

# Social Conflict

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Spring, 1998

## Course Description

The end of the Cold War has not ended the threat of war or of violent conflicts within a society. Some old conflicts that were dormant have now flared up. Problems of large scale, violent conflicts unfortunately remain central in the modern world. The probability of nuclear proliferation and the possible use of chemical weapons make such conflicts even more scary. The purpose of this course is to increase your understanding of the conditions under which social conflicts tend to become violent and on how they can be resolved non-violently.

The format of the class sessions is unusual, with very few lectures. A highlight around which much of the course is built will be SIMSOC weekend, held outside of normal class hours. SIMSOC (Simulated Society), is a game simulation of a society, and will be held on the following dates, with the rooms to be announced:

Friday, January 30: 7:00-10:00 p.m. and Saturday, January 31: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

It is possible for you to miss a small fraction of this time period and still participate but if you must miss the whole session or most of it, please discuss with me how you will need to make it up.

To compensate for the extra class time spent on this weekend, there will be no regular class on the following dates:

Tuesday, Jan 27:

Thursday, Feb 19: (But there will be an optional review session for the mid-term exam on that day.)

Thursday, Feb. 26: (This is the Thursday before Spring break)

Tuesday, April 7: (This is the Tuesday before Easter)

Thursday, April 16 (No class unless needed to make-up a snow holiday)

In most of the regular class sessions, the class will be divided into learning groups of six or seven people to carry out exercises that we will later discuss.

## Course Reading

The coursepack includes many of the required readings as well as class exercises and materials that you will need to bring to class and other material covering exams and papers. It is available at the BC Bookstore and you should obtain a copy as soon as possible. In addition to the coursepack, we will be using the following texts (all available in paperback):

Fisher, Roger, and William Ury 1991 *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. New York: Penguin (2nd edit;on)

Gamson, William A 1991. SIMSOC (Simulated Society): *Participant's Manual*. 4th ed New York: The Free Press

Joseph, Paul 1993. *Peace Politics: The United States Between the Old and New World Orders*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press

## Course Schedule

### 1. **Rebellion** (2-3 weeks)

(Focus on the dynamics of conflict Case study: Berkeley in the Sixties)

Reading:

"Why Do People Rebel?" including introduction and excerpts by Hoffer, Kornhauser, Davies, and Tilly (from coursepack)

SIMSOC: excerpts by Alinsky and by Gamson, Fireman, and Rytina, pp.67-73

### 2 **Conflict and Conflict Resolution** (3-4 weeks)

(Focus on theories of conflict; SIMSOC game; positive value of conflict; game theoretical models; conflict management and resolution)

Reading

: (from SIMSOC prior to play): Rules and articles by Apt and Raser, pp.3-32 and 39-45.

"SIMSOC in Action" (to be distributed in class after game is completed)

SIMSOC (for post-game class sessions) articles by Dahl, Sykes, Gamson, Coser, Boulding, Sarason, pp 87-124

Fisher and Ury, *Getting to Yes*, whole book

### 3. **Socialization and Culture** (1 week)

Reading:

Cancian, Francesca. "A Conversation on War, Peace, and Gender" (coursepack)

Gibson, James William. "American Paramilitary Culture and the Reconstitution of the Vietnam War" (coursepack)

(Midterm Exam: Tuesday, Feb 24)

### 4 **War and Peace** (3 weeks)

(Positive and negative peace; characteristics of societies without war; case study: Operation Desert Storm; war and democracy; international conflict management; peacekeeping; the World Court )

Reading Cancian and Gibson "Is War Inevitable?" (coursepack)

Fabbro, David "Equality in Peaceful Societies" (coursepack)

Russett, Bruce "Winners and Losers Some Reflections on the End of the Cold War" (coursepack)

Joseph, *Peace Politics*, Introduction: "National Security in the Old and New World Orders" and Ch.2: "Old and New World Orders in Operation Desert Storm," pp 1 -21 and 60-94

### 5. **Genocide** (2 weeks)

(Defining it and making important distinctions; preventing it; the tension between peace and justice.)

Reading:

Fein, Helen "Genocide: A Sociological Perspective" (coursepack)

Fein, Helen (ed) "The Prevention of Genocide: Rwanda and Yugoslavia Reconsidered" (coursepack)

**6. Peace Politics** (2 weeks)

(Common security; an alternative vision of international relations; the role of peace movements)

Reading:

Pam Solo, Ted Sasson, and Rob Leavitt, "Outlining the Future: Principles of Common Security" (coursepack)

Joseph, Peace Politics, Ch 4, and Ch 7, pp 140-81, and 234-62