PACS6902 RECONCILIATION AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Postgraduate Program in Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sydney
Winter School 2012

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Dates:  Fri 6 July, Mon 9 July, Tues 10 July, Thurs 12 July and Fri 13 July

Times:  10:00 am – 5:00 pm, with lunchbreak from 1:00 – 2:00 pm each day

Location: Seminar Room 107, Mackie Building, Arundel St, University of Sydney

OVERVIEW

In this unit of study we will take an interdisciplinary approach to analysing the concept and processes of reconciliation and its relationship to other key concepts such as apology, forgiveness, truth, justice and healing. We will explore and assess the various mechanisms for promoting reconciliation as means of transforming conflict and building peace in the context of indigenous/settler society relations, transitional societies and domestic criminal justice. Psychosocial, spiritual, structural, legal, political and performative dimensions of reconciliation will be considered using case studies from the local community to the national and international arenas.

Students will be challenged to critically assess the reconciliation process between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians, and to examine a range of reconciliation and restorative justice mechanisms such as truth and reconciliation commissions, youth justice conferencing and traditional rituals. Philosophical values of respect for diversity, acceptance of difference, participation and empowerment will be considered in a holistic approach to reconciliation taking into account the influence of racial, cultural, gender and religious factors.

Case studies have been chosen to illustrate the diverse meanings of reconciliation and various means of transforming conflict through a focus on reconciliation. Cases will highlight key themes of the course and issues such the role of ritual and performance in reconciliation processes; localisation and cultural contextualisation; and the intersections and integration of cognitive, behavioural, emotional and spiritual transformation.

A number of the case studies will involve exploring the role of reconciliation in transitional societies trying to rebuild and recover in the aftermath of mass violations of human rights perpetrated during violent conflict or by repressive regimes. Included will be an analysis of how societies balance the apparently competing objectives of reconciliation and justice, different ways of understanding truth, the need for healing and for structural changes that address the root causes of conflict.
Students are encouraged to develop their own ideas about reconciliation and conflict transformation through self-awareness, class discussions and role play exercises, and to link their ideas to those of theorists and practitioners in the field. Personal reflection on local and world events through the media, reading and life experience will provide material for analysis in class and assessment exercises.

AIMS & OUTCOMES

It is expected that students will:

- learn to analyse the concepts of reconciliation and justice and begin to understand how they interact and contribute to conflict transformation and peacebuilding;
- develop an awareness of the complexities and contradictions involved in trying to promote reconciliation, including the influences of race, culture, gender and religion;
- develop skills in critically assessing the design and impact of mechanisms and processes that are intended to promote peace and reconciliation, including reference to both theory and practice.

CLASS TIMETABLE

Day 1, Friday 6 July
Session 1 Introductions and Course Overview
Session 2 What is Reconciliation? Personal and Interdisciplinary Perspectives
Session 3 Reconciliation and Conflict Transformation: Theories and Models

Day 2, Monday 9 July
Session 1 Restorative Justice: Theory, Theatre and Ritual
Session 2 Restorative Justice in Practice: Youth Justice Conferencing
Session 3 Restorative Justice Skills: Role Play

Day 3, Tuesday 10 July
Session 1 Bougainville: Indigenous Reconciliation Rituals
Session 2 Indigenous/Settler Society Reconciliation in Australia
Session 3 Australian Reconciliation Process: Performative Aspects

Wednesday 11 July - Reading Day

Day 4, Thursday 12 July
Session 1 South Africa: Truth and Reconciliation Commission
Session 2 Transitional Justice and Reconciliation in Timor Leste
Session 3 Trauma Healing and Reconciliation in Rwanda and Burundi

Day 5, Friday 13 July
Session 1 Understanding Peace and Reconciliation in Liberia
Session 2 Reconciliation and Conflict Transformation: What Have We Learnt?
Session 3 Final Reflections, Integration and Evaluations
ASSESSMENT

(a) Class Participation, including role play (20%)

Students will be assessed on their participation in class discussions including evidence of reading and thoughtful reflection on key issues and themes (10%). Students are expected to read at least one required reading for each session, or at least three readings prior to each day of classes, as a minimum. Completing more of the required readings will enable more informed contribution to class discussions.

Student participation in a role play of a restorative justice process designed to enhance understanding of reconciliation processes and skills will also be assessed based on evidence of preparation and creative engagement in the role play exercise in class on MONDAY 9 JULY (10%). More details will be provided in the first class and on the eLearning site.

(b) Assignment 1: Personal Reflection Exercise (20%) 1200 words DUE WED 18 JULY

What does reconciliation mean to you? This question is the topic for this written exercise. You may refer to the writings or ideas of others, including reference to class discussions. However, the most important criterion for assessment for this exercise is evidence of originality and personal reflection on your ideas about the meaning and significance of reconciliation. You may choose to illustrate your ideas by reference to events or experiences in your life, but please keep the focus on analysis and reflection rather than on description. There is no need to provide a reference list for this assignment.

(c) Assignment 2: Essay (60%) 3500 words DUE WED 8 AUGUST

For this assignment students are required to write a scholarly essay critically analysing the theory and practice of reconciliation processes in a particular conflict or context, including suggestions for alternative approaches. The aim of the assignment is to link theories of reconciliation to the practice of conflict transformation.

You may choose to base your essay on one of the national or international case studies discussed in class, such as the Australian reconciliation process, South Africa, Bougainville, Rwanda or Liberia. Alternatively, you may choose to focus on reconciliation in other national or international contexts such as Cambodia, Northern Ireland, Sierra Leone, Chile, Peru, Bosnia, Iraq or Afghanistan, or an interpersonal context such as a family or relationship conflict, or domestic criminal justice contexts such as community conferencing or circle sentencing.

YOU ARE REQUIRED TO CONFIRM YOUR ESSAY TOPIC WITH DR WENDY LAMBOURNE VIA EMAIL BY FRIDAY 20 JULY.

Criteria for assessment:
- evidence of research and understanding of the nature and context of the type of conflict situation and reconciliation process chosen for analysis
- ability to identify relevant theories, models and ideas relating to reconciliation and to critically assess how reconciliation processes have (or have not) been implemented in the particular context chosen
• evidence of creative application of theory to practice by suggesting improvements or alternative approaches to enhance the contribution of reconciliation processes to conflict transformation
• ability to express ideas clearly and intelligently
• ability to develop and present a coherent argument within the required word limit (essays exceeding the word limit will be penalised)
• evidence of reflective and critical wider reading and research, with full reference list of sources

Assessment Guidelines

Further details regarding referencing styles, presentation and submission of assignments can be found in the CPACS Assignment Presentation and Assessment Guidelines.

Please note that students are required to attach an Assignment Cover Sheet to all work submitted and to sign the Plagiarism Compliance Statement before assignments can be marked. Assignments should normally be submitted in person to the CPACS Administration Office, but where this is not possible (i.e. if you live outside Sydney), assignments may be submitted via email to the Coordinator, Dr Wendy Lambourne.

Extensions should be requested in advance where possible using the online Special Consideration system. Late submission of assignments will attract a penalty, except when an extension has been granted on medical or other emergency grounds. Written work that exceeds the word limit may also incur a penalty.

You will be notified via email when marked assignments are available for collection from the CPACS Administration Office. Please provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you require assignments to be returned by post (this does not apply if you are studying MPACS by distance).

Students must pass all three sections of the assessment (class participation and role play, personal reflection exercise and essay) for successful completion of the course. Failure to attend at least 80% of classes without reasonable cause is grounds for failure.

RESOURCES

There is no required textbook for this course. Students are instead required to purchase a course reader from the University Copy Centre (http://www.usyd.edu.au/ucc). The key readings in this reader are sufficient for class preparation but not for assignments. For the final essay students are required to conduct wider research and to consult library resources including journals, most of which are available electronically via the Fisher Library catalogue. Class resource boxes and other references are also available for students to consult in the CPACS Resource Centre.

The required readings for each class are listed in the following outline of sessions and copies are provided in the course reader. Some additional readings are also listed for each session, most of which are available in the 2008 course reader or on the eLearning site for this course.
Following is a list of general references including books, journals, special journal issues and websites on the topics of reconciliation, justice and conflict transformation that reflect the course themes. Most of the books are available in the Fisher or Law Library and journal articles can be accessed electronically via the Library catalogue or as online journals on the internet. Some of the books may also be available to consult in the CPACS Resource Centre in the class boxes for PACS6902 or PACS6927. These references will provide good introductory reading and useful theoretical and practical ideas for analysing cases studies for class discussion and assignments.

**General Resources**

**Books**


Special Journal Issues (on the theme of reconciliation)

Australian Psychologist, 35:2, July 2000.

Ethics and International Affairs, Volume 13, 1999.


Useful Journals

Human Rights Quarterly

International Journal of Transitional Justice

Journal of Conflict Transformation and Security (online journal)

Transitional Justice Review

Useful Websites

Centre for Peace and Reconciliation Studies, Coventry University
http://www.coventry.ac.uk/researchnet/peacestudies

Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Cape Town, South Africa
http://www.csvr.org.za

Centre for Transitional Justice and Post-conflict Reconstruction, University of Western Ontario
http://politicalscience.uwo.ca/tjcentre/

Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, Cape Town, South Africa
http://www.ijr.org.za/

International Center for Transitional Justice, New York (and many international offices)
http://www.ictj.org

Reconciliation Resource Network, International IDEA, Stockholm
http://www.idea.int/rrn/

United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC
http://www.usip.org
OUTLINE OF SESSIONS

Day 1, Friday 6 July

Session 1: Introductions and Course Overview
Dr Wendy Lambourne & Dr Paul Dwyer

The first day will begin with personal introductions and an overview of the course including aims and outcomes, course outline, resources and assessment.

Session 2: What is Reconciliation? Personal and Interdisciplinary Perspectives
Dr Wendy Lambourne

In this session an introductory discussion will be facilitated exploring the relationship between reconciliation and conflict transformation and our own personal definitions and ideas about reconciliation. The complexity and diversity of meanings and understandings of reconciliation, and the different types of contexts where reconciliation may be pursued, will be highlighted, including a brief discussion of the historical context and evolution of thinking about reconciliation and transitional justice.

Discussion questions:
- What is the link between reconciliation and conflict transformation?
- How do you define reconciliation?
- What would you identify as the most important elements or features of reconciliation?

Session 3: Reconciliation and Conflict Transformation: Theories and Models
Dr Wendy Lambourne

In this session we will explore some of the theories and models of reconciliation proposed by peace and conflict transformation theorists and practitioners including Hizkias Assefa, David Bloomfield, Brandon Hamber and John Paul Lederach, as well as the various approaches outlined by Johan Galtung. A particular emphasis will be placed on beginning to explore the complex and sometimes contested relationships between reconciliation, justice, truth, apology, forgiveness, healing and peace, and the significance of religious and cultural influences on how we conceptualise and experience reconciliation.

Discussion questions:
- How are the concepts of apology, forgiveness, healing, truth, peace, justice and reconciliation defined and related?
- What is the relationship between reconciliation and justice? How does an appreciation of different types of justice help us to understand the process of reconciliation?
- What are the implications of the Christian bias in the Western conceptions of forgiveness and reconciliation for the promotion of reconciliation in non-Christian settings?
- What can we learn about how to promote reconciliation and conflict transformation in different settings and contexts from examining the variety of cultural and religious traditions and approaches to reconciliation?
Required readings:
Please note these readings are relevant for the whole course and will be most relevant for Day 1 and Day 5.

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Additional readings:

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Day 2, Monday 9 July

Session 1: Restorative Justice: Theory, Theatre and Ritual
Dr Paul Dwyer

“Restorative Justice” is the term most commonly used by Western legal practitioners and criminologists to describe a range of informal legal processes that have emerged in recent decades as an alternative to formal court proceedings. In this session we will look at the theory of criminologist John Braithwaite who explicitly links these innovations in Western jurisdictions to practices of reconciliation and conflict transformation in Maori, Indigenous Australian, Melanesian and other ‘traditional’ cultures. We will also consider some important critiques of Braithwaite’s theory. Finally, we turn to the work of anthropologist Victor Turner who offers an alternative way to frame a comparative analysis of reconciliation in different cultural settings, by focusing in detail on their ritual, performative dimensions.

Discussion questions:

- In what ways does the Western legal system discourage reconciliation between conflicting parties?
- How culturally specific are ‘Western’ theories of restorative justice?
- What can we learn from restorative justice practices about the relationship between reconciliation, conflict transformation and peace with justice?
- What role does ritual and performance play in reconciliation and conflict transformation? How do these performances link up with other domains of social experience (e.g. legal, political processes, entertainment, education, religion, etc.)?

Required readings:

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Session 2: Restorative Justice in Practice: Youth Justice Conferencing
Dr Paul Dwyer

In this session we will continue our exploration of restorative justice theory by examining some of the techniques and programs which apply restorative justice in practice with a focus on youth justice conferencing.
Discussion questions:

- What are the key features of youth justice conferencing and how do they contribute to reconciliation and conflict transformation?
- What role does the conference convenor play in preparing participants for a conference and helping to shape the ‘emotional contours’ of the conference itself?
- What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of the theories underpinning restorative justice approaches and community conferencing in particular?

Required readings:


Additional readings:


Session 3: Restorative Justice Skills: Role Play
Dr Paul Dwyer

In this session students will be introduced to some of the skills required to convene a restorative justice community conference. Students will be asked to participate in a role play for assessment. Minimal preparation will be required. Further details will be provided in class on Day 1 and on the eLearning site.

Day 3, Tuesday 10 July

Session 1: Bougainville: Indigenous Reconciliation Rituals
Dr Paul Dwyer

In this class we will analyse the reconciliation process in Bougainville, paying particular attention to the performative aspects of indigenous rituals, the role of women as peacemakers and the use of symbols to promote reconciliation. Discussion will be stimulated by viewing excerpts from the documentary film “Breaking Bows and Arrows”. We will also look at how different approaches to reconciliation may contribute to meeting the needs of the various individuals and groups involved.

Discussion questions:

- How can traditional or indigenous rituals contribute to reconciliation and conflict transformation?
- What are the lessons from the Bougainville example for the design of reconciliation processes in other contexts?
Session 2: Indigenous/Settler Society Reconciliation in Australia  
Dr Wendy Lambourne

In this session students will be introduced to the history of indigenous/settler relations in Australia focusing on the impact of government policies on the identity and well-being of indigenous Australians. The origins of the reconciliation process and formation of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation will be discussed in the context of Aboriginal deaths in custody and the Bringing Them Home report. We will analyse the reconciliation process in Australia including government and community initiatives such as the Sea of Hands, Document for Reconciliation, Sorry Books, Journey of Healing, Corroboree 2000 and the Walk for Reconciliation. We will focus on the responses of indigenous and non-indigenous Australians to the reconciliation process paying particular attention to the controversial issues of compensation and an apology from the Prime Minister; the relative importance of symbolic and practical reconciliation; and calls for a treaty and for sovereignty and human rights (especially in the wake of the 2007 Northern Territory ‘intervention’).

Discussion questions:

- How has the history of indigenous/settler relations in Australia affected the need for a reconciliation process?
- How have indigenous and non-indigenous Australians differed in their expectations and experiences of reconciliation in Australia?
- How does the attitude (and apology) of Australian Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, compare with that of former PM, John Howard, and how did their differing approaches affect reconciliation in Australia?
- What can we learn about the relationship between reconciliation and conflict transformation from the Australian reconciliation process?

Required readings:


Required readings:


Session 3: Reconciliation in Australia: Performative Aspects
Dr Paul Dwyer

Picking up the thread of our discussions on Day 2, we will turn again to Victor Turner’s theory of ritual and ‘social drama’ and explore to what extent it helps us to understand the various stages of the reconciliation process between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. We will pay particular attention to theatre and other forms of cultural performance in which an ‘unofficial’ reconciliation process was continuing even as the ‘official’ reconciliation process, at a governmental level, had badly stalled.

Discussion questions:
- What is the potential for theatre and other forms of cultural performance to effect social change?
- What can be learnt, in terms of designing a reconciliation process, from looking at the kind of relationship between performers and audience which has been established in recent theatre productions by indigenous Australian artists?

Required readings:


Day 4, Thursday 12 July

Session 1: South Africa: Truth and Reconciliation Commission
Dr Wendy Lambourne

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission with its emphasis on forgiveness has been held up as a model of restorative justice for transitional societies dealing with past human rights abuses. In this session we will critically examine the TRC process and its impact on the attitudes and lives of South Africans, including a discussion of the links between interpersonal, community and national reconciliation. We will also consider the transferability of this model to other transitional justice contexts and cultural settings.

Discussion questions:
- What can we learn from the South African experience about the various components and processes of reconciliation?
- Has the South African TRC successfully produced a reconciled nation? What types of truth and justice were addressed and which aspects were given less emphasis by the TRC and South African government?
- What are the arguments for and against amnesties versus prosecution for human rights abuses in terms of reconciliation in transitional societies?
- Can the TRC model be usefully transferred to other transitional justice contexts?

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Session 2: Transitional Justice and Reconciliation in Timor Leste
Dr Wendy Lambourne
The East Timorese have been grappling with the dilemmas of how to balance the need for both justice and reconciliation after years of internal conflict, Indonesian occupation and human rights violations, and the massacres and destruction following the independence referendum in 1999. We will analyse the attitudes and expectations of the various stakeholders towards reconciliation and transitional justice and the impact of the mechanisms adopted. We will focus on a critique of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR) and the Commission of Truth and Friendship (CTF) and the attempts to pursue legal justice through the Indonesian and Timorese courts in the absence of an international tribunal.

Discussion questions:

- What are some of the attitudes expressed by East Timorese, Indonesians and the international community in relation to reconciliation and justice?
- How effective has the CAVR been in promoting reconciliation, conflict transformation and peacebuilding in East Timor? How does its impact compare with that of the CTF?
- What are the political obstacles to reconciliation and justice and how could they be overcome?
- What can we learn from the East Timorese experience about the role of civil society and traditional indigenous approaches in the quest for reconciliation?

Required readings:

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**Session 3: Trauma Healing and Reconciliation in Rwanda and Burundi**

Dr Wendy Lambourne with guest, CPACS PhD candidate, Lydia Gitau

In this session we will focus on understanding how trauma healing and reconciliation have been pursued in Rwanda and Burundi after mass violence and genocide. The discussion will highlight how local civil society initiatives complement national and international approaches to transitional justice, including criminal trials and gacaca in Rwanda and a truth commission in Burundi. We will consider the adoption of Western versus traditional indigenous approaches, the use of creative versus dialogue based processes, and the relationship between healing and reconciliation at psychosocial and political levels.

Discussion questions:

- What can we learn from Rwanda and Burundi about the interaction of international, national and community approaches to transitional justice, and about the relationship between reconciliation and justice?
- How have different cultural and religious approaches to trauma healing and reconciliation affected the mechanisms employed in Rwanda and Burundi?
How do different types of transitional justice mechanisms such as truth commissions and criminal trials affect reconciliation and conflict transformation?

Required readings:


Additional readings:


Day 5, Friday 13 July

**Session 1: Understanding Peace and Reconciliation in Liberia**

James Tonny Dhizaala, PhD candidate, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies

In this session James Tonny Dhizaala will share his critique of the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its contribution to peace and reconciliation in Liberia and for Liberians in diaspora communities. He will present a model of the various aspects of reconciliation which he applies to his analysis.

Required readings:

Session 2: Reconciliation and Conflict Transformation: What Have We Learnt?
Dr Wendy Lambourne

In this session we will return to the question posed on Day 1: “What is reconciliation?” We will look at how our ideas might have changed during the course, and how the theories, case studies and issues covered have informed our views on the relationship between and means of promoting reconciliation, justice, conflict transformation and peace. Included will be a consideration of the challenges involved in interventions to promote reconciliation in a transitional justice context, as well as discussion of the relationship between reconciliation at the personal, community, and national and international political levels.

Discussion questions:
- What is the relationship between reconciliation, peace, justice and conflict transformation?
- What theory or model of reconciliation do you consider would be most useful to inform policymakers and practitioners in the design of transitional justice mechanisms and processes?
- What are the implications of the political cooption of the personal process of reconciliation for peacebuilding and conflict transformation at the national and international levels?

Required readings:
See readings listed for Day 1.

Session 3: Final Reflections, Integration and Evaluations
Dr Wendy Lambourne

In the final session we will review the course and students will complete the unity of study course evaluation. Time will also be allowed for discussion of the final essay.