This short course examines key legal and political issues facing the United Nations and other international policy actors as they endeavor to “build peace” in areas emerging from conflict. The transition from war to peace is a complex, challenging process. Even after warring parties enter into peace agreements, further steps are required to make those agreements durable. International actors are almost always involved to some extent, and not only to advance the welfare of the local population. Failed or war-torn areas also tend to export many of the most pressing threats to international security. It has never been more important for policymakers to understand the potential and the pitfalls of various approaches to peacebuilding.

I will define “peacebuilding” broadly to refer to the various ways in which policymakers seek to stabilize and reconstruct societies ravaged by civil or international conflict. We will focus primarily on three aspects of the process, with particular emphasis on U.N.-led activities in these areas:

1. Enforcing cease-fire agreements and other aspects of peace settlements, often through U.N. or regional peacekeeping operations;
2. Beginning to rebuild and reconstruct ravaged economies and the core public institutions needed to manage them; and
3. Dealing with past abuses and promoting reconciliation through war crimes trials, truth commissions, and other means.

Post-conflict societies typically face a daunting range of challenges. These include the continued threat or occurrence of hostilities, human rights abuses, refugee flows, divided or ineffective government, and widespread economic upheaval and dislocation. During the post-Cold War period, most armed conflict has occurred in the Global South, where the economic and political obstacles to peacebuilding are often particularly formidable. We will use a series of case studies from to examine various international policy approaches to stabilizing and reconstructing afflicted areas.

The course is designed to provide you with a basic understanding of the complexity of the peacebuilding process and an ability to think critically about key aspects of post-conflict stabilization, reconstruction, and transitional justice. We will also seek to build on your policy writing and presentation skills.
**COURSE REQUIREMENTS & POLICIES**

**Participation**
The first course requirement is your active and enthusiastic participation. Public policies are made by engaging in dialogue and debate. To be effective in that setting, you need to develop comfort and confidence when asking questions and advancing your views. I encourage you to raise questions and comments, and I will regularly solicit your opinions and participation. You should come to class prepared to talk and to learn from one another.

If you have an unavoidable conflict and miss a session, please get notes from a colleague. I will not take attendance, but your participation grade will suffer if you miss sessions unnecessarily.

**Assignments and Grades**
Your assignments aim to advance your knowledge of relevant subject-matter and develop your skills as a policy analyst and advocate. I will ask you to complete two graded writing assignments and two short, pass/fail reflection papers:

- **Policy Memorandum** – Your first assignment is to write a memorandum to a key policymaker or policymaking body on a specific decision that needs to be made. You will need to research a current international peacebuilding engagement, identify a problem that requires attention, outline options on how to address it, and recommend a path forward. You may write as an independent outside analyst, in which case your memorandum will be public, like the policy memoranda published by many think tanks. If you prefer, you may also assume the identity of a member of the staff of the relevant agency and write an “inside” non-public decision memorandum solely for your boss and other members of your agency. In either case, be sure to think carefully about your audience as you research and write. Your memo should be no more than 2,500 words long.

- **Talking Points and Backgrounder** – Your second assignment is to write talking points and a backgrounder for a senior policy official of your choosing. Your talking points should address a controversial policy topic and prepare your boss to justify his or her position in public and in a diverse array of private meetings. You may address either a policy decision your boss made in the recent past or one that remains under debate. Your talking points should fit on a single page in 14-point font, and your backgrounder (which only your boss will read) should fit on two single-spaced pages in 12-point font. The goals of this assignment are to practice defending an established policy position and to develop skills in a specific form of policy writing.

- **Reflection Paper** – I want to encourage you to think about issues in peacebuilding outside of the context of our brief course. I will organize a number of seminars, panels and films during the term and will ask you to write a single-page reflection paper on peacebuilding issues raised in connection with at least one campus event you attend. You do not need to conduct extensive research—the objective is merely to encourage you to engage in relevant discussion, think critically, and formulate ideas about relevant policy challenges. I will provide further details in class.
I will provide further guidance on these assignments as the course unfolds. I am also open to your suggestions if you would prefer to practice writing in another format, such as talking points or a draft article for an academic journal. I want the course to be useful in helping you develop skills helpful to you. In each instance, I encourage you to prepare a rough draft and seek comments from a peer reviewer before submitting your final draft to me.

Please turn in your papers on time. In the policy world, meetings happen and decisions are made—late memos, briefs, or op-eds often have little if any effect. In this course, late papers will receive an automatic deduction of one letter grade, compounded after each 24-hour period. Please plan ahead if you anticipate a heavy workload at particular times this semester.

Your grades on papers and presentations will be based on the substance of your arguments and your effectiveness in communicating them. I will calculate your course grade as follows:

- Decision memo 35%
- Policy article 35%
- Participation 30%

Developing Your Writing Skills

In your pre-course survey, almost all of you expressed a strong interest in honing your policy writing skills. Your two main assignments this term will try to help you do that. Effective policy writing means thinking about your audience, organizing your arguments clearly, and presenting them in a concise, compelling manner. I will try to offer thorough and constructive comments on your papers, and I am glad to discuss topics and outlines with you in office hours and to review completed papers after you receive my written feedback.

We are also fortunate to have excellent writing tutors at the Ford School. They will be available to work with you throughout the term, reviewing drafts and offering feedback, and I will share details on how to arrange for appointments during one of our initial class sessions.

Your papers should properly cite the authorities you use by including endnotes. Any standard system of citation is fine, provided that you use it consistently. I encourage you to use a wide range of online sources to begin learning about a subject, but please only cite sources with recognized indicia of reliability.

Readings on CTools

There is no textbook for the course. We will read a wide variety of sources, including academic journals, policy papers, and official documents. Each week, some of the readings will be posted on CTools as PDF files. Many of the recommended readings are journal articles that are available online through the UM library website.

Relevant Journals and Websites

One goal of the course is to familiarize you with some of the magazines, newspapers, academic journals, and websites that can provide you with useful information on peacebuilding issues. In your policy work, you will often be asked to learn about complex topics quickly, and developing a good mental map of the resources you can draw upon to do so. Many of the general international affairs journals contain articles on peacebuilding from time to time, such as the American Journal of International Law, Foreign Affairs, International Security, and the Journal
of Conflict Resolution. Some journals also focus on peacebuilding issues specifically. Examples include:

- **Conflict, Security and Development** - Routledge
- **International Journal of Transitional Justice** – Oxford University
- **International Peacekeeping** - Routledge
- **Journal of Peacebuilding and Development** – Center for Global Peace
- **Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution** – Tabula Rasa Institute
- **Peace, Conflict and development** – University of Bradford

You will also find it useful to familiarize yourself with relevant websites of think tanks, advocacy groups, and national or international agencies involved in peacebuilding. Some examples include:

- **Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation** – [www.csvr.org.za](http://www.csvr.org.za)
- **Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research Initiative** – [www.peacebuildinginitiative.org](http://www.peacebuildinginitiative.org)
- **International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ)** – [www.ictj.org](http://www.ictj.org)
- **International Peace Academy** - [www.ipacademy.org](http://www.ipacademy.org)
- **Oxford Transitional Justice Research** - [http://www.csls.ox.ac.uk/otjr.php](http://www.csls.ox.ac.uk/otjr.php)
- **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute** – [www.sipri.org](http://www.sipri.org)
- **United Nations Department of Political Affairs, Peacemaking and Peacebuilding**
- **United States Institute of Peace** – [www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org)
- **World Bank Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit**

You should also get in the habit—if you are not already—of reading some major newspapers and magazines that deal with peacebuilding topics.

**Laptops, etc.**

I prefer that you take notes by hand, which is more conducive to class discussion. You may use a laptop, but please turn off your wireless device and limit yourself to taking notes. Please also turn off and put away all other electronic devices into the classroom.

**Plagiarism**

I take these rules seriously, and so should you. If I suspect anyone of plagiarizing, I will take appropriate disciplinary measures. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please see [www.lib.umich.edu/handouts/plagiar.pdf](http://www.lib.umich.edu/handouts/plagiar.pdf).

**Contacting Me**

I want to get to know you and encourage you to come to my office hours! One of the most important skills you can develop as a budding policymaker is to get comfortable communicating your ideas orally and discussing policy issues face-to-face. If you send me email asking questions that require detailed responses, I will generally request that you come to office hours to discuss them.
Course Outline & Readings

Note: I have posted required readings (***) and most recommended readings on Ctools ().

Part I – The Challenges of Peacekeeping

Session 1 – Sept. 2
Introduction and the Evolution of UN Peacekeeping

Discussion Topics:

• What do we mean by “peacebuilding”?  
• What are some of the most relevant domestic and international institutions, and what kinds of support do they need to provide?  
• How and why did peacekeeping mandates and missions expand after the Cold War?  
• What was new about UNTAC? In what ways did it succeed or fail?

Reading:

** Roland Paris, At War’s End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict (Cambridge University Press, 2004), chapter 1

** Steven R. Ratner, The New UN Peacekeeping (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), chapters 1-3 – in addition, chapters 6-8 on Cambodia are recommended


Steve Heder and Judy Ledgerwood, eds., Propaganda, Politics, and Violence in Cambodia: Democratic Transition under United Nations Peacekeeping (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), chapter 1


Charles T. Call and Elizabeth M. Cousens, Ending Wars and Building Peace (New York: International Peace Academy, 2007)

Session 2 – Sept. 4
The Limits of Peacekeeping Forces: Rwanda

Discussion Topics:
• Why didn’t UN peacekeepers intervene to stop the genocide?
• What are the key legal and political obstacles to assertive peacekeeping?
• What were the particular challenges in the Rwandan case?
• How could it have been handled differently?

Reading:
** Alan Kuperman, “Rwanda in Retrospect,” Foreign Affairs 79: 1 (2000), pp. 94-118
Romeo Dallaire, Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda (Toronto: Random House, 2003)

Session 3 - Sept. 9
Peacekeeping Reforms and the Case of East Timor

Discussion Topics:
• What proved to be the major shortcomings of UN peacekeeping missions in the 1990s?
• What are some common reasons why peacekeeping missions succeeded or failed during the Cold War and early post-Cold War periods?
• How did the Brahimi report attempt to remedy those problems? Were the fixes that report recommended appropriate and realistic?
• What was new about the East Timor peacebuilding effort?
• What were the biggest challenges to UNTAET in preserving and building peace, and what can we learn from UNTAET’s experience?

Reading:
Session 4 – Sept. 11
Twenty-First Century Peacekeeping in Kosovo

Discussion Topics:

- How did the NATO intervention in Kosovo differ from the INTERFET intervention in East Timor?
- Was the NATO intervention lawful and/or legitimate?
- What particular challenges have UNAMIK and the more recent EU mission faced?
- Is there a way out for the international forces in Kosovo?

Reading:

** Independent International Commission on Kosovo, The Kosovo Report (Oxford University Press, 2000), Executive Summary


Session 5 – Sept. 16
Recent Peacekeeping Trends (Sudan)

Discussion Topics:

• What changes to peacekeeping policies and practices have occurred since the Brahimi report? Have those changes made operations more effective?
• Why have regional states and institutions like the African Union taken a greater role in peacekeeping over the past decade? Is regional leadership a good thing?
• Is the world in danger of running out of peacebuilding resources?
• What needs to be done going forward?

Reading:


UN Department of Peacekeeping, A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping (July 2009)

Aicha Elbasri, “We Can’t Say All That We See in Darfur,” Foreign Policy, Apr. 2014)


PART II – PEACEBUILDING AND POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION

Session 6 – Sept. 18
Democratic Institutions and the Case of Iraq

Discussion Topics:

• To what extent are democratic institutions needed to maintain peace in fragile societies?
• When are democratic elections and capitalism conducive to building the peace? When do they undermine peace?
• What has gone wrong in Iraq? Could another approach have succeeded?
Reading:


** short articles on Iraq (Ctools)


Condoleezza Rice, “Promoting the National Interest,” *Foreign Affairs*, Jan-Feb 2000, pp. 45-62

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** Session 7 – Sept. 23 **

** Post-Conflict Economic Reconstruction **

Discussion Topics:

- What types of economic structures and networks tend to produce conflict and undermine peace?
- To what extent are security and economic reconstruction mutually dependent?
- What can international institutions do to make a difference?
- What are the World Bank and regional development banks equipped to do in post-conflict reconstruction?
- What reforms have the development banks made to improve their effectiveness in this area? Have they been successful?
- Was the UN Peacebuilding Commission needed? What has it done to date?
- What institutional changes have occurred within the U.S. government?
- What are the principal advantages of these institutions? What are their main challenges?

Reading:


Assignment due: POLICY MEMORANDUM

Session 8 – Sept. 25
The Politics of Post-Conflict Reconstruction (Lebanon)

Discussion Topics:

- How do various actors compete for leadership in post-conflict reconstruction zones?
- What types of problems can civil society help to address in economic reconstruction?
- What are some of the principal barriers to NGO effectiveness in this area?
- What can we learn from the case of Lebanon after the 2006 war about the relative strengths and weaknesses of official and non-governmental actors in reconstruction?

Reading:


Session 9 – Sept. 30
Reconstruction in Resource-Rich States (Liberia)

Discussion Topics:

• What are some of the special challenges of reconstruction in states with resource wealth?
• How have international actors tried to address the “resource curse” problem in diamond-rich countries like Liberia and Sierra Leone?
• What international policies and practices are being used in oil-rich states that have been prone to conflict? What other options are available?
• What special problems have aid agencies encountered when providing relief to conflict-torn areas?
• When are economic relief efforts helpful, and when do they tend to undermine peacebuilding efforts?
• What have aid donors learned from recent experience?

Reading:


Session 10 - Oct. 2
Reconstruction amid Conflict: Afghanistan

Discussion Topics:

• What are the added difficulties that flow from ongoing conflict (as opposed to a post-conflict environment)?
• How does the presence of large-scale US and allied combat forces change the equation?
• How do illicit drug networks impact reconstruction efforts?

Reading:
 William Brownfield, Assistant Secretary of State, “Future U.S. Counternarcotics Efforts in Afghanistan,” Senate testimony (Jan. 2014)

PART III – PEACEBUILDING AND TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

Session 11 – Oct. 4
Documenting Past Atrocities

Discussion Topics:
• In what ways can peace, truth, justice, and reconciliation go hand-in-hand? In what ways can they conflict?
• What are the main options for dealing with past abuses?
• Is documentation of human rights abuses inherently political? Should it be?
• Who is in the best position to conduct documentation activities?
• How effective was the process in Guatemala? What were its shortcomings?

 John D. Ciorciari, “Archiving Memory after Mass Atrocities,” working paper for the University of Texas (Jan. 2012)


Session 12 – Oct. 9
Truth Commissions

Discussion Topics:
- What should the main goals of truth-telling processes be?
- How much do TRCs contribute to public understanding? To reconciliation?
- Was the South African TRC a success?
- What kinds of processes need to accompany a formal TRC to make it effective?

Reading:


Session 13 – Oct. 16
Criminal Tribunals

Discussion Topics:

• Why do international trials occur in lieu of domestic proceedings?
• Have the trials for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda produced a sense of justice and/or reconciliation or reopened old wounds?
• Is the ICC an improvement over ad hoc courts?
• Why did the hybrid model come about?
• What are the advantages and disadvantages of hybrid tribunals?

Reading:


Session 14 – Oct. 21
Civil Society Measures and Other Forms of Transitional Justice

Discussion Topics:

• Does the experience of the Khmer Rouge tribunal validate arguments in favor of mixed tribunals or undermine them?
• What role can civil society have alongside the formal accountability process?
• What are some major constraints on civil society activities and effectiveness?
• To what extent is civil society participation a requirement for reconciliation?

Reading:

** John D. Ciorciari and Sok-Kheang Ly, “The ECCC’s Role in Reconciliation,” in On Trial: the Khmer Rouge Accountability Process (Documentation Center of Cambodia, 2009)

Assignment due: TALKING POINTS AND BACKGROUND