The Course

A pilot initiative sponsored by the University of Maryland’s Office of International Affairs, this “blended format” (part traditional, part online) course pairs 10 University of Maryland students in International Development and Conflict Management, Government and Politics, and Global Studies with 10 Tel Aviv University students in the International Program in Conflict Resolution and Mediation. Students spend the bulk of the semester collaborating in teams comprised of equal numbers of UMD and TAU students, working to research and produce creative, viable, sustainable solutions to major contemporary development problems that may in conflict zones. Each team is challenged to build expertise in a specific problem in a specific locale. The search for solutions to these problems is complicated by a context of protracted conflict and multiple forms of organized violence, in the form of a complex humanitarian emergency, post-conflict reconstruction, or another aspect of conflict prevention, management and transformation.

Through this course, students will be exposed to the practical realities of the international development “industry” and develop applicable hard skills, practical knowledge and issue expertise. Skills to be developed and practiced include stakeholder analysis, project development, results-based thinking, professional writing, and ethical reflection on the ends and means of international development. The course will also offer students the opportunity to study a particular country or region that is or recently has been exposed to widespread, protracted violent conflict, to build an expertise in one critical development “issue,” and to meet and engage with students from around the world (both UMD and TAU students are a diverse group, having been born in and traveled to a variety of countries around the world).

ASSIGNMENTS: DUE DATES

- Problem Statement: March 4 (1st draft), March 11 (final draft)
- Issues Note, Needs Assessment, and Stakeholder Analysis: March 25
- Results Framework: April 8
- Project Brief: April 24
- Project Pitch: May 8

Due dates are firm. Late assignments will be penalized.
All assignments are due by 5:00pm Tel Aviv time.
What? – Your Deliverables

We will provide you with detailed instructions and resources you may consult as you complete each of the deliverables below. We will also be available to consult with groups on a weekly basis, as needed, even when we do not meet as a group. All assignments except the first will be completed as a team and all team members will share the grade.

Problem Statement (20%) – This single statement will clearly and succinctly capture the problem that your team will spend the rest of the semester tackling.

Issues Note, Needs Assessment, Stakeholder Analysis (15%) – Teams begin laying the groundwork for what will ultimately become a full brief (below).

Results Framework / Visioning Exercise (15%) – This detailed one-page road map will lay out and visually connect the key components of your project.

Policy Brief (25%) – Your team will build on its preparatory work (above) and draft a professional policy brief, detailing the problem and laying out the proposed solution.

Project Pitch (15%) – Each team will “pitch” their projects/solutions to a policy audience (us) and be prepared to respond to questions and critiques. Attendance is mandatory.

Participation (10%) – All students are expected to participate actively in class discussions and to be a full and productive member of your project group.

How and Where? – The Logistics

Though the course also meets “live” through videoconference at regular intervals throughout the semester, this is a non-traditional course. Therefore, students should not expect bi-weekly lectures and class discussion, but rather will spend a significant proportion of their time working independently—with professor support and feedback—in their groups, during the research and design phases of project development.

Tuesdays & Thursdays
12:30-1:45 p.m. College Park Time
7:30-8:45 p.m. Tel Aviv

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