

# Syllabus

Fall 2016

424/524

## UN Intervention In Global Crises

Humanitarianism,  
Development  
Peace,  
and Conflict.

INTL 424/524, Fall 2016  
Fridays, 2-4:50 p.m.  
16 Pacific Hall

Nick Macdonald [npm@uoregon.edu](mailto:npm@uoregon.edu)  
PH: 971 231-7839  
Office Hours: PLC 371  
Fridays, noon to 2 p.m., and by appointment.

### Course Description

Explores the theory and practice of UN intervention, humanitarian aid, peace-building, and development during or after violent conflict. Focuses on work of the UN and other international organizations in conflict areas or on issues of conflict.

### Expected Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate understanding of the international conflict management system led by the United Nations that works to intervene and manage conflicts between and within states, provide relief and development assistance, and protect human rights.
- Evaluate the landscape of theories of conflict and development, their critiques, and be able to articulate, justify, and criticize their opinions about approaches to poverty reduction, human rights protection and peace-building.
- Analyze several real world examples of UN and other organizations working 'in' and 'on' conflict, and the kinds of practical obstacles and dilemmas they present.

**Texts:**

Keen, David 2012, Complex Emergencies. Polity.

Rieff, David 2003, A Bed for the Night. Simon & Schuster

Crocker, Chester (Ed) 2007, Leashing the Dogs of War. USIP Press.

Minear, Larry 2002, The Humanitarian Enterprise. Kumarian Press.

Caplan, Richard 2006, International Governance of War Torn Territories. OUP.

Additional readings are from journals or periodicals and will be provided to students.

## Week-by-Week

### Week 1- Introduction: Humanitarianism, development, peace, and conflict.

Why has the development and relief community found itself working in conflict environments so much in the past 20 years? What does this look like in practice?

Keen, David 2012, Complex Emergencies. Ch 1 – War pp 11-24.

Rieff, David 2003, A Bed for the Night Section 1 pp 31-120



Crocker, Chester 2007, Leashing the Dogs of War Ch 14 pp245-261 & Ch 28 pp 497-518

### Week 4 - Case study 2 - Genocide in Rwanda.

As the UN peacekeeping operation struggles in the face of overwhelming violence, the humanitarian agencies wrestle with the moral issues of providing assistance in the midst of a genocide.

Rieff, David 2003, A Bed for the Night Ch5 Rwanda pp 155-193

UNHCR Rwandan Genocide and its aftermath 245-273

Power, Samantha, 2001 The Atlantic. Bystanders to Genocide pp 1-30



### Week 5 - Transitional administrations.

How and why the UN and other organizations step in to administer territories and countries that have fallen under international jurisdiction.



### Week 2 - Case study 1 - Humanitarian intervention and peacekeeping operations - Bosnia and Herzegovina

As war rages on the borders of Europe in the early 1990s the international community struggles with how to frame the conflict, whether to respond with humanitarianism or military force, and how to stop the violence in the Former Yugoslavia.

Rieff, David 2003, A Bed for the Night Ch4 Bosnia pp 123-154

Minear, Larry 2002, The Humanitarian Enterprise pp 119-144

### Week 3 - Coercive humanitarianism.

We'll examine the use of military power for humanitarian reasons, both unilaterally and as part of multilateral forces. The advantages and pitfalls of this practice.

Caplan, International Governance of War Torn Territories  
Intro & Ch 1 pp1-41

Crocker, Chester 2007, Leashing the Dogs of War Ch 21  
pp369-387



### Week 6 - Case study 3 - Kosovo - humanitarianism and human rights.

At the height of the popularity of the idea of 'humanitarian war', with human rights organizations calling for lessons from the failed UN military intervention in Bosnia, NATO embarks on a military campaign in Serbia designed to assist Kosovo Albanians.

Humanitarian agencies deal with the resulting refugee crisis and humanitarian issues, but some suggest that the dream of using military might to address humanitarian and human rights issues effectively dies in Kosovo.

Rieff, David 2003, A Bed for the Night Ch6 Kosovo pp 197-229

Yannis, Alexandros 2004, Global Governance 10, 67-81.  
The UN as government in Kosovo

### Week 7 - Humanitarianism and development assistance in war.

Why has the development and relief community found itself working in conflict environments so much in the past 20 years?

What practical and philosophical problems does this pose?  
What tools and approaches to humanitarian agencies adopt to cope?



Keen, David 2012, Complex Emergencies. Ch 5 – Famine pp 100-148.

Minear, Larry 2002, The Humanitarian Enterprise pp 189-209

### Week 8 - Case study 4 - International intervention and war in Afghanistan.

For those who have been working in Afghanistan for decades the US coalition is a defining moment in many ways. For some they are just one more invading army, for others they are the last best hope for peace and development, some view them as crusading imperialists, and others try to tread a painful path of maintaining 'independence and neutrality' when their main donors are also belligerent powers.

Rieff, David 2003, A Bed for the Night Ch7 Afghanistan pp 231-265

Minear and Smith, Humanitarian Diplomacy Ch7 pp 153-171

Featherstone, Andy, 2012. Afghanistan: A case study. Pp1-24

### Week 9 - 'Natural' disasters and war - Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Pakistan.

Sri Lanka, Aceh, and Pakistan were all embroiled in decades long civil wars when the 2005 Indian Ocean Tsunami hit - why did the peace processes turn out so differently for each?



Renner and Chafe, 2007. Beyond Disasters pp1-56

Anderson, Mary, Option for Aid in Conflict pp 5-25

Cohen, Charles, 2008 Journal of Conflict Resolution. The Political Economy of 'Natural' Disasters pp795-816

## Week 10 - Conclusions, overflow, extra issues.

We'll wrap up, deal with any outstanding issues, questions, and special requests.

Rieff, David 2003, A Bed for the Night Ch Endgame pp 267-302

## Requirements: Undergraduates

Activity	Hours per term UG	Explanation
Lecture	20	10 2-hour lectures
Seminar	10	Seminar style discussions
Assigned reading	50	~100 pp (5 hrs)
Writing assignments	40	4hrs/week UG Weekly reading assignments (specifics will vary by week, but will include reading journals, policy essay, group project proposal).
	120	

Undergraduate students are expected to complete the assigned basic reading, participate in class discussions, and complete writing assignments. Contributions in class are an opportunity to demonstrate understanding of the material, raise questions, and discuss competing conclusions.

Written assignments are expected to refer to the assigned reading where relevant.

I assign grades for undergraduates based on four data points.

### Participation (30%)

To get a C grade, you should show up, having done the reading, and contribute something to the class discussion that shows you've done the reading. You'll also need to complete the weekly reading journal. This is a one to two paragraph email everyone should send me every week in which you tell me what you found most interesting or challenging about the reading that week. To get a B I want you to contribute something to class that advances the group's understanding of the material and to get an A you need to show your deeper mastery of it.

### Supplementary reading – Syria (10%)

The humanitarian situation in Syria has been critical for the past 5 years, and remains fast-moving and dynamic. Undergraduate students will complete additional reading relating to the Syria emergency.

The reading consists of selection of topical reading identified by the instructor. Undergraduates will be expected to integrate this material into class participation grade (both verbal participation and reading journal).

### Policy Essay (30%)

This is an individual essay you will write about a policy issue involving an organization operating in the intersection of the issues of aid, development, conflict and peace experiences. It can be pretty much anything you like (talk to me first about it!), but it's going to be easier for you to focus on something we deal with in class. Past topics include: 'Save the Children's child protection policies in complex emergencies', and 'ICRC's use of armed protection in conflict environments'.

The purpose of the essay is to give you a chance to demonstrate your ability to describe the issues that led the organization in question to adopt the stance it did, and the pros and cons of it.

An essay that outlines the facts of the situation and describe what happened will get you a C. To get a B you'll need to connect the logic behind what the organization decided to do with the problem they were trying to solve. A-grade essays will place these decisions in a larger context of development theory and other possible choices that could have been made.



## Group proposal project (30%)

This is a project done in a group, and written in the form of a funding or action proposal to carry out some kind of intervention that will address a conflict / development related need. Your group might write a proposal to a donor for assistance-work in a refugee camp, a proposal for military action to end a war, or pretty much anything else that gives you a chance to demonstrate that you can identify a problem, craft an appropriate solution, and make the case for the right actors to take action. Past projects included a proposal for comprehensive state-building in Somalia, military intervention in the DRC, and a proposal for water solutions in conflict-affected camps. A project proposal that shows an understanding of the facts of the situation and describes a plausible intervention will earn a C grade. To get a B you'll need to show the logic that connects your analysis of the problem to the expected outcome of the intervention. A-grade projects will place these decisions in a larger context of development theory, and explore other possible choices that could have been made, while anticipating potential problems or unintended negative consequences.

## Requirements: Graduate students

Activity	Hours per term Grad	Explanation
Lecture	20	10 2-hour lectures
Seminar	10	Seminar style discussions
Assigned reading	70	~160 pp (7 hrs) / week Grad Readings assigned to undergraduates plus additional case study readings on Syria.
Writing assignments	60	6 hrs/week grad Will vary from week to week but will include weekly reading journal, policy essay and group project. Additional for grads: five 2-3pp reading critiques.
	160	

Graduate students are expected to complete the assigned basic reading, participate in class discussions, and complete writing assignments. Contributions in class are an opportunity to demonstrate understanding of the material, raise questions, and discuss competing conclusions.

Written assignments are expected to refer to the assigned reading where relevant, and place the topic in a broader context that reflects an understanding of relevant critical frameworks.

I assign grades for graduate students based on five data points:

## Participation (15%)

To get a C grade, you should show up, having done the reading, and contribute something to the class discussion that shows you've done the reading. You'll also need to complete the weekly reading journal. This is a one to two paragraph email everyone should send me every week in which you tell me what you found most interesting or challenging about the reading that week. To get a B, I want you to contribute something to class that advances the group's understanding of the material. To get an A you need to show your deeper mastery of it.

## Supplementary case study – Syria (10%)

The humanitarian situation in Syria has been critical for the past 5 years, and remains fast-moving and dynamic. Graduate students will undertake a supervised case study of the Syria emergency.

The case study consists of a weekly written response (additional to the regular reading response) or mini-essay based on topical reading identified by the instructor. These readings may be drawn from scholarly work, contemporary humanitarian publication, or long-form journalism and will focus on salient issues of current relevance.

Graduate students will write weekly notes on the reading and will be expected to draw comparisons to other case studies and theoretical materials, and show the similarities and differences of the Syria emergency.

Outlining the facts of the situation and describing what happens will get you to a C-grade. To get a B, you'll need to dive into the reasons for the way events unfold the way they do. A-grade responses will place Syria in a larger context of development and humanitarian theory.

## Reading critique (15%)

Five 2-3 page critiques of weekly readings that highlight relevant themes, draw out commonalities or tensions between these and previous readings, and place the content in a broad context. C grades will be awarded for critiques that are a factual understanding of the reading, B grades will show how the different readings relate to one another, highlighting conflicts or agreements, while A grades will do all of this, plus relate the reading to other relevant material.

## Policy Essay (30%)

This is an individual essay, which you write. It should be about a policy issue facing an organization operating in the intersection of the issues of aid, development, conflict and peace experiences. It can be pretty much anything you like (talk to me first about it!), but it's going to be easier for you to focus on something we deal with in class. Past topics included: 'Save the Children's child protection policies in complex emergencies', and 'ICRC's use of armed protection in conflict environments'.

The purpose of the essay is to give you a chance to demonstrate your ability to describe the issues that led the organization in question to adopt the stance it did, and the pros and cons of it.

An essay that outlines the facts of the situation and describe what happened will get you a C. To get a B you'll need to connect the logic behind what the organization decided to do with the problem they were trying to solve. A-grade essays will place these decisions in a larger context of development theory and other possible choices that could have been made.

## Group proposal project (30%)

This is a project done in a group, and written in the form of a funding or action proposal to carry out some kind of intervention that will address a conflict / development related need. Your group might write a proposal to a donor for assistance-work in a refugee camp, a proposal for military action to end a war, or pretty much anything else that gives you a chance to demonstrate that you can identify a problem, craft an appropriate solution, and make the case for the right actors to take action. Past projects included a proposal for comprehensive state-building in Somalia, military intervention in the DRC, and a proposal for water solutions in conflict-affected camps.

A project proposal that shows an understanding of the facts of the situation and describes a plausible intervention will earn a C grade. To get a B you'll need to show the logic that connects your analysis of the problem to the expected outcome of the intervention. A-grade projects will place these decisions in a larger context of development theory and explore other possible choices that could have been made, anticipating potential problems or unintended negative consequences.

## Grading

### How do I do well in this class as an undergraduate?

To get a C as an undergraduate you will need an understanding of the history, the facts, and the main characters and ideas of the topics. You will need to synthesize information from textbooks, other readings, and lectures to understand what happens in the kinds of situations that concern us in this course.

To get a B at the undergraduate level you will have a grasp of the basic events and actors, but you will also understand the conversation that takes place in the material between differing and sometimes contradictory perspectives. You'll notice these inconsistencies and ideological positions, and you'll respectfully challenge the assumptions and biases through lively debate.

To get an A at the undergraduate level you will need to do everything above, and in addition you will be expected to show deeper critical analysis, actively seeking alternative sources, interpretations, and voices, understanding the important principles at play and the contested understandings of them.

### How do I do well in this class as a graduate?

In general graduate students are expected to be bringing a significantly higher standard of analysis and to proactively integrate new material into broader theory and knowledge.

To get a B at the graduate level you will be expected have an excellent grasp of the events and actors, to show deep critical analysis, and to show how they relate to relevant theory.

To get an A at graduate level you will need to do everything above, but also actively seek alternative sources, interpretations, and voices. You should not take any of the course's structure or content as natural or inevitable, and will spot (and fill!) the gaps, as well as identifying and challenging the assumptions and biases baked into the course format. At this level you'll be understanding the important principles at play, and the contested understandings of events.

No assignments will be accepted late except by prior arrangement with a compelling reason (legitimate reasons for extensions include documented sickness, but do not include failure to plan your time and manage workload).

The instructor will assign letter grades roughly corresponding to the table below. However, in some cases, the instructor will curve course grades, in order

to more fairly distribute letter grades. Letter grades will always be curved in the students' favor, e.g. a "92" might be an A- or an A, but not a B+; similarly, a 70 might be a C- or C, but never a D+.

A+	100
A	94-99
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	< 60

**Accessibility statement:**

*The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center (formerly Disability Services) in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or [uoaec@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoaec@uoregon.edu).*