

# **Latin American Development and Conflict Transformation<sup>1</sup>**

**George Mason University  
Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution**

**Instructor Catalina Rojas  
Proposed Course  
United States of America**

## **Course Description:**

This period will unite two dynamic areas: social, political and, economic development with inter-personal, inter-communal and political conflict transformation. The influence that conflicts have on successful development is undeniable, and in turn the war that development is approach can have great influence on how protracted conflicts may be resolved and transformed. We will study the relevant principles of both, and then apply them to case studies in Guatemala, Nicaragua and Colombia, with special attention on the current situation of the later.

## **Syllabus:**

### ***Conflict Analysis and Resolution Module***

#### ***Week 1: Conflict Analysis***

#### **Class 1 — Conflicts? what, when, where. Why does culture matters?**

15 minutes Class announcements

1 hour Introduction to the textbook Ausburger, David. 1992. "Conflict mediation across cultures". Westminster: Kentucky

#### **Required reading:**

Chapter 1 pages 11–40

30 minute break

1 hour The development of the Conflict Analysis and Resolution Field

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<sup>1</sup>This syllabus is an excerpt from a longer course.

**Required reading:**

Kreisberg Louis. 1997. "The development of the CR field" In: "Peacemaking in the international context". Washington: USIP Press" pages 51–77

**Suggested reading:**

Lauie James 1992. "Contributions of the emerging field of CR" pages 300–332 In: "Approaches to Peace". Washington: USIP Press.

15 minutes Q&A session

**Homework:** bring a written story (600 words or 2 pages max) describing a real, fictional, personal, communal or national conflict of your interest

**Class 2 — Analyzing the nature, structure and dynamics of conflicts**

15 minutes Q&A session about readings and past class discussion

1 hour- Presentation and class discussion of the required reading of Chapter 2 "Culture mediation across cultures"

30 minutes break

30 minutes Explaining frameworks for analyzing conflicts: Galtung, Mitchell, SPITCEROW

30 minutes exercise "Everything that I wanted to know about analyzing a conflict but I was afraid to ask". Apply today's class readings and presentations to analyze the conflict that you brought. This exercise should be handed in at the end of the class, should be no more than 3 pages and is individual. General questions to the instructor are allowed during the written period.

***Week 2: Conflict Resolution***

**Class 3 — "How do parties behave in conflict?"**

15 minutes Q&A session, class announcements

30 minutes Presentation and class discussion

30 minutes break

30 minutes Presentation and class discussion Chapter 5 "Conflict triangular in origin and Resolution" In: "Conflict mediation across cultures".

30 minutes Presentation and class discussion Chapter 7 "Mediation: The necessity of a go-between" In: "Conflict mediation across cultures".

15 minutes for mediation demonstration

**Class 4 — "Transforming conflicts: the field in the XXI century"**

15 minutes Q&A session

1 hour discussion panel of the required reading (students will conduct the panel) of Jean Paul Lederach “Conflict Transformation across cultures” Chapter 2

30 minutes break

1 hour discussion panel of the required reading (students will conduct the panel) of Raimo Vayrynen “From conflict resolution to conflict transformation: a critical review” Chapter 7

15 minutes Conclusions of the Conflict Analysis and Resolution module

## **Colombia Module**

### **Analysing the Colombian Conflict**

For better performance during the Colombian module the students are required to start collecting news about the Colombian conflict from the main US newspapers as well as starting visiting Colombia related web sites.

#### **Week 1**

#### **Class 1 — “The history of violence in Colombia or...violence in Colombia’s history”**

15 minutes Q&A session

1 hour Presentation Historical analysis of the conflict

##### **Required reading**

Marc Chernick “Negotiating peace amid multiple forms of violence: the protracted search for a settlements to the armed conflicts in Colombia” In: “Comparative peace processes in Latin-America”. Arnson, Cynthia (Ed). Washington :Woodrow Wilson Center Press. Page 159–195

30 minutes break

1 hour Continuation of the class presentation and class discussion

#### **Class 2 — ”Analyzing the Colombian conflict: the key parties”**

15 minutes Q&A session

1 hour presentation: The key parties

##### **Required readings**

Alfredo Molano “The evolution of the FARC” NACLA Magazine Pages 23–31

Nazih Richani “The paramilitary connection” NACLA Magazine page 38–42

Winifred Tate “Repeating past mistakes: Aiding counterinsurgency in Colombia”. NACLA Magazine Pages 16–19

30 minutes break

1 hour Class exercise: Students will use different conflict analysis models to be applied to the Colombia case answering the following questions:

Identifying the nature of the conflict (is it a conflict of data, interest, information, communication, class, identity?)

Who are the main parties and how is their behavior?

Using SPITCEROW and other analysis models what can we learn from the Colombian conflict?

### ***Week 3***

#### **Class 3 — Colombia: Internal war and regional dimensions: A framework of analysis**

15 minutes Q&A session

1 hour Underlying and proximate causes of the Colombian conflict

30 minute break

1 hour Effects of the Colombian conflict in the neighboring states

30 minutes debate: The role of US in the resolution, transformation or escalation of the Colombian conflict

#### **Class 4 — “Plan Colombia: US involvement in the war”**

15 minutes Q&A Session

1 hour What is Plan Colombia?

##### **Required reading**

“Plan Colombia” International Policy report. December 2000

##### **Suggested reading**

“Just the facts: a civilian’s guide to US defense and security assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean”.

30 hour break

Class debate “Drug cultivation, fumigation and the conflict in Colombia”.

#### ***Resolving the Colombian Conflict: the never-ending story***

### ***Week 4***

#### **Class 5 — “Winds of peace, storm of violence: origins and dynamics of the Colombian peace processes”**

15 minutes Q&A session

1 hour presentation of the Colombian Peace process

30 minute break

**Required reading**

Chernik Marc "Elusive Peace" NACLA Magazine Pages 32–37

30 minutes class discussion. Current events of the Colombian peace process: escalation of the conflict or reconciliation? The students must have been collecting information in the news and appropriated web pages in English to enrich this debate.

**Class 6 — “The victims of the conflicts: the issue of forced displacement”**

15 minutes Q&A session

Presentation of the situation of Colombia’s 2 million internally displaced people

**Required reading**

WORLD REFUGEE SURVEY 2000 Report on Colombia pages 299–302

UNHCR and Internal displacement WORLD REFUGEE SURVEY 2000 Report Pages 26–31

**Week 5**

**Class 7 — “The victims of the conflict: experiences of the Civil Society**

15 minutes Q&A session

1 hour presentation “The role of the civil society in the peace process”

**Required reading**

María Carrión “Barrio Nelson Mandela: A community of survivors” In: NACLA Magazine Pages 42–47

30 minutes break

1 hour: presentation of the documentary “Fiction of War” from Sheila Franklin

30 minutes Q&A session about the class and the film

**Class 8 — “The theory behind the practice: Civilians building peace in Colombia”**

15 minutes

1 hour What is peacebuilding?

**Required reading**

Jean Paul Lederach “Justpeace” In: “People building peace” 1999. The Netherlands: European Centre for Conflict Prevention Press.

30 minutes break

Applying Lederach's model to the Colombian conflict

Class exercise called "How do various Colombian actors build different scenarios for peace"

***Week 6***

**Class 9 — "Zones of Peace in Colombia: the people's peace process"**

15 minutes Q&A session

Student presentations

30 minutes "What is a peace zone"? Required reading by Francine Blume "Peace zones: exemplars and potentials"

30 minutes "Colombia: zones of peace in the heart of a bitter war" In: "People building peace" Pages 180-185

30 minutes break

1 hour presentation and discussion of the article written by Catalina Rojas "The people's peace process". The Zone of Peace research project at ICAR

***Week 7***

**Class 10 — "The other face of DC: US NGO's supporting the Colombian peace efforts"**

Field trip to WOLA and Colombian Human Rights Network (Pending confirmation).

**Class 11 — "Comparative analysis of the conflicts and the peace process in Colombia and Guatemala"**

Students will be divided and are expected to prepare a presentation to the rest of the class based on the following variables:

1st hour: separation by groups and preparation of the activity

30 minutes break

1 and 1/5 hour: Group presentation

History of the conflict in each country (compare social, economic and political factors)

The main parties (government, rebel groups, paramilitaries)

The role of the US and the international community

The peace process (existence of third-party intervention, successes, failures, impasses)

Lessons from the Guatemalan peace process that should be implemented or avoided for the future Colombian peace process

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