

1. BASIC INFORMATION

Course	Theory and Analysis of International Conflicts
Degree program	Bachelor's Degree in International Relations and Law
School	School of Social Sciences
Year	Fourth Year
ECTS	6 ECTS
Credit type	Compulsory
Language(s)	English
Delivery mode	Face-to-face
Semester	Second Semester
Academic year	2024/2025
Coordinating professor	PhD. Thomas Kruiper

2. PRESENTATION

This course is designed to present students with a deeper understanding of the theories behind, and analysis of, international armed conflicts. Whereas the concept of conflict studies is traditionally associated with international wars between sovereign states, most modern conflicts tend to occur within states, and subsequently form security threats to regional stability, human security, or the geopolitical interests of powerful states. Modern conflict analyses therefore include a much broader array of state activities, related to a wide range of security threats, including regime security, coups d'état, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, arms proliferation, hybrid warfare, and cyber security. The current conflict between Ukraine and Russia goes against many of the trends of international armed conflict in that sense.

To understand fully the variety of international conflicts that states deal with within international institutions, we need to understand how these conflicts originated, the major players involved, their objectives, and the tools they use to achieve these objectives. Only once we comprehend the nature of contemporary conflicts can we start thinking about how different conflicts could be solved.

A major issue with contemporary armed conflicts is that they face a high risk of reigniting. Post-conflict peacebuilding activities by the international community are therefore at least as important as making peace itself. After all, what is a peace agreement between factions worth if the structural grievances of those who started the conflict are not fully resolved, or if people who live in post-conflict societies remain armed, angry, and poor? Without successful peacebuilding, conflict analysis is not complete.

The course is divided into four blocks that help conceptualize the different perspectives on contemporary armed conflicts and the way the international community deals with them. Apart from the introduction (block 1), each block is also related to a specific case study. In block 2 (Civil War) we focus on the war between Israel and Gaza, as well as on the individual and group dynamics that help us understand the war. In block 3, we focus on the war in Ukraine, discussing the role of states and theories related to hybrid warfare and cyber-warfare. Block 4 discusses the topic of humanitarian intervention in the Congo DRC, with a specific focus on the role of UN peacekeepers. Finally, block 5 focuses on post-conflict peacebuilding in Liberia.

3. COMPETENCIES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Core competencies:

- CB1 – Students possess and demonstrate their knowledge in an area that departs from a level of secondary education and is based on advanced textbooks and also includes aspects that imply knowledge of their field of study.
- CB2 – Students know how to apply knowledge from their field of study, work, or vocation in a professional manner and possess competencies that are demonstrated by elaborating and constructing arguments relevant to the main concepts of the course. Students show problem-solving skills.
- CB3 – Students have the capacity to combine and interpret relevant data and content within the course and are able to analyze, judge, and reflect upon issues and case studies related to the course topic.
- CB4 – Students can transmit information, ideas, problems, and solutions to an audience, whether specialized or not.
- CB5 – Students develop learning abilities necessary to understand future studies with a great deal of autonomy.

Cross-curricular competencies:

- CC4 – Ability to analyse and synthesise. Being capable of disentangling complex situations or problems into separate parts. Being able to evaluate alternative options, solutions, or perspectives in order to find optimal solutions to a problem. Being able to synthesise complex problems into understandable blocks and propose a solution.
- CC6 – Oral and Written communication. Ability to transmit and receive data, ideas, opinion and attitudes and turn them into comprehension and action, whether in an oral presentation, debate, or through written exercises or explaining graphs and tables.
- CC9 - Skills in interpersonal relationships: Ability to relate positively with other people by verbal and non-verbal means, through assertive communication, understood as the ability to express or transmit what one wants, what one thinks or feels without making the other person uncomfortable, attacking or hurting the feelings of the other person.
- CC10 – Innovative and entrepreneurial spirit. Capacity to cope with and resolve difficult and stressful situations successfully. Capacity to anticipate problems, propose improvements and plan successfully. Ability to successfully manage projects.
- CC11 - Time planning and management: Ability to set goals and choose the means to achieve those goals using time and resources effectively.
- CC14 – Innovation and Creativity. Capacity to propose and elaborate new and original solutions that add value to proposed problems, including those coming from other academic or professional fields.

Specific competencies:

- SC17 - To have the ability to establish analogies and differences between the different actors present in the international arena.
- SC20 - Analyze, interpret and develop programs and projects aimed at improving aspects related to international security.
- SC21 - Contribute to the design of sustainable growth policies that favor equality, reduce poverty, foster citizen participation and promote democratization processes.
- SC22 - To play an active role in proposing solutions to specific problems and conflicts regardless of the geopolitical area.

Learning outcomes:

- LO1: The student will be able to analyze, interpret and develop programs and projects aimed at improving aspects related to international security.
- LO2: It will be able to contribute to promoting peace policies and proposals for peaceful solutions to conflicts.
- LO3: Be able to inform, evaluate and assess facts and situations of international security.
- LO4: Capable of analyzing, interpreting and developing programs and projects aimed at improving aspects related to international security.

The following table shows the relationship between the competencies developed during the course and the learning outcomes pursued:

Competencies	Learning outcomes
CB2, CB3, CB4, CB5, CC4, CC10, CC11, CC14, SC20, SC22	LO1: The student will be able to analyze, interpret and develop programs and projects aimed at improving aspects related to international security.
CB2, CB3, CB4, CC6, CC9, CC10, SC21, SC22	LO2: It will be able to contribute to promoting peace policies and proposals for peaceful solutions to conflicts.
CB2, CB3, CB4, CC4, CC6, CC11, SC17, SC20	LO3: Be able to inform, evaluate and assess facts and situations of international security.
CB2, CB3, CB5, CC4, CC10, CC14, SC20, SC22	LO4: Capable of analyzing, interpreting and developing programs and projects aimed at improving aspects related to international security.

4. CONTENT

Study of war as a leading phenomenon in international relations and of the policies and instruments for its prevention. Analysis of non-war conflicts. Historical and strategic perspectives on armed conflicts.

5. TEACHING-LEARNING METHODOLOGIES

The types of teaching-learning methodologies used are indicated below:

- Cooperative learning
- Problem-based learning
- Simulation environments
- Case Method

6. LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Listed below are the types of learning activities and the number of hours the student will spend on each one:

Learning activity	Number of hours
Debates	8
Oral Presentations	11
Tutoring	18
Autonomous work	50
Master Class	20
Non-Synchronous Classes	10
Case Studies	12
Problem Solving	15
Written assignments	4
Assessments	2
TOTAL	150

7. ASSESSMENT

Listed below are the assessment systems used and the weight each one carries towards the final course grade:

Assessment system	Weight
Knowledge Assessment	30%
Oral expositions	20%
Portfolio	30%
Individual assignments	20%

When you access the course on the *Campus Virtual*, you'll find a description of the assessment activities you have to complete, as well as the delivery deadline and assessment procedure for each one.

7.1. First evaluation period

To pass the course in the first exam period, you must obtain a final course grade of at least 5 out of 10 (weighted average).

In any case, you will need to obtain a grade of at 5.0 in the final exam in order for it to count towards the final grade along with all the grades corresponding to the other activities.

7.2. Second evaluation period

To pass the course in the second exam period, you must obtain a final grade of at least 5 out of 10 (weighted average).

In any case, you will need to obtain a grade of at 5.0 in the final exam in order for it to count towards the final grade along with all the grades corresponding to the other activities.

The student must deliver the activities not successfully completed in the first exam period after having received the corresponding corrections from the professor, or those that were not delivered in the first place.

8. SCHEDULE

This table shows the delivery deadline for each assessable activity in the course:

Evaluated activities	Deadline
Knowledge Assessment	2 nd half of May (exact date tbd)
Oral expositions	Weeks 5, 8, 11, 14
Portfolio	Weekly forum assignments
Individual assignments	Weeks 5, 8, 11, 14

This schedule may be subject to changes for logistical reasons relating to the activities. The student will be notified of any change as and when appropriate.

9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

The main reference work for this subject is:

- Barash, David and Webel, Charles. "Peace & Conflict Studies". SAGE Publications, London. 2018. ISBN9781506344225*

All course readings and other materials will be provided in PDF or video-format on Canvas.

**This is the only book that you will need to buy or read in the library. All other readings are available in PDF on Blackboard.*

The recommended Bibliography is:

- Bierstecker, Thomas, Sue Eckert, and Marcos Tourinho, eds. "Targeted Sanctions: The Impacts and Effectiveness of United Nations Action." Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.
- Collier, Paul. "Wars, Guns, and Votes". HarperCollins, New York, 2009.
- Collins, Alan. "Contemporary Security Studies". Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Kaldor, Mary. "New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in a Global Era". Polity Press, 3rd Edition, Cambridge, 2012.
- Koops et. al: "The Oxford Handbook of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations"; Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2015.
- LaFree, Gary, Laura Dugan & Erin Miller. "Putting Terrorism in Context: Lessons from the global

terrorism database". New York, Routledge, 2015.

10. EDUCATIONAL ORIENTATION, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION UNIT

From the Educational Orientation, Diversity and Inclusion Unit we offer support to our students throughout their university life to help them reach their academic achievements. Other main actions are the students' inclusions with specific educational needs, universal accessibility on the different campuses of the university and equal opportunities.

1. Accompaniment and follow-up by means of counselling and personalized plans for students who need to improve their academic performance.
2. In terms of attention to diversity, non-significant curricular adjustments are made in terms of methodology and assessment for those students with specific educational needs, pursuing an equal opportunities for all students.
3. We offer students different extracurricular resources to develop different competences that will encourage their personal and professional development.
4. Vocational guidance through the provision of tools and counselling to students with vocational doubts or who believe they have made a mistake in their choice of degree.

Students in need of educational support can write to us at:

orientacioneducativa.uev@universidadeuropea.es

11. ONLINE SURVEYS

Your opinion matters!

The Universidad Europea encourages you to participate in several surveys which help identify the strengths and areas we need to improve regarding professors, degree programs and the teaching-learning process.

The surveys will be made available in the "surveys" section in virtual campus or via e-mail.

Your assessment is necessary for us to improve.

Thank you very much for your participation.