

SIS 619-007: Youth and Conflict

**School of International Service
American University
Spring 2017**

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Class time: Mondays: 08:20pm – 10:50pm
Classroom: SIS 333

Office: SIS 244
Office Hours: Mondays 2:30pm – 7:00pm and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will explore the various roles of youth in conflict contexts, be it as victims or perpetrators of violence or as actors in peacebuilding processes. Although youth are seen as a particularly vulnerable population who can be susceptible to recruitment into violent activities, they can also be an incredible driving force for change, and may be less jaded than older individuals involved in the political process. We will examine the role of youth in violence and the child soldier phenomenon, as well as the experiences of youth in post-conflict reconstruction processes such as reintegration and reconciliation. We will pay special attention to the discourse surrounding these youth and the general absence of young women from these conversations. Additionally, we will consider how youth influence social movements and peacebuilding processes when they mobilize nonviolently and trends in programming with youth in conflict regions such as peace education and youth peacebuilding through sports and the arts. Throughout the course we will draw from current events and inspect case studies in Asia, the Middle East, Europe, Africa, and the Americas to ground our study in practical experiences of youth throughout the globe.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students will:

- Understand the multitude of roles played by youth in conflict, “post-conflict”, and peacebuilding processes
- Be familiar with foundational texts *and* cutting edge thinking in the field of youth and conflict
- Develop proficiency in applying literature on youth and conflict to analyze pressing international conflicts
- Be familiar with different approaches to intervention programming with youth in conflict situations and designing interventions appropriate for these contexts
- Reflect on personal trajectories for working with youth in peace and conflict based on knowledge and skills gained throughout the course

REQUIRED TEXTS

Honwana, Alcinda. 2013. *Youth and revolution in Tunisia*. New York, Zed Books.

Özerdem, Alpaslan and Sukanya Podder. 2015. *Youth in conflict and peacebuilding: Mobilization, reintegration, and reconciliation*. (E-Book Available from <http://www.palgraveconnect.com.proxyau.wrlc.org/pc/doi/10.1057/9781137314536.0014?focus=true>)

Schwartz, Stephanie. 2010. *Youth in post-conflict reconstruction: Agents of change*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.

REQUIRED ARTICLES/BOOK CHAPTERS

All remaining assigned readings will be provided in PDF form or through links on Blackboard.*

**I reserve the right to add or subtract readings as we progress.*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Class Attendance and Participation:	20%
Youth and Conflict in the News	10%
Reflective Paper:	10%
Group Proposal Presentation:	30%
Final Research Paper:	30%
Total:	100%

Class Attendance and Participation (20%): Attendance and participation is an essential part of this course. Students are expected to attend class, to participate actively and responsibly, to hand in all assignments when due, and to support other students in the learning process. We will all learn from each other. Each student will be an active learner, coming fully prepared to listen to and learn from others and to raise questions and suggest answers or tracks to follow in search of answers. Students are expected to read and be prepared to discuss the assigned texts. We will work collaboratively to understand each other's perspectives and support the growth and learning of one another. Additionally, the use of cellphones is absolutely not permitted during class. Laptops are also not to be used as they can distract from full participation in class discussions.

Youth and Conflict in the News (10%): Before class every week, students will post at least one current event article or video/audio clip that shows the role of youth in conflict or peacebuilding in the world. These will need to be posted every week on the shared discussion platform (Blackboard or Facebook, TBD) by 11:59pm every Sunday before class. In preparation for class, students should also review what fellow students post every week. We will begin each class discussion by examining these events in light of the theories that we are studying in the course. This assignment will be important for contextualizing frameworks explored in the course within conflicts throughout the globe.

Reflective Paper (10%): Students will reflect on how their thinking has changed about

youth in conflict situations, what they have learned about interventions with these youth, and how what they learned in the course has impacted their future plans for working with youth. Specifically, you will be asked to explore questions such as: what new insights have you gained about youth in conflict zones? What are some challenges these youth face that you were previously unaware of? What misconceptions did you have about these youth before this course? How has your thinking changed? If you were planning on working with youth before you started this class, how does what you have learned about youth in peace and conflict affect your future plan for working with them? If you were not interested in youth programming, how has what you have learned in this course informed your future academic or career trajectory? This paper should be between 3-4 pages double-spaced and should follow the “Rough Guide on Reflection” format that will be provided in class. It will be due by 8:20pm on April 24th on Blackboard.

Group Proposal Presentation (30%): The class will be divided into 3 groups and each group will be tasked with selecting a case study, presenting on the role of youth in conflict and peacebuilding for their particular case, and proposing an intervention that will address the issues faced by youth in the conflict. The group should provide a thorough explanation of the dynamics of the conflict and how youth are involved in these dynamics. They will also need to detail the specific initiatives targeting youth that have been implemented in the country. (Examples include reintegration programs, peace education, civil society trainings, Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programs, peacebuilding through sports or the arts, etc.) Most importantly, students should propose a specific intervention plan that addresses the issues they have mapped in the conflict. Presentations will be between 45-60 minutes and will take place on April 10th, 17th, and 24th. More information on this assignment will be provided in class.

Final Research Paper (30%): Students will write a research paper that provides an in-depth analysis of the role of youth in a specific international conflict of their choice. In this paper, the conflict should be mapped as a whole and the student should detail the involvement of youth in violence, their experiences as victims, and any relevant role they played in social mobilization, peacebuilding, or the post-conflict reconstruction process. The paper should use theories explored throughout the course to support their explanation of these conflict dynamics. The student’s work should also provide feasible recommendations on how to further include youth in reconciliation and reintegration processes, peace education, peacebuilding, and civil society building to address unresolved issues in the conflict. This paper should be between 16-18 pages double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font, using the citation style of your choice. This paper will be due on Monday, May 8th by 11:59pm on Blackboard.

Grading Standards: I know that many of you are concerned about your grades and I will do everything in my power to help you throughout the course. However, I do have high standards for you, a function of the respect I have for your ability and ambition. Due to that respect, I simply will not allow you to produce work that is below your potential. Therefore, do not expect a high grade for minimal effort. In general, these will be the standards for your written assignments:

- **A:** Excellent work that thinks precisely, creatively and clearly. The research, if necessary for the assignment, is appropriate to the ideas under examination, creative, and exhaustive in nature. The paper is ready to begin the process of being transformed into published research, a Masters thesis, or a doctoral dissertation.
- **A-:** Strong work that does everything an 'A' paper does but not quite as strongly. There are small gaps in the author's thinking and/or research. I would want the author to revise and resubmit the work before she committed to it for a published paper, doctoral dissertation, or Masters thesis.
- **B+:** About average work for a graduate student. The paper contains some strong ideas or research, but suffers from at least one major problem that remains unresolved (e.g., only weak research, ideas not fully thought out, etc.). The work is still several revisions away from being considered as a published paper, doctoral dissertation, or Masters thesis.
- **B:** Work that only barely rises to the standards I set for a graduate student. There may be a core idea that deserves merit, but the author fails to consider that idea fully. There are extensive problems with both the ideas and research.
- **B- or lower:** Failing work. There is virtually nothing deserving about the analysis in the paper. The author fails to develop a central theme or line of research. There are such massive problems in ideas and research that the author cannot expect to pass this class.

Late Work: Papers and other assignments are to be submitted through Blackboard before the start of class. **Late work will be reduced one letter grade per day.** No work will be accepted over one week late without a valid written medical excuse or notice of death in the family. Work should be submitted in the required format.

Journal of International Service: For students looking to improve their writing, build their resume, and expand their portfolio, you are encouraged to submit your class papers, or modified versions, to the Journal of International Service (JIS). To learn more about JIS and how to submit, please visit: www.american.edu/sis/jis

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: January 16 – MLK Jr. Day – NO CLASS

Week 2: January 23 – Introduction to the Course & Each Other

We will review the syllabus, discuss expectations, and get to know each other.

Reading: Albom, M. (1997). *Tuesdays with Morrie*: pp. 154 – 157 (pdf)

Week 3: January 30 – Children and Youth: Victims of Violence, Actors for Violence, or Change Agents for Peace?

Readings:

- *Youth in Conflict and Peacebuilding*, Chapter 1

- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (Summary & Fact Sheet) (PDF)
- UN Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace & Security (Annotated by UNOY) (PDF)
- Danesh, Roshan. 2008 “Youth and peacebuilding.” In online *Encyclopedia of peace education*, ed. Monisha Bajaj. Available from: http://www.tc.columbia.edu/centers/epe/PDF%20articles/DaneshYouthandPeaceBuilding_22feb08.pdf (PDF)

Week 4: February 6 – The Youth Bulge & Youth Mobilization in Conflict

Readings:

- *Youth in Conflict and Peacebuilding*, Chapter 2
- Urdal, Henrik. 2004. *The Devil in the Demographics: The Effect of Youth Bulges on Domestic Armed Conflict, 1950-2000*, The World Bank. (PDF)
- Urdal, Henrik. 2012. “A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence.” *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs*. (PDF)
- Sommer, Marc. 2007. “Embracing the Margins: Working with Youth amid War and Insecurity.” In *Too Poor for Peace? Global Poverty, Conflict, and Security in the 21st Century*, ed. Lael Brainard & Derek Chollet. Brookings Institution Press. (PDF)
- LaGrafte, Dan. 2012. “The Youth Bulge in Egypt: An Intersection of Demographics, Security, and the Arab Spring.” *Journal of Strategic Security*. 5(2): 65-80. (PDF)

Week 5: February 13 – Child Soldiers and Violent Youth Participation in Conflict

Readings:

- Child Soldiers International website. (<http://www.child-soldiers.org/>) Review everything under the “The Issue” tab (“Who are child soldiers?,” “International Standards,” and “FAQs”).
- Huynh, Kim, Bina D’Costa, and Katrina Lee-Koo. (2015). *Children and Global Conflict*. Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 5) (PDF)
- Wessells, Michael. 2006. “Child Victims, Young Combatants,” Chapter 1 in *Child Soldiers: From Violence to Protection*. Harvard University Press.
- Rosen, David. 2005. *Armies of the Young*, Chapter 1 (Link on Blackboard)

Week 6: February 20 – Youth in Social Movements

Readings:

- Bazeed, Mariam. 2012. “Anonymous no more.” In *Arab Spring dreams: The next generation speaks out for freedom and justice from North Africa to Iran*, eds. Nasser Weddady and Sohrab Ahmari. Palgrave Macmillan. (PDF)
- Tarrow, Sidney. 1998. *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics*. NY: Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 1) (PDF)
- Cole, Juan. 2014. *The New Arabs*. New York, Simon & Schuster. (Chapter 1)

(PDF)

- *Youth and Revolution in Tunisia*, Introduction and Chapters 1-3

Week 7: February 27 – Post-Conflict Youth Reintegration (DDR) and Trauma Healing

Readings:

- *Youth in Conflict and Peacebuilding*, Chapters 3 & 6
- *Youth in Post-Conflict Reconstruction*, Chapters 2 & 3
- Gopin, Marc. 2004. *Healing the heart of conflict: Eight crucial steps to making peace with yourself and others* (excerpt) (PDF)

Week 8: March 6 – Youth in Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Processes

Readings:

- *Youth in Conflict and Peacebuilding*, Chapters 4 & 5
- Ellison, Christine Smith. 2014. "The role of youth in post accord transformation in Northern Ireland. *Peace and Conflict Studies* 21 (1): 25-48.
- Dwyer, Leslie. 2015. "Beyond youth 'inclusion': Intergenerational politics in post-conflict Bali." *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* 10 (3): 16-29.

Week 9: March 13 – Spring Break (NO CLASS)

Week 10: March 20 – Youth Agency in Peacebuilding

Readings:

- *Youth in Post-Conflict Reconstruction*, Chapter 4 & Conclusion
- *Youth and Revolution in Tunisia*, Chapters 4-6 & Conclusion
- Gifford, Darcy. 2004. *PeaceJam: How young people can make peace in their schools and communities*. (Chapter 6) (PDF)
- Barber, Brian K. and Joseph Olsen. 2009. "Positive and negative psychosocial functioning after political conflict: Examining adolescents of the first Palestinian Intifada." In *Adolescents and war: How youth deal with political violence*, ed. Brian K. Barber. Oxford University Press. (PDF)

Week 11: March 27 – Gender (Girls and Young Women as Victims and Activists)

Readings:

- *Youth and Revolution in Tunisia*, Chapter 7
- Ziada, Dalia. 2012. "My sacred NO!" In *Arab Spring dreams: The next generation speaks out for freedom and justice from North Africa to Iran*, eds. Nasser Weddady and Sohrab Ahmari. Palgrave Macmillan. (PDF)
- Taft, Jessica K. 2011. *Rebel girls: Youth activism and social change across the Americas*. New York University Press. (Introduction)(PDF)

- Swaine, Aisling, with Thomas Feeny. 2004. "A neglected perspective: Adolescent girls' experiences of the Kosovo conflict of 1999." In *Children and youth on the front line: Ethnography, armed conflict & displacement*, eds. Jo Boyden and Joanna de Berry. New York, Berghahn Books. (PDF)

Week 12: April 3 – Peace Education in Ethnopolitical Conflict

Readings:

- Salomon, Gavriel, and Edward Cairns, eds. 2010. *Handbook on peace education*. New York: NY: Psychology Press. (Introduction) (PDF)
- Lazarus, Ned. 2015. "Evaluating seeds of peace: Assessing long-term impact in volatile context." In *Peace education evaluation: Learning from experience and exploring prospects*, eds. Celine Del Felice, Aaron Karako, & Andria Wisler. Charlotte, Information Age Publishing. (PDF)
- Malhotra, Deepak, and Sumanasiri Liyanage. 2005. "Long-term effects of peace workshops in protracted conflicts." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 49 (6), 908-924. (PDF)
- Cromwell Draft Dissertation Chapters (TBD)

Week 13: April 10 – Group 1 Presentation, Arts-Based Youth Peacebuilding, GUEST SPEAKER: Nawal Rajeh

Readings:

- Lederach, John Paul. 2011. "The 'Wow Factor' and a non-theory of change." In *Positive approaches to peacebuilding: A resource for innovators*, eds. Cynthia Sampson, Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Claudia Liebler, and Diana Whitney. (PDF)
- Opiyo, Lindsay McClain, and Tricia Redeker Hepner. 2013. "Youth in transition: The arts and cultural resonance in postconflict Northern Uganda." In *Conflict and peacebuilding in the Africa Great Lakes Region*, eds. Kenneth Omeje and Tricia Redeker Hepner. (PDF)

Recommended:

- Lederach, John Paul. 2005. *The moral imagination*. Oxford University Press. (Chapter 7)(PDF)
- Picher, Marie-Claire. 2007. "Democratic process and the theater of the oppressed." *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 116: 79-88.

Week 14: April 17 – Youth Peacebuilding through Sports, Group 2 Presentation

Readings:

- Tuohey, Brendan and Brian Cognato. 2011. "PeacePlayers International: A case study on the use of sport as a tool for conflict transformation." *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 31 (1): 51-63.
- Mitchell, David, Ian Somerville, and Owen Hargie. 2016. "Sport for peace in Northern Ireland? Civil Society, change, and constraint after the 1998 Good Friday Agreement." *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 18 (4): 981-996.

- Galily, Yair, Michael J. Leitner, and Pini Shimion. 2013. "The effects of three Israeli sports programs on attitudes of Arabs and Jews toward one another." *Journal of Aggression, Conflict, and Peace Research* 5 (4): 243-258.

Week 15: April 24 – Course Integration, Group 3 Presentation

Readings:

- *Youth in Conflict and Peacebuilding*, Chapters 7 & 8
- Sommers, Marc. 2015. *The outcast majority: War, development, and youth in Africa*. University of Georgia Press. (Chapter 6) (PDF)

Week 16: May 1 – Course Wrap-up: Reflection on Learning

Week 17: May 8 – FINAL PAPER DUE BY 11:59PM

UNIVERSITY-WIDE POLICIES

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE

Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's Academic Integrity Code, which can be found at: <http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.cfm>

It is expected that all assignments will be completed according to the standards set forth in this code. By registering, students have acknowledged awareness of the Academic Code and are obliged to become familiar with their rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will result in disciplinary action. Please see me if there are any questions about the academic violations described in the Code in general, or as they relate to particular requirements for this or any other course or work at American University.

DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS

If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please do not hesitate to consult with me. In addition to the resources of the department, a wide range of services is available to support you in your efforts to meet the course requirements:

Academic Support and Access Center (x3360, MGC 243):

In addition to using the resources available in this department, all students may take advantage of individual academic counseling, skills workshops, tutor referrals, Supplemental Instruction, and writing appointments in the Academic Support and Access Center.

Note: Students with Disabilities:

If you wish to receive accommodations for a disability, please notify me with a letter from the Academic Support and Access Center. As accommodations are not retroactive, timely notification at the beginning of the semester, if possible, is requested.

Counseling Center (x3500, MGC 214):

The Counseling Center offers counseling and consultations regarding personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus mental health resources.

Writing Center:

The Writing Center in 228 Battelle-Tompkins offers free, individual coaching sessions to all AU students. In your 45-minute session, a student writing consultant can help you address assignments, understand the conventions of academic writing, and learn how to revise and edit your own work. The Center offers appointments on the hour from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, and 3 to 6 p.m. on Sundays. Call 202- 885- 2991 to arrange a session.

Center for Diversity & Inclusion:

The Center for Diversity & Inclusion is dedicated to enhancing LGBTQ, Multicultural, First Generation, and Women's experiences on campus and to advance AU's commitment to respecting & valuing diversity by serving as a resource and liaison to students, staff, and faculty on issues of equity through education, outreach, and advocacy. It is located on the 2nd floor of Mary Graydon Center: 202-885-3651, email is cdi@american.edu.

AU EMERGENCY PREPARATIONS

In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease) (or other emergency), American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format or use of distance instructional methods, or both. All faculty members will design alternative means of completing classes. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. I will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail, or Blackboard, or both, while you must inform me immediately of any absence due to illness or emergency. Students are responsible for checking AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, you should refer to the AU Web site (www.prepared.american.edu) and the AU information line at 202-885-1000 for general university-wide information. AND contact your faculty, or respective dean's office, or both for course and school/college-specific information.