

BUILDING PEACE: INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS & JUSTICE IN CONFLICT

Professor: **Rana KHAROUF, Stefan TSCHAUKO**

Session: **July 2026**

Language of instruction: **English**

Number of hours of class: **36h**



Objective of the Course

This course explores how peace is pursued, negotiated, sustained, and sometimes undermined during periods of armed conflict, while also examining the global institutional landscape that shapes these efforts.

Students will study how states and international organizations engage with the challenges of peace and security, human rights, sustainable development, and humanitarian action. By combining philosophical, historical, political, and social perspectives on peace in wartime with an understanding of how international institutions operate, the course provides a comprehensive view of how peace is imagined and pursued both within conflicts and at the global level.

Through case studies from different regions and eras, students will critically assess whether peace is possible during war, what forms it can realistically take, and how moral, political, and legal frameworks guide peace efforts in times of violence.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Gain an overview of global challenges and how international organizations such as the United Nations are trying to address those challenges
- Understand the world of international politics through theoretical frameworks of international relations
- Understand the different international organizations that form the UN system, what they aim to do, and the challenges they face
- Explore how the founding treaty of the United Nations, the UN Charter, shapes the behavior of the UN
- Understand major theories of peace and conflict
- Analyze how peace initiatives function during active warfare
- Evaluate the role of states, international organizations, and civil society in peace-building
- Examine ethical dilemmas surrounding war, peace, and justice
- Apply theoretical frameworks to real-world conflicts



Summary

The course begins by examining the actors and structures that shape efforts to build peace at the international level. Understanding peace requires first understanding who operates in this arena and what drives their behavior. States and international institutions are central, and the United Nations System remains the primary global framework for addressing peace and security, human rights, sustainable development, and climate action. Created in the aftermath of World War II to maintain international peace and security, the UN has spent the last 75 years at the center of global efforts to confront these challenges.

In this first part of the course, students explore how the UN engages with these issues, why states create and act through international organizations, and how theories of international relations help explain state behavior. They also examine the UN's successes and limitations across key areas such as peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development. In short, this section offers an introduction to how the UN attempts to “save the planet” and the obstacles it encounters along the way.

The second part of the course turns to the pursuit of peace within wartime itself. Drawing on philosophical, historical, political, and social perspectives, students explore how peace can be pursued, negotiated, and sustained even amid violence. They examine diplomacy, ceasefires, humanitarian law, peace movements, civil resistance, humanitarian action, transitional justice, and post-conflict reconciliation. Through diverse case studies, students assess whether peace is possible during war, what forms it can realistically take, and how moral, political, and legal frameworks shape peace efforts.

Together, these two parts provide a comprehensive understanding of how peace is constructed: from the global architecture of international institutions to the complex realities of conflict and the fragile pathways toward justice and reconciliation.



Professor's Biography



Rana Kharouf is an international law expert and academic known for her work in international humanitarian law, victims' rights, and transitional justice. She is a professor at the Paris School of International Affairs at Sciences Po (Paris) and also teaches at Sorbonne University.

- Academic & Professor: Teaches courses on international humanitarian law, victims' rights, and transitional justice in Paris.
- Judge Assessor at the French National Court for Asylum: She was nominated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to serve on France's national asylum court.
- Legal & Policy Experience:

- Former legal advisor for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Syria and Libya.
- Former legal expert at UNESCO.
- Researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law in Heidelberg, focusing on international public law implementation.
- Publications & Scholarship: She has written dozens of scholarly articles in international law, and her doctoral thesis has been published.
- Education: Graduated from the Paris Sorbonne University Faculty of Law and received awards from the Academy of Paris.

Rana Kharouf is recognized for her contributions to international law education, humanitarian legal practice, and asylum law adjudication in France.



Stefan Tschauko is an Adjunct Assistant Professor of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University (SIPA), Instructor at the Harvard Summer School, and Visiting Scholar at CUNY's Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies. He has also taught at Brown, Fairleigh Dickinson, and Tufts Universities, as well as Sciences Po in Paris; and he has been a teaching fellow for international relations classes at the Harvard Extension School, the Harvard Summer School, Tufts, and the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University. He has also held workshops on graphic design and on personal knowledge management at Columbia, Harvard, The Fletcher School, and the International Studies Association. Previously, he worked at a branding and graphic design company in Vienna, Austria, and at the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in New York City. Tschauko's research explores how branding and brand management can improve the performance of international organizations of the United Nations system. Tschauko earned degrees in international relations (PhD, MALD) from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, in international management (MS) from the University of Economics and Business in Vienna, and in information management (DI FH) from FH Joanneum in Graz, Austria. He spent exchange semesters at Sciences Po in Paris, Koç University in Istanbul, and the University of Portsmouth in the United Kingdom.