

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.



Organization of the course

PART I: International Institutions and the United Nations

Learning Objectives

- 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 theoretic frameworks of international relations theories.
- Know how different areas of global governance, i.e., “regimes,” have evolved and are shaped through resolutions, treaties, conferences and the actions of important actors.
- Be sensitive to the challenges of achieving progress in the issues areas covered by the UN

Session 1: Introduction

Getting to know each other, Overview of the course, introduction to key themes

Key Questions

- What is “international relations”?
- What is global governance?
- What are international institutions and organizations?

Session 2: The United Nations System

Student Presentations on UN Organizations

Key Questions

- What is the UN and the UN system?
- Which organizations are part of the UN system, and what do they do
- How and why was the UN created?
- How are decisions made at the UN?

Session 3: International Relations Theories and International Institutions

Key Questions

- How do different schools of thought and theories explain State behavior?
- What are the causes of war?
- How can we achieve peace?
- Do international institutions matter?
- Why do States create and act through international institutions?
- How do institutions facilitate cooperation?

Session 4: International Law

Key Questions

- What is international law?
- What are the sources of international law?
- How is international law created?
- Why do States in an anarchic world comply with international law?
- What is the role of international organizations in creating international law?

Session 5: Peace & Security

Key Questions

- How can the UN use force to maintain international peace?
- What is the Security Council's role in authorizing the use of force?
- What are peacekeeping operations?
- How can the UN intervene when human rights are abused and when States commit crimes against their populations?

Session 6: Human Rights & Reflections on International Institutions

Key Questions

- What are the origins of human rights?
- How do UN actors and mechanisms aim to protect human rights?

PART II: Justice in Conflict

Learning objectives

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

Session 1: Introduction — War and Peace

Key Questions

- Defining war and peace
- Is peace the absence of war?

Session 2: Theories and History of Peace / Conflict

Key Questions

- What is the theory of Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism ?
- Positive vs. negative peace (Johan Galtung)
- Just War Theory
- Peace during ancient and medieval wars
- Religious and philosophical traditions on peace
- The Peace of Westphalia, what contribution to the modern history ?

Session 3: International Law and Peace in Wartime

Key Questions

- What is the International Humanitarian Law (IHL)
- How does law protect in war ?
- What is the role of international organizations and NGOs ?

Session 5 : Accountability of war crimes

Key Questions

- What are domestic mechanisms and the role of a judge ?
- How accountability of war crimes could be effective ?
- What are the international mechanisms for prosecution of violation of international humanitarian law?

Session 6: Diplomacy and Negotiation During War

Key Questions

- What are the mechanisms of establishing ceasefires ?
- What is a pacific resolution of conflict ? How could it be implemented ?
- What is the mediation and negotiation role during war ?

Session 7: Humanitarian Action and Peace / Case Study

Key Questions

- What does humanitarian corridors mean ?
- Neutrality and impartiality as conditions of humanitarian assistance
- NGOs and international agencies
- Contemporary conflicts (e.g., Middle East, Ukraine, Africa)

- Challenges of peace in asymmetric warfare (counterterrorism)

Session 8: Transitional Justice and Reconciliation

Key Questions

- What are the pillars of transitional justice ?
- The role of truth commissions ?
- Reparations and memorialization
- Peace vs. justice debates

Session 9: Future of Peace in a Changing World

Key Questions

- What are available mechanisms of reconstruction?
- What is the role of international actors in peacebuilding ?
- Challenges of technology / cyber warfare and peace
- Climate change and conflict
- Prospects for global peace



Bibliography

Textbook for Part 1: International Institutions and the United Nations

The following book needs to be purchased or rented (students who learn better by highlighting and taking notes in the margins may wish to purchase the book):

- Weiss, Thomas G., David P. Forsythe, Roger A. Coate, and Kelly-Kate Pease. *The United Nations and Changing World Politics*. 8th ed. New York and London: Routledge, 2020.
- ✓ You can purchase the textbook in a variety of places. [Here](#) is the link to the softcover and digital versions on Amazon. Please make sure to purchase the book in time; it may not arrive in time otherwise.
- ✓ **The book is also available online and on campus through the Sciences Po Library**

Other readings will be made available on the course website before the beginning of the class.

!! We highly recommend printing the material and having handwritten notes, as there is a no-laptop/no-phone policy in the course. !!

Part 2 : Justice in Conflict

- Johan Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means*
- Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*
- Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars*
- United Nations *reports on peacekeeping and conflict resolution*
- ICRC, *International Humanitarian Law : answers to your questions*



Requirements for validation

Assignments for Part 1: International Institutions and the United Nations

- 25% Individual mini presentation on a UN system organization (see [here](#))
- 25% Class Participation (e.g., engagement during discussions)
- 25% Mini quizzes (in the beginning session 3, 4, 5, 6)
- 25% Individual paper (to be completed before the beginning of Part 2 of the course)

Assignments for Part 2 : Justice in Conflict

- 25% Individual mini presentation on international humanitarian law (source, historical background, principles and implementation) and the 5 pillars of transnational justice.
- 25% Class Participation
- 25% Mini quizzes (in the beginning session 6, 7, 8, 9)
- 25% Individual paper (to be completed before the end of session 8 / Part 2 of the course)



Professor's Biography



Rana Kharouf is an international law expert and academic known for her work in peace studies, 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. Her academic background includes a PhD in international law, awarded by the Academy of Paris. She has authored numerous scholarly articles in the field.

Alongside her academic career, Dr. Kharouf is a researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law in Heidelberg, where her work focuses on the implementation of international public law.

Dr. Rana Kharouf also holds a judicial mandate as a Judge Assessor at the French National Court for Asylum, a position to which she was nominated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Her role reflects her long-standing engagement with refugee protection, humanitarian law, and the rights of vulnerable populations.

Her expertise is also grounded in significant international institutional experience: she previously served as a legal advisor for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and as a legal expert at UNESCO.

Dr. Rana Kharouf is recognized for her effective contributions to international law education, humanitarian legal practice, and refugee law.



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.