

SOC326: ANTHROPOLOGY OF PEACE & CONFLICT
St. Louis University in Madrid Spring 2013 Course Syllabus

Time: Tuesday/Thursday 12:30-1:45 pm **Place:** TBA

Professor: Dr. Mary Prendergast (email: mprende1@slu.edu)

Office hours: Tuesdays 2:00-3:30 pm, or by appointment (contact by email)

Credits: 3

Prerequisites: SOC120/SOC110 or equivalent strongly recommended but not required

Course description:

Faced with the daily headlines, one might easily conclude that we live in the most chaotic and violent period in human history. Yet a number of recent studies argue precisely the opposite. If we are, in fact, living in an era of unprecedented peace, then what does this say about human nature, the social contract, and the potential for future conflicts?

This course draws on evidence from the three main subdisciplines of anthropology in order to address these questions. Studies in biological anthropology spark debates about violence and conflict resolution among our closest relatives, the chimpanzees. Results of archaeological research support or refute the notion that violent conflict rose in tandem with so-called “civilization.” And from cultural anthropology – the study of living people – we witness a breadth of human experiences ranging from violent conflict, including genocide and cannibalism, to a complete absence of aggression and a desire to forgive and forget. After exploring the breadth and chronological depth of human experience, we turn to a prominent case study in conflict and reconciliation: the Rwandan genocide. In so doing, we consider anthropological perspectives on ethnicity, ethnic conflict, and reconciliation. Finally, we return to questions of what the future holds in terms of the human potential for peace.

Course objectives:

This course is aimed at anthropology, sociology, political science and international relations majors. Students will be introduced to anthropological literature, and unique perspectives on human behavior, not commonly encountered in traditional courses on war and peace, with the goal of reassessing widely-held assumptions about what is “natural” or “normal.” Students will be asked to rigorously examine current evidence in the centuries-old debate on the roles of aggression and peace-making in human societies. The course will hone students’ critical thinking and debating skills.

Requirements:

Class meetings will be structured as discussions, and class participation is a key part of your grade in this class. See below for a detailed description of how participation is evaluated. Few to no slides will be used, and students are therefore expected to come to class prepared to debate the readings at a deep level. In order to avoid a classroom atmosphere in which a handful of students dominate the conversation, it is essential that each student do the reading for every class. To that end, unannounced reading quizzes will be a common occurrence. The readings for this course are intriguing, but in many cases they are also lengthy and challenging. *Please review the syllabus now and make sure you wish to do this amount of reading before you make a commitment to this course.*

In addition to readings, several films will be treated as texts in this class. Students are expected to view all films and to discuss them in detail afterwards. Films, readings, and discussions are all fair game for the midterm and final exams, which will be written exams testing your comprehension of basic concepts as well as major themes or debates.

Finally, all students will be asked to write a short (4-5 page) summary of their findings after reviewing published and online ethnographic data on small-scale societies (often but not always “tribes”) that do not engage in warfare. The point of this short paper is to identify the main reasons some groups of people appear to avoid violence, and to explain the implications of your findings for the industrialized world. One class period will be devoted to discussing your results

NOTE: The final exam will be held on the last day of class, **April 30**, during normal class hours. In order to prepare for the exam and meet the required number of credit-hours, there will be a mandatory review session on **Friday, April 26, at 3:00 pm**. Failure to attend will count as a regular absence (see attendance policy). There will be no meeting during final exam week.

Grading:

Active, meaningful participation in class, including attendance: 25%

Reading quizzes: 10%

Midterm exam: 20%

Short paper: 15%

Final exam: 30%

93 and above = A

90-92 = A-

87-89 = B+

83-86 = B

80-82 = B-

77-80 = C+

73-76 = C

70-72 = C-

60-69 = D

0-59 = F

Participation grades and attendance policy:

Students are expected to come to class having done the readings in advance. Active, meaningful participation means: 1) attending class regularly; 2) participating in class discussions by offering comments that demonstrate understanding of course content; 3) asking questions (and/or answering classmates'/professor's questions) in a way that demonstrates engagement with the material; and 4) being a kind and considerate classmate, which means: not interrupting others; taking your fair share of discussion time; and reacting to your classmates' comments in a respectful way. As a very general guideline, students that regularly attend and actively and meaningfully participate in class receive a participation grade of A. Excellent attendance, but meager participation, merits a B. Students who are frequently absent, never participate, and/or repeatedly demonstrate inconsiderate behavior, will earn a C or lower.

Repeated unjustified absences or extreme tardiness will affect your participation grade. *Students who arrive at class more than 15 minutes late will be marked tardy. Two tardies equals one absence. A justified absence must be documented by a doctor's note or equivalent documentation.* The participation component of your grade will be decreased by one full letter (e.g., B to C) for every three unjustified absences beyond the add/drop date. A student with 10 or more unjustified absences will automatically fail the course.

Missed or late work policies:

Reading quizzes cannot be made up. If you miss class on the day of a quiz, *for any reason*, you will receive a grade of 0. However, all students will drop their two lowest quiz scores. This means that if you fail two quizzes, your total quiz grade will be an average of the others. The midterm and final may only be missed in the event of a medical or family emergency, adequately documented; otherwise, a grade of F will be given. The short paper will be downgraded one full letter grade for each 24h period it is late (e.g. a B becomes a C).

Policy Statement on Academic Integrity:

The following is a statement of minimum standards for student academic integrity at SLU: The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. As members of this community, students, faculty, and staff members share the responsibility to maintain this environment. Academic dishonesty violates it. Although not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, it can be said in general that soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of any work submitted toward academic credit is dishonest. It not only violates the mutual trust necessary between faculty and students but also undermines the validity of the University's evaluation of students and takes unfair advantage of fellow students. Further, it is the responsibility of any student who observes such dishonest conduct to call it to the attention of a faculty member or administrator. Examples of academic dishonesty would be copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed-book exam, submitting materials authored by or editorially revised by another person but presented as the student's own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, tampering with another student's work, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, and colluding with another student or students to engage

in an act of academic dishonesty. Where there is clear indication of such dishonesty, a faculty member or administrator has the responsibility to apply appropriate sanctions. Investigations of violations will be conducted in accord with standards and procedures of the school or college through which the course or research is offered. Recommendations of sanctions to be imposed will be made to the dean of the school or college in which the student is enrolled. Possible sanctions for a violation of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University. The complete SLU Academic Honesty Policy can be found at:

http://spain.slu.edu/academics/academic_advising/docs/Academic_integrity.pdf

Students with disabilities:

Any student who qualifies for special accommodations, due to presence of a disability, and feels it necessary to utilize them in order to meet the requirements of this course as outlined in the syllabus, should contact Counseling/Disability Services. Please phone the office at 91 554-5858 (Ext. 230), or send an email to disabilityservices-madrid@slu.edu. Students may also stop by the Counseling/Disabilities Services office in the Manresa building. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

Readings:

Readings will be posted on Blackboard. *Please familiarize yourself with Blackboard ASAP.* Readings are subject to change during the term and new readings may be posted or emailed.

Many of the readings in this course will come from the following books, which are recommended for those who wish to know more about the subjects covered this term:

Eller, J. *Culture to Ethnicity to Conflict: An Anthropological Perspective on Ethnic Conflict*

Fry, D. *Beyond War: The Human Potential for Peace.*

Keeley, L. *War Before Civilization: The Myth of the Peaceful Savage.*

LeBlanc, S. with K. Register. *Constant Battles: Why We Fight.*

Pinker, S. *The Better Angels of our Nature: The decline of violence in history & its causes.*

deWaal, F. *Peacemaking among primates; also Our Inner Ape.*

Wrangham, R. with D. Peterson. *Demonic Males: Apes and the Origins of Human Violence.*

Important registrar dates (see SLU academic calendar for further information):

Jan 23: Last Day to Drop a Class Without a Grade of W and/or to Add a Class

Feb 7: Last Day to Choose Audit (AU) or Pass/No Pass (P/NP) options

Mar 11: Last Day to Drop a Class and Receive a Grade of W

Apr 9: Registration begins for Fall Semester

Course Outline (subject to change):

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignment Due
UNIT 1: AN ERA OF UNPRECEDENTED PEACE?		
Thurs Jan 10	Introduction to the course <i>Short film: The bi-polar ape</i>	---
Tues Jan 15	"Myside bias" & thinking critically	Klein, "I was wrong and so are you"
Thurs Jan 17	A future of conflict & anarchy?	Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy"
Tues Jan 22	A future of peace & stability?	Easterbrook, "The End of War" UMD, "2012 Peace & Conflict Report"
Thurs Jan 24	Historical trends in violence I	Pinker video
Tues Jan 29	Historical trends in violence II	Pinker, <i>Better Angels...Nature</i> Ch 1
Thurs Jan 31	Historical trends in violence III	Pinker, <i>Better Angels...Nature</i> Ch 10

UNIT 2: PEACE AND/OR CONFLICT: WHAT IS “NATURAL”?		
Tues Feb 5	Natural states, social contracts and social scientists' views of war	Hobbes, <i>The Leviathan</i> ; Rousseau, <i>The Social Contract</i> (excerpts) Mead, “War is only an invention...” The Freud-Einstein Correspondence
Thurs Feb 7	Midterm review/recap session	Midterm prep assignment
Tues Feb 12	MIDTERM EXAM	---
Thurs Feb 14	Midterm exam review Intro to primate studies	De Waal, “False dichotomies”
Tues Feb 19	Violence and peacemaking among common chimpanzees (film clip: <i>The New Chimpanzees</i>)	Wrangham, “Paradise Lost” De Waal, “Chimpanzees” (selections)
Thurs Feb 21	NO CLASS – HOLIDAY	-
Tues Feb 26	Demonic males and peacemaking females? (film clip: <i>The New Chimpanzees</i>)	Wrangham, “A question of temperament”; “Relationship violence”
Thurs Feb 28	Violence and peacemaking among bonobo chimpanzees (film clip: <i>The Last Great Ape</i>)	Wrangham, “The gentle ape” De Waal, “Bonobos” (selections)
Tues Mar 5	Interpreting the primate data	Wrangham, “Message from the southern forests”; “Taming the Demon”
Thurs Mar 7	Contested archaeological evidence for war	Excerpts from: Keeley, “The Pacified Past;” LeBlanc, “Enter Conflict;” Fry, “Killer Apes” “Earliest Evidence of War”
Tues Mar 12	“Peaceful savages”? Film clips: <i>The Gods Must Be Crazy</i> ; <i>Bushman Business</i> ; <i>N'ai</i> , <i>The Story of a !Kung Woman</i>	Excerpts from: Keeley “The Dogs of War” + Tables; Fry, “Do Nonwarring Societies Actually Exist?”; “Returning to the Evidence”; + Appendix
Thurs Mar 14	The Yanomamö controversy Film clips: <i>The Ax Fight</i>	Chagnon, “Life Histories, Blood Revenge and Warfare...” Fry, “Void if Detached;” “A New Evolutionary Perspective”
Tues Mar 19	Film: <i>Secrets of the Tribe</i>	Read film handout
Thurs Mar 21	What conditions lead to peace? (Discussion of papers)	PEACEFUL SOC. PROJECT DUE
Tues Mar 26	NO CLASS – HOLIDAY	-
Thurs Mar 28	NO CLASS – HOLIDAY	-

UNIT 3: ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC CONFLICT: RWANDA CASE STUDY		
Tues Apr 2	What is ethnicity?	Eller, <i>From Culture...</i> , pp 1-28 & 47-48
Thurs Apr 4	Ethnicity, memory and history	Eller, <i>From Culture...</i> , pp 28-47
Tues Apr 9	Use and abuse of the past	Arnold, "Past as Propaganda" MacFarquhar, "Hussein's Babylon"
Thurs Apr 11	Hutu, Tutsi and Twa	Eller, <i>From Culture...</i> , pp 195-217
Tues Apr 16	Film: <i>Hotel Rwanda</i>	SKIM Eller, <i>From Culture...</i> , pp 217-241, focusing on conclusion; read Rwandan genocide + film handouts
Thurs Apr 18	Discussion of film & events	Review film handout & Eller readings
Tues Apr 23	The gacacas of Rwanda Film: <i>As We Forgive</i>	Gibbs, "The Kpelle Moot" Uvin, "Gacaca Trials in Rwanda"; "Rwanda's community courts"
Thurs Apr 25	Return to Kaplan's world: A clash of civilizations?	Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations" Said, "The Clash of Ignorance"
FRIDAY APRIL 26 3:00-4:00 PM: MANDATORY REVIEW SESSION		
Tues Apr 30	FINAL EXAM	