

HSS 404 101 Global Conflict Resolution

Fall 2025

Office Hours: Tuesdays 4 pm – 5:30 pm
Or by appointment

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Tuesdays 6 pm – 8:50 pm
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“The purpose of all war is peace.” St. Augustine

Course Description: This course is a structured and coherent investigation of the salient approaches to the study of international conflict and peacemaking. Conflict resolution is the process of attempting to resolve a dispute or a conflict, in our case, at the interstate level. This may involve conflict management in which the parties continue the conflict but with less extreme methods; settlement in which they reach agreement on enough issues that the conflict stops; or removal of the underlying causes of conflict—“resolution,” usually by means of creative diplomatic techniques.

This course will also examine the systemic contexts shaping the course of conflict resolution: these include alliance structures, the role of power, influence, fluctuating national interests, and the role of misperception in policy decisions.

Conflict itself has both positive and negative outcomes. Practitioners in the field of conflict resolution seek to find ways to promote positive outcomes and minimize the negative ones. Sometimes stalled or dysfunctional peace processes thwart negotiations and new strategies for rejuvenating or reorienting have to be devised. There exists an enormous body of literature on this subject with considerable confusion and competition among proponents of various approaches. Moreover—precisely because of this confusion—vital links of communication among various schools of thought either have never existed or have broken down.

A further aim of this course is to help students understand and thus help to build and repair these communication links, in the process helping you identify your own position and viewpoints within the epistemology of international relations as a whole. The objective is not to produce a “definitive” mode of analysis but to encourage thought about the interconnections between and among various conceptual approaches to war, conflict management and the modalities of sustainable peace settlements. With its strong historical orientation, the course will help students make sense of contemporary conflictual issues by placing these into a broader, informed context.

Course Goals: By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Apply international relations theory to historical phenomena thereby gaining a firmer grasp of world issues and politics.
- Understand the policy prescriptions, moral principles and ethical dilemmas underlying the effective resolution of armed conflicts.
- Appreciate the problematic nature of international/security choices thus making them more informed citizens.
- Evaluate the impact of globalization processes and conditions on issues of peace.
- Better understand the scope and limits of arbitration and mediation as vital organizational tools in both international and domestic settings.
- Confront conflicts, at all levels, more creatively, with greater understanding of governing dynamics.

Assignments and Marks:

Written Assignments:	40%
Midterm Quiz	20%
Final Quiz:	30%
Class Attendance and Participation:	10%

Grading Scale for Assignments and Participation:

A = 85 – 100	B+ = 80 – 84.5
B = 75 – 79.5	C+ = 69.5 – 74.5
C = 65 – 69.5	D = 50 – 64.9

Course Requirements:

- There will be 4 in-class written assignments throughout the course and each will be 5 to 6 pages in length.
- These assignments will be based on class lectures, assigned readings, class handouts and occasional online links.
- No computers, phones, or other electronic devices as well as written or printed material will be permitted.
- Absence and makeup arrangements will only be permitted with an official notification from the Dean of Students.
- The assignments will equal 40% of the final class grade.
- Students taking the class acknowledge that they have carefully read and understand the entire syllabus (i.e. required reading, mark distribution, in-class writing assignments, etc).

Course Assignments:

1. September 23: First in-class written assignment.
2. October 14: Second in-class written assignment.
3. November 11: Third in-class written assignment.
4. December 2: Fourth in-class written assignment.

Texts: (required readings)

John W. Burton, Conflict Resolution: Its Language and Processes (London, 1996).

Keith Hamilton and Richard Langhorne, The Practice of Diplomacy (London, 2001).

Charles Kegley & Gregory Raymond, How Nations Make Peace (NY, 1999).

Gordon Craig and A.L. George, Force and Statecraft (NY, 1995).

Semester Schedule:

Sept. 2: Introduction: Approaches to the Study of International Relations

Readings: Kegley, ch. 1; Craig & George, intro.

Sept. 9: State Interests, Power, Capability, Influence

Readings: Burton, intro; Kegley, ch. 2.

Sept. 16: Conflict, Alignment (Alliances) Systemic Dimensions.

Readings: Kegley, intro., Burton, ch. 1; K. Schweizer, "International Systems" handout; Hamilton & Langhorne, ch. 3.

Sept. 23: i: **First in-class written assignment.**

ii: Crises and War: Categories of Conflict and Peace Strategies.

Readings: Burton, ch. 2; Kegley, ch. 1; Craig & George, ch. 12.

Sept. 30: i: Diplomacy and Negotiation; ii: Diplomatic Theory; iii: Types of Diplomacy.

Readings: K.W. Schweizer, "Diplomacy", "Callières and the Development of Diplomatic Theory"; Hamilton & Langhorne, ch. 4; Craig & George, ch. 13.

Oct. 7: Elements of Conflict Resolution: Mediation, Negotiation Theories, Crisis Management.

Readings: Burton, ch. 4; Kegley, ch. 2; K.W. Schweizer, "Diplomacy's Seamless Web," handout.

Oct. 14: i: **Second in-class written assignment.**

ii: Review for midterm quiz.

Oct. 21: **Midterm Quiz**

Oct. 28: Deterrence: Coercive Diplomacy and Collective Security.

Readings: Kegley, ch. 8; Nathan, ch. 6; K. Schweizer, "Deterrence," handout; Craig & George, ch. 14..

Nov. 4: Justice and Expediency in International Affairs: Reconciliation vs Retribution

Readings: Burton, ch. 4; Kegley, ch. 2; Nathan, ch. 5.

Nov. 11: i: **Third in-class written assignment**

ii: Case Study: The Treaty of Versailles

Readings: Burton, ch. 5; Kegley, ch. 7; K.W. Schweizer, "The Treaty of Versailles" handout; Craig & George, ch. 15.

Nov. 18: International Law and the Balance of Power.

Readings: Kegley, ch. 1.

Dec. 2: i: **Fourth in-class written assignment**

ii: Review for final quiz.

Dec. 9: **Final Quiz**

Policies:

- This is an **intellectually demanding course** and all students will be expected to do all the readings listed in the syllabus.
- Attendance will be taken during each class. Absences will be excused only with documentation from the Dean of Students.
- Plagiarism in any written assignment will result in an automatic failure and will be reported to the Dean of Students.
- There will be no “make-up” quiz. If you miss the final quiz, documentation from the Dean of Students must be provided in order to make up the quiz.
- All submitted work must comply with the NJIT Honor Code. You can view NJIT Honor Code at: NJIT website, just Google: “academic integrity.”