

DIPLOMACY IN TIMES OF GLOBAL CRISES: THEORY & PRACTICE

Professor: **Dr. Charles Tenenbaum**

Session: **June 2026**

Language of instruction: **English**

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



Objective of the Course

Building on the history of diplomacy as well as on its contemporary actors and practices, this course will provide students with the necessary tools to better understand and analyze the contemporary issues and challenges of the “art of negotiation”.

The objective of the course is to offer students a solid background in the study of diplomacy as an indispensable instrument of international politics and to give participants the opportunity to become familiar with both the theories and the practices of negotiation.

Particular attention will be paid to the role of diplomats in times of international crises and to the contribution of negotiation skills to the mitigation of war, mediation, and conflict resolution.

Learning outcomes

1. Master the theory and practice of Diplomacy through readings and case-study analysis.
2. Become familiar with the role and contribution of diplomats, negotiators, and mediators.
4. Identify and discuss dynamics and challenges of contemporary negotiation, crisis management, and mediation processes.
5. Become familiar with professional diplomatic environments through encounters with career diplomats and visits to relevant institutions (tbc).



Summary

Times of renewed regional and global crises, as well as growing instability, call for renewed diplomatic efforts and creativity as the only alternative to international relations based solely on power relations and the use of force.

Lectures will cover key developments in ancient and modern diplomatic activity, from good offices to crisis negotiation and the role of intermediaries in complex mediation processes. Encounters with diplomats at the national and EU level, debates in class and students' assignments will focus on the use of specific techniques of diplomatic negotiation and help the students understand the roles and missions of today's diplomats.

Diplomatic strategies involving a wide variety of actors (States, Multilateral organizations, NGOs, "Independent Diplomats", etc.) will be analyzed and their respective roles discussed throughout this course. Attention will be paid to cultural and traditional approaches to negotiation while helping students navigate through the "multitrack" dimension of contemporary public and private diplomacy.



Organization of the course

Session 1 - General Introduction

Irrelevant Diplomats? Diplomacy challenges in times of War & Global Crises

Session 2 - The historical foundations of modern Diplomacy

1. The legacy of ancient diplomacy
2. Diplomacy missions and rules in contemporary world politics
3. Ministries of Foreign Affairs

Session 3 - Multilateral Diplomacy: Still relevant?

1. From the League of Nations to the United Nations
2. Foreign Policy of the European Union: what perspectives?
3. Mediation by Multilateral Organizations: A "Working Peace System"?

Session 4 - Diplomatic appeasement or use of force (including sanctions)?

When to negotiate, when to fight?

Debate in Class

Session 5 - Great Power Diplomacy

1. The USA, China, Russia: the "Great Chessboard"?
2. Crisis Diplomacy
3. Nuclear Diplomacy

Session 6 - Diplomacy in the digital Era

1. Virtual negotiators
2. Digital Public diplomacy
3. Diplomatic response to cyberthreats

Session 7 - Negotiation across cultures

1. Religious actors and Diplomacy
2. Perceptions and Misperceptions
3. Soft-Power Diplomacy: Is it working?

Session 8 - From Negotiation to Mediation: Dynamics of Third-Party Intervention

1. The Mediation Process
2. Ripe for resolution? When talks fail
3. Mediation techniques

Session 9 - Negotiation & Mediation Simulation

Session 10 - The European Union Foreign Policy and Security Strategy: Wakeup Call?

1. The EU Common Foreign and Security Policy: A Global Diplomacy in the making?
2. Europe and the Middle East Peace: missed opportunities?
3. EU-Africa relations: the end of Europe's influence?

Session 11 - Global Governance Diplomacy: The End or the renewal of Multilateralism?

1. Diplomats vs. Experts
2. Interests vs. Values, Solidarity Diplomacy
3. Diplomacy and the management of Global issues

Session 12 - Building an open & Inclusive Diplomacy

1. "Feminist Diplomacy"?
2. Civil society diplomacy
3. The role of Private actors

Session 13 - Negotiation case-study presentations

Conclusion



Bibliography

Required readings:

1. Berridge Geoff, 2022, *Diplomacy: theory and practice*, 6th edition, Palgrave macmillan, 302 p.
2. Constantinou Costas M. (ed.), 2016, *The SAGE handbook of diplomacy*, Los Angeles, SAGE, 684 p.

3. Cooper Andrew Fenton, Heine Jorge et Thakur Ramesh, 2013, *The Oxford handbook of modern diplomacy*, Oxford, U.K., Oxford University Press.
4. Kissinger Henry, 2015, *World Order*, Penguin Press, 2015.
5. Lequesne, Christian, *Ministries of Foreign Affairs in the World: Actors of State Diplomacy. Diplomatic Studies*, vol. 18, 2022.
6. Pierre Buhler, "About European Sovereignty", *Survival*, 65:2, 2023, pp. 55-74.
7. The Palgrave Handbook of EU Crises. Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.
8. Zartman, I. *Peacemaking in international conflict: methods & techniques*. Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997.
9. Balzacq Thierry et Krebs Ronald R., 2021, *The Oxford handbook of grand strategy*, Oxford, Oxford university press.

Suggested readings:

1. Aggestam, Karin. *Gendering diplomacy and international negotiation*. Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2017.
2. Autesserre, Séverine. *The frontlines of peace: an insider's guide to changing the world*. Oxford University Press, 2021.
3. Bergmann, Julian, et Arne Niemann. « Mediating International Conflicts: The European Union as an Effective Peacemaker? » *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 53, n° 5, septembre 2015, p. 957-75.
4. Burns, William J. *The back channel: a memoir of American diplomacy and the case for its renewal*. First edition. New York: Random House, 2019.
5. Cooper, Robert. *The Ambassadors: Thinking about Diplomacy from Machiavelli to Modern Times*. 2021.
6. Farrow, Ronan, 2018, *War on peace: the end of diplomacy and the decline of American influence*. New York, Etats-Unis d'Amérique: W.W. Norton & Company.
7. Fletcher Tom, *Naked diplomacy: power and statecraft in the digital age*, London, William Collins, 2016.
8. Hauss, Charles. *From conflict resolution to peacebuilding*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2019.
9. Hazan, Pierre. *Negotiating with the Devil: Inside the World of Armed Conflict Mediation*. Traduit par Susan Mutti, Hurst & Company, 2024.
10. Holbrooke, Richard. *To End a War*. Revised, Modern Library Inc, 1999.
11. Kerr, Pauline, et Geoffrey Wiseman, éditeurs. *Diplomacy in a globalizing world: theories and practices*. Second Edition, Oxford University Press, 2018.

12. Kissinger Henry, *Diplomacy*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1994, 912 p.
13. Larsén, Magdalena Frennhoff. *The EU in International Negotiations*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2023.
14. Rosoux, Valérie. « How Not to Mediate Conflict ». *International Affairs*, vol. 98, n° 5, septembre 2022, p. 1717-35.
15. Turner, Catherine, et Martin Wählich, éditeurs. *Rethinking Peace Mediation: Challenges of Contemporary Peacemaking Practice*. Bristol University Press, 2021.
16. Vivet, Emmanuel, éditeur. *Landmark Negotiations from around the World: Lessons for Modern Diplomacy*. Intersentia, 2019.
17. Wilkenfeld, Jonathan, éditeur. *Research handbook on mediating international crises*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019.
18. Zartman, I. William, et al. *Escalation and negotiation in international conflicts*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.
19. Zelikow, Philip. *The road less traveled: the secret battle to end the Great War, 1916-1917*. First edition, PublicAffairs, 2021.



Requirements for validation

1. **Read & Discuss** (individual assignment): students will read, and comment texts previously distributed to the class. Students will be asked to formulate short comments and questions on a dedicated online form. The Read & Discuss questionnaire will include elements related to the author and their writing(s), a short summary of the text's main argument(s) along with the expression of a personal point of view (30% of the final grade).
2. **Participation in class** (individual assignment): students are expected to actively participate to discussions in class, including when debates or exercises (negotiation in practice) will be organized (20% of the final grade).
3. **Negotiation Case-Study**: At the end of the course, groups of students will present a case of international negotiation. Each group will have previously chosen a case study (ancient or contemporary diplomatic negotiation) approved by the teacher. The group will hand out a report of 8-10 pages max. to be submitted by the end of the course, with an outline to be circulated on the day of the presentation. This final paper will introduce the context and main characteristics of the studied negotiation along with elements of negotiation techniques and strategies. Depending on the selected negotiation, students are encouraged to use this exercise as an opportunity to get in touch with negotiators (50% of the final grade).



Professor's Biography



Dr. Charles Tenenbaum

Associate Professor of Political Science, Dr. Charles Tenenbaum, specializes in the study and practice of Negotiation and Diplomacy, conflict resolution and international mediation. At Sciences Po, he teaches Peace Mediation and Conflict Resolution at the graduate level along with courses on Diplomacy and International Organizations. His research interests currently focus on the European Union and Peacemaking, Multilateralism, and the influence of religious actors in international relations.

Charles Tenenbaum's publications include *The European Union and Peace* (2017) and "Negotiations and Mediations in the resolution of Conflicts" in: Placidi-Frot, Delphine, Petiteville, Franck, *Négociations internationales* (2013). He is the co-coordinator of the Online Observatory on Multilateralism and International Organizations.

Dr. Tenenbaum was a Fulbright Visiting Fellow at the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (George Mason Univ.) and at the International Peace Institute in New York. Consultant for United Nations programs and expert NGOs, he trains civil servants at the National Institute for Public Service. He was a trainer and facilitator for the Wilson Center facilitative initiative in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He is a member of the French UN Association Academic board and has gained experience on African, Middle East and Eastern European issues.