4 (due September 18); session 5 (due September 25); session 6 (due October 2 ); session 7 (due October 10); session 14 (due November 20).

**Online synchronous class seminar - 14 sessions - verbal participation (20 points)** Each student will co-facilitate a discussion of the reading which they review in their discussion board post. Each student is responsible for active verbal participation in our learning community during each online Zoom class session, beyond solely attendance. Please reach out to me if you have any questions concerning the verbal participation requirement.

**Written Conflict Assessment (20 points)** Each student team (in groups of 2 or 3) posts one Draft Conflict Assessment; they then receive feedback on the Draft from peers and the instructor; finally, they revise the Draft (twice) and submit one Final Conflict Assessment. Each team member receives the same group grade for the submitted written Assessment - Draft (10 points) and Final (10 points).

 Draft 1 posted on the Forum: Midnight Tuesday October 20

 Draft 1 reviewed + written feedback posted on the Forum: Midnight Friday October 23

 Draft 1 discussed in class as part of the peer review process: Saturday October 24

 Draft 2 posted on the Forum: Midnight Friday October 30

 Draft 2 reviewed + written feedback posted on the Forum: Midnight Monday November 2

 Draft 2 discussed in class as part of the peer review process: Tuesday November 3

 Final Draft submitted to NYU Classes + posted on the Forum: Midnight Monday November 9

**Verbal Conflict Assessment Presentation (10 points):** Session 13, November 10. Each team will present their Final Conflict Assessment to the Class, will respond to questions, and will receive written and verbal feedback from their peers and the instructor. Each student will provide written and verbal feedback for each of their peers. These presentations must be no more than 15 minutes per group. A variety of formats may be used. Presenting teams will be asked to prepare visual aids (maps, charts, diagrams, etc.) to support their presentations to be shared with peers as part of a peer review process of iterative improvement. Further details of this assignment will be discussed in class. Each team member receives their own presentation grade for their role in the group presentation of the Final Conflict Assessment.

**Policy/Project Pitch (20 points):** Session 14, November 17. Each student team will present a verbal pitch to a fictional donor/policy maker for a policy or project recommendation based off their conflict assessment. Each team will identify which organization they will represent, and which donor/policy maker that the instructor will role play. Each team will have a chance to pitch and respond to questions, and will receive written and verbal feedback from their peers and the instructor. Each student will provide written and verbal feedback for each of their peers. These presentations must be no more than 10 minutes per pair. Further details of this assignment will be discussed in class. Each team member receives their own presentation grade for their role in the Pitch.

**Peer Review Feedback (10 points)** Provide and receive both verbal and written feedback from peers. Learn how to deliver criticism diplomatically, frame challenges as opportunities, and reinforce positive components. Learn how to effectively accept and integrate feedback, and work towards course corrections that iteratively improve your capabilities. Sessions 7, 10, and 11 will be dedicated to a peer review process, during which students will work in groups to evaluate one of their classmates groups’ draft conflict assessment reports. Students will be asked to review each report with a critical eye and to provide written feedback that demonstrates their ability to distinguish between insightful writing and work that is lacking in critical analysis, fails to provide clear and concise information to the reader, and/or does not meet the requirements of the assignment. A review form will be provided for this process. Each student group’s care and effort in performing this peer review will be part of a shared grade. The instructor will review every report along with peer-reviewer comments to ensure the propriety of the process**.**

**Grading and Evaluation**

Final grades will be determined in the following manner:

20 points: Online asynchronous discussion forum posts - written (20 points).

1 reading breakdown & analysis post throughout the semester (10 points);

5 weekly responses to the Question of the Week (QotW); and 2 weekly posted replies to peers responses to each of the five QotW; and responses to 2 weekly replies that peers post to each of your five QotW post (10 points).

20 points: active verbal participation in all 14 online sessions

20 points: Written Conflict Assessment (10 for Draft; 10 for revised Final)

10 points: Verbal Conflict Assessment Presentation

20 points: Policy/Project Pitch

10 points: Peer Review Feedback - including quality of the feedback you provide and how effectively you integrate the feedback of others in order to improve your work

There is no independent MidTerm Assessment. Your “Midterm Assessment” grade is the combination of your First Draft Conflict Assessment (10%) and your Peer Review Feedback to date (5%) and your Online asynchronous discussion forum participation to date (5%).

**Evaluation Criteria**

* ***Online asynchronous discussion forum posts - written:*** Demonstrate mastery of the concepts underlying conflict assessment and the purposes of conflict assessment, understand the strengths and weaknesses of particular approaches to conflict assessment, and the reasons for undertaking certain types of assessments given a certain context.
* ***Effective Class Participation:*** Active, respectful and collegial engagement during all class discussions; evidence of reading and preparation referenced in commentary (both written and verbal).
* ***Written Conflict Assessment:*** Clear evidence of wide and relevant research and critical thinking about the data and sources; a strong grasp of the analytical framework, and its relationship to other frameworks; evidence of thorough research to obtain information from multiple, credible sources; well-organized and judicious presentation of needed data and information; effective analysis that leads to a compelling conclusion; good, accurate and persuasive writing.
* ***Verbal Conflict Assessment Presentation:*** Clear evidence of a detailed understanding of all the conflict assessment components. Careful selection, prioritization and sequencing of information and analysis to present as comprehensively as possible in a limited time frame. Selection of effective visual material to support your verbal presentation. Balanced teamwork involving each team member in a significant and meaningful way.
* ***Verbal Policy Project Pitch:*** Is your proposal possible? Are you the best organization/individual to complete the proposal? Who will benefit? What will the impact be? Can you confidently ask for the money you need? and justify if questioned? Can you present these key components of a project or policy pitch effectively in a “realistic” role play experience. The donor/policy maker (the instructor) will interrupt your presentation, will ask questions to make sure you know your details, will pursue tangents, and will attempt to reflect some real world challenges the instructor has experienced in these conversations during his career. How do you handle it? Can you prepare the right information? Can you think on your feet? Can you make a confident ask?
* ***Peer Review Feedback Process:***  Be able to both provide, and receive respectful substantive feedback to/from your peers - both written and verbal. Working in pairs, students will receive drafts of their classmates’ conflict assessment reports, and will be asked to provide detailed feedback that will demonstrate their own knowledge of the concepts and practices discussed during the course, along with providing constructive criticism to their colleagues.

The seminar seeks to enhance student capacity to conduct original research, oral and written presentations, and to develop a conflict sensitive practice. Assignments are intended to enhance the skills required to undertake conflict assessment, including: developing an understanding of conflict context; generating a synthesis report; critically evaluating different methods of conflict assessment; delivering oral presentations; and providing as well as receiving and integrating peer feedback.

The assessment report and oral presentation assignments are intended to give students the opportunity to critically explore and apply research and analysis methods in assessing a specific conflict case. The objective of these assignments is to produce a multidimensional picture rather than to take a position on a specific conflict. The objective of pitching a policy or project to a policy-maker or donor is to propose a realistic and plausible option for the use of conflict assessment to identify and subsequently address factors contributing to conflict, and find long-term approaches to strengthen sustainable peace and development.

**\*\*Important note.** Because conflict assessment is generally a team exercise, students must work in groups of at leasttwo-people on their conflict cases for both their oral presentations and final draft reports (you should work in the same groups for both components).

**Submission of work**: All written work must be submitted via the Assignment Tool on NYU Classes; student work will be scanned by Turnitin plagiarism-detection software.

**SPS Grading Scale and Policies:**

Grading for graduate programs is by letter grade: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, and F. For NYUSPS’s complete graduate grading policies, including criteria for a grade of

Incomplete, taking a course on a pass/fail basis, and withdrawing from a course, see the Grades section of the Policies and Procedures:

<https://www.sps.nyu.edu/homepage/student-experience/policies-and-procedures.html#Graduate1>

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter**  | **%** | **GPA** | **Descriptions** | **Definitions** |
| A | 95-100 | 4.0 | Exceptional | Demonstrates exceptional mastery of all learning outcomes of the course and thorough and complete understanding of all concepts.  |
| A- | 90-94 | 3.7 | Excellent | Demonstrates highly competent mastery of all learning outcomes of the course and strong understanding of all concepts.  |
| B+ | 87-89 | 3.3 | Very Good; exceeds course standards | Demonstrates mastery of all learning outcomes of the course and understanding of core concepts.  |
| B | 83-86 | 3.0 | Good; meets course standards | Demonstrates mastery of some learning outcomes; understanding of some core concepts could be improved.  |
| B- | 80-82 | 2.7 | Somewhat Satisfactory; meets some course standards and requires improvement | Demonstrates basic understanding of some learning outcomes; improved understanding of all core concepts is needed.  |
| C+ | 77-79 | 2.3 | Less than Satisfactory; requires significant improvement  | Demonstrates partial understanding of all learning outcomes and core concepts; requires significant improvement.   |
| C | 73-76 | 2.0 | Unsatisfactory; requires substantial improvement  | Demonstrates partial understanding of some learning outcomes and core concepts; requires substantial improvement. |
| C- | 70-72 | 1.7 | Unsatisfactory; requires extensive improvement | Demonstrates poor understanding of all learning outcomes and core concepts; requires extensive improvement. |
| F | Below 70 | 0.0 | Fail | Demonstrates minimal to no understanding of all key learning outcomes and core concepts; work is unworthy of course credit towards the degree. |

**Week By Week Overview**

**Intensive In-Person Weekend:** September 12+13, 2020

Session 1- AM - Introductions - students, instructor, course, syllabus, assignments

Session 2- PM - Conflict Assessment Overview

Session 3- AM - Tools to conduct Conflict Assessments, and How to use them.

Session 4- PM - Testing Technology for online component: Zoom, Message Boards.

**Front Loaded: Reading, Theory, Discussion**: September 14-October 13

Session 5: September 22 - Do No Harm, Conflict Sensitivity and other Foundational Principles

 Key Research Methods for Conflict Assessment

 Identity, Ethics and Bias

 Gender and Conflict Assessment

Session 6: September 29 - Modern International Institutional Conflict Assessment Approaches

 Required

* World Bank - Joint Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment
* SADC - Southern Africa Development Community

Optional

* USAID - Conflict Assessment Framework
* SIDA - Swedish International Development Agency

Session 7: October 6 - Modern International NGO Conflict Assessment Approaches

Required

* International Peace Park Expeditions PCIA Peace & Conflict Impact Assessment
* AND select your choice among the optional readings

 Optional

* World Vision - MSTC (Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts)
* World Wildlife Fund - GRRT (Green Recovery & Reconstruction Toolkit)
* International Alert - CHRIA (Conflict and Human Rights Impact Assessment)

Session 8: October 13 - Applications of Conflict Assessment on Policy and Programming

* Policy/Program Development
* Adaptive Management
* Monitoring & Evaluation

Session 9: October 20 - Conflict Assessment Methodologies review - The Steps and Sequence of the process of research and analysis; and why it matters. Q&A on Conflict Assessment Presentation expectations.

**Team Research, Analysis, Peer Feedback, Revision**: October 14 - November 9

**Intensive In-Person Saturday:** October 24, 2020

Session 10: AM October 24 - Peer Review & Instructor Feedback session #1.

Session 11 - PM October 24 - Case Study Research, Policy/Project Pitch progress check-ins, Adaptive Management.

Session 12 - November 3 - Peer Review & Instructor Feedback session #2.

**Presentations**: November 10 and 17

Session 13: November 10 - Student Conflict Assessment Presentations

Session 14: November 17 - Student Policy/Project Pitches.

Class Conclusion - Enumerating what we learned, and how to apply it

**Student Responsibilities**

**Attendance:** All students must attend every class. Your contribution to classroom learning is essential to the success of the course. More than two absences (with or without an explanation) likely will lead to a need to withdraw from the course or a failing grade. As this is an online course format, students will need to be comfortable with the online platform, Zoom, NYUClasses and Albert. We will have three intensive in-person weekend days on September 12 and 13; and October 24; and then we will have eight online sessions on Tuesday nights from 6:30-9:10pm.

**Reading/Discussion**: Students will be responsible for completing all assigned reading in advance of the class session in which the readings will be discussed. Because the class will be discussion-oriented, it is essential that students read assigned materials with an eye for themes and connections to broader ideas that will be discussed during the course. This course will be taught in a discussion-based format with some lecture, as opposed to a lecture format with some discussion. Learning of the material will occur through engagement with fellow students and the instructor on the online forum, during class sessions, and through completion of assignments. Therefore, thorough preparation and active participation in discussions – both online and in-class – will be necessary and expected. Each week, some students will summarize their identified reading and will post the overview on the class discussion board by each Monday evening before class, and be prepared to co-facilitate the class discussion of that reading. All students will be required to make at least five meaningful posts on the course discussion board per week - a response to each of the five QoTWs, a reply to two of your fellow students’ responses to each of the five QoTWs, and two responses to the two replies to your original posts from your fellow students.

**Research, Analysis, Writing, Integrating Feedback, Revision:** Students will work in groups to develop a Conflict Assessment for an identified “fictional” partner organization. The written conflict assessment should follow the format of a major known conflict assessment framework. Students should rely on published research and reports from reputable organizations, media reports and primary-source data. Primary data generation can be in the form of first person interviews with experts on, or stakeholders in, the context you are studying. Because extensive field research will not be undertaken, the paper should also include a thorough section explaining details of subsequent field research, which would be required to complete the conflict analysis.

**Conflict Assessment Draft 1 Posted by midnight on** **October 20**.

**Conflict Assessment Draft 2 Posted by midnight on November 2.**

**Conflict Assessment Final Draft Posted by midnight on November 9.**

Students should submit both drafts via the posts on the forum. These drafts will be used for the in-class peer review process (described above). Students will be encouraged to take the feedback from the peer review process into consideration during the revision of their assessment reports prior to submitting the final report.

The final reports should be no longer than 3,000 words, total, excluding bibliographical references. Final Reports must include full citations and **must be submitted via the Assignment Submission Tool on NYU Classes; student work will be scanned by Turnitin plagiarism-detection software.** Submitting a hard copy is unnecessary.

Your final Conflict Assessment submission should include the following sections:

* Discussion of the chosen analytical framework, including strengths and weaknesses, compared to other frameworks which we have studied; and outlining why this is the best framework to analyze your chosen case
* Context of the Conflict
* Actors/Stakeholders Analysis
* Conflict Factors
	+ Dividers/Connectors
	+ Political/economic/social/environmental/identity
	+ Capacities for peace
	+ Triggers

The actual categories to be included within your text will vary based on the framework which you select.

**Technology for Online Synchronous and Asynchronous participation:** Students will be responsible for ensuring the speed and reliability of their internet connection. Not being able to connect to the internet is not a valid excuse for absence. Students must download and create a free account with Zoom.us, and ensure that their computer can run Zoom.us in the video-conference mode, with a working camera and working microphone. Students must register to the online course on NYU Classes, and utilize NYU Classes for asynchronous discussion forum posts; and to access links to the syllabus, and other class resources provided by the instructor and fellow students.

**Detailed WEEK by WEEK Breakdown with REQUIRED and OPTIONAL Readings**

**\*\*NOTE - Readings listed under the Class Week are to be read BEFORE that class, so that they can be discussed during that week’s class. For Example: No required readings are due on September 12th, but before our Sunday class on September 13th, there are two key chapters and an overview of the steps of a conflict assessment to *read*; and 4 Conflict Assessment examples which you should *skim* BEFORE you arrive in class on Sunday morning. Most readings can be found on NYU Classes or through hyperlinks on this syllabus; there are only 2 required books that can be purchased online, or at most bookstores, or likely available at the NYU Library.**

**Intensive In-Person Weekend:** September 12+13, 2020

**Saturday**

Session 1 AM - Introductions - students, instructor, course, syllabus, assignments

Session 2 PM - Conflict Assessment Overview - terms, process, context, power, relationships

Required Readings

Anderson, M. (1999). *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – or War* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. (Introduction + Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6; pages 23-67). (currently $15.56 on Amazon)

Schirch, L (2013). Conflict Assessment and Peacebuilding Planning: Toward a Participatory Approach to Human Security. Kumarian. (Pages 1-13). (currently $19.62 on Amazon)

**Sunday**

Session 3 AM - Tools to conduct Conflict Assessments, and How to use them.

Susskind, Lawrence & THOMAS-LARMER, JENNIFER. (1999). Conducting a Conflict Assessment. 99. <http://web.mit.edu/publicdisputes/practice/cbh_ch2.html>

**EXAMPLE 1** (skim) - European Union, World Bank, United Nations (2018). Joint Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments (RPBAs): A Practical Note to Assessment and Planning

**EXAMPLE 2** (skim) -USAID : Conflict Assessment Framework: Version 2.0. 2012. <https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnady739.pdf>

**EXAMPLE 3** (skim) World Vision - Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts. Garred, M. et al. (2015). *Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts: Local Perspectives on Large-Scale Conflicts*. World Vision International

**EXAMPLE 4** - (skim) International Peace Park Expeditions - Peace & Conflict Impact Assessments (PCIA). 1. Waterton Glacier International Peace Park. 2. Parque Internacional La Amistad.

Session 4 PM - Tools continued. Testing the NYU Classes Forum

* Why is Feedback Important? How to Give it Correctly. March 2020. <https://www.actitime.com/project-management/importance-of-feedback/>

**Front Loaded: Reading, Theory, Discussion**: September 14-October 12

**Session 5: September 22 - Do No Harm, Conflict Sensitivity & other Foundational Principles**

Key Research Methods for Conflict Assessment

 Identity, Ethics, and Bias

 Gender and Conflict Assessment

How do theories of conflict affect the practice of conflict assessment? In this session, we will explore links between assumptions about conflict and responses to conflict. Why does aid sometimes have unintended consequences on conflict? How can we know whether providing aid will increase or decrease levels of violence? The Do No Harm approach to programming in development and humanitarian assistance helps us to answer these questions, and serves as the foundation to much of what we now understand as participatory conflict assessment and conflict-sensitive programming. The Do No Harm approach establishes the link between external interventions and conflict/peace, and the dividers/connectors framework provides an elegant but fairly thorough way for students to conceptualize the fluidity of conflict factors.

Required Readings

Anderson, M. (1999). *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – or War* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. (Select one case study from Chapter 7, 8, 9, 10 or 11 + read all of Chapter 12 conclusion). (STUDENT PRESENTER)

Schirch, L (2013). Conflict Assessment and Peacebuilding Planning: Toward a Participatory Approach to Human Security. Kumarian. (Pages 14-44). (STUDENT PRESENTER)

UN WOMEN, Gender and Conflict Analysis: <http://www.unwomen.org/~/media/Headquarters/Media/Publications/en/04AGenderandConflictAnalysis.pdf> (STUDENT PRESENTER)

Hannah Wright and Sophia Close. “Inclusion in practice: Examining gender-sensitive conflict analysis.” Conciliation Resources, London. United Kingdom. March 2019. <https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Inclusion%20in%20practice%20-%20Examining%20gender-sensitive%20conflict%20analysis.pdf>

Close S, Groenewald H. Gender-Sensitive Conflict Analysis: A New Training Method for Practitioners. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*. 2019;14(3):304-317. <https://journals-sagepub-com.proxy.library.nyu.edu/doi/pdf/10.1177/1542316619856291>

**Session 6: September 29 - Modern International Institutional Conflict Assessment Approaches**

The World Bank Group, United Nations, and the European Union have developed a “Joint Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment that operates on the international institutional level. The South African Development Community has developed a Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis that operates on the regional sovereign state level. The United States and Sweden are two states that have developed their own conflict assessment frameworks (there are many different nation states which have their own frameworks). This session will present an overview of the USAID Conflict Management and Mitigation: Conflict Assessment Framework, and the Swedish International Development Agency Conflict Assessment Framework, while diving deeper into the World Bank, UN, EU - Joint Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment, and the Southern African Development Community - Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis. Our goal will be to seek to understand if there are core components of conflict analysis that each of these different actors has deemed critical to the analysis which they have developed; and to determine what kinds of decisions are made based off of these Conflict Assessments, in order to change policy or programming.

 Required Readings

* **EXAMPLE 1 (read in full)** - European Union, World Bank, United Nations (2018). Joint Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments (RPBAs): A Practical Note to Assessment and Planning (STUDENT PRESENTER)
* **EXAMPLE 2** (SADC - Southern Africa Development Community) SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Synthesis Report 2016. (STUDENT PRESENTER)

Optional

* **EXAMPLE 3** - USAID : Conflict Assessment Framework: Version 2.0. 2012. <https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnady739.pdf>
* **EXAMPLE 4** - SIDA - Swedish International Development Agency. Conflict Sensitivity in Programme Management. January 2017.

**Session 7: October 6 - Modern International NGO Conflict Assessment Approaches**

International Peace Park Expeditions (IPPE) is a small US-based NGO that developed a unique Peace & Conflict Impact Assessment for use in border regions impacted by conflict that have critical contested natural resources. We will learn how the PCIA process and output evolved from a 2010 report on Waterton Glacier International Peace Park to a 2016 report on Parque Internacional La Amistad. We will also review IPPE’s use of micro-documentary film to complement the PCIA, discussing how this alternative medium impacts the Conflict Assessment and Peacebuilding opportunities. (\*The instructor, Todd Walters, founded International Peace Park Expeditions and has served as the Executive Director of IPPE for the past decade). We will also have the opportunity to explore the ways in which other Non-State Actors have developed and adapted the Conflict Assessment to support their work.

For example, World Vision International has devoted significant time and resources to developing and utilizing its Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts (MSTC), a highly participatory conflict assessment method and analytical framework. The World Wildlife Fund determined that conflict was impacting their global conservation work, that conflict hotspots and biodiversity hotspots were overlapping, and that they needed to understand the conflicts in order to effectively conserve endangered species and their critical habitats. Therefore, they worked with Academia, and Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief workers to develop the Green Recovery and Reconstruction Toolkit. International Alert is a UK based charity that developed a Conflict and Human Rights Impact Assessment, integrating conflict assessment with protection of human rights for the first time, using the Assessment results to advocate at the highest levels of government. The American Friends Service Committee is an academic arm of the Quaker religion which is pacifist, and in conjunction with their special role/relationship with the United Nations, they produced a conflict assessment of the conflict in Afghanistan. We will briefly review and discuss each of these conflict assessment frameworks, and will conduct an in-depth review of IPPE’s Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment.

Required

* **EXAMPLE 4** - **(read in full)** International Peace Park Expeditions - Peace & Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA). 1. Waterton Glacier International Peace Park. 2. Parque Internacional La Amistad.
* AND select your choice of the Optional Case Study
* Jos de la Haye and Koenrad Denayer, PCIA: A Tool to Move from Conflict Ignorance to Conflict Sensitivity within Development, Humanitarian Aid and Peacebuilding Work, *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (2003), pp. 49-62. (NYU Classes) (STUDENT PRESENTER)
* Hanson, et al. “Warfare in BioDiversity Hotspots” . Conservation Biology. 2009. (STUDENT PRESENTER)
* Porter, E., Robinson, G., Smyth, M., Schnabel, A. and Osaghae E. (2005) (eds.), *Researching Conflict in Africa: Insights and Experiences* (Tokyo: United Nationsome s University Press) [Book is available electronically through BobCat at: <https://getit.library.nyu.edu/go/5182757>] (STUDENT PRESENTER)
* Jonathan Goodhand, *Aiding Peace? The Role of NGOs in Armed Conflict*, chap. 2, pp. 27-47

 Optional

* **EXAMPLE 3** - World Vision - Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts. Garred, M. et al. (2015). *Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts: Local Perspectives on Large-Scale Conflicts*. World Vision International
* **EXAMPLE 4 -** World Wildlife Fund - GRRT (Green Recovery & Reconstruction Toolkit)
* **EXAMPLE 5 -** International Alert - CHRIA (Conflict and Human Rights Impact Assessment)
* **EXAMPLE 6 -** American Friends Service Committee - Conflict Assessment - Afghanistan

**Session 8: October 13 - Impacts of Conflict Assessment on Policy and Programming**

Effective conflict assessments include core elements, including gaining a thorough understanding of context, actors, and their motivations. In this session, we will consider how to develop meaningful research regarding these central components of assessments. Once researchers develop a nuanced understanding of conflict context and the key actors, the multitude of factors that contribute to conflicts must be explored: including drivers and mitigators, sources and uses of power, and possible triggers. This session will begin to examine the idea of conflict assessment from a systems perspective, with a focus on how to apply what is learned during the assessment to make more informed decisions, which impact policies and programs.

Key Areas of Focus include: Program Development; Adaptive Management and Monitoring & Evaluation

Required Readings

* World Vision, From analysis to action: World Vision’s journey of rapid context analysis in humanitarian emergencies. December 2016.
* European Union, World Bank, United Nations (2018). Joint Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments (RPBAs): A Practical Note to Assessment and Planning (STUDENT PRESENTER)
* European Union, Guidance note on the use of Conflict Analysis in support of EU external action, 2013
* Sigrid Gruener and Thomas Hill, *Introducing Conflict-Sensitive Community Development to Iraq* (2006). Journal of Peacebuilding and Development, Vol. 2, No.3. (STUDENT PRESENTER)
* Cheyanne Church and Mark Rogers, *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs, part 1 (Part 2 is optional)*. Search for Common Ground (STUDENT PRESENTER)

Session 9 - October 20 Conflict Assessment Methodologies review - The Steps and Sequence of the process of research and analysis and writing and editing - Q&A. Conflict Sensitive Policy and Program Design & What makes an effective Pitch - How do you implement Do No Harm principles? How do you avoid unintended consequences? Q&A on Policy/Project Pitch Presentation expectations.

**Intensive Saturday:** October 24, 2020

**Team Research, Analysis, Peer Feedback, Revision**

**Saturday**

Session 10 - AM October 24 - Peer Review & Instructor Feedback session #1.

Session 11 - PM October 24 - Case Study Research, Policy/Project Pitch progress check-ins, Adaptive Management.

Session 12 - November 3 - Peer Review & Instructor Feedback session #2.

Required Reading

**Read:** Raul Pacheco [12 tips to give a solid scholarly talk within a short time frame](http://www.raulpacheco.org/2018/04/10-tips-to-give-a-solid-scholarly-talk-within-a-short-time-frame/)

Kate Torgovnick May, Emludolph. “A TED speaker coach shares 11 tips for right before you go on stage.” <https://blog.ted.com/a-ted-speaker-coach-shares-11-tips-for-right-before-you-go-on-stage/>

**Watch:**  Speech coach for TEDxPortland and Distinction Communication, Amy Wolff, gives five tips for being a better public speaker. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNOXZumCXNM>

 (STUDENT PRESENTER)

**Presentations**: November 10 and 17

Session 13: November 10 - Student Conflict Assessment Presentations

Session 14: November 17 - Student Policy/Project Pitches

Class Conclusion - Enumerating what we learned, and how to apply it

What did we learn? What do we still need to know about conflict assessment and the tools and approaches needed to utilize it effectively and ethically? This wrap-up session will serve as a moment to take stock of the course, and to look ahead.

**NYU SPS Policies:**

NYU SPS policies regarding the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Academic Integrity and Plagiarism, Students with Disabilities Statement, and Standards of Classroom Behavior, among others can be found on the NYU Classes Academic Policies tab for all course sites as well as on the University and NYUSPS websites. Every student is responsible for reading, understanding, and complying with all of these policies.

The full list of policies can be found at the web links below:

* University: <http://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance.html>
* NYUSPS: <http://sps.nyu.edu/academics/academic-policies-and-procedures.html>

**Academic Integrity**

It is important that all students read and understand the SPS Statement on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism. It states that “Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s work as though it were one’s own. More specifically, plagiarism is to present as one’s own a sequence of words quoted without quotation marks from another writer; a paraphrased passage from another writer’s work; creative images, artwork, or design; or facts or ideas gathered, organized, and reported by someone else, orally and/or in writing and not providing proper attribution. Since plagiarism is a matter of fact, not of the student’s intention, it is crucial that acknowledgement of the sources be accurate and complete. Even where there is no conscious intention to deceive, the failure to make appropriate acknowledgement constitutes plagiarism. Penalties for plagiarism range from failure for a paper or course to dismissal from the University.”

**Incomplete Policy:** Incompletes are only granted in extreme cases such as illness or family emergency and only where almost all work for the semester has been successfully completed. A student’s procrastination in completing his/her paper is not a basis for an Incomplete.

**Accommodations for Disabilities**: Any student who needs a reasonable accommodation based on a qualified disability is required to register with the Moses Center for Student Disabilities for assistance (www.nyu.edu/csd).

**Writing Assistance**

Some students find that they have difficulty with writing academic papers in a clear, easy-to-read way. Because writing is one of the most important skills for a professional in Global Affairs, I highly recommend that any students experiencing difficulties with writing seek assistance in this area. One free, on-campus resource is The NYU Writing Center, located at 411 Lafayette St., 4th Floor, Telephone: 212 998-8866 Email: writingcenter@nyu.edu. More information is available at: <http://cas.nyu.edu/ewp/writing-resources/writing-center.html>

**Resources:**

* **Student Resources:** <http://www.nyu.edu/life/resources-and-services.html>
* **Virtual Computer Lab**: <https://vcl.nyu.edu/vpn/index.html>
* **NYUSPS International Student Support Center:** <http://www.scps.nyu.edu/student-affairs/student-life/international/international-student-support-center.html>

**Other resources**

Bobst Library currently is expanding its already-rich collection of books, journals and electronic resources in the fields of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Many important titles can be found through BobCat. Of particular interest to students conducting research for their presentations and final papers are the following five journals

Journal of Peace Research

Journal of Peacebuilding and Development

Journal of Conflict Resolution

Conflict Resolution Quarterly

Peacebuilding

**Additional Sources for Research Methods**

Hoglund, K. and Oberg, M. (2011). Understanding Peace Research: Methods and Challenges. New York: Routledge. (Book available electronically through BobCat at: <https://getit.library.nyu.edu/go/4984269>

Wallensteen, P. (2011). Peace Research: Theory and Practice. New York: Routledge (Book available electronically through BobCat at: <https://getit.library.nyu.edu/go/5182719>).

**Additional Source for Interviewing**

Seale, C. (2004) (ed.). *Researching Society and Culture* (London: SAGE Publications) [required chapters available on NYU Classes]

Karen Brouneus. In-depth Interviewing: The process, skill and ethics of interviews in Peace Research, in Kristine Hoglund and Magnus Oberg (eds.) Understanding Peace Research: Methods and Challenges, pp. 130-145.

*Johanna Soderstrom. Focus Groups: Safety in Numbers? in Kristine Hoglund and Magnus Oberg (eds.) Understanding Peace Research: Methods and Challenges, pp, 146-164.*

Off-campus, you can search for the titles here: <http://library.nyu.edu/collections/ejournals.html>

In addition, students may find relevant information and research about peacebuilding, international conflict resolution and specific international conflicts from publications produced by the following organizations:

The Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management: <http://www.berghof-center.org/std_page.php?LANG=e&id=11>

Swisspeace: <http://www.swisspeace.ch/typo3/en/publications/index.html>

The United States Institute of Peace: [www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org)

The Peace Research Partnership: <https://www.c-r.org/our-work-in-action/peace-research-partnership>

US Agency for International Development: Conflict Management and Mitigation technical publications library: <https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/working-crises-and-conflict/technical-publications>

**Technical Requirements:**

Computer Hardware

Recommended Requirements

● Computer with at least 4GB of memory or more (RAM)

● Windows 8.0 or Mac OS X 10.9 (Mavericks) or higher

● Broadband (high-speed) internet access (direct connection or Wifi)

● Webcam and microphone (for online meetings)

**Student Technical Skills:**

You are expected to be proficient with installing and using basic computer applications and have the ability to send and receive email attachments.

Software

● Google Chrome (recommended browser for viewing online course materials)

● Mozilla’s Firefox (latest version; Macintosh or Windows)

● Adobe’s Flash Player and Reader plug-in (latest version).

● Apple’s QuickTime plug-in (latest version).

● Microsoft Office Suite (free for NYU Students).

● Zoom web conferencing tool

● Link to any additional software required.

**NYU Classes Orientation and Training:**

To actively participate in this course, you will need to get familiar with the course environment. If you are not familiar with how to navigate this environment as a student or use any of these tools, please visit NYU’s Getting Started with NYU Classes page for a full tutorial on using NYU Classes.

**NYU Classes Support:**

To receive 24/7 live support or deliver NYU Classes feedback, contact the IT Service Desk:

● Phone: 1-212-998-3333

● Email: AskIT@nyu.edu

● In-Person: Visit the IT Service Desk at 10 Astor Place, 4th Floor (M-F 9 am-6 pm EST)

● For support at NYU’s global locations visit www.nyu.edu/it/servicedesk.