Governance, Identity and War

A Doctoral Course within the University of Oslo, NTNU and PRIO
Research School on Peace & Conflict

Overview: Through multiple disciplinary perspectives, this seminar explores three broad processes - governance, identity, and war – that shape much of contemporary peace and conflict studies. How does governance work at the global level and, in particular, what role do institutions play? Are international organizations (sometimes) a force for good, or (mostly) ineffectual 'talk shops'? We see an ever-growing amount of international human-rights law making, yet horrific abuses of such rights continue. Why?

Regarding identity, you and I have one. States have identities. Regions have identities. Identities establish boundaries and markers ('this is who we are!') and create senses of shared community. But how does identity matter in shaping political outcomes? When does it lead to violence – genocide or sexual assault, say? When is it benign? It has become a commonplace to talk of a European identity, and to see it as force for good. Yet both Brexit and the current refugee crisis suggest it may be weaker than many suspect.

Finally, international wars – that is, a war between two states – seem to be a relic of the past. Yet, sadly, organized violence persists; however, it is now most often an instance of civil war. How do we explain the origins and duration of such wars? Why do some rebel groups engage in horrific acts of sexual violence while others do not? What – if anything – can the international community do to mitigate the worst effects of such conflicts?

We will explore these issues through a careful reading of major works by political scientists, economists, sociologists, and institutional theorists, among others. These will be supplemented with articles and chapters that provide critical context and background.

Admission: Please fill in the application form on the course homepage. PhD candidates should specify the topic of their project under ‘Research interests.’ PhD students get priority, but others with graduate training from a relevant discipline may also apply.

There is no course fee, but the cost of transportation and accommodation must be covered by the participants. A limited number of stipends to cover basic accommodation at the neighbouring Anker Hotel are available for PhD students who do not have funding for such course participation through their universities.

If needed to make the necessary travel arrangements, students may request an early evaluation of their application in an e-mail to Marte Nilsen (marte.nilsen@prio.org).

Credits: 10 ECTS.

Requirements: There are three.
1) **Active Participation in Class Discussions**: The course will be run as a seminar, where debate and discussion are the norm; for each session, written discussion questions will serve as our starting point. For this format to be successful, students need to read the seminar readings prior to our first meeting on 31 August.

2) **Preparation of Discussion Points**: For each class session, students should prepare a brief list of discussion questions and comments (3-5 in number); these should be based on the readings and will be distributed to all other seminar participants. (Please make sufficient copies for distribution!) Your questions/comments should reflect a critical assessment of those readings. What are their strong and weak points? Their theoretical, methodological, empirical contributions? How do they relate to or build upon other readings or discussions?

3) **Completion of an Analytic Essay**: Students have two options. (I) Prepare an analytic review on a topic that is of special interest and is consistent with the course's purpose and theme; or (II) prepare a draft research design for a PhD project where the course subject matter plays some role. In either case, essays should be 6000-10000 words and are due by 15 December 2017. On the first day of class – Thursday, 31 August - students should provide the instructor with a 1-2 page introduction to their proposed essay. These overviews will then be discussed at one-on-one meetings on the morning of Monday, 4 September, 0900-1200, when there will be no formal class sessions.

**Readings**: The following 4 books – all available as paperbacks - should be purchased.


Students should be able to access most other assigned reading – especially journal articles - through their local libraries. A number of hard-to-get readings (chapters in books not recommended for purchased; forthcoming articles) will be made available on the [course homepage] by early August.

**Syllabus and Class Schedule**

**Day #1: Thursday, 31 August**

**Session I (0900 – 1030): Global Governance and Institutions – Perspectives from Economics and Sociology**


Session II (1030 – 1200, 1315 – 1400): Governance and Institutions - The Power, Pathologies and Legitimacy of International Organizations


Session III (1400 – 1630): Governance and Human Rights I – Insights from International Law and Political Science


Day #2: Friday, 1 September

Session IV (0900 - 1100): Governance and Human Rights II – Insights from Sociology


Session V (1100 – 1200, 1315 - 1415): Identity and Great Powers


Session VI (1415 - 1630): Identity and Regional Institutions


Day #3: Monday, 4 September

Session VII (0900 - 1200): Individual Meetings on Course Essays

Session VIII (1315 - 1630): Identity and Violence


**Day #4: Tuesday, 5 September**

**Session IX (0900 - 1200): Civil War – (Differing) Insights from Economics, Political Science and Sociology**


**Session X (1315 – 1630): Civil War - International Dimensions**


**Day #5: Wednesday, 6 September**

**Session XI (0900 - 1100): Civil War - International Interventions in Post-Conflict Settings**


**Session XII (1100 - 1215): Summary & Conclusions**

No Reading