

# Contemporary armed conflicts and stability operations

University of Warsaw  
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**Module  
coordinator:**

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**Period:** Second semester

**Venue & hours:****1. Introduction****2. Learning outcomes**

At the end of the course, the student:

- Has highly specialised knowledge and a critical understanding of theoretical concepts and theories on armed conflicts and peace and stability operations.
- Has a critical understanding of personal security risks in humanitarian fieldwork, as well as opportunities and threats of current trends in organised violence and peace and stability operations, with special attention to their humanitarian dimension.
- Has highly specialised knowledge of the diversity of actors and stakeholders involved in contemporary armed conflicts and peace and stability operations, their interaction and competition, as well as understanding of the importance of coordination between their activities.
- Has a thorough knowledge of the operational processes and changes in political, military, economic and social structures and institutions in the international dimension; has a thorough knowledge of the theory and practice of political and economic decision-making in these entities at the nation state level and on the international scale in context of armed conflicts and peace and stability operations.
- Has a critical understanding of the social, legal and security environment in context of armed conflicts and peace and stability operations.
- Has demonstrated the ability to formulate adequate and ethically sound recommendations for involvement in conflict resolution through peace and stability operations.

- Has specialised skills to conceptualise, interpret and critically analyse armed conflicts and peace and stability operations on the basis of a variety of sources, generating new interdisciplinary expertise to help solve complex humanitarian problems.
- Has the ability to formulate independent views on armed conflicts and peace and stability operations, support them with elaborate arguments, using a broad range of approaches and theoretical perspectives, formulate coherent conclusions and make a synthetic summary of these conclusions, using a specialized language of conflict studies and conflict resolution studies.
- Has studied a research topic in depth, and conducted and completed a medium-length research project largely self-directed.
- Learns from past experiences in armed conflicts conflict resolution, identifies opportunities to overcome dilemmas concerning peace and stability operations, with a clear application of humanitarian principles and standards.

### **3. Course material**

- A. Bellamy, P. Williams (eds.), *Understanding Peacekeeping*, Polity, Cambridge-Malden 2010
- J. Koops, N. MacQueen, T. Tardy, P. D. Williams, *The Oxford Handbook of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, OUP: Oxford 2015
- P. Diehl, A. Balas, *Peace operations (2nd edition)* Polity, Cambridge-Malden 2012
- D. Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency*, OUP, Oxford 2010
- M. Kaldor, *New and Old Wars. Organised Violence in the Global Era*, Polity:Cambridge-Malden 1998, 2006, 2012
- R. Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations. Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century*, Grove Press: New York 2003
- M. Shaw, *The New Western way of War*, Polity: Cambridge-Malden 2005
- R. Smith, *The Utility of Force. The Art of War in the Modern War*, Vintage: New York 2008
- P. Singer, *Wired for war. The Robotics revolution and Conflict in the 21 st Century*, Penguin: New York 2009
- P. Singer, *Corporate Warriors. The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry*, Cornell UP: New York 2003, 2008
- M. Boot, *War Made New: Technology, Warfare, and the Course of History, 1500 to Today*, Gotham Books: New York 2006
- SIPRI Yearbook (various editions), Conflict barometer (various editions)

### **4. Teaching and learning methodology**

### **5. Programme and training activities**

- 1 General ideas and concepts - armed conflicts and peace and stability operations
  - Armed conflicts: main definitions, typologies and classifications (incl. question of "level of intensity of violence", inter- vs. intra vs. intra-national internationalised conflicts, issue of one-sided violence, conflicts and interventions).
  - Peacekeeping and stability operations – general idea of the concept, main definitions and classifications
2. Old wars - traditional (Clausewitzian) vision of armed conflicts, XX century wars – geopolitics, total wars, Cold War and its implications
3. UN model of peacekeeping – genesis, principles, forms, evolution since 1948 until the end of Cold War
4. Contemporary armed conflicts - statistical overview, geographical distribution, intensity
5. Theories on evolution of conflicts in macro scale (methods and means used, strategies adopted): A. and H. Toffler' "war generations" and derivative concepts (i.e. fourth generation wars, etc.), M. van Creveld "transformation of war"
6. Theories on sources and reasons for armed conflicts (based on structural factors - R. Cooper; economic and ecological factors - P. Collier, T. Homer-Dixon)
7. Theoretical reflection on the conduct and forms of contemporary armed conflicts - "new wars" theories (M. Kaldor, H. Muenkler);
8. Theoretical reflection on the conduct and forms of wars/interventions: of risk-transfer war (M. Shaw), "war amongst the people" (R. Smith)
9. UN model of peacekeeping – post Cold War evolution, current organizational schemes (incl. issue of force generation, burden- and responsibility sharing, financing, coordination/commanding), key evolutionary trends, main problems and challenges
10. European perspective – NATO model for peace/stability operations (idea, structures, force generation, financing schemes, burden-sharing); EU model for peace/stability operations
11. Ethical and cultural questions in contemporary armed conflicts ("intercultural awareness" and its implications; just war theory and peace/stabilization missions and humanitarian interventions/R2P actions);  
Mass media and conflicts and peace operations (evolution of their role, CNN effect, parachute journalism and other innovations within media practices; media and conflict resolution)
12. Problem of asymmetry in contemporary conflicts. Insurgency and counterinsurgency. Issue of hybrid warfare
13. Technology and war – RMA and its implications (impact on strategies and methods of conflict). Privatisation of violence
14. Selected problems of peacekeeping/conflict management: comprehensive approach and civil-military relations; militarization of humanitarian aid.  
kinetic operation/use of force in peace/stability missions: irole of policing.

15. Future of armed conflicts and peace and stability operations (incl. robotization of warfare and acting "

#### **6. Workload**

The module will involve 30 hours of lectures.

#### **7. Assessment methods**

attendance and active participation (15%), written exam - test+ oper questions (short essay) (85%