PSY450: Psychology of Ethnic Conflict
http://www2.kenyon.edu/people/lyubanskym/conflict.htm
Spring, 2004: Mondays 7-10pm
308 Sam Mather Hall

Instructor: Mikhail Lyubansky, Ph.D.
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email: lyubanskym@kenyon.edu

Office hours: Mon, Tues, Wed, and Thurs:
3:30-4:30 and by appointment

Required Texts:

Additional readings will be assigned and distributed in class (see course schedule)

Required Films
TBA

Course Description
Although group conflict is hardly new, the last decade has seen a proliferation of conflicts engaging intra-state ethnic groups, with approximately thirty such conflicts being fought each year in every part of the globe, including North America. Unlike traditional warfare, civilians comprise over eighty percent of the casualties and the economic and psychological impact on survivors is often so devastating that some experts believe that ethnic conflict is the most destabilizing force in the post cold-war world. Although these conflicts also have political, economic, and other causes, the purpose of this advanced seminar is to develop a psychological understanding of ethnic warfare. More specifically, the course will explore the function of ethnic, religious, and national identities in inter-group conflict. In addition, it will examine the roles of leaders, extremists (terrorists/freedom fighters), victims, and bystanders using psychological theory and research about individual and group behavior. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict will be used as a case-study. However, most readings will not be conflict-specific, and students will be able to pick a different conflict for their written assignments.
Course Expectations

There are several good guidelines that have been developed for class discussions. Here are three that have the most importance for me. In fact, these are my expectations not only for you, but also for myself, and I am convinced that both your learning and enjoyment of the class will be directly proportional to your desire and ability to follow these guidelines.

- **Come prepared.** In a seminar, your preparation for class discussion effects not only your own learning but also that of others.

- **Don’t silence yourself** (in class or in any of your assignments) because you are afraid of saying something wrong and offending someone. While this may be a reasonable strategy elsewhere, if you decide to be “politically correct” rather than authentic in this seminar, you deprive yourself and others of a potential learning opportunity (either from your comments directly or through the responses of others).

- **Allow others, as well as yourself, the freedom to change and grow.** Our goals are knowledge and growth, not accountability.

Additional Information

**Availability**

I encourage you to take advantage of office hours to either discuss the course material or share your reactions to something related to the class. I am also often in my office at other times (including several evenings per week) and will usually be happy to talk with you. While there is no substitute for face-to-face contact, you should also feel free to contact me via email. In fact, this is often the best way to get a quick answer to a question, usually within 24 hours.

**Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to strictly follow the college’s academic honesty policy. Failure to do so will result in a letter to the department chair and, very likely, a formal petition to the Academic Infractions Board.

**Learning Disabilities**

If you have a hidden or visible disability which may require classroom or test accommodations please see me as soon as possible. To be eligible for such accommodations, you are required to register with the Coordinator of Disability Services, Erin Salva (salvae@kenyon.edu, x5145). All information and documentation of disability is strictly confidential.
Course Requirements

Class participation (70 points)

Students are expected to attend and actively participate in class. Part of each class period will be devoted to class discussion of the readings and the ideas and issues raised in the lecture and readings. You will be evaluated primarily on your willingness to engage with the course material (see section on course expectations), as demonstrated by your analysis of the readings and the quality of your responses to other students’ comments. Please be assured that disagreeing with the instructor or another student will in no way affect your grade. Indeed, I have found that open inquiry and constructive disagreement can often lead to learning and growth, and I hope that we can create an environment in which all of us feel free to express our thoughts and reactions.

Like most courses, the quality and effectiveness of class discussions will significantly depend on your commitment to reading and processing the assigned materials prior to class. I try to facilitate this by choosing readings that are engaging and stimulating, but because this is the first time that I am teaching this course, some may fall short of this standard. I hope that you will still persevere if and when this occurs. While I know that most of you don’t require any additional incentive, in order to maximize the quality of the discussions, there will also be an evaluative component (worth 70 points) to the reading assignments. However, since this is your class, you will have the freedom and the responsibility to choose (as a group) the specific format of the evaluation on the first day of class. Below is the option that you selected on the first day of class, along with some additional information:

Exams (50 points each for 100 total points)

The purpose of exams in this course is not to prove to me that you have the ability and motivation to memorize some specific set of facts. Rather, they are designed to provide you with the opportunity to think deeply and critically about the course materials, integrate ideas, concepts, and theories from readings and lectures, and struggle with your own opinions. Thus, there will be two take-home exams (see course schedule for dates). Each exam will consist of 1-2 long essay questions and 3-5 short essays. The exams are cumulative in the sense that material from an earlier exam may be incorporated into a question on a later exam, but the emphasis will be on the readings since the previous examination. The exams should be typed and the specified length-limit (usually 8 typed, double-spaced pages) should be closely followed. To ensure fairness, due dates for the exams will be strictly enforced. If you cannot be in class on the day the exams are passed out, it is your responsibility to make arrangements to obtain a copy. There is no final exam in this course.
Group Identity Autobiography (50 points)

The goal of this assignment is to explore your own group identity. You will be evaluated on the quality of your writing (20%), as well as the content (80%). It is expected that you will integrate some of the assigned readings into your self-exploration. This assignment can be handed in at any time prior to the day the first exam is handed out. Late papers will be penalized 10% for each class period thereafter.

All papers must be typewritten and double-spaced with a standard 12-pt. font and 1-inch margins. You should have a reference page, properly citing any sources that you use, including the assigned readings. You should also have an end-page with your name, the course name, date, and my name. Please be sure that this is the last page (not first!), so that I can grade your paper without knowing who the author is. The end-page and reference page are not part of the 5-6 page length requirement.

I am aware that this assignment may be challenging for some of you. Please feel free to come talk about it with me during office hours, if you get stuck or just feel like you could use some guidance. To help you get started, several suggestions are listed below for the two parts of the assignment. Please note that these are intended solely as suggestions. You are neither required to discuss these elements, nor are you limited to them.

• When, why, and how you first became aware of your group identity
• Cultural environment in which you grew up and its effect on your group identity
• Influence of skin color or other physical characteristics (related to group membership) on your life
• Description of values, attitudes, and rules shared by group members
• Your group’s primary or secondary language
• Media and cultural messages about your group (e.g., group stereotypes)
• Description of group members’ relationships with one another
• Group members’ stories about your group
• Friendships and other relationships within and apart from your own group
• Your group’s preferences for food, music, clothes, or activity
• Participation in groups or activities centered on race or racial issues
• Experiences with racism (as victim, as perpetrator, or as both)
• What it means to you (if anything) to identify with your group
• What you like and don’t like about being a member of your group
Media Analysis. (80 points)

Examine and analyze how television, movies, or print media (e.g., newspapers, magazines) represent the origins and, if appropriate, resolution of group conflict. Your analysis may focus either on the global conflict (e.g., the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) or on one particular manifestation of that conflict (e.g., a specific terrorist attack or a specific Israeli military action), depending on the focus of the coverage. Make sure that your analysis doesn’t just describe the media content but also integrates the content with concepts and materials covered in the course. Finally, your analysis should also discuss the implications of what you find. Please follow the following guidelines, which differ according to the source.

1. Television. Select one television program (e.g., FOX nightly news) and analyze at least seven different episodes of that program. Please note that due to time constraints, most television coverage focuses on reporting specific events, rather than on the global conflict. If you are committed to doing a television analysis but want to do it at the global conflict level, you will probably have more success with newsmagazine programs, such as 60 Minutes, and 20/20. If you go the newsmagazine route, you may limit your analysis to five episodes.

2. Movies. Select and watch at least three films dealing with group conflict. Please focus on either fictional conflicts or conflicts that followed World War II.

3. Print Media. Pick a print media source (e.g., New York Times) and analyze at least seven different articles from different editions of that source (no more than one article from a single edition). Please select either news stories or editorials but do not combine them. You will probably find editorials to be a richer source of information, but you can certainly focus on news stories if you prefer to do so. Regardless of which you pick, I suggest that you use the Lexis-Nexis database to locate appropriate stories (you can find it on the database page of the LBIS web site). Please see me or a reference librarian if you are not familiar with Lexis Nexis.
Grading

The final grade for this course will be based on the total number of points you **earn** on class participation, two take-home examinations, journal entries, two papers, and the final project. The assignments total to 300 points, and your grade will be calculated using the **300-point scale** at the bottom of this page.

Here is the point break-down for all the course examinations and assignments. Detailed descriptions of each one are found later in the syllabus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation/Reading evaluation</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group identity paper</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media analysis paper/presentation</td>
<td>80 (50 paper, 30 presentation)</td>
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</tbody>
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Grades will be assigned according to the following scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A +</td>
<td>293-300</td>
<td>98-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>275-292</td>
<td>92 - 97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>269-274</td>
<td>90 - 91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>263-268</td>
<td>88 - 89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>245-262</td>
<td>82 - 87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>239-244</td>
<td>80 - 81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>233-238</td>
<td>78 - 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>215-232</td>
<td>72 - 77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>209-214</td>
<td>70 - 72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>203-208</td>
<td>68 - 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>185-202</td>
<td>62 - 67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>179-184</td>
<td>60 - 62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;179</td>
<td>&lt;60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Semester Schedule

This is a tentative schedule. Modifications to the schedule may occur at any time in the semester. Such modifications will always be posted on the course web site and announced in class, with at least a full week’s notice. However, you are responsible for knowing about changes announced during your absence.

Case Study: Arab-Israeli Conflict

Jan. 19 Introduction; Begin case study (Bickerton, Ch.1-4)
Jan. 26 Continue case study (Bickerton, Ch. 5-8)
Feb. 2 Complete case study (Bickerton, Ch. 9-12)

General Psychological Issues

Feb 9 Ethnic Identity: Models and Influences
Feb 16 Social Identity Theory (Chirot & Seligman, Ch. 21)
Feb. 23 Group Stereotypes
** 1st Exam handed out (due March 1st) **
March 1 Theories of Intergroup Conflict (Chirot & Seligman, Ch. 18, 20; Volkan, Ch. 1-3)
March 6-19 SPRING VACATION

Psychology of Perpetrators

March 22 Social Movement Theories (Volkan, Ch. 9; Waller, TBA)
March 29 Political Violence and Terrorism (Volkan, Ch. 10; Waller, TBA)
April 5 Genocide and Human Rights Violations (Waller, TBA)

The Victims and the Helpers

April 12 The Problems of Refugees and Survivors
** 2nd Exam handed out (due April 19th) **
April 19 Who are the Helpers?

Peace Psychology

April 26 Conflict Resolution
May 3 Media Analysis Presentations