MPhil Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation
Course Overview 2022-23

The MPhil in Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation, Trinity College Dublin at Belfast, is an interdisciplinary course examining conflict and peacebuilding in Ireland and around the world. This document provides an overview of the modules on offer in the academic year 2022-23.

At Trinity, course elements are weighted with credits according to the European Credit Transfer Scheme – ECTS. The required ECTS for the MPhil is 90. All Master’s students must complete the Research Skills module (10 ECTS), plus a further 50 ECTS worth of taught modules and a dissertation (30 ECTS). Module registration takes place in advance of the beginning of the programme and students must complete and return a module registration form.

It should be noted that students may also take for credit or audit up to two modules from two Dublin MPhil programmes, International Peace Studies and Contextual Theologies & Interfaith Studies. This will require Belfast-based students to travel for classes held in Dublin and those who wish to do so should make sure that timetabling clashes can be avoided and their visa allows them to travel to the Republic of Ireland. The Dublin timetable will be provided. However, this year for the first time, one Dublin module, Gender, War and Peace, will be taught in hybrid format in semester 2, meaning Belfast students will be able to join online or attend in person.

It is recommended that you balance your modules over the two terms. Please note you may not take more than four modules in one term. You may also audit modules (i.e. take the class but not for credit). Community Learning is an exception to this rule as it is available over two terms.

Information provided below is done so in good faith and is correct as of June 2022. Modules may be amended depending on staff availability. In addition, module availability depends on numbers of interested students.
Research Skills EM7301

Co-ordinator: Dr David Mitchell (damitche@tcd.ie)
Time: Michaelmas/Autumn Semester
Format: Weekly lectures
Assessment: Dissertation proposal and proposal presentation

Overview
This module provides an insight into some of the core skills needed to develop as a graduate student here at Trinity College Dublin. The module will reflect on a number of core themes including: reading and writing; theories of knowledge production; qualitative research methods; ethical considerations in research; and data analysis. It has been designed in such a way as to support the successful completion of written assignments in the taught modules and serves as early preparation for the MPhil dissertation. In addition, the sessions will provide an orientation to some of the resources available for studies during the programme and an analysis of academic skills involved in graduate work.

Learning Outcomes
- Understand the different theoretical arguments surrounding the production of knowledge.
- Grasp issues pertaining to qualitative and quantitative enquiry.
- Submit academic work in an appropriate structure and format, with a full bibliography and consistent referencing.
- Distinguish between proper academic use of research material of others and inappropriate plagiarism.
- Develop a coherent plan for the dissertation.

Select Reading
Conflict and Peace in Northern Ireland EM7469

Co-ordinator: Dr Brendan Ciarán Browne (brbrowne@tcd.ie)
Time: Michaelmas/Autumn Semester
Format: Weekly lectures
Assessment: Two essays

Overview
This course analyses the origins and dynamics of the conflict across the region with a view to assessing the prospects for peace and reconciliation. Core topics include, inter alia: explanations of the conflict (colonial, economic, religious, ethno-nationalist); Irish republican/nationalist, and Ulster unionist/loyalist perspectives of the conflict; the peace process and Good Friday Agreement; civil society peacebuilding. Students will be invited to form their own views on the current, complex condition of Northern Ireland and to examine the multi-faceted nature of Northern Ireland’s transition. (Note there are some field visits included in the module meaning there may be a small charge for transport/fees).

Learning Outcomes
• Identify and analyse the causes of the conflict in the north of Ireland including the merits of different perspectives on the nature of the conflict in Northern Ireland.
• Give a detailed account of processes of change leading up to the 1998 Good Friday/Belfast Agreement and thereafter.
• Analyse the continuing tendencies for conflict in ‘transitional’/post-conflict’ Northern Ireland and assess the prospects for real and meaningful reconciliation.

Select Reading
Foundations of Conflict Resolution Research EM7450

Co-ordinator: Dr David Mitchell (damitche@tcd.ie)
Time: Michaelmas/Autumn Semester
Format: Weekly lectures
Assessment: Essay and presentation

Overview
This course examines some of the key concepts and debates in the field of peace and conflict research. It discusses the emergence of peace/conflict/conflict resolution as a subject of academic scrutiny. It explores influential ideas which have driven the pursuit of peace and justice such as liberalism, Marxism, feminism, religious faith, as well as the non-violence and Just War traditions. Furthermore, the module provides students with a theoretical understanding of the causes and dynamics of ethnic conflicts and approaches to their resolution.

Learning Outcomes
• Identify the contributions made to peace theory and practice of different traditions of thought.
• Grasp the nature of ethnic nationalism and the causes and dynamics of ethnic conflicts.
• Assess the different kinds of intervention strategies that are used by third parties to manage, resolve and transform destructive conflict.
• Further demonstrate the transferable skills of independent study and research, critical analysis and clear presentation of complex ideas.

Select Reading
Mediation and Peacebuilding Skills EM7487

Co-ordinator: Dr. Dong Jin Kim (kimdj@tcd.ie)
Time: Michaelmas/Autumn Semester
Format: One week intensive
Assessment: Essay

Overview
The Mediation and Peacebuilding Skills Module is taught as a one week intensive in November 2022. The aim of the module is to provide a theoretical and practical introduction to mediation and dialogue facilitation skills in the context of intractable conflict. In addition, the module offers an insight into political negotiations and conflict management practices, and outlines how to prepare for, and conduct dialogue in challenging environments.

Learning Outcomes

- Develop an understanding of mediation, dialogue and conflict analysis models.
- Grasp various dialogue methods and facilitation techniques as well as planning, conducting and monitoring a dialogue process.
- Begin the cognitive and emotive process of operationalizing how to translate different conflict resolution/transformation theories of change into facilitation and dialogue theories of practice.

Select Readings

Community Learning and Reflective Practice EM7454

Co-ordinator: Eileen Mah (gricuke@tcd.ie)
Time: Michaelmas/Autumn Semester &/or Hilary/Spring Semester (there will be some group sessions throughout the year)
Format: Placement
Assessment: Reflective essay and supervisor evaluation

Overview
This module – an internship with an identified partner organisation - allows students to gain real-world experience of community work in Northern Ireland and connect this experience with what is being learned in the classroom. If you already work for a non-governmental organisation, we hope that the community-based learning component of the course will help you to reflect on what you do, share those experiences with others, and enhance your work. Those who do not are encouraged to seek out a placement opportunity in line with their interests and abilities or consult with the Module Co-ordinator to identify an appropriate organisation. In this module, students are expected to work a minimum of 96 hours with the organisation between October 2022 and April 2023, and spend at least 24 hours in personal study/reading and reflection. Students will be asked to keep a reflective journal and make use of this journal when writing their coursework reflective essay. Students enrolled in this class must also take the ‘Conflict and Peace in Northern Ireland’ module to ensure that their experiences in the community are grounded in a sound understanding of the socio-political context. Please note, this module will be awarded a pass/fail grade.

Learning Outcomes
• Engage in ‘reflective practice’.
• Connect ‘theory’ from the classroom with ‘practice’ in various organisations.
• Identify skills gained through community-based work.

Select Reading
• Brendan Browne (2013) ‘Recording the personal: the benefits in maintaining research diaries for documenting the emotional and practical challenges of fieldwork in unfamiliar settings’, International Journal of Qualitative Methods, Vol.12, pp. 403-419
Transitional Justice EM7447

Co-ordinator: Dr. Nisan Alici
Time: Hilary/Spring Semester
Format: Weekly lectures
Assessment: Essay and presentation

Overview
The aim of this course is to provide students with an introduction to the fundamental questions and concerns of transitional justice, and examples of transitional justice mechanisms in operation in conflicted/post-conflict societies across the world. The module will examine issues relating to how best to counter impunity, recognise and meet victims’ needs, and to ensure mass human rights violations are not repeated in the future. The core areas of transitional justice, including theories of transitional justice, domestic/international tribunals, truth recovery, reparations, and reconciliation initiatives, will be covered. In so doing, students are provided with the framework to better interrogate the issues associated with dealing with the past in conflict. The interdisciplinary nature of the module is one of the great attractions of studying transitional justice and permits students to engage with sociological, anthropological, legal and political material whilst also examining legal proceedings of the many international legal institutions in place to manage transitional justice issues in a variety of cases.

Learning Outcomes
- Comprehend the theoretical and historical underpinnings of the field of transitional justice.
- Assess the legal, political and sociological concepts relevant to the field of transitional justice and critically reflect on the role of transitional justice in aiding reconciliation and dealing with the past.
- Utilise practical case-study examples in order to bring the field of transitional justice to light and to highlight its applicability in a local context.

Select Reading
Dynamics of Reconciliation EM7451

Co-ordinator: Dr David Mitchell (damitche@tcd.ie)
Time: Hilary/Spring Semester
Format: Weekly lectures
Assessment: Essay and presentation

Overview
This module interrogates the concept of reconciliation from a range of disciplinary perspectives and within various domains. What is reconciliation? Is it possible and why does it attract criticism, scepticism and even hostility? Does reconciliation mean abandoning justice and ‘forgiving and forgetting’? What are the personal and social psychological dimensions of reconciliation? Is it an inherently religious idea – and how and why has it so often been promoted from a faith-based perspective? How can sport and the arts and symbolism contribute to reconciliation? What is political reconciliation? What roles do apology and forgiveness play? Can we measure reconciliation, and can we find it?

Learning Outcomes
• Understand reconciliation as a concept.
• Critically appraise the relationship between reconciliation and justice.
• Grasp how reconciliation has been pursued in various domains such as politics, sport, and the arts.
• Understand how reconciliation has been understood in different traditions, such as faith traditions and liberal human rights tradition.

Select Reading
Dissertation

Co-ordinators: Dr David Mitchell/Dr Brendan Ciarán Browne

Assessment: 15,000-20,000 words to be supervised by an appropriate member of staff. Supervisors will be allocated following the submission of formal dissertation proposals at the beginning of March.

Submission Date: August 2023