

# IREn5019 No War, No Peace: Frozen Conflicts in the Caucasus

Syllabus  
Fall 2020

Lecturer: Mgr. Zinaida Bechná, Ph.D.  
Saturdays: 10:00 - 11:40 Microsoft Teams  
Office Hours: Office # 4.67, by appointment  
Office Phone: 549 49 6761  
E-mail: [bechna@fss.muni.cz](mailto:bechna@fss.muni.cz)

## Goals and Objectives

The course is designed to familiarize students with unresolved conflicts in one of the most volatile regions of the world – the Caucasus. Armed conflicts in this region represent one of the biggest challenges that emerged with the break of the Soviet Union. Frozen conflicts in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh, Chechen wars, the Ingush-Ossetian conflict, along with the multi-ethnic clashes in Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria make incredibly complex and unique cases for the analysis. Patterns of political, economic, cultural discrimination, intensified by historical grievances, the effects of political transformation and economic development, national doctrines, the role of external actors, have all contributed to the no war no peace situation in this volatile region. That created a challenge for the conflict analysis and has led to the development of different interpretations emphasizing the role of weak states, economic depression, and external support.

The major objective of this course is to provide a **solid, elaborate picture of the conflict processes and mechanisms in the Caucasus region**. This small area has a high number of unresolved “frozen” conflicts, which might lead to an escalation in the future. In order to understand the logic of violence and trace the path of evolution of the life cycle of these conflicts, the course is based both **on theoretical with empirical knowledge**. The readings illustrate the variety of theoretical perspectives and data collection methods to study armed conflicts in general and the unresolved conflicts in the Caucasus region in particular.

One of the primary goals of this course is to develop the **analytical skills and practice critical analysis of the students**. In order to cultivate such skills students will be required to apply academic knowledge on to the actual situation in the ground. This will include **investigation of factors that affect conflict (re)escalation processes, the role of external actors, democratic development and possible ways for conflict resolution**.

**Understanding the fragile peace arrangements or the reasons for the impossibility for resolution is significant. Studying the evolution of changing nature of these conflicts along with the packages of factors (both internal and external) that may reignite large-scale violence, students will explore the possible ways of resolution of these conflicts in future.**

Masaryk University, Faculty of Social Studies

Joštova 10, 602 00 Brno, Czech Republic  
T: +420 549 49 1910, E: [info@fss.muni.cz](mailto:info@fss.muni.cz), [www.fss.muni.cz](http://www.fss.muni.cz)



### Course goals

By the end of the semester, students will be able to identify, analyze and evaluate who were the conflict parties? What were the parties' incompatible goals, values and interests? What were the trigger events and issues at stake? How the conflicts evolved and why they have never been resolved?

The learning outcomes of the course will enable students upon completion to:

1. Engage critically with different theories of ethnic conflicts.
2. Obtain a broad knowledge of the conflict escalations process in the Caucasus region.
3. Acquire insights of how political developments, socio-economic process and systemic features resulted into the outbreak of violence.
4. Examine the nature of conflicts in the Caucasus with respect to factors that generates those conflicts and their change in time.
5. Acquire knowledge of international engagement towards conflict settlement and establishment of democratic institutions in the Caucasus.

### Plagiarism

Use of material written by another person without proper attribution of referencing the source is considered to be plagiarism. The Department of International Relations and European Studies adheres to the university's policy ( <https://www.muni.cz/study/plagiatorstvi> ). Violation of this policy will be addressed by the Disciplinary Commission. Plagiarist will receive no points and the final grade will be an F. In case of uncertainty about how to avoid plagiarism, please follow instructions mentioned on this link (<https://www.sv.uio.no/english/studies/resources/sources-and-references/>). Please follow this link to see one of the styles of citation: <http://mve.fss.muni.cz/en/study-programs/studyagenda/citationstyle> . In case you still have questions, please consult Zinaida Bechná via email.

### Requirements

- I. Readings: The syllabus lists required readings below. Students are responsible for completing all of these readings before every class and coming to class prepared to discuss issues indicated for every session. Required readings for the course are to be found in Study Materials folder in Information System.
- II. Attendance: Attendance is not compulsory; however I will take "spot attendance". It means that if you are not in the class constantly I will know and this will affect my evaluation of your performance in this course. Furthermore, we will be discussing a lot of material for your take home exercises and examination during class lectures, it would be in your best interest to attend regularly.
- III. Take home exercises: There will be two take-home assignments during the semester. The length of the assignment should vary between 1800 and 3600 characters. Each of the assignments will be graded between 0 and 10 points. Thus the students can obtain up to 20 points.
  1. Are the conflicts in the South Caucasus ethnic? If yes, explain why? If not, what type are the conflicts in this region? (choose only one conflict) Due to: 20 December 2020.

2. Based on comparison of Russian and Western engagement in the South Caucasus conflicts explain, which strategy is more successful for building sustainable stability in this region? Due to 17 January 2021.
- IV. Presentation (10 points): Each student is required to present one presentation from the assigned literature. Presentation should have a clear structure and last for no more than 10-12 minutes.
- V. Final written test: The final written test will contain 10 open questions from the mandatory literature. You will have a maximum of 60 minutes to complete the written test. There will be several terms of final examination in the Information System. Final Grading: The maximum is 60 points; the minimum to complete the course is 35 points.
- A 56 – 60 points  
B 51 - 55 points  
C 46 - 50 points  
D 41 – 45 points  
E 36 – 40 points  
F less than 36 points.

To receive a final grade, students have to take a part at a sufficient number of classes as well as submit a sufficient number of take home exercises, present a presentation and write the final written test base on compulsory literature (for details see above).

Class Schedule: Week 1: *Introduction* (7/10.2020)

No mandatory readings.

Introduction to the course goals and requirements.

Week 2: *Definitions and trends of different types of internal armed conflicts* (14/10.2020)

Mandatory readings:

Shevchuk, Z. (2014): “Towards the Typology of Armed Conflict,” chapter 3 in Kříž, Z. and Urbanovská, J.: *Examining Armed Conflict: Theoretical Reflections on Selected Aspects*, MUNI Press, pp: 87-114.

Arbatova, Nadezhda (2010): “Frozen Conflicts and European Security”, *Security Index: A Russian Journal on International Security*, Vol. 16, No. 3, pp.: 51-59.

Smetana, M. and Ludvík, J. (2019): “Between War and Peace: a dynamic reconceptualization of “frozen conflict”, *Asia Europe Journal*, Vol. 17, pp:1-14.

Presentations:

1. Brown, M.E. (2001): “The Causes of Internal Conflict: An Overview”, in Brown, M.E, Coté, O.R., Lynn-Jones, S.M. and Miller, S.E.: “Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict”, The MIT Press, Cambridge, pp.: 3-25.

Week 3: *Ethnicity as a cause of armed conflicts* (21/10.2020)

Mandatory readings:

Kaufman, S. J. (2001): “Modern hatreds: The symbolic politics of ethnic war”, Cornell University Press, chapter 2, pp. 15-48.

Masaryk University, Faculty of Social Studies

Joštova 10, 602 00 Brno, Czech Republic  
T: +420 549 49 1910, E: info@fss.muni.cz, www.fss.muni.cz



Cederman, L., Wimmer, A., Min, B. (2010): "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis", *World Politics*, Vol. 62, No. 1., pp.: 87-119.

Presentations:

2. Mueller, J. (2001): "The Banality of "Ethnic War", in Brown, M.E, Coté, O.R., Lynn-Jones, S.M. and Miller, S.E.: "Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict", The MIT Press, Cambridge, pp.: 126-162.
3. Posen, B. R. (1993): "The security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict", in Brown, M.E.: "Ethnic Conflict and International Security", pp.: 103-124.

**Week 4: National holiday, no class (28/10.2020)**

Week 5: *From Conflict to Autonomy in the Caucasus* (4/11.2020)

Mandatory readings:

Sarapov, A. (2015): *From Conflict to Autonomy in the Caucasus. The Soviet Union and the making of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh*, Routledge, chapters 6 and chapter 7, pp: 125- 169.

Presentations:

4. Cornell, S.E. (2002): "Autonomy as a Source of Conflict: Caucasian Conflicts in Theoretical Perspective", *World Politics*, Vol.54. No.2. pp.: 245-276.

Week 6: *Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh* (11/11.2020)

Mandatory readings:

Cheterian, Vicken (2009): *War and Peace in the Caucasus: Ethnic Conflict and the New Geopolitics*. New York: Columbia University Press, chapter 3, pp: 87-154.

Presentations:

5. Broers, L. (2015): "From "frozen conflict" to enduring rivalry: reassessing the Nagorny Karabakh conflict", *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 43(4), pp: 556-576.
6. German, T. (2012): "The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia: Security issue in the Caucasus", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 32, pp. 216-229.

Week 7: *Nagorno-Karabakh conflict today* (18/11.2020)

Mandatory readings:

Broers, Laurence (2019): "Land for Peace," chapter 8 in "Armenia and Azerbaijan, Anatomy of a Rivalry", Edinburgh University Press, pp.: 276-316.

Presentations:

7. Gasparyan, Arsen (2019): "Understanding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict: domestic politics and twenty-five years of fruitless negotiations 1994-2018," *Caucasus Survey*, Vol. 7, No. 3., pp.: 235-250.

8. German, Tracey (2012): “The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia: Security Issue in the Caucasus”, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp.: 216-229.

Week 8: *Georgian conflicts I* (25/11.2020)

Mandatory readings:

Cheterian, Vicken (2009): “Georgia, From National Liberation to State Collapse and Back”, Chapter 4 in Cheterian, Vicken(2009): “War and Peace in the Caucasus”, New York: Columbia University Press, pp.: 155-215.

Presentations:

9. Petersen, Alexandros (2008): “The 1992-1993 Georgia-Abkhazia War: A forgotten Conflict”, *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 2., No.4. pp.: 187-199.
10. Shevchuk, Zinaida (2014): *The Evolving Nature of the Armed Conflict in South Ossetia: From “Frozen” to “Hot” and Back*, *Defence and Strategy*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 53-68.

Week 9: *Georgian conflicts II* (2/12.2020)

Mandatory readings:

Felgenhauer, P. (2009): “After August 7: The Escalation of the Russia-Georgia War”, chapter 9 in Cornell, S. E., Starr, S. F.: “The Guns of August 2008 Russia’s War in Georgia”, M. E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York. pp. 162-180.

Welt, Cory (2010): *The Thawing of a Frozen Conflict: The Internal Security Dilemma and the 2004 Prelude to the Russo-Georgian War*, *Europe-Asia Studies* Vol. 62, Issue 1, pp. 63-97.

Presentations:

11. Karagiannis, Emmanuel (2013): “The 2008 Russian-Georgian war via the lens of offensive Realism”, *European Security*, Vol. 22, No. 1., pp.: 74-93.
12. Nodia, Ghia (2012): “The August 2008 war: main consequences for Georgia and its conflicts”, *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 40. No.5., pp.: 721-738.

Week 10: *The Second Caucasian Conflicts I* (9/12.2020)

Cheterian, Vicken (2009): “The Second Caucasian War”, Chapter 5 in Cheterian, Vicken(2009): “War and Peace in the Caucasus”, New York: Columbia University Press, pp.: 217-283.

Presentations:

13. Lyall, Jason (2010): “Are Coethnics More Effective Couterinsurgents? Evidence from the Second Chechen War”, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 104., No 1., pp.: 1-20.
14. Sokirianskaia, Ekaterina (2008): “Ideology and Conflict: Chechen Political Nationalism prior to, and during, ten years of war”, chapter 7 in Gammer, Moshe: “Ethno-Nationalism, Islam and the State in the Caucasus”, London and New York, Routledge, pp.: 102-138.

Week 11: *The Second Caucasian Conflicts II* (16/12.2020)

Masaryk University, Faculty of Social Studies

Joštova 10, 602 00 Brno, Czech Republic  
T: +420 549 49 1910, E: info@fss.muni.cz, www.fss.muni.cz

Mandatory readings:

Cornell, E. Svante (2001): “Conflicts in the North Caucasus,” chapter 6 in “Small Nations and Great Powers. A Study of ethnopolitical conflict in the Caucasus”, London and New York, Routledge Curzon, pp.: 241-274.

Presentations:

15. Rezvani, Babak (2010): “The Ossetian-Ingush Confrontation: Explaining a Horizontal Conflict”, *Iran and the Caucasus*, Vol. 14., pp.: 419-430.
16. Bruce, Robert and Kisriev, Enver (2009): “Conflict and Catharsis: Why Dagestanis Fought to Remain in Russia”, chapter 6, in: “Dagestan. Russian Hegemony and Islamic Resistance in the Northern Caucasus”, M.E. Sharpe, New York, London, pp.: 121-155.

**Winter Holiday 20 December 2020 – 3 January 2021**

Week 12: *No peace no war: the role of Russia in the Caucasian conflicts*  
(6/1.2021)

Mandatory readings:

Kazantsev, Andrei.A., Rutland, Peter, Medvedeva Svetlana. M and Safranchuk, Ivan. A. (2020): “Russia’s policy in the frozen conflicts” of the post-Soviet space: from ethno-politics to geopolitics,” *Caucasus Survey*, Vol. 8, No. 2., pp.: 142-162.  
Russell, John (2006): “Obstacles to peace in Chechnya: What scope for international involvement?”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 58, No. 6., pp.: 941-964.

Presentations:

17. Hoch, T; Souleimanov E. and Baranec, T. (2014): Russia’s role in the official peace process in South Ossetia, *Bulletin of Geography, Socio- economic Series* Vol. 23, no. 23, pp: 53-71.
18. Gerrits, A. WM, and Max, B. (2016): Russian patronage over Abkhazia and South Ossetia: implications for conflict resolution, *East European Politics* Vol. 32, no. 3, pp: 297-313.

Week 13: *No peace no war: the Western role in the Caucasian conflicts*  
(13/1.2021)

Mandatory readings:

German, Tracey, C. (2007): “Visibly invisible: the EU Engagement in the Conflict Resolution in the South Caucasus”, *European Security*, Vol. 16, No 3, pp.: 357-374.  
Whitman, Richard.G, Wolf, Stefan (2010): “The EU as a conflict manager? The case of Georgia and its implications”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 1., pp. 87-107.

Presentations:

19. Whitman, R. (2011): *Normative Power Europe. Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives*, chapter 4 by Stewart. E.J.: Mind the Normative Gap? The EU in the South Caucasus, Palgrave, pp: 65 – 82.



20. Tsygankov, Andrei (2013): "The Russia-NATO mistrust: Ethnophobia and the double expansion to contain the "Russian Bear"." Communist and Post-Communist Studies Vol. 46, Issue 1, pp. 179-188.

