

# The Politics of Peace: Reconstruction and Justice in Post-Conflict Societies

IR-2041/ POL-2096: Spring 2024

Dipin Kaur

**Class Meeting:**

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:50 am – 1:20 pm  
AC02-LR 214

**Office Hours:**

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5- 6 pm

Sign up at: <https://calendly.com/dipin-kaur/officehours>

**Teaching Assistant:**

Madhumitha GI

## Course Description

In this course, we will aim to impart agency to states, insurgents, aid agencies, and civilians in narratives of post-conflict politics. Specifically, we will explore various cases from around the world to think about the following questions:

- What are the problems of accountability and issues of individual responsibility in times of war? How have they been dealt with in response to historical conflicts of global significance?
- What are the current principles of accountability and mechanisms for enforcing these principles, including truth and reconciliation commissions, international criminal tribunals, and legal actions by third-party countries?
- Does international intervention and aid help states to protect civilians, engage in hearts and minds, or build military coercive capacities?
- How do states that receive peacekeeping to end conflict fare differently in terms of long-term violent outcomes than those that don't?
- How do victims of conflict remember it, and/ or take part in movements to memorialize the violence?
- Why do some rebel groups translate into political parties, while others don't? What are the impacts of insurgent political participation on post-conflict democracy?
- What are some domestic obstacles to peacekeeping, reconstruction, and justice? How do conflict-affected groups draw boundaries between re-traumatization and accountability in the absence of state processes?

## Assignments and Grading Rubric: (20 + 20 + 5+ 15 + 5 + 35 = 100%)

### 1. Weekly In-Class Reflections (20%) – due weekly on Mon/ Wed 11:59 pm, depending on the readings you are addressing, for any 10 weeks of the course.

For each week, select a film, TV show, or news article, and analyze the ways in which it relates to min. 2 readings for the week – does your chosen piece of media substantiate/ contradict/ nuance the claims in the readings? This should be SHORT (150 words max) and no AI should be used in writing this assignment. These are due on Monday 11:59 pm (for Tuesday's readings) or on Wednesday 11:59 pm (for Thursday's readings) on the day prior to the class meeting. Students will be expected to post on Canvas/ Classroom for any 10 weeks of the course.

### 2. In-class Midterm Assignment: (20%) on March 6

The midterm will take place on Thursday, March 6, during class time. The exam will last 1 hour and 15 minutes, during which time students will answer a set of multiple-choice questions and 2 long answer questions in a closed book format.

### 3. Periodical Pop Quizzes (5%) (1% each, a total of 5 quizzes - all post midterm)

Six lectures through the semester will be followed by a short, multiple-choice quiz drawn either from the week's readings or the content of that day's lecture. These quizzes are meant to serve as low-stakes attention checks that would allow you to better absorb otherwise expansive course material. Quizzes will not be intimated in advance and can only be taken in person in that class

session. We will count the best of 5 quizzes for the final grade – you miss a quiz because you were absent in class on a particular day, you have one opportunity to make up for it. Beyond that date, you will forgo the 2%.

#### **4. Class Attendance + Participation (7.5 + 7.5 = 15%) and In-Class Reading Presentation (5%)**

Aside from being present (see attendance policy below), students are expected to take part in discussions as part of class activity. In addition, all sessions will start with a student's presentation (of MAX 3 mins per student), based on class readings and case studies selected by students. Please sign up for a set of reading(s), posted on excel.

#### **5. Final Simulation (30% for final paper, +5% for memo) - Memo (5%) due on April 10 at 11:59 pm, Final Paper (30%) on May 2.**

- As the final submission for the course, you will attempt a final simulation (i.e., complete some long answers about a fictional case I will give you) in the span of 3 hours. This will be online and open book, with the only condition that talking to your peers is not permitted.

- The objectives in the exercise are for you to identify various actors and their interests, potentially conflicting goals, and interactions. Further, it will help you think about how to deal with the heavy resource demands necessary for successful peace operations and consider what strategies or tactics would allow you to achieve your stated aims. Overall, you will be asked to identify conflicting interests and challenging conditions, and you will also be asked to think and problem solve creatively. **This simulation will take place on May 2, 2025. NO extensions will be allowed beyond this date.** Starting this time, the standard grading policy (see below) will apply.

- To help you prepare for this, a 2-page memo will be due on April 10, in which you will use class readings to answer the question: "List 5 priorities that countries are likely to have in their conflict-termination/post-conflict stages. In a couple of lines, have at least 1 example of a conflict case for each type of priority."

- In case you feel especially strongly about writing a research paper instead, please see me in Office Hours to discuss.

### **Course Structure, Schedule, and Readings:**

#### **Week 1– Tue, Jan 21 and Thu, Jan 23: Course Introduction + The Politics of Post-Conflict Accountability**

*[Jan 21: Class Introduction, no assigned reading]*

1. (Jan 23) Davenport, Christian, Erik Melander, and Patrick M. Regan. The peace continuum: What it is and how to study it. Oxford University Press, 2018. Chapter 1.
2. (Jan 23) Cunningham, Andrew J. "Post-conflict contexts and humanitarian organizations: the changing relationship with states." *Journal of International Humanitarian Action* 2.1 (2017).

#### **Week 2 – Tue, Jan 28 and Thu, Jan 30: The Politics of Accountability – World War II and The Problem of Individual Responsibility for War Crimes**

1. (Jan 28) Khilnani, Sunil. "The British Empire Was Much Worse Than You Realize". *The New Yorker*, March 28, 2022. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2022/04/04/the-british-empire-was-much-worse-than-you-realize-caroline-elkinss-legacy-of-violence>
2. (Jan 28) WATCH: Oxford Union Debates on Reparations for the British Empire:  
(a) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SjTSgP6Lm0A&ab\\_channel=OxfordUnion](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SjTSgP6Lm0A&ab_channel=OxfordUnion),  
(b) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SjTSgP6Lm0A&ab\\_channel=OxfordUnion](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SjTSgP6Lm0A&ab_channel=OxfordUnion)

3. (Jan 30) Karstedt, Susanne. "From absence to presence, from silence to voice: Victims in international and transitional justice since the Nuremberg trials." *International Review of Victimology* 17.1 (2010): 9-30.
4. (Jan 30) Wilke, Christiane. "Remembering complexity? Memorials for Nazi victims in Berlin." *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 7.1 (2013): 136-156.

*Recommended Reading:*

- Mukherjee, *Shivaji. "Colonial origins of Maoist insurgency in India: Historical institutions and civil war."* *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 62.10 (2018): 2232-2274.
- Heath, Deana. *Colonial Terror: Torture and State Violence in Colonial India.* Oxford University Press, 2021. Chapter 1.
- Cohen, "Beyond Nuremberg: Individual Responsibility for War Crimes," in Hesse and Post, (eds.), *Human Rights in Political Transitions* (Zone, 1999)
- Nersessian, "Whoops, I Committed Genocide," *Fletcher Forum on World Affairs* (Summer 2006)

### **Week 3 – Tue, Feb 4 and Thu, Feb 6: Global Responses to Conflict – The Failure of Peacekeeping in the Rwandan Genocide**

#### **Global Responses to Conflicts – The Failure of Peacekeeping in the Rwandan Genocide:**

1. (Feb 4) Prunier, Gérard. "Rwanda and Darfur: A comparative approach to two peacekeeping failures." *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 14.1-2 (2010): 117-133.
2. (Feb 4) Alan Kuperman, "Rwanda in Retrospect," *Foreign Affairs* 79:1 (2000) [https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/jaro2010/MVZ155/um/rwanda\\_in\\_retrospect.pdf](https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/jaro2010/MVZ155/um/rwanda_in_retrospect.pdf)
3. (Feb 4) Samantha Power, "Bystanders to Genocide: Why the United States Let the Rwandan Tragedy Happen," *The Atlantic Monthly*, September 2001. Very interesting comparison to Gaza from the same author 20 years later, in case you are interested: <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/02/01/nation/usaids-samantha-power-genocide-scholar-confronted-by-staff-gaza/>

**\*\*Feb 6 – I will not be on campus, and classes will not meet. Please use this time to watch any one: "My Neighbor, My Killer" (on Rwanda's Gacaca courts) or "Operation Finale" (on capturing the leadership of Nazi Germany) and read this short article:**

[https://www.harvardmagazine.com/2021/06/features-restorative-justice\\*\\*](https://www.harvardmagazine.com/2021/06/features-restorative-justice**)

*Recommended Reading:*

- Rettig, Max. "Gacaca: truth, justice, and reconciliation in postconflict Rwanda?." *African Studies Review* 51.3 (2008): 25-50.
- Krog, Antjie, *Country of My Skull*. 1998.
- Mamdani, Mahmood. *When victims become killers: Colonialism, nativism, and the genocide in Rwanda.* Princeton University Press, 2020.

### **Week 4 – Tue, Feb 11 and Thu, Feb 13: To Intervene or Not to Intervene? State Interest and Strategic Interventions in Conflict**

1. (Feb 11) Read **BOTH**: (a) Sabaratnam, M. (2011). The Liberal Peace? An Intellectual History of International Conflict Management, 1990-2010. In S. Campbell, D. Chandler, & M. Sabaratnam (Eds.), *A Liberal Peace? The Problems and Practices of Peacebuilding* (13-30). London: Zed Books. And (b) a very short addendum: Caplan, R. (2019). Peacekeeping in Turbulent Times. *International Peacekeeping*, 26(5), 527-530.
2. (Feb 11) Richmond, O. (2004). UN Peace Operations and the Dilemmas of the Peacebuilding Consensus. *International Peacekeeping*, 11(1), 83-101.
3. (Feb 13) Gershkoff, Amy, and Shana Kushner. "Shaping public opinion: The 9/11-Iraq connection in the Bush administration's rhetoric." *Perspectives on Politics* 3.3 (2005): 525-537.

4. (Feb 13) Gadarian, Shana Kushner. "The politics of threat: How terrorism news shapes foreign policy attitudes." *The Journal of Politics* 72.2 (2010): 469-483.

*Recommended Reading:*

- Lehmann, Ingrid A. "Public Perceptions of UN Peacekeeping: A Factor in the Resolution of International Conflicts." *Fletcher F. World Aff.* 19 (1995): 109.

## **Week 5 – Tue, Feb 18 and Thu, Feb 20: Global Responses to End Conflicts – Which Interventions Work and Why?**

1. (Feb 18) Fortna, Virginia Page. "Does peacekeeping keep peace? International intervention and the duration of peace after civil war." *International studies quarterly* 48.2 (2004): 269-292.
2. (Feb 18) Autesserre, Séverine. 2019. "The Crisis of Peacekeeping: Why the UN Can't End Wars." *Foreign Affairs* 98 (1): 101-116 <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/crisis-peacekeeping> and see also the a letter to the editor for the author's arguments + the author's response: <https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/d8-gcre-q775#assets-panel>
3. (Feb 20) Astri Suhrke, "Democratizing a Dependent State: The Case of Afghanistan," *Democratization*, Volume 15, Number 3 (2008): 630-648 and Dobbins, James. "Afghanistan Was Lost Long Ago." *Foreign Affairs*. 2021.
4. (Feb 20) Bastaki, Basil, Paul Staniland, and Bryan Popoola. "Stabilizing Civil Wars without Peacekeeping: Evidence from South Asia." *International Security* 49.1 (2024): 133-170.

\*Also, if you are interested in where peacekeepers go — you can zoom into each case and see which peacekeepers are sent where/ when: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/where-we-operate>\*

*Recommended Readings:*

- Berman, Eli, Jacob Shapiro and Joseph Felter. 2011. "Can Hearts and Minds Be Bought? The Economics of Counterinsurgency in Iraq." *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 119, pp.766-819.
- World Food Programme, 2013, "Examining Protection and Gender in Cash and Voucher Transfers." <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/communications/wfp260028.pdf>, pp. 1-14.

## **Week 6 – Tue, Feb 25 and Thu, Feb 27: Accountability After Conflict – Transitional Justice in the Form of Truth Commissions**

1. (Feb 25) Wiebelhaus-Brahm, Eric. "What is a truth commission and why does it matter?" *Peace and Conflict Review* 3.2 (2009): 1-14.
2. (Feb 25) Gibson, James L. "The truth about truth and reconciliation in South Africa." *International Political Science Review* 26.4 (2005): 341-361.
3. (Feb 27) Olsen et al., "When Truth Commissions Improve Human Rights," *The International Journal of Transitional Justice*, Vol. 4 (2010)
4. (Feb 27) Skaar, Elin. "Reconciliation in a transitional justice perspective." *Transitional Justice Review* 1.1 (2012): 54-103. (Also highly recommend this short report on civilian attitudes about Sierra Leone's truth commission: Shaw, "Rethinking Truth and Reconciliation Commissions: Lessons from Sierra Leone," United States Institute of Peace Special Report, No. 130 (February 2005))

*Recommended Readings:*

- Dancy, Geoff, and Oskar Timo Thoms. "Transitional Justice and the Problem of Democratic Decline." *The International Journal of Transitional Justice* (2024): ijae039.
- Gibson, James L. "The contributions of truth to reconciliation: Lessons from South Africa." *Journal of conflict resolution* 50.3 (2006): 409-432.

### **Week 7 – Tue, Mar 4 and Mar 6: The Rise of Foreign Aid; Midterm**

1. (Mar 4) Berrebi, Claude, and Véronique Thelen. "Dilemmas of foreign aid in post-conflict areas." *Dilemmas of Intervention* 291 (2011).
2. (Mar 4) Zurcher, Christoph. "What Do We (Not) Know About Development Aid and Violence? A Systematic Review," *World Development* (2017)

### **MIDTERM REVIEW: Last 20-30 mins of class on March 5**

### **MARCH 6: IN CLASS MIDTERM EXAM**

### **Week 8 –SPRING BREAK, Classes do not meet.**

### **Week 9 – Tue, Mar 18 and Thu, Mar 20: Accountability After Conflict – Trials, Punishment, and Justice I: The UN Courts of Justice and the ICC**

1. (Mar 18) Introduction to ICC and ICJ: ICC -- [https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/Publications/understanding-the-icc.pdf?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/Publications/understanding-the-icc.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com) and ICJ -- <https://www.icj-cij.org/history> and this super short article putting the ICJ in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2024/05/ici-and-icc-put-israel-notice-cannot-stop-war>
2. (Mar 18) Pena and Carayon, "Is the ICC Making the Most of Victim Participation?" *The International Journal of Transitional Justice*, Vol. 7 (2013)
3. (Mar 20) Ciorciari, John D., and Anne Heindel. Hybrid justice: the extraordinary chambers in the courts of Cambodia. University of Michigan Press, 2014. Introduction, Chapter 1
4. (Mar 20) Barria, Lilian A., and Steven D. Roper. "How effective are international criminal tribunals? An analysis of the ICTY and the ICTR." *The International Journal of Human Rights* 9.3 (2005): 349-368.

\*You can also spend some time exploring the International Criminal Court's website and the cases it has pursued: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/cases> \*

### **Recommended Reading:**

- Benyamin, Daniel, and Ronen Perry. "Israel, Palestine, and the ICC." *Mich. J. Int'l L.* 32 (2010): 73. <https://repository.law.umich.edu/mjil/vol32/iss1/2/>
- Chappell, Grey and Waller, "The Gender Justice Shadow of Complementarity: Lessons from the International Criminal Court's Preliminary Examinations in Guinea and Colombia," *The International Journal of Transitional Justice*, Vol. 7 (2013)
- Mischkowsky and Mlinarevic, *The Trouble with Rape Trials – Views of Witnesses, Prosecutors and Judges on Prosecuting Sexualised Violence during the War in the former Yugoslavia* (December 2009), Part II (pp. 50-96)

### **Week 10: Mar 25 and 27: Rebuilding After Conflict: Victim Perspectives and Contested Memory**

1. (Mar 25) Kaur, Bhavneet. "Sensory remembrance: Retelling the 1990s in downtown Srinagar." *Routledge Handbook of Critical Kashmir Studies*. Routledge, 2022. 138-148
2. (Mar 25) Budhoo, Sofie. "Divisive Documents: Exploring the Local Impact of Legal Documents in Transitional Justice Contexts." *International Journal of Transitional Justice* (2025): ijte047.
3. (Mar 27) Carey, Sabine C., Belén González, and Christian Glaßel. "Divergent perceptions of peace in post-conflict societies: Insights from Sri Lanka." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 66.9 (2022): 1589-1618.
4. (Mar 27) **Read both** magazine pieces/ photo essays on the violent legacies of conflict in (a) Sri Lanka <https://caravanmagazine.in/conflict/post-war-sri-lanka-lives-tamils> and (b) Bangladesh <https://caravanmagazine.in/books/politics-bangladesh-liberation-war>

## Week 11 – Apr 1 and 3: Gender in Transitional Justice + The Long-Term Impact of Conflict on Masculinities

1. (Apr 1) Carpenter, R. Charli. "Women and children first": Gender, norms, and humanitarian evacuation in the Balkans 1991–95." International Organization 57.4 (2003): 661-694.
2. (Apr 1) Kusafuka, "Truth commissions and gender: A South African case study," African Journal on Conflict Resolution, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2009)
3. (Apr 3) Jha, Saumitra, and Steven Wilkinson. "Does combat experience foster organizational skill? Evidence from ethnic cleansing during the partition of South Asia." American Political Science Review 106.4 (2012): 883-907.
4. (Apr 3) Grewal, Inderpal, Dipin Kaur, and Sasha Sabherwal. "The security state and securitizing patriarchies in postcolonial India." Social Text 40.3 (2022): 83-104.

### Recommended Reading:

- *The Legacy of "Comfort Women" in WWII Japan:*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/14/opinion/comfort-women-japan-south-korea.html>

### Simulation memo Due April 4, 11:59 pm

## Week 12 - Apr 8 and 10: Post-Revolution Democratizations and Their Discontents: The Arab Spring and Color Revolutions

1. (Apr 8) Filin, Nikita, Alexander Khodunov, and Vladimir Koklikov. "Serbian "Otpor" and the color revolutions' diffusion." Handbook of Revolutions in the 21st Century. Springer, Cham, 2022. 465-482
2. (Apr 8) Kuran, Timur. "Now out of never: The element of surprise in the East European revolution of 1989." World politics 44.1 (1991): 7-48.
3. (Apr 10) Brownlee, J., Masoud, T., & Reynolds, A. (2013). Why the Modest Harvest? Journal of Democracy, 24(4), 29–44. doi:10.1353/jod.2013.0061
4. (Apr 10) Nugent, Elizabeth R. After repression: How polarization derails democratic transition. Vol. 28. Princeton University Press, 2020. Chapter 1.

### Recommended Reading:

- Collier, Paul, Anke Hoeffler, and Måns Söderbom. "Post-conflict risks." *Journal of peace research* 45.4 (2008): 461-478.

## Week 13 - Apr 15 and 17: Transitions from Armed Politics to Electoral Politics

1. (Apr 15) Matanock, Aila M., and Paul Staniland. "How and why armed groups participate in elections." *Perspectives on Politics* 16.3 (2018): 710-727.
2. (Apr 15) Flores, Thomas Edward, and Irfan Nooruddin. "The effect of elections on post-conflict peace and reconstruction." *The Journal of politics* 74.2 (2012): 558-570.
3. (Apr 17) Jeroen de Zeeuw, "Projects Do Not Create Institutions: The Record of Democracy Assistance in Post-Conflict Societies," *Democratization*, Volume 12, Number 4 (2005): 481-504.
4. (Apr 17) (Apr 22) Lake, Milli. "Policing insecurity." *American Political Science Review* 116.3 (2022): 858-874.

### Recommended Reading:

- Lawless, Jennifer L. "Women, War, and Winning Elections: Gender Stereotyping in the Post-September 11th Era." *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 57, no. 3, 2004, pp. 479–90. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3219857>

## Week 14 – Tue, Apr 22 and Thu, Apr 24: Memorialization Politics

1. (Apr 22) Otele, Olivette, Luisa Gandolfo, and Yoav Galai, eds. Post-Conflict Memorialization: Missing Memorials, Absent Bodies. Springer Nature, 2021. Read the Introduction chapter (pp 1-15).

2. (Apr 22) Park, You-me. "Comforting the nation: 'Comfort women,' the politics of apology and the workings of gender." *Interventions* 2.2 (2000): 199-211.

(I am super happy to change this last session for another topic/ case that you all might find to be currently missing/ more interesting to cover)

*[Apr 24: Course Conclusion, no assigned reading]*

**Final Simulation on May 2, 2025.**