

MPHIL INTERNATIONAL PEACE STUDIES

Course Overview 2025-26

The MPhil in International Peace Studies (IPS) at Trinity College Dublin is a comprehensive program that explores the causes and consequences of war and armed conflict, aiming to find ways to establish enduring peace. The IPS curriculum is interdisciplinary, incorporating elements of international relations, political science, gender studies, conflict analysis and resolution, negotiation, and strategic peacebuilding. Students may also have the chance to gain practical experience through optional internship opportunities.

At Trinity College Dublin, course elements are weighted with credits according to the European Credit Transfer Scheme – ECTS. The required ECTS for our MPhil is 90. **All IPS students must complete two compulsory modules, 'The Politics of Peace and Conflict' (worth 10 ECTS) and 'Research Methods' (also worth 10 ECTS).** Additionally, MPhil students must complete a further 40 ECTS worth of taught modules (4 optional modules) and a dissertation (worth 30 ECTS). The postgraduate diploma, which serves as an exit qualification, is equivalent to 60 ECTS and does not require the writing and submission of a dissertation.

Module registration takes place before the beginning of teaching. Students need to fill out a module registration form and return it to our Postgraduate Officer. IPS students may also take for credit up to two modules from the following options:

- Theories and Methods of Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies (WS7050) - an optional module from the MPhil in Gender and Women's Studies (a cap of 5 IPS students applies)
- Transitional Justice (EM7447) and Dynamics of Reconciliation (EM7451) - two optional modules from the MPhil in Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation.
- Any optional module from the MPhil in Contextual Theologies & Interfaith Relations

Please take note that IPS students who choose optional modules from CRR will need to travel to attend classes in Belfast at their own expense. Therefore, it is important to 1) ensure that there are no timetable conflicts and 2) check if their visa permits travel to the UK.

In the IPS program, students are encouraged to evenly distribute their workload across semesters. They are not required to take two options in one semester and two in the next. Some students may find the options offered in one semester more suitable for their interests and needs. However, students cannot take more than four modules in one term, except for the Research Methods module, which is spread over two terms. If a student wishes to audit a module (i.e. attend the class but not for credit), they should discuss their intention with the module coordinator beforehand.

For part-time students, Politics of Peace and Conflict (EM7201) is a required course in the first year, while Research Methods (EM7202) is mandatory in the second year. Part-time students must also select 40 credits of optional modules over the course of two years. We suggest that part-time students choose 20 credits in year 1 and 20 in year 2, but there is some flexibility in this selection. The dissertation is completed in the second year.

IPS Core & Optional Modules (2025-26)

EM7202: Politics of Peace and Conflict (Core Module)

Coordinator: Dr Gillian Wylie

Time: Michaelmas/Autumn Semester

Format: Weekly lectures

Peace Studies is a multidisciplinary field focused on understanding the root causes of armed conflicts and exploring ways to achieve sustainable peace in societies affected by war. The course covers theories of peace and war, as well as specific topics relevant to International Peace Studies. These include concepts like peace, violence, and conflict, as well as conflict resolution, transformation, and peacebuilding theories. The module serves as an introduction to these issues and theories, providing a foundation for more specialized courses within the International Peace Studies program. In addition, students are required to participate in one of the seminar groups associated with the course.

Learning Outcomes

- To provide a background in relevant peace theories
- To examine critical issues in peacemaking and peacebuilding
- To connect Peace Studies to wider issues in other disciplines

Core Reading

Amster, R., Finley, L., Pries, E. and McCutcheon, R. (eds.) (2015) *Peace Studies - Between Tradition and Innovation*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Atack, A. (2005) *The Ethics of Peace and War*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.

Barash, D. and Webel, C. (2014) *Peace and Conflict Studies*. London: Sage. 3rd Edition

Dietrich, W., Echavarría Alvarez, J., Esteva, G., Ingruber, D. and Koppensteiner, N (eds.) (2014) *The Palgrave International Handbook of Peace Studies: A Cultural Perspective*. London: Palgrave.

EM7201: Research Methods (Core Module)

Coordinator: Dr Maja Halilovic Pastuovic

Time: Michaelmas/Autumn Semester & Hilary/Spring Semester

Format: Weekly lectures

The Research Methods module introduces students to the key approaches to research in the Social Sciences, focusing on the knowledge and research skills necessary to write a dissertation in International Peace Studies. The module covers research paradigms, methodologies, qualitative and quantitative research methods, mixed methodologies, research design, management and ethics, new emerging research methods, decolonising methodologies, AI and the research process, and research integrity. After completing the module, students will have the skills needed to design their own research project, collect and analyse data, and write up their dissertation.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand both qualitative and quantitative research methods and practices used in social sciences
- Understand the relationship between overall research design and methodological techniques used in research
- Critically evaluate research projects (their own and others) including ability to assess research ethics
- Deploy main qualitative and quantitative methodological techniques
- Conduct data collection and data analysis in a real word setting and write a proposal for their own research project.

Core Reading

Denzin, N.K., Lincoln, Y.S., Giardina, M.D. and Cannella, G.S. (2023) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Clark, T., Foster, L., Sloan, L. and Bryman, A. (2021). *Bryman's Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2021). *Thematic Analysis: A practical Guide*. London: Sage.

Seale, C. (2012). *Researching Society and Culture*. London: Sage.

Smith, L.T. (2012). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books.

EM7436: Gender War and Peace

Coordinator: Dr Gillian Wylie

Time: Michaelmas/Autumn Semester

Format: Weekly lectures

What insights can gender analysis provide about the roots and nature of war and peace? The module begins by exploring and criticising some basic gendered assumptions - such as that war is the business of men and peace that of women. Instead, we challenge these dichotomies by examining issues such as the complicated relationship between the social construction of masculinity and soldiering and the challenge posed to militaries by the inclusion of women in their ranks. We ask why peace processes have generally excluded women and what the consequences of that are for the sustainability of peace, while at the same time querying the assumption that 'women' as an essentialized group have skills to bring to the peace table. Through these debates we examine the ways in which war and peace are gendered experiences which also shape our understanding of what it is to be a gendered person.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand key concepts in Gender Studies
- Comprehend and consider arguments regarding the gendered nature of war and the importance of integrating gender concerns into peacebuilding.
- Demonstrate knowledge of key international political and legal developments in this area such as UNSC Resolution 1325 and the Yugoslav and Rwanda tribunals

Core Reading

Ní Aoláin, F., Cahn, N., Haynes, D. F. and Valji, N. (eds.) (2018) The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Conflict, Oxford University Press.

Sharoni, S. Welland, J., Steiner, L. and Pederson, J. (2016) *Handbook on Gender and War*. Edgar Elgar

Basu, S., Kirby, P. and Shepherd, L. (2020) *New Directions in Women, Peace and Security*. Bristol: Bristol University Press

EM7554: Fundamentalism and Radicalisation

Coordinator: Dr Carlo Aldrovandi

Time: Michaelmas/Autumn Semester

Format: Weekly lectures

Religious, ethnic, and far-right radicalisation, along with various forms of violent extremism, have had a serious impact on millions of people worldwide. The aftermath of 9/11, the emergence of Islamist groups such as ISIS in Syria and Iraq, and the growth of fundamentalist and far-right organizations in several global contexts have raised important questions about the nature, evolution, causes, and consequences of such phenomena. As a result, debates about these topics are now at the forefront of academic, policymaking, and media discussions. The module will equip students with the necessary tools to critically engage with such issues through the latest research and methodologies. We will also challenge common wisdom and open debates around the role of violence in relation to state power in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, while assessing the efficacy of the conventional security responses to the threats of fundamentalism, radicalisation, and violent extremism.

Learning Outcomes

- Approach fundamentalism and radicalisation as ‘subjects of scholarly enquiry’ and develop a critical awareness of the cultural and political biases behind such framings
- Comprehend key ideological and theological elements in the evolution of fundamentalism, radicalisation and violent extremism
- Understand religious fundamentalism, radicalisation, and violent extremism in relation to social, historical, political and cultural dynamics
- The ability to critically reflect upon the various steps of the so-called ‘radicalisation process’ and the transition towards violent action

Core Reading

Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan, *Strong Religion: The Rise of Fundamentalisms Around the World*, University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Charles B. Strozier, David M. Terman & James W. Jones, with Katherine A. Boyd, Eds., *The Fundamentalist Mindset: Psychological Perspectives on Religion, Violence, and History*, Oxford University Press, 2010.

S.N. Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism, and Revolution: The Jacobin Dimension of Modernity*, Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Peter Neumann, *New Jihadists and the Threat to the West*, B Tauris, 2016.

EM7495: Human Rights: Challenges and Prospects in the 21st Century

Coordinator: Prof Linda Hogan

Time: Michaelmas/Autumn Semester

Format: Weekly lectures

This module provides a critical introduction to the fundamental ideas, principles and practices which underpin the protection and promotion of human rights at the international and national level. We will begin by looking at the origins, foundations and justifications of human rights considering a diverse range of philosophical, political and religious perspectives. The module will also consider the institutional context of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and associated treaties, bodies and frameworks. Other significant themes will include: the debate between universalistic defences of human rights and pragmatic or culturally based approaches; the role of state power and invocations of security on human rights norms; the torture debate; climate change and its significance for human rights, gendered perspectives on human rights; religions and human rights, especially debates about freedom of religion and belief.

Learning Outcomes

Be familiar with the major universal and regional human rights systems

Understand the socio-political and legal implication(s) involved in human rights

Be able to carry out effective research in the field of international human rights

Develop the ability for critical analysis and assessment of ongoing debates in human rights

Core Reading

Donnelly, J. (2003) *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, Cornell University Press.

Hoffmann, S-L. (ed.) (2011) *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: CUP.

Hogan, L. (2015) *Keeping Faith with Human Rights*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.

Iriye, A., Goedde, P. and Hitchcock, W. (eds.) (2012) *The Human Rights Revolution: An International History*, Oxford: OUP

Moyn, S. (2010) *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*, Belknap.

EM7434: Conflict Resolution and Negotiation Across Worldviews

Coordinator: Dr Carlo Aldrovandi

Time: Michaelmas/Autumn Semester

Format: Weekly Lectures

This module emphasizes the concept of 'worldview' as a key factor in understanding identity conflict and developing strategies to address its deepest causes and motivations. Worldview is particularly valuable for examining modern situations where communities are divided based on seemingly irreconcilable values, conflicting visions of society and the state, or mutually exclusive perspectives on the past and aspirations for the future. Because worldview differences pose unique challenges for negotiation, conflict resolution, and peacemaking as they are the main source of 'intractability', third-party intervenors must develop specific analytical and methodological approaches to address such conflicting differences. Using interdisciplinary teaching, class activities, and reflective exercises, the module aims to increase participants' awareness of how their own and others' worldviews influence their interactions as negotiators and dialogue partners in situations involving identity and protected values. Importantly, the module is designed to equip participants with the skills to become more effective negotiators and dialogue partners, thereby improving their ability to navigate worldview disputes and build peace.

Learning Outcomes

- A critical awareness of how mainstream conflict resolution and negotiation have traditionally engaged with the concept of worldview across several cultural contexts
- The ability to carry out a sophisticated mapping of the modalities whereby worldview differences influence conflict dynamics and negotiation
- An understanding of how worldviews can act as 'polarization catalysts' augmenting the conflict's intractability
- A scholarly knowledge and practice-based skills through which third-party intervenors can facilitate the creation of a 'safe dialogic space' that may constructively reframe worldview disputes and enable transformative changes

Core Reading

Docherty, Jayne. 2001. Learning Lessons from Waco: When the Parties Bring Their Gods to the Negotiation Table.

Cobb, Sara B., Sarah Federman, and Alison Castel, eds. 2020. Introduction to Conflict Resolution Discourses and Dynamics. London: Rowman & Littlefield International.

Fisher, Roger, William Ury, and Bruce M. Patton. 1983. Getting To Yes. London: Hutchinson.

Lederach, John Paul. 1996. Preparing For Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures. Syracuse University Press.

Avruch, Kevin. 1998. Culture & Conflict Resolution. US Institute of Peace Press.

EM7437: NGOs in Theory and Practice: Internship Module

Coordinator: Emma (Fitzy) Fitzgerald

Time: Michaelmas/Autumn Semester & Hilary/Spring Semester

Format: Placement

International Peace Studies has built strong connections with NGOs that focus on peacebuilding, human rights, and conflict resolution. As a result, we have created an internship program that is at the forefront of these areas. The main theme of the program is to examine the relevance of NGOs in key international politics and to assess their role based on academic literature and work placement experience. Some of the NGOs currently providing internships to our students include Frontline Defenders in Dublin, the United Nations in Geneva, World Vision in Dublin, and the Churches Commission on Migration Issues in Brussels.

Please note the following: Internships are unpaid, and students are responsible for covering all associated costs, such as travel and accommodation. The number of available internships will determine the intake to this module. Cancelling your internship is only permitted in cases of medical or bereavement reasons. Internships will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

Learning Outcomes

- Apply academic and theoretical research in peace studies to practical work experience in peace-related NGOs.
- Review intellectual and practical problems associated with NGO activity in international politics.
- Demonstrate analytical skills by producing an in-depth analysis of a real-life NGO operations situation.
- Analyse and explain the strategies adopted by NGOs in particular contexts

Core Reading

Erman E., and Anders U., 2010, Legitimacy beyond the state? Re-examining the democratic credentials of transnational Actors, Palgrave, Basingstoke.

Jönsson C. and Tallberg J. 2010, Transnational Actors in Global Governance: Patterns, Explanations and implications, Basingstoke, Palgrave.

Steffek J., and Hahn K., 2010, Evaluating transnational NGOs: Legitimacy, Accountability, Representation, Basingstoke, Palgrave.

Weiss T. and Thakur, R. Global Governance and the UN, 2010, Indiana, Indiana UP.

EM7431: Armed Conflict, Peacebuilding and Development (Intensive Module)

Coordinator: Dr Dong Jin Kim

Time: Hilary/Spring Semester

Format: Intensive

Peacebuilding is an inter-disciplinary field of research and practice, with a particular concern for increasing understanding of the origins of violent conflicts and possibilities for their resolution and transformation, as well as conditions for sustainable peace. Since former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's report, *An Agenda for Peace* (1992), the term peacebuilding has been widely used by the international community to embrace multiple activities in multiple sectors, from peace mediation to humanitarian and development aid cooperation, to prevent and/or to end violent conflicts. This module examines the complex relationship between peacebuilding and development in conflict-affected societies, and introduces relevant concepts and theories, as well as practices, including conflict sensitive development, basic conflict analysis, peace mediation and peacebuilding skills. Multiple case studies will be used to explore the on-the-ground reality from the perspective of diverse theories and concepts.

Learning Outcomes

- Provide the background of relevant concepts and theories for peacebuilding
- Connect development as a process of social, economic and political change to armed conflict and peacebuilding
- Understand the link between theory and practice in peacebuilding

Core Reading

Lederach, J. P. (1997), *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, United States Institute of Peace Press.

Philpott, D. & Gerard F. P. (eds.) (2010), *Strategies of Peace: Transforming Conflict in a Violent World*, Oxford University Press.

O'Gorman, E. (2011) *Conflict and Development*, Zed Books.

Richmond, O. P. (2016) *Peace Formation and Political Order in Conflict Affected Societies*, Oxford University Press.

EM7431: Reconciliation in Ireland? Religion, Politics and Peace

Coordinator: Dr Etain Tannam

Time: Hilary/Spring Semester

Format: Weekly Lectures

The Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, which brought peace to Northern Ireland, is considered a model of conflict resolution. However, its primary goal was not only peace but also reconciliation, and its success in achieving reconciliation remains incomplete. This module takes a multidisciplinary approach to help understand the conflict, the peace process, and the challenges of achieving reconciliation. It explores the topic of reconciliation in Ireland and whether it is attainable. The module concludes on a positive note by highlighting the benefits of the Good Friday Agreement and discussing how to advance reconciliation in the coming decades, especially in anticipation of a possible referendum on a United Ireland.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the meaning of reconciliation in Northern Ireland from theological and political science perspectives
- Assess critically political science explanations for the conflict in Northern Ireland
- Address the role of religion and religious agents in the conflict
- Interrogate the debate about a United Ireland from nationalist, unionist and ‘neither’ perspectives
- Understand Northern Ireland’s mechanisms of conflict transformation and peace-building in comparative perspective (e.g. Bosnia, Sri Lanka, and South Africa)

EM7488: Forced Displacement, Conflict and Peacebuilding

Coordinator: Dr Gillian Wylie

Time: Hilary/Spring Semester

Format: Weekly Lectures

Forced migration of people stands at record numbers in the contemporary world. This displacement is caused by a complicated range of factors, but war is often at the root. How people move, where they go, and the rights and reception accorded to them are crucial ethical and political concerns of our times. While human rights and ethical frameworks exist, global and local political climates mean that ‘securitization’ and ‘crimmigration’ approaches often dominate contemporary responses. This module explores these dynamics from an interdisciplinary perspective and draws on a number of case studies of forced migration to explore the issues. Critical engagement with the politics and ethics surrounding forced displacement will enable us to ask what responses from the perspective of peacebuilding might look like. This will be considered in ways that recognise the agency of the displaced, as well as host communities and the political context in which all this unfolds.

Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate knowledge of the extent, causes and responses to contemporary global displacement
- Think independently about the ethical and political issues posed by forced displacement.
- Imagine creatively alternative approaches to forced displacement
- Demonstrate the transferable skills of independent study and research, critical analysis and clear presentation of complex identities

Core Reading

Fiddian, E., Qasmiyeh, G., Loescher, K. and Sigona, N. (eds) (2014) *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee & Forced Migration Studies*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Parekh, S. (2017) *Refugees and the Ethics of Forced Displacement*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

UNHCR (2020) *Global Trends in Forced Displacement*, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-ie/statistics/unhcrstats/5d08d7ee7/unhcr-global-trends-2020.html>.

EM7435: United Nations and Conflict Resolution

Coordinator: Alex Richardson

Time: Hilary/Spring Semester

Format: Weekly lectures

The United Nations (UN) was established in the aftermath of World War II to promote international peace and security worldwide. Since its founding, the UN has served as a forum for diplomacy in many fragile regions and has developed a range of ambitious policy initiatives, including UN peacekeeping operations (PKOs) and the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda. However, many critics argue that the UN is constrained by differing perspectives in global politics, selective and controversial political interventions, and the persistence of colonial hierarchies in the Global South. This module critically examines the UN, not merely as a neutral political problem-solver but as a site of contestation where competing visions of peace, security, and justice are explored. Through Queer-Feminist, Decolonial, and Critical Peace and Security perspectives, students will evaluate the UN's interventions in conflict zones and its evolving legitimacy.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the decision-making processes of the United Nations, particularly those of the Security Council, General Assembly, and specialized agencies.
- Consider the various sources of power that influence global decision-making, as well as which voices may be marginalized in this process.
- Understand the challenges that the European Union and the UN are likely to face in the coming decades, including climate insecurity, migration crises, and the rise of a multipolar world.

Core Reading

Henry, M.G. (2024). *The End of Peacekeeping: Gender, Race, and The Martial Politics of Intervention*. University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Karim, S., & Beardsley, K. (2022). Peacekeeping and the problem of sexual and gender-based violence. In Dorussen H., (Eds) *Handbook on Peacekeeping and International Relations*. 256-269. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Karlsrud, J. (2015). *The UN At War: Peace Operations in A New Era*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.