



UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE  
ACADEMY FOR INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND PEACEBUILDING

## **ENGAGING WITH IDENTITY-BASED DIFFERENCES**

APRIL 16-20, 2012  
9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Course Facilitator:  
Peter Weinberger, Ph.D.

Phone: 202 429 4761  
Email: [pweinberger@usip.org](mailto:pweinberger@usip.org)

In today's complex peacebuilding missions, civilian personnel and soldiers are routinely required to work with religious, ethnic, tribal, and minority communities. Participants in the course will learn how to engage these communities in effective and sustainable ways. Identity-based conflicts rooted in ethnic, religious, or tribal differences pose distinctive challenges for third-party mediators and other advisors. Parties to such conflicts often fear the annihilation of their group or their way of life, making them resistant to compromise or interest-based negotiations. The course will outline strategies for addressing these challenges, including countering hate speech and exclusionary policies, engaging religious and tribal leaders in peacebuilding efforts, establishing trust through intergroup dialogues, and promoting educational reforms. An important aim of the course is to convey that ethnic or religious conflict is neither "natural" nor inevitable and that applied conflict resolution is highly compatible with both religious peacebuilding and traditional reconciliation practices.

**Objectives:** By the end of this course, participants will be better able to:

- Understand characteristics of conflicts involving ethnic, religious, and tribal identities
- Recognize how "conflict entrepreneurs" manipulate identities in order to advance their own agendas
- Be mindful of and navigate how different religious traditions promote peacebuilding
- Make use of ritual and symbol
- Utilize indigenous or traditional reconciliation measures
- Address issues of gender empowerment and human rights

## Teaching Methodology and Structure

The course takes a two-fold approach to teaching. It is largely *elicitive* in nature, meant to draw out and utilize each participant's professional experience. The class also has a *prescriptive* component: new concepts and analytical tools are introduced, but with the aim for each student to identify and articulate how these ideas can be *directly applied* to their work.

A number of *interactive exercises* will also be used as learning tools: case studies, role-playing, simulations, guided discussions, etc.

## Course Requirements

Students are asked to attend every session and to participate in all activities and discussions/debriefs.

Recommended readings can be accessed on-line in the USIP Distance Learning platform.

- Log on by clicking at: <https://academyonline.usip.org>
- Your user name is your first initial followed by your last name, for example, Adam Smith would use: asmith
- Your initial password is Usip!123 – this password is case sensitive. You may change your password after your first log-in.
- From the list of courses, choose “Engaging with Identity-Based Differences.”

## April 16: Grasping Identity and the Challenge of “Conflict Entrepreneurs”

### 1) Exercise: *Personal and Professional Experiences in the Field*

The purpose of the exercise will be for the course participants to 1) map out the wealth of knowledge and experience that is available to them through their colleagues; 2) start to build meaningful relationships; and 3) clarify expectations from the course.

### 2) Guided Discussion and Exercise: *Dealing with the Blurred Boundaries between Ethnicity and Religion*

Course participants will be divided into small groups to explore the relationship between two different kinds of development projects and related preconceptions about ethnic and religious conflict.

### 3) Guided Discussion and Exercise: *Collective Traumas and “Identity Politics”*

Frameworks are presented to approach the main groups involved in protracted international conflicts: 1) an understanding of collective traumas; and 2) a view on the “localization” of identity. These ideas form the basis of skill sets needed to address the problem of “conflict

entrepreneurs,” or demagogues who enflame ethnic and religious identities as means to advance complex political and financial agendas.

#### 4) Exercise: *Identifying and Dealing with “Conflict Entrepreneurs”*

Course participants will analyze and address “conflict entrepreneurs” in the fictional case of Bambaku. Teams will present recommendations how to better deal with similar occurrences in the future, as 1) general preventative measures, and 2) crisis management techniques.

Video Clip: Slobodan Milosevic in Kosovo, 1987.

#### *Recommended Readings:*

Scott Atran and Jeremy Ginges, “How Words Could End a War” NY Times, January 25, 2009.

Espen Barth Eide, “Conflict entrepreneurship: on the art of waging civil war” *PRIO Report*, 4(1997), pp. 41-69.

David Smock, “Religion in World Affairs: Its Role in Conflict and Peace” USIP Special Report 201, February 2008.

### **April 17: Engaging Local Actors through Dialogue and Ritual**

#### 1) Exercise and Small-Group Discussion: *When their Religion is Different, When their Secularism is Different*

Participants use a perception-building activity to explore the issue of how their own personal values or religious faith shapes their conception of peacebuilding. The aim is to demonstrate that engaging religious actors can often be qualitatively different from secular groups and outreach or overtures may be unsuccessful unless they actively resonate with local parties’ worldview. The focus is on a more nuanced understanding of the religious mindset, in both traditional and modern forms.

#### 2) Guided Discussion and Exercise: *Religion and Politics: Differences in Practice*

Religious traditions underpin and guide politics, even within the largely secular West. The discussion focuses on drawing out these often implicit influences and it is noted how some taken-for-granted principles of peacebuilding are more specifically Western than universal in nature.

The exercise covers principles of various religious traditions that promote conflict resolution. It makes use of theological language and concepts to emphasize how differences in religious peacebuilding materialize and become complicated when dealing with Buddhist, Hindu, and Islamic cultures. Participants will brainstorm ways to approach and manage these differences.

#### 3) Guided Discussion and Exercise: *Apology, Honor, and Ritual Transformation*

Rituals are crucial tools of peacemaking when there are symbolic dimensions of conflict and parties cannot or will not articulate their true feelings through the use of words in dialogue. Techniques are relayed to recognize nonverbal cues for gestures of apology or honor and how to utilize ritual and symbol to bring about tangible, lived experiences of change. Participants will role-play groups in divided societies, and must agree upon the design of either 1) joint mourning rituals or 2) a monument to the deceased (of both groups) as part of a peace process.

Video Clip: Music and Dance in the Bougainville Peace Process

4) Guest Talk: “The interplay between religion and culture in peacebuilding in Afghanistan and Pakistan”

Qamar ul-Huda, USIP

*Recommended Readings:*

Marc Gopin, “The Use of the Word and Its Limits: A Critical Evaluation of Religious Dialogue as Peacemaking” in David Smock, ed. *Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding* (Washington DC: USIP Press, 2002).

George E. Irani and Nathan C. Funk, “Rituals of Reconciliation: Arab-Islamic Perspectives” Kroc Institute Occasional Paper # 19:OP: 2, August 2000.

Douglas E. Streusand and Harry D. Tunnell IV, “Choosing Words Carefully: Language to Help Fight Islamic Terrorism” National Defense University, Center for Strategic Communications, May 23, 2006.

### **April 18: Utilizing Traditional Governance and Reconciliation Practices**

1) Guided Discussion and Exercise: *Reframing the In-Group*

Many cultures and peoples in conflict have traditional reconciliation practices that are overlooked or underutilized by third party mediators and other advisors. Participants will be asked to analyze the potential advantages and pitfalls of using such resources to try to enhance the legitimacy of outside peacebuilding efforts.

2) Guided Discussion and Exercise: *Using Ex-Combatants as Change Agents*

Militias commonly form along ethnic and sectarian lines and often constitute prominent sub-groups within the life of a conflict. They in turn can be important resources for peace. Participants will be asked to make recommendations how to give ex-combatants a more active role in peacebuilding efforts, but in a way that does not undermine disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) measures enacted at the end of armed conflict.

3) Case-Study Exercise: *Japanese Hostages in Iraq*

Three Japanese nationals in Iraq were abducted in April 2004, with the demand for their release being the withdrawal of all Japanese forces in the country. Course participants will be given the general outlines of a strategy successfully used by the Japanese government at the time, and will be asked to make use of this approach to present specific recommendations to secure the hostages' freedom.

Short Film: Tribal Mediators in Yemen

4) Guest Talk: "Traditional Conflict Resolution, Problem Solving, and "Blood Money"  
Jacki Wilson, USIP

*Recommended Readings:*

Pablo de Grieff, "Contributing to Peace and Justice – Finding a Balance Between DDR and Reparations" Paper presented at the "Building a Future on Peace and Justice" conference organized by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Nuremberg, Germany, 2007).

Frank Ledwidge, "Justice in Helmand – The Challenge of Law Reform in a Society at War" *Asian Affairs*, Vol. XL, No. 1, March 2009.

**April 19: Addressing Empowerment and Critical Reflection**

1) Discussion and Exercise: *Human Rights: What is your Role?*

There is often a tension between the desire to respect indigenous identity norms and a commitment to human rights in peacebuilding. Participants will respond to scenarios dealing with issues such as honor killings and child marriage.

2) Discussion and Exercise: *Empowering Women in Post-Conflict Environments*

It is important to involve women in peacebuilding, but the challenge lies in navigating the patriarchal cultures of many developing countries. Participants will be asked to devise strategies to empower women in the "opportunity space" often provided by post-conflict situations.

3) Guided Discussion and Role-playing Exercise: *Contested Histories*

The German experience of "coming to terms with the past" is used as a template to evaluate long-term strategies to promote tolerance and critical reflection about past crimes and abuses. Course participants will participate in an exercise on contested histories that could potentially be used to stimulate both the process of educational reform as well as general healing strategies for divided societies.

4) Guest Talk: "School Reform in Post-Conflict Societies"  
Linda Bishai, USIP

*Recommended Readings:*

Jana Arsovska, "Understanding a 'Culture of Violence and Crime': the *Kanun of Lek Dukagjini* and the Rise of the Albanian Sexual-Slavery Rackets" *European Journal of Crime, Criminal Law, and Criminal Justice* Vol. 14/2, 2006.

Elizabeth A. Cole and Judy Barsalou, "Unite or Divide: The Challenges of Teaching History in Societies Emerging from Violent Conflict" USIP Special Report, 163, June 2006.

Richard Strickland and Nata Duvvury, "Gender Equity and Peacebuilding - From Rhetoric to Reality: Finding the Way" Discussion Paper: International Center for Research on Women, December 2003.

**April 20: Identity and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding**

1) Guided Discussion and Exercise: *Different Levels of Trust*

Deeply divided societies tend to remain segregated even in a successful peace process. Participants will reflect upon the ability of local leaders in these communities to build trust, and how outside advisors can shepherd this process in moments of crisis.

Video Clip: Archive of Willy Brandt in Warsaw, 1970

2) Capstone Exercise: *Peacebuilding in Ashland*

Course participants will be given a scenario for the fictional divided society of Ashland, in which they must address a peacekeeping mission gone awry.

*Recommended Readings:*

Roger Conner and Patricia Jordan, "Never Being Able to Say you're Sorry: Barriers to Apology by Leaders in Group Conflicts" *Law and Contemporary Problems* Vol. 72, No. 2, Spring 2009.