



Theories of Conflict | SOP77041

Year	MPhil
ECTS Credits	10
Contact Hours	
Mandatory/Optional	Mandatory
Semester	
Module Coordinator	Dr Andrew Finlay, Department of Sociology, TCD
Contact Email	

Module Description:

The study of peace and conflict in the modern era dates back to the middle of the 20th century, with seminal contributions from renowned scholars such as Kenneth and Elise Boulding, Johan Galtung, and Edward Azar. The breadth of knowledge produced by these scholars and peace practitioners forms the epistemological foundations of peace and conflict theory, which informs much of the work of peace practitioners and those working in the field of conflict resolution today. In this module, we will build a solid foundation of theoretical knowledge on the causes, consequences, and methods of transforming and resolving conflict, as well as theories of peace making and peace building. In doing so, we will critique Western notions of “conflict” and “peace” (e.g. the “liberal peace”) and consider non-Western and anti-colonial perspectives of peace and conflict theory. Empirical case studies of contemporary conflicts and peace processes will be used to demonstrate the challenges, successes, and limitations of peace and conflict theory in contemporary conflicts.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module you will have a critical understanding of:

- demonstrate a solid foundational understanding of peace and conflict theory.
- critically evaluate theoretical concepts in the field of peace and conflict studies.
- explain and critically evaluate Western and non-Western approaches to peace and conflict theory and practice.
- apply theoretical models to contemporary case studies of conflict.

Delivery and syllabus:

The module is delivered through 11 seminars. Each seminar will consist of lecture, discussion, and practical exercises. Readings must be completed before each class and a 300 word summary (in the form of an ongoing annotated bibliography) of the main weekly reading will be required on each seminar.



The module will examine how theoretical understandings of peace and conflict can help us understand the practical manifestations of these issues in contemporary conflicts. The main topics covered will be:

- Theories of peace and conflict
- Seminal Studies of peace and conflict theory
- Western and non-Western/anti-colonial approaches to knowledge in conflict theory
- Manifestations of conflict (e.g. identity/ethnic conflicts)
- Theories and methods of managing/containing and resolving/transforming conflict
- Empirical case studies representative of peace and conflict theory in the modern era

Recommended Texts

- Boulding, E. (1990) *Building a Global Civic Culture: Education for an Interdependent World*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Boulding, K. (1962) *Conflict and Defense: A General Theory*. New York: Harper Torchbooks.
- Boulding, K. (1978) *Stable Peace*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Boutros-Ghali, B. (1995) *An Agenda for Peace*, New York: United Nations.
- Burton, J. (1990) *Conflict Resolution and Prevention*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Deutsch, M. (1973) *The Resolution of Conflict: Constructive and Destructive Processes*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Galtung, J. (1996) *Peace by Peaceful Means*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Gandhi, M. K. (1971) "Non-Violence." In *Civil Disobedience and Violence*, edited by Jeffrie G. Murphy. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.
- Lederach, J.P. (1997) *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, Washington, D.C.: USIP.
- Ramsbotham, O., Woodhouse, T. and H. Miall (2011) *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, 3rd Edition, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Zartman, W. (1985) *Ripe for Resolution*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Selected readings from *Beyond Intractability*:
<http://www.beyondintractability.org/resources>
- Selected readings from Johan Galtung: <https://www.transcend.org/>

Assessment

Assessment is based on the weekly reading summaries (annotated bibliography) (50%) and a final exam covering a variety of topics from the module (50%).