

Peace and Conflict Studies in Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo

PEAC-3005 (3 credits)

Serbia, Bosnia, and Kosovo: Peace and Conflict Studies in the Balkans

This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Course Description

In the aftermath of the disintegration of Yugoslavia, new states emerged, each with their own new political structures, and various challenges and realities to face of societies in transition. This course will focus on some of these changes and challenges, examining today's Serbia, Kosovo, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, respectively. During the course, students will explore each of the case studies by focusing on the following three main areas: conflict transformation/peacebuilding, transitional justice, and memory politics. Students will use a comparative perspective to analyze internal dynamics of post-conflict studies.

The course will expose students to the social dynamics in these case studies as related to the theme of peace and conflict studies and post-Yugoslav studies, European Union politics after Brexit, Refugees and Migrants on the Balkan Route and other ongoing issues. Students will have opportunities to learn outside the classroom, thus deepening their understanding and analysis of the issues discussed and read about.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate the understanding of how conflict, post-conflict, and post-Yugoslav dynamics have shaped the social, political, and cultural realities in Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo;
- Show familiarity with the work of institutions and NGOs in the area of memory politics and transitional justice in Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo;
- Analyze country-specific data regarding current political structures and local efforts to engage in processes of transitional justice and dealing with the past;
- Analyze and compare transitional justice processes in Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo and regional initiatives for conflict transformation, reconciliation, and memory activism.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English; during the sessions students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content.

Instructional Methods

SIT's teaching and learning philosophy is grounded in the experiential learning theory developed by Kolb (1984; 2015) and informed by various scholars, such as Dewey, Piaget, Lewin, among others. Experiential learning theory recognizes that learning is an active process that is not confined to the formal curriculum; "knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 2015, p. 49). Learning involves both content and process. Learning is holistic and happens through various life experiences upon which students draw to generate new ways of knowing and being. Learning involves a community and is a lifelong endeavor. Learning is transformational. The suggested four step-cycle of a *concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation* embedded in the experiential learning model is not linear and might not always happen in that specific order, as any learning is highly context dependent. These stages of taking part in a shared experience; reflecting on that experience by describing and interpreting it; challenging their own assumptions and beliefs to generate new knowledge; and ultimately applying new knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes in a variety of situations and contexts are important for students to engage in to become empowered lifelong learners.

Course Schedule

*Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.

Module 1: Serbia after Milošević (I)

This module will introduce students to the main political and socio-economic dynamics and changes since the 1990s until the present. During the decade of the 1990s, as Yugoslavia was disintegrating, Serbia was engaged in all the conflicts that took place in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and finally Kosovo, culminating in the 1999 NATO intervention and bombing of the country. In the aftermath of October 5, 2000, Serbia was about to enter a new chapter of democratic transition, though changes were occurring at a slower pace than hoped and expected. Why were these changes so slow? What changes took place? Who are the main actors involved? These are some of the questions students will be introduced to in this module. Finally, students will prepare for their visit to Kosovo and begin unfolding the policies and perceptions of political elites as well as ordinary people in Serbia toward the Kosovo conflict and post-conflict issues, as well as current negotiations in Brussels.

Session 1: 17 Years after the fall of Milošević: Continuation and Change in Serbia

This session will discuss changes and developments in Serbia since 2000. Dr. Petrović will discuss and introduce some of the main challenges ahead of Serbia; from economic development to corruption; from Serbia's road to join the European Union to the attempts to transform the frozen conflict between Serbia and Kosovo; from the assassination of premier Zoran Djindjić in 2003 to the current political actors in Serbia.

Required Reading:

Gordy, E. (2014). Tracing Dialogue on the Legacy of War Crimes in Serbia. In *Narratives of Justice In and Out of the Courtroom*. New York: Springer, 111-130.

Fridman, O. & Hercigonja S. (2017). Protiv Nenormalnog: An analysis of the #protivdiktature Protests in the Context of Memory Politics of the 1990s in Serbia. *Contemporary Southeastern Europe*, 4(1), 12-25.

Recommended Reading:

PODCAST: The Southeast Passage Podcast: A look at Vučić's Serbia and the emergence of new social movements available at: <http://thesoutheastpassage.com/podcast/popovic-papovic-vucic-serbia-social-movements/>

Session 2: Serbia's Road to the European Union (EU)

This session will introduce students to the history of the EU, the nuance of the processes of EU enlargement, or shrinkage after Brexit, as well as EU politics and policies in the Western Balkans.

Session 3: Field Visit: Transitional Justice and Dealing with the Past in Serbia

This session will offer students a site visit to the Humanitarian Law Center (HLC): one of Serbia's, and the region's, most prominent NGOs dealing with transitional justice in the aftermath of the wars and the breakup of Yugoslavia.

Required Reading:

Subotić, J. (2009). *Hijacked justice: Dealing with the past in the Balkans* (pp. 1-37). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Recommended Reading:

Méndez, J. E. (1997). Accountability for past abuses. *Human Rights Quarterly: a Comparative and International Journal of the Social Sciences, Philosophy, and Law*, 19, 2, 255-282.

Session 4: Frozen Conflicts: Serbia-Kosovo Conflict Analysis

This session will engage students with an introductory analysis of the Serbia-Kosovo conflict. Who are the parties involved in the conflict? Who are the actors in the current reality? What are the main issues shaping Serb-Albanian relations? These and other questions will be unfolded based on the required readings and students' discussions and questions.

Required Reading:

Ker-Lindsay, J. (2009). *Kosovo: The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans*. London: I. B. Tauris. (Introduction, Chapter 1).

Required Film:

The fall of Milošević: BBC Documentary Film

This film offers a most coherent insight into the war in Kosovo and the NATO intervention as seen through the Milošević regime days in Serbia, in the late 1990s. It offers unique footage that adds images to in-class discussions and readings. Watch the film at home and be prepared for class discussion.

Session 5: Serbia's Kosovo Policy after Milošević

As direct negotiations between Serbia's and Kosovo's premiers continue to unfold, this lecture examines the state's policy towards the Kosovo conflict in the last 13 years. From introducing the myth of Kosovo and the 1389 battle of Kosovo, to more recent developments following the 2008 declaration of independence, the session highlights current dynamics as related to Serbia's EU accession process and conflict transformation.

Required Reading:

Judah, T. (2008). *Kosovo: What everyone needs to know*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Selected chapters: post-war.)

Module 2: Kosovo: State-Building and Post-Conflict Transformation

This module takes place in Kosovo as a study visit during which students are introduced to the Kosovo-Serbia conflict. The focus is on the Kosovar Albanian as well as Kosovar Serbs and other minority communities' points of view. During the Kosovo study visit students learn about the challenges it faces, and its State-building processes. Additionally, students will trace the creation of new collective memories in Kosovo in the aftermath of the 1998-99 war and the NATO intervention and how are these present in public space: what monuments are built now in Kosovo and what myths are created? What processes of transitional justice are in place?

Session 1: The History of State-Building Process in Kosovo: An Introduction

In this session, students are introduced to the recent history, from the end of Yugoslavia to the 1998-99 war in Kosovo, from a Kosovar point of view.

Readings

Krasniqi, V. (2014). Topography of the Construction of the Nation. In P. Kolsto (Ed.), *Strategies of Symbolic Nation Building in Southeast Europe* (pp. 139-163). Farnham: Ashgate Publishing.

Session 2: Kosovo from International Administration to Independence

This session introduces students to the aftermath of the war and international intervention in Kosovo. Kosovo was governed by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), and through the 2006 Ahtisari plan, finally reached a crucial moment in the February 2008 Declaration of Independence. What was the political climate that allowed this move? What was the role of international and local actors in this declaration? Can Kosovo become a UN member state, and if so how? These and other questions introduce students to some of the most acute questions in international relations as of now: should the international community intervene in conflicts such as in Kosovo? Or Syria? What is the precedent created by the intervention in Kosovo? Or is Kosovo a case of *sui generis*?

Recommended Reading:

Krasniqi, G. (2012). Overlapping jurisdictions, disputed territory, unsettled state: the perplexing case of citizenship in Kosovo. *Citizenship Studies*, 16, 2-4, 353-366.

Session 3: Prishtina Memory Walk

In this session students explore the public space in the capital of Kosovo as it was shaped after 1999. Students visit newly built monuments in order to be able to critically engage with post-2008 memory politics in Kosovo. The session is conducted by scholars from the Gender Studies program at the University of Prishtina.

Session 4: Site Visit to Prizren

In this session, students visit Prizren, which is among the most heterogeneous municipalities in Kosovo, with communities of Bosniaks, Turks, Roma, and Albanians. Students visit the old city of Prizren to explore its Ottoman past and the heritage of the League of Prizren, and be introduced to later developments in the city, demographic changes in the aftermath of the war, and more recent cultural developments with the founding of the DokuFest film festival, among the most cutting edge film festivals in the Balkans. The visit is followed by a group discussion.

Session 5: Serbs in Kosovo

In the aftermath of the war, Serbs who remained in Kosovo received a minority status. While Serbs north of river Ibar refused to recognize Prishtina's role, powers, and rule of law, south of the Ibar River, Serb communities began to transform from enclaves to local Kosovar municipalities. In this session, we may visit the municipality of Gračanica, including a visit the Gračanica Monastery and a meeting with the mayor. We may alternatively visit the Decani Monastery and meet with Father Sava Janjic, also known as the cyber monk from Kosovo.

Session 6: Transitional Justice in Kosovo

In this session, students are introduced to current developments in implementation and introduction of transitional justice mechanisms in Kosovo. The main issues and challenges to TJ are introduced such as the problem of still missing people in Kosovo, the creation of national myths and national heroes, and the role of gender and women in these processes. Alternatively, in this session students may visit the Humanitarian Law Center (HLC), a leading local NGO in TJ issues.

Recommended Reading:

DWP Kosovo: Dealing with the Past <http://dwp-kosovo.info>

Module 3: Serbia after Milošević (II)

In this module, we continue to deepen our understanding of political and social processes in Serbia, as well as begin with the group's preparation for the next module and visit to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Session 1: Kosovo Reflection Session and Summary

This session is devoted to a summary of the module and a reflection session, in which students bring together theory and practice, classroom lectures and site visits.

Session 2: Responsibility as a Political Category

In this session, Prof. Daša Duhaček from the faculty of Political Science introduces the question of responsibility as a political category. Building on Hannah Arendt's political theory,

Duhaček takes students through the fascinating and challenging dilemma of a society that still struggles with the definitions of war heroes and war criminals.

Recommended Reading:

Duhaček, D. (2006). The making of political responsibility: Hannah Arendt and/in the case of Serbia. *Women and citizenship in Central and Eastern Europe*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 205-224.

Session 3: Field Visit: Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Serbia

Following the introduction to the question of responsibility as a political category, students visit a local NGO run by young Belgradians. Today's Serbia's post-war generation has to deal with the legacies of the wars of the 1990s. In their work, these activists put into action some of Duhaček's and Arendt's more theoretical discussions and share with students some of their projects such as "The Visiting Program" (building bridges between young people from Kosovo and Serbia), "The Days of Sarajevo Festival," and others.

Module 4: Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) after the Dayton Accords

This module starts in Belgrade and continues in Bosnia. It allows students to understand and capture the new structures of post-Dayton BiH as divided to two entities: Republika Srpska and The Federation. The module presents current challenges, new identity constructions and peacebuilding efforts in dealing with the recent past. It also allows students a critical look on international interventions in the Western Balkans (and beyond).

Session 1: Introduction to BiH after Dayton (in Belgrade)

In this session, students are to the political structures in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina, created as the consequences of the Dayton accords. The session picks the discussion from the end of the war in Bosnia to the current impediments to the functioning of Bosnia-Herzegovina as one state. Students are introduced to the two entities: Republika Srpska and The Federation, their political structures and political actors. The session features a documentary film, an ISP produced by SIT Balkans Alum (Spring 2009), that discusses the question of identity and belonging among young generation in BiH.

Required Film:

Seigel-Boettner, Jacob, "Naši Narodi? Moji Identiteti: Four Youth Perspectives on National Identity in Post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina" (2009). *Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection*. Paper 692.

Session 2: Students' Led Discussion: The New Bosnian Mosaic

This student-led discussion is scheduled prior to the educational excursion to BiH. The aim of this session is to allow students to engage with the readings and with some of the arguments about studying peace and conflict studies in Bosnia after Dayton to reflect on the challenges and dilemmas students and scholars should be aware of.

Required Reading:

Bougarel, X., Helms, E., & Duijzings, G. (Eds). (2006). Introduction. *The New Bosnian Mosaic: Identities, Memories and Moral Claims in a Post-War Society*. Hampshire: Ashgate, 1-

The following sessions take place in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Session 3: Bosnia after Dayton: a view from Banja Luka

In this session at the University of Banja Luka, students are introduced to the current burning issues in Bosnian politics as seen from Banja Luka: from the issue of the national census to the question of identity and belonging. On the same day, SIT students may meet with local students for an informal meeting in town.

Recommended Reading:

Štiks, I. (2011). Being Citizen the Bosnian Way: Transformations of Citizenship and Political Identities in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In Cheneval, F., and S. Ramel (Eds). *Transitions: from Peace to Shared Political Identities: Exploring Pathways in Contemporary BiH*, 51, 1-2, 245-267.

Session 4: Field Visit: OSCE Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina

Students visit the OSCE offices in Banja Luka and meet with local and international position holders in the organization. This session not only exposes students to the ongoing presence of international organizations and powers in BiH, but also makes them aware of the challenges faced by the local communities as they continue to engage with peacebuilding and conflict transformation processes, decades after the war.

Session 5: Dayton Agreement and Transitional Justice: the Sarajevo Point of View

This session introduces students to the war and post-war post-Dayton politics in Bosnia-Herzegovina as seen from Sarajevo, the capital of the state as well as the political center of the federation. Students are introduced to the current challenges to identity and transitional justice in BiH.

Session 6: The Role of the International Community in BiH

This session students are introduced to the role of the international community in BiH after the war. Through a discussion about the role of the US, the students are challenged to process their thoughts and position regarding international interventions and the international community.

Session 7: Field Visit to the Museum of History of Yugoslavia and to the War Child Museums

Students learn about the history of the Siege of Sarajevo, and about the newly established war child museum.

Session 8: Islam in BiH

This session offers an introduction to Islam in BiH and in the Balkans with a focus on the ways the war, ethnic cleansing, and other processes have shaped perceptions of Islam among believers and non-believers as well the politics of identity in BiH. Following the lecture, students may visit the Gazi-Husrev Beg Mosque (Gazi Husrev Begova Džamija).

Recommended Reading:

Bringa, T. (1995). *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Session 9: Field visit: The Srebrenica Memorial in Potočari

In this half-day study visit, students may visit the Potočari Memorial Center where the war victims are buried. After a visit to the cemetery, students also visit the memorial room and are introduced to the issues by a staff member at the Memorial Center. Prior to the visit, students participate in a discussion based on the *Cry from the Grave* Film and the Duijzings' text.

Required Reading:

Duijzings, G. (2006). Commemorating Srebrenica: Histories of Violence and the Politics of Memory in Eastern Bosnia. In Bougarel, X., E. Helms, & G. Duijzings (Eds). *The New Bosnian Mosaic: Identities, Memories and Moral Claims in a Post-War Society*. Hampshire: Ashgate, 141-166.

Required Film:

Woodhead, L., (1999). *A Cry from the Grave*. London: BBC & Antelope Limited. Antelope.

Session 10: Bosnia-Herzegovina Reflection Session and Summary

This session is devoted to a summary of the module and a reflection session, in which students bring together theory and practice, classroom lectures and site visits.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

1) Student-led Class Discussion (40%)

In each of the modules, readings and reflection sessions are led by students, in addition to those led by SIT staff. Student-led discussions put emphasis on text joint analysis and on synthesis sessions between readings, field visits, and lectures.

You are expected to prepare Power Point Presentation that will serve as a basis for:

- 50-minute presentation which should also allow for an interactive group discussion and reflection on the subject matter
- Each group will consist of 4 students barring one which will only include 3 students
- Each group will be divided into two subgroups (2+2) with each being allocated 25 minutes of the presentation
- It is up to the groups themselves to decide on the subgroups and the order in which the members will be presenting

Text analysis group discussions should include:

- Necessary background information, including the name(s) of author(s);
- Main themes identified;
- Other relevant information or data you find particularly interesting/important;
- Your reflections on identified themes/issues raised.

Post-excursion group discussions should summarize the students' experiences and allow for the synthesis of the various themes, lectures and sites that the students were exposed to during their excursion as well as the knowledge previously acquired in class and through the reading materials.

2) Opinion Essay (50%)

The purpose of this assignment is to allow you to reflect on your own learning process since the beginning of the semester, in studying about post-conflict, post-Yugoslav, post-Socialism processes in Serbia, Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The opinion essay should serve as an opportunity to critically reflect on the experiential and academic knowledge you have acquired during the course. In your essay, you should make reference (by using in-text citations) to any of the literature that we read and to the lectures you attended, to offer a synthesis of your experience in the Peace and Conflict Studies seminar.

The main objective of the assignment is to allow you to reflect on your experience as a student on a semester abroad in the Balkans. Even more so, what do you foresee as the ethical concerns you may be facing during your independent study month, as an undergraduate student conducting the ISP/ISPJ/Internship research on some sensitive themes?

Your essay can be written as a blog entry.

Strong essays may be considered for publication on Reporting Balkans researching Balkans section.

Your essay should not exceed 1000 words

Font size: 12

Double space.

3) Participation (10%)

- Attendance – promptness to class and positive presence in class;
- Active listening – paying attention in class and during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm, entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes;
- Self-directed learning – reading the local paper and other materials to follow local perspectives on relevant issues, discussing issues with host families and others;
- Involvement in-class discussions – either in small or large groups;
- Group accountability during field excursions and classes;
- Taking leadership roles – leading and guiding discussions in a productive direction.

Assessment

Student-led Class Discussion - 40%

Opinion Essay - 50%

Participation/Readings - 10%

Attendance and Participation

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in each and every class session, attendance at all classes and for all program excursions is required. Criteria for evaluation of student performance include attendance and participation in program activities. Students must fully participate in all program components and courses. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed with the academic director or other designated staff person. Absences impact academic performance, may impact grades, and could result in dismissal from the program.

Late Assignments

SIT Study Abroad programs integrate traditional classroom lectures and discussion with field-based experiences, site visits and debriefs. The curriculum is designed to build on itself and progress to the culmination (projects, ISP, case studies, internship, etc.). It is critical that students complete assignments in a timely manner to continue to benefit from the sequences in assignments, reflections and experiences throughout the program. Students may request a justified extension for one paper/assignment during the semester. Requests must be made in writing and at least 12 hours before the posted due date and time. If reason for request is accepted, an extension of up to one week may be granted at that time. Any further requests for extensions will not be granted. Students who fail to submit the assignment within the extension period will receive an 'F' for the assignment.

Grading Scale

94-100%	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
84-86%	B
80-83%	B-
77-79%	C+
74-76%	C
70-73%	C-
67-69%	D+
64-66%	D
below 64	F

Program Expectations

- In addition to readings, which will be assigned for each of the units, it is also your responsibility to keep up to date with current events. At a minimum, you are required to read the *Balkan Insight* news website (<http://www.balkaninsight.com>); it is also recommended that you read daily newspapers available online in English (list available on Moodle). Familiarity with current events and a working knowledge of day-to-day political issues will be needed in the Thematic Seminar and will also help you in the process of choosing your ISP topic.

- Show up prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (classmates', lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.
- Storing Your Work: Keep several copies of your work as back up and keep one copy accessible to you through an online forum, such as an attachment in your email, the course learning management system, or cloud-based storage. This way your work will always be available to despite technical issues. Lost files, deleted drives, or computer crashes are not excuses for late, missing work.
- Personal Technology Use: Cell phones and other personal electronics can be used for taking notes and other class activities. Off-task usage is not acceptable. You may be marked as absent for habitually using them for something other than classroom activities.
- Content Considerations: Some texts and activities you will encounter in this course delve into sensitive topics that may be emotionally and intellectually challenging. Our classroom is a space where we can engage with challenging ideas, question assumptions, and navigate difficult topics with respect and maturity. As possible, I will flag content and activities that are especially graphic or intense, so we are prepared to address them soberly and sensitively. If you are struggling to keep up with the work or participate in the course because of the nature of the content and activities, you should speak with me and/or seek help from counseling services.
- Classroom recording policy: To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use

SIT Policies and Resources

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Disability Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.