DHP P227
ADVANCED SEMINAR IN DEVELOPMENT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION
Fall 2019

Professor Neil A. Levine

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Class: Mondays, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.; Cabot 206

Office hours: 232A Mugar - Mondays 1:00 – 4:00 pm by sign-up and by appointment.

Course Description:

The aim of this seminar is to provide students with contemporary tools and understanding at the intersection of development and conflict resolution practice. This seminar is in-depth and cutting-edge, discussing in detail what informs development and conflict resolution practitioners as they do their work today. The course will draw deeply from three specific perspectives: academic insights, donor policy views, the views of development practitioners and their critics. Students will explore how these varying but related perspectives inform approaches to addressing the problems of conflict at the international, national, sub-national and local levels. Emphasis will be placed on critical thinking skills, the ability to defend and critique an argument, orally and in writing. The course deals with methodologies (e.g. conflict analysis, program design), policy analysis (e.g. political economy, systems thinking, complexity) and issue areas identified by the class (e.g. resource conflicts, reconciliation; security sector reform; women, peace and security, education and conflict, atrocity prevention, demobilization, disarmament and reintegration, etc).

Prerequisites:

DHP D222 “Development Aid in Practice” (Elke Jahns-Harms) or DHP D223 “Conflict Resolution Theory” (Eileen Babbitt) or similar courses. Exemption granted exceptionally by the instructors on the basis of significant professional experience in both of these fields.
**Course Requirements**

Students will be required to read the assignments and participate actively in class discussions and exercises. Reading assignment will amount to about 75-100 pages each week.

Students will submit three assignments: 1) A conflict analysis of a country or region (group PPT presentation and bibliography); 2) a project design aimed at identifying approaches to conflict mitigation and management objectives based on a rapid assessment of a conflict situation (5 pages); 3) a final assignment (15 pages) of their choosing dealing with one of the following topics:

1) A conflict analysis and programming recommendations for a particular country setting;
2) A thematic paper covering a particular development topic and conflict mitigation and management challenge, or
3) A policy memo directed to a high level official at the National Security Council, the Department of State or the U.S. Agency for International Development identifying, analyzing and recommending approaches to a particular issue identified in class.

**Grading**

Active Class Participation in Discussions and Class Exercises 15%
Conflict Assessment Group Presentation 20%
Project Design (maximum of 5 pages) 25%
Final Paper (Student selection from one of three categories) 40%

Class participation is graded according to attendance and active participation while in class. Students who miss more than two classes will be penalized.

**Calendar**

Consult the attached PDF for the detailed calendar.
**Conflict Topics will be selected by the class during Class #1/#2. Given the make-up of the class and the trends in this dynamic field, this seminar allows students to take responsibility for their own learning, including in the choice of topics that we choose together to explore.**

**READING LIST**

**Class #1: September 9**

**Introduction and the Current Environment**

*Themes and Questions*

- What are some of the major trends facing the fields of development and peacebuilding?
- What are the theories about how development assistance can contribute to transformation of conflict? What are the strengths and limitations of these assumptions and theories?

*Required Readings*


*SKIM:*

- OECD, States of Fragility Report, 2018. (24 pages)

**Class #2: September 19**

**Perspectives on the International Development Field Today**

- What are the policy bases for development work in support of conflict resolution? What issues and dilemmas do they raise?
• What assumptions underlie current approaches to development’s contribution to conflict and conflict resolution?

Required Readings


University of San Diego and the Stanley Foundation, Launching Impact:Peace – Conference Report, August 2019. (13 pages)

Class #3: September 23 Conflict Assessment #1: Tools for Conflict Analysis

Themes and Questions

• What are the assumptions underlying the different approaches to conflict analysis?
• What are the strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches to conflict analysis?
• What about the approach and tool(s) for conflict analysis were most useful? In what ways?
• How does the emphasis or focus of each guide or tool for conflict analysis differ from the others?
• How should one decide what approach or tools to use in a particular situation?

Required readings for Conflict Assessment I, II and III:


Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit, Social Development Department, Dissemination Notes, The Conflict Analysis Framework - Identifying Conflict-related Obstacles to Development, World Bank, October 2002. (4 pages)


Assignment (due Oct 16 – Class #6): Working in groups, you will be responsible for presenting a conflict assessment. You can draw the basic factual material from any source you like (using no less than four). Economist Intelligence Unit, U.S. State Department Country Reports on Human Rights, International Crisis Group reports are good places to start. You may pick any of the above frameworks. Presentations should be no more than 15 minutes and involve all team members. You will be graded on Content (15 pts), Organization (5 pts) and Delivery (5 pts). Assignments will be in the form of a PPT presentation and accompanying bibliography of sources consulted and are due before class on October 16.

Class #4 September 30 Practitioner Profile: Conducting a Conflict Assessment

Our Guest Speaker will be TBD.

- You will receive a bio and other background information on the speaker. Additional reading assignments, if any, will be posted to Canvas.
- We will ask the speaker to prepare a 20-30 minute presentation focused on their experience in conducting conflict assessments.
- You will have the opportunity for Q&A and have the opportunity to ask questions about actual conduct of a conflict assessment, how it was executed, how the findings were used, challenges, new learning, practical advice, etc.
Class #5 October 7  

Group Meetings to Prepare Presentations

(Plan to meet at Cabot 206 and work in your groups. I will circulate among the groups to assess your progress and answer any questions about the assignment).

Class #6 October 15  

Conflict Assessment III – Presentations – (Assignment Due)

Each group will have 10-12 minutes to present their conflict assessment. This should be highlights only with each person speaking 3-4 minutes only. Please practice delivering your presentation to get the timing down to no more than 12 minutes.*

*The timing may be adjusted depending on class/group size.

Class #7 October 21  

Program Design I: Methodology

Required Readings


Green, Duncan, “What is a Theory of Change and Does it Actually Help?, Oxfam Blogpost, August 13, 2013. (6 pages)

Assignment for Week #9: Identify an example of a conflict management or mitigation program, from your own experience or from any source. Provide a brief background and basic conflict analysis, describe the program objective, theory of change, project activities and indicator(s) used to demonstrate whether the objective was met or not. Maximum 5 pages.

Class #8 October 28  

Program Design II: Practitioner Profile – Designing a Conflict Program
Class #9  November 4  
Program Design II – Class Discussion  
(Program Design Paper Due)

We will have a roundtable discussion of the program design unit with opportunity for students to present their program design paper, describe the theory of change and programmatic approach.

NO CLASS November 11 – Holiday

Class #10  November 18  
Conflict Topic #1 – TBD – Readings TBD

Class #11  November 25  
Conflict Topic #2 – TBD – Readings TBD

Class #12  December 2  
Conflict Topic #3 – TBD – Readings TBD

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Topics may be selected from – but not limited to – the following:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gender and Conflict</td>
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<td>Complex Environments: COIN/CT</td>
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<td>Resource Conflicts</td>
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<td>Atrocities Prevention</td>
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<td>Transitional Justice</td>
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<td>Peace Negotiations</td>
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<td>Land Conflicts</td>
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<td>Urbanization and Conflict</td>
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<td>Crime and Conflict</td>
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<td>Corruption</td>
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<td>Security Sector Reform</td>
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<td>Mass Media and Conflict</td>
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<td>Technology/Data</td>
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<td>Design Tools of the Trade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Security and Justice</td>
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Students will be asked to identify conflict topics during Class #1/#2. Readings, presentations, discussion topics, exercises and practitioner profiles/guest speakers will be identified. The syllabus will be revised accordingly and posted to Canvas.

Class #13  December 9  
Distinguished Practitioner – TBD

You will receive a bio and additional background and topical material related to our Distinguished Practitioner. Presentation and Q&A will allow you to interact directly with a leader in the field.