

SEMINAR: War Termination and Post-conflict Recovery

Syllabus[†]

Instructor: Frank Wyer

Term: Spring Quarter, 2025

Location: TBA

Course Description

In recent decades, an increasing share of armed conflicts are ending in negotiated settlements. Yet maintaining lasting peace in conflict-affected countries is difficult—indeed, some scholars estimate that up to 90% of civil wars in the 2000s were “repeat civil wars”, in which conflict restarted after an interval of peace. This course will focus on the challenge of ending conflicts and building peace, applying insights from social science to tackle important questions such as: How do peacekeeping forces prevent ceasefire violations from escalating? How are peace agreements negotiated and which types of provisions are most important? When do reforms to the political system or security sector help to maintain stability, and when are they counterproductive?

The capstone project for this seminar will be a collaborative project that allows groups of 3-4 students to choose either (1) a data-driven exercise that analyzes new or existing data on conflict termination or postconflict peacebuilding pertinent to one of the topic areas discussed in this course, or (2) a detailed case-study that applies one of the major theories discussed in this course to a specific country or set of countries.

Sample of Topics and Readings

- **Week 1 - NEGOTIATING SETTLEMENTS**

- **Questions for Discussion:** When are conflicts “ripe” for settlement? What is the nature of the commitment problem that prevents rebels and governments from trusting each other? How can commitment problems be resolved?

- **Readings:**

- * Walter, Barbara F. “The critical barrier to civil war settlement.” *International Organization* 51, no. 3 (1997): 335–364.
- * Wallensteen, Peter, and Isak Svensson. “Talking peace: International mediation in armed conflicts.” *Journal of Peace Research* 51, no. 2 (2014): 315–327.
- * Optional: Zartman, I William. “Ripeness: The hurting stalemate and beyond.” *International conflict resolution after the Cold War* 2 (2000): 225–250.

[†]This draft: October 10, 2024

- **Week 2 - PEACE AGREEMENT SPOILERS**

- **Questions for Discussion:** Who opposes peace deals and why? What are the different strategies peace opponents use to disrupt peace agreements?

- **Readings:**

- * Kydd, Andrew, and Barbara F Walter. “Sabotaging the peace: The politics of extremist violence.” *International Organization* 56, no. 2 (2002): 263–296.
- * Chapters 4 and 6: De Waal, Alex. *The real politics of the Horn of Africa: Money, war and the business of power*. John Wiley & Sons, 2015.
- * Optional: Autesserre, Séverine. “The Trouble with Congo-How Local Disputes Fuel Regional Conflict.” *Foreign Aff.* 87 (2008): 94.

- **Week 3 - PEACEKEEPERS**

- **Questions for Discussion:** Do peacekeepers actually help to keep the peace? What is it about the types of conflicts where peacekeepers are sent that make this a difficult empirical question? What does it mean for peacekeepers to be impartial or neutral, and is that possible?

- **Readings:**

- * Fortna, Virginia Page. “Does peacekeeping keep peace? International intervention and the duration of peace after civil war.” *International Studies Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (2004): 269–292.
- * Betts, Richard K. “The delusion of impartial intervention.” *Foreign Affairs* 73 (1994): 20.
- * Optional: Gilligan, Michael J, Ernest J Sergenti, et al. “Do UN interventions cause peace? Using matching to improve causal inference.” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 3, no. 2 (2008): 89–122.

- **Week 4 - PEACE AGREEMENT DESIGN**

- **Questions for Discussion:** What are some of the key objectives for a peace agreement? What tradeoffs have to be navigated?

- **Readings:**

- * Joshi, Madhav, and J Michael Quinn. “Is the sum greater than the parts? The terms of civil war peace agreements and the commitment problem revisited.” *Negotiation Journal* 31, no. 1 (2015): 7–30.
- * Colombia. *Final agreement to end the armed conflict and build a stable and lasting peace*, 2016.

- **Week 5 - DISARMING, DEMOBILIZING, DERADICALIZING, AND REINTEGRATING COMBATANTS**

- **Questions for Discussion:** What are the key components of DDR programs? What is the evidence on their effectiveness?

– **Readings:**

- * Blattman, Christopher, and Jeannie Annan. “Can employment reduce lawlessness and rebellion? A field experiment with high-risk men in a fragile state.” *American Political Science Review* 110, no. 1 (2016): 1–17.
- * Humphreys, Macartan, and Jeremy M Weinstein. “Demobilization and reintegration.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51, no. 4 (2007): 531–567.

• **Week 6 - SECURITY SECTOR REFORM**

– **Questions for Discussion:** Why do post-conflict countries often require major reforms to the military and police? How effective are different security sector reforms?

– **Readings:**

- * Berg, Louis-Alexandre. “Civil–military relations and civil war recurrence: Security forces in postwar politics.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64, nos. 7-8 (2020): 1307–1334.
- * Tiscornia, Lucía. “Police reform in the aftermath of armed conflict: How militarization and accountability affect police violence.” *Journal of Peace Research* 61, no. 3 (2024): 383–397.

• **Week 7 - TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE**

– **Questions for Discussion:** What are the risks of prosecuting perpetrators of wartime human rights violations and what are the risks of granting them amnesty? What are the challenges to providing justice to victims in post-conflict settings?

– **Readings:**

- * Revkin, Mara. “After the Islamic State: Balancing Accountability and Reconciliation in Iraq.” *United Nations University Centre for Policy Research*, 2018.
- * Jo, Hyeran, and Beth A Simmons. “Can the international criminal court deter atrocity?” *International Organization* 70, no. 3 (2016): 443–475.

• **Week 8 - POST CONFLICT ELECTIONS**

– **Questions for Discussion:** Should a country hold elections immediately after a conflict ends, or should rule be handed to a transitional government? Should former rebels be allowed to compete in elections?

– **Readings:**

- * Excerpts: Matanock, Aila M. *Electing peace: From civil conflict to political participation*. Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- * Brancati, Dawn, and Jack L Snyder. “Time to kill: The impact of election timing on postconflict stability.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 57, no. 5 (2013): 822–853.

• **Weeks 9-10 - CAPSTONE PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**