

SYLLABUS

SC 094: Social Conflict
T/Th 9-10:15
Carney Hall 106
Fall 2006

Instructor: Michelle Gawerc
Office Hours: T/W 10:30-11:30
e-mail: gawerc@bc.edu
Office: McGuinn 410-B

The end of the Cold War has not put an end to either war or violent conflicts within society. Some old conflicts that were dormant have now flared up. Problems of large scale, violent conflicts unfortunately remain central in the modern world. The probability of nuclear proliferation and the possible use of chemical weapons make such conflicts even scarier. The purpose of this course is to increase your understanding of the conditions under which social conflicts tend to become violent and on how they can be resolved non-violently.

Since this is a core sociology course, we will address some of the perennial questions that concern sociologists about society, conflict, and human and social behavior. More specifically, we will consider rebellion, conflict and conflict resolution, socialization and culture, war, genocide and the breakdown of social order, and finally, the possibilities for peace and justice. In this course, we will explore issues of causality (human nature or social creation); the characteristic of societies with and without war; the tension between peace and justice; and finally, questions concerning the potential for human agency within the larger social structures. Through this broader exploration of these perennial questions we will keep an eye towards the questions: Why is there so much destructive conflict; how can it be transformed to more constructive conflict; and what is needed for building more peaceful and just societies taking into account both structures and relationships.

In this course, we will also incorporate culturally diverse perspectives that bring new and critical insight into these perennial topics of rebellion, conflict, war, genocide, and peace. These voices and perspectives are vital for the study of social conflict and often serve to bring issues of oppression, justice, discrimination, and prejudice to the forefront.

The course explores work in the fields of sociology, conflict resolution, and peace studies that draw on comparative, historical, and case study methods. Students mainly read qualitative material but there is also attention to quantitative data as it relates to social conflict and war. There is also an in-depth and critical look at issues of framing for understanding conflict and the ways individual conflicts are represented in the mass media.

Finally, we will bring a historical perspective to the course with an eye towards where we have come from, where we are now, and where we may be going. Society is not static and change is inevitable. So the question is not whether or not there will be change, but what kind of change will there be and where will we be in relation to it. It is my intention that this course will help you to recognize the moral significance of your life, both for you and society and encourage

you to create a life philosophy that integrates your values, commitments, and the type of change you would like to see in this world.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND EXPECTATIONS

The format of the class sessions is unusual, with very few lectures. The course will be discussion-based and involve experiential learning and active learning/ participative methods. In numerous class sessions, the class will be divided into learning groups of five to seven people to carry out exercises that we will later discuss.

In this course, I would like to foster an open atmosphere of discussion, learning, questioning, dialogue, and teamwork. Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, who saw education as part of a larger struggle for liberation from oppression and social change, referred to traditional teaching styles as being based on *a banking concept of education*, in which the teachers *deposit* knowledge into the students. In this model, teachers are seen as being knowledgeable and students ignorant. The teacher is the subject and students are the objects; the teacher is made active and students are made passive with the focus being on memorizing rather than really understanding. This class will not be run in this way. I do not have all the answers—no one does for that matter. And rather than *depositing* knowledge, I will seek to pose problems and foster critical thinking about social conflict, its analysis, and the possibilities for resolution. As noted above, much of the regular class sessions will involve group work committed to this purpose. In this class, the goal is for you to be an active learner—rather than a passive learner. In order for this to work, your participation and your preparedness with the readings (not to mention your attendance) is pivotal.

READINGS

The coursepack consists of many of the required readings that you will need to bring to class. They are available at the BC Bookstore and you should obtain copies as soon as possible. In addition to the coursepack, we will be using the following texts (all available in paperback):

Bartos, Otomar J. & Paul Wehr. 2002. *Using Conflict Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Evans, William. 2006. *War and Peace in an Age of Terrorism: A Reader*. Boston: Pearson Education.

COURSE OUTLINE

I. Rebellion

(Focus on the dynamics of conflict. Case study: Berkeley in the Sixties)

September 5th – Introduction and Orientation. Case Study: Berkeley in the Sixties
No Readings

Begin Case Study: Berkeley in the Sixties (video – first half)

September 7th – Social Protest & Social Change. Case Study: Berkeley in the Sixties
No Readings

*Case Study cont: Berkeley in the Sixties (second half)
Reflection & Discussion of Film*

September 12th – Rebellious Collective Action

Readings:

William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani, “Why Do People Rebel?” including introduction and excerpts by Eric Hoffer, William Kornhauser, James C. Davies, and Charles Tilly

Saul D. Alinsky, “The Process of Power” (excerpt)

William A. Gamson, Bruce Fireman, and Steve Rytina, “The Theory and Practice of Rebellion” (excerpt)

Robert A. Dahl, “Legitimacy and Authority” (excerpt)

Discussion & Learning Group: Rebellious Collective Action

September 14th – Emergence & Dynamics of Conflict

Readings:

Otomar J. Bartos & Paul Wehr, “Emergence of Overt Conflicts” (chap. 5) and “Escalation and Deescalation” (chap. 7 – skim escalation models)

Discussion & Learning Group: Conflict Spiral

II. Conflict and Conflict Resolution

(Focus on theories of conflict; positive value of conflict; game theoretical models; conflict management, resolution and transformation)

September 19 – Theories of Conflict

Readings:

Otomar J. Bartos & Paul Wehr, “Introduction” (chap. 1) and “Understanding Conflict” (chap. 2)

Lewis Coser, “The Functions of Conflict” (excerpt, coursepack)

Robert A. Dahl, “Conflict: A Paradigm” (excerpt, coursepack)

Discussion & Learning Groups: Game Theory Models of Conflict

September 21 – Conflict and Issues of Framing

Readings:

Conflict Research Consortium, “Incompatible Frames” (coursepack)

Charlotte Ryan, “Getting Framed: The Media Shape Reality” (excerpt, coursepack)

Discussion & Learning Group: Framing Arab-Israeli Conflict

September 26 – Incompatible Goals: Contested Resources, Roles, and Values.

Case Study: Civil Rights Struggle.

Readings:

Otomar J. Bartos & Paul Wehr, “Development of Incompatible Goals” (chap. 3) and “Application to the Civil Rights Struggle” (chap. 4)

Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (coursepack)

Film: At the River I Stand

Discussion

September 28 – Conflict Resolution Basics

Readings:

Roger Fisher and William Ury, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving Up* (WP Reader)

Discussion & Learning Groups: Conflict Resolution Basics

October 3 – Conflict Resolution (cont.)

Readings:

Otomar J. Bartos & Paul Wehr, “Making Conflict Work Economically” (chap. 9)

Kenneth E. Boulding, “Conflict Resolution and Control” (abridged, coursepack)

Simulation: Conflict in Labworld

October 5 – Conflict Resolution (cont.). Simulation: Conflict in Labworld

Readings:

Louis Kriesberg, “Countering Intractability” (excerpt, coursepack)

Otomar J. Bartos & Paul Wehr, “Understanding and Managing Conflicts”
(chap.10)

Simulation: Conflict in Labworld

III. Socialization and Culture

October 10 – Gender: War, Peace, Violence & Negotiations

Readings:

Francesca Cancian, “A Conversation on War, Peace, and Gender” (coursepack)

Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever, “Introduction: Women Don’t Ask”
(coursepack)

Film: Tough Guise: Violence, Media and the Crisis in Masculinity

October 12 – Religion, Gender & Culture.

Readings:

Elise Boulding, “History at Sword’s Point? The War-Nurtured Identity of
Western Civilization” (coursepack)

Learning Group: Socialization for War

Discussion of film and readings (from 10/10 & 10/12)

(Midterm Exam: Tuesday, October 17)

IV. War and Peace

(Positive and negative peace; characteristics of societies without war; war and democracy; international conflict management; peacekeeping; the World Court)

October 19 – Historical Overview – Is War Inevitable?

Readings:

Will and Ariel Durant, “The Lessons of History” (WP Reader)

Francesca M. Cancian & James William Gibson. “Is War Inevitable?”
(coursepack)

David Fabbro, “Equality in Peaceful Societies” (coursepack)

Discussion on readings (including E. Boulding, "History at Sword's Point" from 10/12) & Learning Group: Is War Inevitable?

October 24 – Theories of War

Readings:

- "The Seville Statement on Violence" (WP Reader)
- Margaret Mead, "Warfare is Only an Invention—Not a Biological Necessity;" (WP Reader)
- Bronislaw Malinowski, "An Anthropological Analysis of War" (WP Reader)
- John G. Stoessinger, "Why Nations Go to War" (WP Reader)...
- Herbert C. Kelman, "Social Psychological Dimensions of International Conflict" (coursepack)

Discussion on readings

October 26 – Theories of War (cont.)

Readings:

- Michael Hogan, Film Review: "The Secret Government" (coursepack)
- Donald E. Nuechterlein, "Defining U.S. National Interests" (excerpt, coursepack, 12-17)

Film: The Secret Government

October 31 – National Interests and War

Readings:

- Thomas Carothers, "Promoting Democracy and Fighting Terror" (WP Reader)
- Tom Barry, Salih Booker, Laura Carlsen, Marie Dennis, and John Gershman, "A Global Good Neighbor Ethic for International Relations" (coursepack)

Finish Film, Discussion & Learning Group: Defining National Interests

November 2 – International Conflict Management

Readings:

- Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "An Agenda for Peace" (coursepack)
- Hizkias Assefa, "Conceptions of Peace" (excerpt, coursepack)
- Conflict Management Program at SAIS, and Julian Ouellet. "Peacekeeping" (coursepack)

Discussion & Learning Group: Peacekeeping

November 7 – International Law and World Court

Readings:

- William M. Evan, “War Crimes: International Court of Justice” (WP Reader)
- International Court of Justice, “Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons” (WP Reader)
- “Constitution of Japan” (WP Reader)
- William M. Evan & Francis A. Boyle, “Kashmir: Invoking International Law to Avoid Nuclear War” (WP Reader)

Discussion & Learning Group: Taking it to Court
Potential short film: The Court

November 9 – War and Democracy

Readings:

- Bruce Russett, “Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World” (WP Reader)
- Edward D. Masfield & Jack Synder, “Democratization and War” (WP Reader)

Discussion and Learning Group: No More War?

V. Genocide

(Defining it and making important distinctions; preventing it; the tension between peace and justice.)

November 14 – Defining Genocide

Readings:

- Helen Fein, “Genocide: A Sociological Perspective” (chaps. 1 & 2 required; 3 highly recommended - coursepack)

Discussion & Learning Group: What is genocide?
If extra time, Learning Group: Genocide in Ethnikistan

November 16 – A Contemporary Case Study: Darfur, Sudan

Readings:

- Eric Reeves, “The Darfur Crisis” Parts 1-5 (coursepack)
- Helen Fein, “Genocide by Attrition” (coursepack)
- Gregory H. Stanton, “Proving Genocide in Darfur: The Atrocities Documentation

Project and Resistance to its Findings” (optional; coursepack)

Film: Translating Genocide

Reflection & Discussion on Film

November 21 -- Tension Between Peace & Justice

Readings:

Joe Saunders, “Bridging Human Rights and Conflict Resolution: A Dialogue Between Critical Communities” (coursepack)

John Paul Lederach, “‘Revolutionaries’ & ‘Resolutionaries’: In Pursuit of Peace” (coursepack)

Discussion & Simulation: Justice versus Conflict Resolution

VI. Possibilities for Peace after Genocide, War, and Other Atrocities

November 28 – Justice, truth, forgiveness, reconciliation, and coexistence. Case study: South Africa after Apartheid

Readings:

Eric Brahm, “Peacebuilding and Reconciliation Stage” (coursepack)

Priscilla Hayner, “The Truth and Reconciliation Commission” (excerpt, coursepack)

David Anthony, “A Comparative History of South Africa and the United States” & “The Rise and Fall of Apartheid: A Timeline” (excerpts, coursepack)

Film: “Long Night’s Journey Into Day”

November 30 – Justice, truth, forgiveness, reconciliation, and coexistence. Case study: South Africa after Apartheid

Readings:

John Paul Lederach, “Truth and Mercy, Justice and Peace” (coursepack)

Martha Minow, “Vengeance, Retribution, and Forgiveness” (excerpt, coursepack)

Pumla Gobodo-Madikezela, “On Trauma and Forgiveness” (excerpt, coursepack)

Lynn Walker Huntley, “Conflict Resolution” (excerpt, coursepack)

Finish film & Discussion of film and readings (including 11/28 & 11/30)

VII. Peace Politics & Strategies

(Common security; an alternative vision of international relations; the role of peace movements)

December 5 – Common Security and Peace Movements

Charles DeBenedetti, “American Peace Activism” (WP Reader)

Pam Solo, Ted Sasson & Rob Leavitt, “Outlining the Future: Principles of Common Security” (coursepack)

Paul Joseph, “Peace Movements Make a Difference” (coursepack)

Discussion & Learning Group: Do Peace Movements Matter?

December 7 – The Peace Movement Today (and Human Responsibilities)

Kate Zernike and Dean E. Murphy, “Antiwar Movement Morphs from Wild-eyed to Civil” (WP Reader)

Hans Küng, “A Global Ethic in World Politics” (WP Reader)

Discussion & Wrap-Up

EVALUATION

Your course grade will be determined as follows:

Midterm and Final (20% each); Two Short Papers (20% each); Participation in Class Exercises & Discussion (20%)

In-Class Exams will consist of five short essay questions (you will receive more information on this). The two *short papers* (suggested length: 3-5 double-spaced pages; one due October 3rd and the other due December 5th) will be based on questions posed to you. Most class sessions will have exercises to be completed in your learning groups. If you miss a class, *regardless of the reason*, you won't receive participation points for that session but in many cases, *you can do the exercise out of class for partial credit*. It is up to you to ask the instructor about make-ups.

Optional Research Paper. You will be offered the chance to do a research paper involving an analysis of a past or present conflict. If you don't do this paper, it won't affect your grade at all. The optional paper can be used for extra credit to raise your grade or to substitute for a low grade on the midterm exam or paper. More details to come.

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, December 12: 9:00 a.m.