New York University  
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences  

**Politics, Education, and Conflict**  
*September 12, 2008*  

Fall 2008  
Tuesdays 4:55-6:35

Professor: Dana Burde, International Education  
Office: 316E Kimball Hall, 246 Greene Street  
Office hours by appointment only: Wednesdays 4-6

Please email Tamika Bota [tb58@nyu.edu](mailto:tb58@nyu.edu) to schedule an appointment.

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Teaching Assistant: Ashleigh White  
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Office hours by appointment: Wednesdays 1:30-3:00, Thursdays 6:30-7:30  
*Please email or speak with Ashleigh directly to set up an appt.

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This seminar explores the politics of civil conflict, peacebuilding, and the role of education in promoting violence or peace. Specifically it explores the role of external actors (international organizations, bilateral donors, nongovernmental organizations), local actors (civil society associations, nationalist and ideological state factions), and their influence on education systems during war and emerging peace. Readings and discussion will focus on humanitarian action, human rights and development, nationalism and ethnic conflict, the political economy of post-conflict education, and the politics of promoting education in early reconstruction and peacebuilding. Case studies will include Afghanistan, Colombia, Sierra Leone, Pakistan, and West Bank/Gaza, but students will be encouraged to explore cases of their choosing.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- To gain a deeper understanding of the theoretical assumptions regarding causes of conflict and peace;  
- To assess education programs as part of a short term response to conflict and long term peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts;  
- To provide the knowledge necessary for graduate students who plan to work as practitioners in humanitarian or development organizations, or academic researchers in educational institutions.
REQUIREMENTS

There are three requirements for this course:

- Course participation and presentation: 30%
- Short writing assignment (5 pages): 30%
- Research paper (15-20 pages): 40%

I. PARTICIPATION (30%):

1) Attendance and participation in discussions (15%): Attendance includes coming to every class and recitation on time. The course requires the participation of all class members; lateness or absence disrupts the course plan. In addition, you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss and critique all of the required readings. Because there may be a large number of pages assigned for many of the sessions, you do not need to read every word, but you do need to understand each article or chapter thoroughly and absorb the main points and arguments the authors make. It is helpful when reading analytically to consider the similarities and differences between the authors’ positions and how the pieces inform each other. You will be expected to offer your insights into these arguments during each class and recitation session.

2) Group presentation (15%): In addition to participating actively in discussions, you will be asked to organize one presentation with one or two colleagues. You are required to email your presentation outline to me on the Monday morning prior to class; I will review it and send comments or suggestions. In the presentation, you will be evaluated for content, creativity, and pedagogy. A sign-up sheet will be distributed during the second class session.

II. SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENT (30%) DUE 6PM OCTOBER 14th via email

Choose one set of readings from the first six sessions about which to write a short paper (5 pp., double-spaced, 11-12 pt font, one-inch margins all around). This paper should examine some theoretical aspect of the readings, providing a brief critical reflection, or analysis of the ideas presented in them. More detailed instructions will be emailed to you two weeks prior to the assignment deadline.

III. RESEARCH PAPER (40%) DUE DECEMBER 1st AT 6 PM via email

After the first four weeks of the course, you will be required to identify a research topic among the topics covered in the course, broadly defined. I would like you to use this paper as an opportunity to explore a topic that you find particularly compelling. Although it is not required, I encourage you to use primary as well as secondary sources. In other words, you should feel free to conduct interviews with current or former colleagues, or with contacts that you develop in aid or development organizations. I will ask that you submit an abstract to me on September 26th (via email), describing why your topic is important, your main argument, and sources (primary and/or secondary). I encourage you to use this exercise to explore topics for a paper of publishable quality. You may work in pairs if you prefer.

You will receive a more detailed description of this assignment on September 18. Criteria for grading written work: Strength and clarity of arguments, quality of analysis, use of sources. Please consult writing guidelines that will be posted on Blackboard.
NOTE: Please submit all assignments to me via email at: dana.burde@nyu.edu. You will receive comments and feedback via email as well. This means that I will use the editing functions under “tools,” “track changes” to write comments and suggestions into your papers using highlighted text.

*Policy on late assignments: Barring serious illness or family emergency (both require documentation), late papers will be reduced by 1/3 of a grade for each 24-hour period for which they are turned in after the deadline. For example, a paper turned in one day late with a grade of B would be marked down to a B-. This is a strict policy. Exceptions are granted only in extreme circumstances and require written documentation. Examples of exceptional circumstances include a learning disability (documented by NYU in the form of a written letter from the Center for Students with Disabilities) or hospitalization. Changing topics, regions, countries of study for an assignment; poor time management; and procrastination do not count as exceptional circumstances.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All assignments must adhere to standards of academic ethics. Your work must reflect your own writing and ideas. According to the Steinhardt School of Education Statement on Academic Integrity, you violate the principle of academic integrity by turning in work that does not reflect your own ideas or includes text that is not your own; when you submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from the instructor; when you receive help on a take-home examination when you are expected to work independently; when you cheat on exams, and when you plagiarize material. Any student who submits work that constitutes plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary sanctions, which range from failure of the course to dismissal from the school.

Please consult the Steinhardt School of Education Statement on Academic Integrity for more information about academic integrity and plagiarism, including the steps involved in disciplinary sanctions. This document is available at: http://education.nyu.edu/education/students/pdfs/soai.pdf.

REQUIRED BOOKS TO PURCHASE AVAILABLE AT THE NYU BOOKSTORE


The required readings, beyond these books, are available on line via the NYU Blackboard webpage. Required readings that are not located in the books, or on Blackboard, are available through the NYU library website ejournals. If you have difficulties locating readings, please ask the NYU library staff, or a classmate to assist you.

Because we are studying education in dynamic international environments, and because much of international education work relates directly to current political changes, I may add short readings that will be particularly relevant to the topics that we are studying as the course
progresses. Any additional readings will be added several days before the class meets (at minimum), and the syllabus will be updated on Blackboard. Please check for these updates.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**NOTE:** All readings, unless taken from the books that you are to purchase, will be available online via Blackboard. If you see a problem with the readings, first consult a classmate. If you still cannot resolve the issue, please let the Teaching Assistant for this class, Ashleigh White, know.

### Part I: War: Conflict, Causes, and the Humanitarian Impulse

**September 2**

**Session 1:** Introduction: War, Peace, and Education in Emergencies


**September 9**

**Session 2:** War: Ethics and causes


**September 16**

**Session 3:** Causes of conflict, continued

September 23
Session 4: Humanitarian Intervention
Guest Speaker: Susan Allee, Senior Political Affairs Analyst, United Nations Department of Peace Keeping Operations


September 30
Session 5: Humanitarianism: History and impulses

- Fearon, J. Chapter 2: “The rise of emergency relief aid;” (pp. 49-72).
- Calhoun, C. Chapter 3: “The imperative to reduce suffering” (pp. 73-97).
And:

Part II: Actors and Institutions

October 7
Session 6: Global norms and standards: International agencies’ principles and approaches to working with children affected by conflict
Guest Speaker: Allison Anderson, Director Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies


October 14 – No Class
October 21
Session 7: Humanitarians: Who are humanitarian actors?
Guest Speaker: Jack Snyder, Robert and Renée Belfer Professor of International Relations, Political Science Department, Columbia University


October 28
Session 8: Global norms and standards for psychosocial work: International agencies’ principles and approaches to working with children affected by conflict
Guest Speaker: Professor Neil Boothby, Director of the Forced Migration Program, Columbia University School of Public Health


November 4 Don’t forget to VOTE!
Session 9: Violence against humanitarians

- INEE Tribute to Jackie Kirk.
Part III: Case Studies

November 11
Session 10: Case study: Afghan refugee education and community-based schools in Afghanistan


November 18
Session 11: Case Study: Strengthening government or religious schools in Pakistan

- International Crisis Group. (October 2004). *Pakistan: Reforming the education sector*.

November 25
Session 12: Case study: Curriculum development in Palestine


Optional:
December 2
Session 13: Case study: Child soldiers in Sierra Leone


Optional:
- Take a look at the following websites: www.witness.org and Campaign for Good Governance: www.slcgg.org/home.htm
- Read this short article on civic education in Sierra Leone: http://www.usaid.gov/sl/sl_democracy/news/030718_ndicivforum/
- And this evaluation of a USAID Office of Transition Initiatives youth reintegration program: http://www.beps.net/publications/FINAL%20EVALUATION%20OF%20OTI%20PROGRAM%20IN%20SIERRA%20LEONE.PDF

December 9
Session 14: Case study: Internally displaced people in Colombia


Optional:

**Useful Resources:**

Human Rights Watch: http://www.hrw.org/

The Human Security Center: http://www.humansecuritycentre.org/

Research resources and links:  http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?l=1&id=1130

International Peace Academy:  http://www.ipacademy.org/

Overseas Development Institute:  http://www.odi.org.uk/