American University School of International Service  
International Peace and Conflict Resolution Program

LOCALIZING PEACE  
SIS 619.023 2017F  
Mondays, 2:30 - 5:20PM; HRST 209

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I. Course Description

There is a widely held belief that modern peacebuilding practice (over the past 15-20 years) has produced disappointing results, from an economic standpoint to be sure, but also with respect to the stated objectives of powerful western interveners. The so-called “liberal peace,” consisting of democracy, rule of law, market economics, has proved a bridge too far, whether in the former Yugoslavia, Sierra Leone, Iraq or Afghanistan, to name but a few noteworthy examples. In light of the enormous resources that have been committed to these peacebuilding efforts, why have results been so tragically suboptimal? There are many theories and empirical studies that try to provide answers. At the most fundamental level, the argument is top-down, imposed (hegemonic) peace is doomed to failure, and that a far more nuanced approach that appreciates and capitalizes on local traditions and practices holds a higher promise of success. Of course this is an oversimplification, and we will not be romanticizing the traditional; but we will be critiquing the dominant paradigm and examining when, why and how peace from the grassroots up, is best suited to the needs and desires of affected peoples.

II. Course Objectives

The course is designed to achieve several, interrelated objectives. First, to examine what local peacebuilding actually means. Is it simply a geographical designation or are we referring to specific approaches, goals, and values that are unique to peace at the local level? As a second objective is to analyze international and regional dynamics that may undermine local efforts. Finally, we seek to become more familiar with best current practices in the field.
III. Learning Outcomes

Expectations are you will be able to think critically about the main themes and topics of the course, specifically, what are the ingredients of success and what leads to more problematic outcomes in efforts to build peace at the local level. You will know the main challenges to localizing peace, and potential approaches to affecting more positive outcomes. Through the study of concrete cases you will learn about the shortcomings of many current practices as well as policies and on-the-ground programs that have produced more promising results. In individual study and group work you will assess the strength and utility of various approaches to putting local first. You will be able to express your knowledge and analytical skills in writing and in oral presentations.

IV. Assignments and Grading Criteria

1. Participation (15%)

- Obviously you must attend class to participate!
- Consistent engagement
- Preparation and familiarity with course topics and content of readings
- Quality of interpretation and analysis of topics and themes
- Response to other students and to instructor

- Each of the criteria will be scaled as adequate (1 point), good (2 points), and excellent (3 points)

Team Presentations (20%)

Starting in week four, teams of 2 students will critically examine the week’s readings. The presentation will be 30 minutes long, followed by a discussion period. In the presentation, students must consider the following questions: How convincing are the arguments presented in the week’s reading? Are there any shortcomings in the thesis of the author(s)? Are the cases cited transferable or are they sui generis? Has anything been overlooked in the argument made? After your presentation, lead the class in a discussion for 5-10 minutes by preparing a few questions for your classmates to consider. You should also be prepared to address any questions your classmates have for you. The class discussion will continue after your presentation is “officially” over, but it is your presentation that will lead us into examination of the week’s theme(s).

Analytical Paper (25%): Due September 28

Critically review the Victoria Fonton reading (week 4). What are her views regarding the challenge of localizing peace? How convincing a case does she make? What are the strengths and weaknesses of her arguments? In illustrating your points, it would help to
make reference to real world cases.

- The paper should not exceed 1,500 words. U of Chicago or APA style.
- Do not consult or reference outside sources other than for the concrete case.
- Title page must cite your name, and the title of the paper.
- Be sure to number pages
- Of course critical analysis does not necessarily mean “criticism.” It means carefully studying her arguments and determining their merits and shortcomings.

Grading Criteria
I. Comprehension of the author’s arguments
II. Sophistication of your analysis of its merits and shortcomings
III. Analytical rigor
IV. Originality of your thought and insight
V. Quality of writing (e.g., logical flow, style, force of narrative, no errors in spelling, grammar, syntax. No typos!)

Final Paper (40%): Due December 7

Based on the practitioner approaches covered in Weeks 12-14 and other sources (not more than 2 or 3) develop a “how to” primer for external actors (NGOs, governments, regional or multilateral organizations) to help enhance peacebuilding effectiveness. The primer should outline the challenges that are likely to be faced, approaches that might be taken to help empower local organizations, discuss how to leave a “light footprint” that helps local actors develop local solutions to local problems. Be as practical as you can in your recommendations. Be realistic in considering contexts, resources, options, and restrictions (social, political, economic).

- The primer should not exceed 3,500 words. U of Chicago or APA style.
- You are free to consult all sources.
- Be sure to carefully offer supporting data, especially when making assertions regarding a course of action.
- Title page must cite your name, and the title of the paper.
- Be sure to number pages
- Of course your recommendations must be supported by reference to concepts covered in class and their real-world application.

Grading Criteria
I. The range and depth of research
II. Strength and balance of recommendations
III. Synthesis, sequencing and calibration of approach(es) recommended to localize peace
IV. Analytical rigor
V. Originality of thought and insight

VI. Quality of writing (e.g., logical flow, style, force of narrative, no errors in spelling, grammar, syntax. Again, no typos!)

Grading Scale

See, http://www.american.edu/provost/registrar/academicservices/system.cfm

Please note that an “A” grade denotes an excellent performance and work that is original, insightful, critical, clear, well written and well presented. It indicates that you (and your group) worked effectively and successfully to complete all assignments. A “B” is solid work that is well organized and goes beyond minimum requirements. It reflects a good command of the material, with instances of higher-level thinking and intellectual engagement. It will also indicate the degree to which the team has worked effectively. A “C” reflects a lack of higher-level thinking, intellectual originality, clear organization, and teamwork. A “D” indicates that minimum course requirements were not fully met. An “F” means the minimum course requirements were not met.

Late Assignment Policy

Late assignments will not be accepted without penalty except in cases of genuine, documented, illness or emergency. Late submissions will be downgraded one-third a letter grade for the first three hours (e.g., A- to B+) and a full letter grade thereafter, up to 24 hours later (e.g., A to B), after which papers will not be accepted without more severe penalty.

V. Academic Integrity Code

In the unlikely event that you have not consulted the American University Academic Integrity Code, I urge you to carefully read all sections at http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.cfm. There is no excuse for violation of the Code, not least due to ignorance of standards of conduct or definition of integrity violations.

VI. Required Texts (available in campus bookstore or E-book, AU Library)

VII. Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

[Key to Text Abbreviations: 1. Preparing for Peace (PfP); 2. Building Sustainable Peace (BSP); 3. International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance (IPLR)]

Week 1 (August 28): Introduction
- Review of syllabus, course content, course objectives
- Discussion of learning objectives
- Concepts and definitions

Required Reading
- IPLR, Introduction

Section 1. Overview: Challenges and Framework

Week 2 (September 11): The Problematic

Requires Reading
- BSP, pp. xxxi-lx
- IPLR, Ch. 1, “The Liberal Peace,” pp. 19-46

Week 3 (September 18): Frameworks for Local Peace

Required Reading
- PfP, pp. 3-33
- BSP, Ch. 11, “Participatory Peacebuilding,” pp. 241-259
Section 2. Overview: External Challenges to Local Peace

Week 4 (September 25): Local Global Tension

Required Reading
- BSP, Ch. 1, pp. 1-17; Ch. 2, pp. 23-43; Ch. 4. pp. 71-88

Analytical paper due by 11:59 PM September 28

Week 5 (October 2): Regional Organizations and Local Peace

Required Reading
- BSP, Ch. 9 and 10

Section 3. Women and Local Peace

Week 6 (October 9): The Importance of Women in Local Peacebuilding

Required Reading
- BSP, Ch. 7

Section 4. The “Hybridization” and Elicitive Models

Week 7 (October 16): Local Peacebuilding and Hybridity

Required Reading
- IPLR, pp. 47-67 and 68-90

Week 8 (October 23): Hybrid Security and Economy: Afghanistan and Iraq

Required Reading
- IPLR, Chapters 4 and 5

Weeks 9 and 10 (October 30 and November 6): Hybrid Statebuilding, Governance & Civil Society: Bosnia, Lebanon and Northern Ireland
Required Reading
- IPLR, Ch. 6,7, and 8
- PSP, Ch. 5 and 6

Week 11 (November 13): Local Participation: The Elicitive Model

Required Reading
- PfP, pp. 37-122

Section 5. Guidance for Practitioners

Week 12 (November 20): Lessons from Development Assistance – Peace Direct

Required Reading

Week 13 (November 27): Participatory Approaches to Building Peace – World Vision

Required Reading

Week 14 (December 4): Identifying and Engaging Local Systems – USAID

Required Reading

FINAL PAPER DUE 11:59 PM, THURSDAY, December 7

VIII. Sources of Support

If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please don’t 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 Center** (x3360, MGC 243) offers study skills workshops, individual instruction, tutor referrals, and services for students with learning disabilities. Writing support is available in the ASC Writing Lab or in the Writing Center, Battelle 228.

**Counseling Center** (x3500, MGC 214) offers counseling and consultations regarding personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus mental health resources.

**Disability Support Services** (x3315, MGC 206) offers technical and practical support and assistance with accommodations for students with physical, medical, or psychological disabilities. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please notify me in a timely manner with a letter from the Academic Support Center or Disability Support Services so that we can make arrangements to address your needs.

### IX. Emergency Preparedness

In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease), 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 and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site (www.prepared.american.edu) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean’s office for course and school/college-specific information.