

Peace and Conflict Studies

LMH Summer Programmes are provided by Lady Margaret Hall, a college in the University of Oxford

Course:	Peace and Conflict Studies
Available:	Programme Session 2: 21 st July 2025 to 8 th August 2025
Lectures:	18 Hours
Seminars:	12 Hours
Tutorials:	3 Hours
Independent Study:	Approximately 120 Hours
Recommended Credit:	15 CATS / 7.5 ECTS / 4 US Credits

About this Course:	<p>Why do countries go to war? What is the impact of conflict on a society? And how do we find the path to sustainable peace? This course offers the opportunity to explore these questions and more through an introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies, an interdisciplinary Social Science dedicated to understanding the root causes of conflict and the conditions for the promotion of peace.</p> <p>You will examine varied conflicts from around the world, among them the war in Ukraine, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the Syrian Civil War, and gain insights from the analysis of post-conflict scenarios such as Europe's reconciliations after the Second World War; you will assess the legacies that conflict leaves on societies, their people, and their politics, both from a 'bottom-up' perspective, looking at the lived experiences of refugees and internally displaced people, and 'top-down', analysing the responses of leaders and political elites; and you will investigate emerging practices of sustainable peace-building, including feminist agendas for peace, decolonial constructions of peace, and transitional justice mechanisms.</p> <p>Join this course to develop your understanding of the history of enquiry in the field, to gain critical insight into the latest research, and to equip yourself with practical knowledge of current and emerging approaches to peace-building.</p>
Course Overview:	<p><u>Week 1: International Relations Theories</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IR Theories: Competing Approaches to the Study of International Relations • Democratic Peace Theory and the Role of Culture in Conflicts and Wars • The United Nations as a Collective Security System and its Role to Keep Peace • Refugees and Displacement in International Relations <p>The first week of the Academic Programme focuses on the topic of 'IR Theories' and their explanation on war and peace. We shall seek to lay out different IR theories (realism, liberalism, constructivism and postcolonial approaches) and their assumptions on why there is conflict between states. We shall investigate the</p>

	<p>Democratic Peace Theory and the role of culture in conflict and wars between and within states. Moreover, we shall examine the United Nations, the idea of ‘collective security’ and the international community’s ‘Responsibility to Protect’ (R2P). This week you will develop a deeper understanding of IR’s theoretical perspectives on how states interact in global politics, and which factors spark conflict between them.</p> <p><u>Week 2: Conflict and War in the Middle East</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Middle East – Overview, Themes, Challenges • Political Ideologies in the Middle East – From Pan-Arabism to Political Islam • Ethnicity and Sectarian Identities in the Middle East • The Protracted Conflict between Israel and the Palestinians – Conflict Trajectory and Obstacles to Peace <p>The second week of the Academic Programme applies the theoretical frameworks to a region in which peace so far has proven to be elusive: the Middle East. We shall explore the particularities of this region with regards to its political regime types, especially the robustness of authoritarianism when compared to democratization processes in other world regions, dominant political ideologies such as Pan-Arabism and Political Islam, and the role of ethnic and sectarian identities in sparking conflict. Finally, we will look at the historical development and current trajectory of the protracted conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, while exploring possible scenarios for peace. You will learn to apply theoretical approaches to regional case studies and critically assess concepts and frameworks in the context of the Middle East.</p> <p><u>Week 3: Post-Conflict Reconciliation and Pathways Towards Peace</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Experience of War, Social Trauma, and Collective Identity – Overview, Concepts and Approaches • Pathways towards Reconciliation: The Example of Germany and Israel post-WWII • Competing Memories of Victimhood and their Quest for International Recognition • Legacies of War and Visions of Peace <p>In Week Three of the Academic Programme, we shall examine the concepts and diverse manifestations of the legacy that war and conflict leave on societies and states in global politics. We shall explore the notions of ‘collective memory’ and ‘social trauma’ and their links with group identities based on victimhood. We shall critically analyse the politics of memory, and countries’ efforts to remember or silence past trauma. We shall also look to successful examples of post-war reconciliation, such as the reparations agreement between Germany and Israel post-World War II. We shall test the replicability of successful cases in other bilateral contexts. Finally, we shall critically examine different approaches towards past conflicts and their consequences for the sustainability of peace in the future.</p>
Key Texts:	<p>Bachleitner, K., Collective Memory in International Relations, 2021</p> <p>Bachleitner, K., Legacies of war: Syrian narratives of conflict and visions of peace, 2022</p> <p>Kaldor, M., New and old wars: organised violence in a global era, 2012</p> <p>Richmond, O.P, and Visoka, G., (eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Peacebuilding, Statebuilding, and Peace Formation, 2021</p>
Learning Outcomes:	<p>By the end of this course, you will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to demonstrate familiarity with key issues and debates in Peace and Conflict Studies.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to articulate varied causes of conflict worldwide, drawing on real-world examples. • Be able to assess critically how varied peace-building mechanisms may be applied to different conflicts. • Be able to evaluate the legacies of war and conflict, including with regard to displaced people.
Admissions Requirements:	<p>LMH Summer Programmes are designed for students who want to gain and develop knowledge in their chosen subject area. LMH Summer Programmes are intensive courses of study aimed at undergraduates who have completed one, two, or three years of their degree, or entry level postgraduate students.</p> <p>We will consider each applicant's academic ability and expect successful applicants to have a minimum grade point average equivalent to 2:1 level on the British grading scale. For example, this would mean at least a 3.2 GPA on the 4.0 grading scale in the United States, and 80% in China.</p> <p>This course would suit students from a range of academic disciplines, but especially those with a background or interest in International Relations, Politics, History, Sociology, or Sustainable Development.</p> <p>To participate fully in the programme all students will need to have proficiency in English.</p> <p>English language requirements for students who are not native English speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOEFL iBT score of 98 • IELTS score of 7.0 (no less than 6.5 in each component) • Duolingo English Test score of 125 (no less than 115 in each section) • Cambridge English Scale score of 185 <p>If the language of instruction in your home institution is English you do not need to provide evidence of your English proficiency.</p>
Teaching Methods:	<p>Core syllabus material will be covered in lectures. Students attend four lectures each week and each lecture lasts 90 minutes. Seminars in smaller groups offer students space to discuss and debate, to dig deeper into difficult concepts, and to explore their own ideas. Student contribution to seminars is vital, and tutors will ensure everyone takes part in discussions. Seminars last 1 hour and students will take part in four seminars each week.</p> <p>Independent study is a crucial part of an LMH Summer Programme and of the Oxford teaching model. Tutors will recommend important reading to do between lectures and seminars that will enable students to come to class equipped to understand the information presented and prepared to take part in discussion and debate. Each week students will have an assignment of independent work to complete and submit in advance of the tutorial. There is an appropriate amount of space in the timetable to complete the necessary reading, preparation, and assignments. Students should expect to do around 40 hours of independent study each week.</p> <p>The final class each week is a tutorial, a very small class typically including only 2-4 students and central to the teaching methods used by the University of Oxford and on LMH Summer Programmes. Guided by their tutor, students will receive feedback on their assignments and be challenged to defend, justify, or even rethink their work and ideas. These rigorous academic discussions help develop and facilitate learning in a way that cannot be done with lectures and seminars alone.</p>
Assessment:	<p>On a three-week LMH Summer Programme students produce one piece of assessed work every week, which is submitted to the tutor and then discussed in a tutorial. At</p>

	the end of each week students will receive a percentage grade for their submitted work. Each week's work counts for a third of the final percentage grade, so the final grade is an average of the mark received for each piece of work. Students who stay for six or nine weeks will receive a separate grade for each 3-week course.
Academic Credit:	Lady Margaret Hall will provide a transcript of students' assessed work, and can send this directly to your home institution if required. LMH Summer Programmes are designed to be eligible for academic credit, and we will communicate with home institution to facilitate this as needed. As a guide, we recommend the award of 15 CATS / 7.5 ECTS / 4 US Credits for each 3-week course.