Western intervention is a prominent feature of violent conflict in the Great Lakes region of Africa. From anti-slavery campaigns in the 20th century to today’s peacebuilding and statebuilding interventions, Westerners have often justified their involvement in the Great Lakes region of Africa using arguments about progress and peace. This option will critically assess these claims, and evaluate different theories of conflict, peace and change. We will pay particular attention to the interplay between international, regional and local ideas and practices related to peace and conflict. Why has the Great Lakes region of Africa experienced such high levels of violence in the post-colonial period? Why have so many international and regional efforts to end conflict and promote peace failed? What accounts for different patterns of violent conflict in the region? What is the relationship between state formation, international economy, identity, development and violence? Has the involvement of non-traditional donors in the Great Lakes region had any notable consequences? These are some of the questions that will be explored in this option. We will focus on these questions and themes with reference to the experiences of Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi, but students are welcome to draw comparisons with other African countries and regions.

Relevant Lectures: There are no required lectures for Lent term, but there are some relevant undergraduate lectures that you may find interesting. If you would like the reading lists for any of these courses, you can get them from the POLIS administrative office.

Peacebuilding
(10 lectures, Dr Curtis, 10-11 on Tuesdays and Thursdays, starting 21 January, Tuesday lectures in room S1, Thursday lectures in room SG2)
1: Introduction: peace studies (Tues 21 January)
2: Conceptions of peace (Thurs 23 January)
NOTE: no class on Tuesday 28 Jan
3: Who keeps the peace? The UN and regional organisations (Thurs 30 Jan)
4: The politics of humanitarian assistance (Tues 4 February)
5: Negotiations, mediation and peace agreements (Thurs 6 February)
6: Governance: Democratisation& governance of divided societies (Tues 11 Feb)
7: Security: Ex-combatants, security and stabilisation (Thurs 13 Feb)
8: Society: Justice and post-war reconciliation (Thurs 20 Feb)
9: Economy: Post-conflict economic policies and development (Thurs 27 Feb)
10: Beyond a liberal peace? (Thurs 6 March)
African Development
(Dr Fraser, Wednesdays 11-12, starting 22 Jan, Sidgwick Lecture Block room 4)

Introduction to State formation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
(Dr Curtis, Monday 20 Jan, 10-11am, POLIS SG1; Monday 3 February 9-11am, Mill Lane Lecture room 7; Monday 10 February, 10-11am, POLIS SG1.

Seminars and Readings

Some weeks we will discuss a full book, other weeks you will be read a number of different articles. There are limited copies of the books in the UL, PPS library, African studies library, Marshall library. Please also check your college library for the books. The articles will be on Camtools on the HSPS library site. I will expect you to have read all the starred weekly readings on the list.

1. The North-South politics of humanitarianism (13 Jan)
How was the idea of 'Congo' produced? What were the consequences of the North-South encounter in the Congo? What was the basis for international humanitarian campaigns in the Congo?


Further reading:


White King, Red Rubber, Black Death
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paPl5VyU91
Dir. Peter Bate, 2003 (documentary)
2. Violence and genocide in Rwanda and Burundi (20 Jan)
What are the causes and dynamics of war and genocide? What is the relationship between the state, violence and genocide?

*Scott Straus, The Order of Genocide: Race, Power and War in Rwanda, Cornell University Press, 2006. (Read entire book)


Further reading:


3. Understanding Violence and Conflict in the DRC (27 January - Marta Iniguez de Heredia)
How is violence produced and reproduced in the DRC? Why is the conflict in Eastern DRC still ongoing? What are the mains actors and drivers of violence and conflict in the DRC?


Further reading


4. Identity and the representation of conflict and violence (3 Feb)

*The contest over discourse and representation. The construction of identity. How do cognitive maps shape the possibilities for action? Are material explanations convincing?*

*Roxanne Doty, *Imperial Encounters*, University of Minnesota Press, 1996 (Read Introduction, pp. 1-19).*


Further reading:


5. Negotiations and Conflict Resolution (10 Feb)

Why do peace negotiations sometimes fail? Is it possible for outsiders to ‘institutionally engineer’ states and societies in order to reach desired outcomes? In what ways might peace negotiations help provoke further violence?


Jeffrey Herbst and Greg Mills, “There is No Congo” *Foreign Policy*, 18 March 2009; See reply by Timothy Raeymaekers, “Who Calls the Congo”


Further readings:


Jones, Bruce. *Peacemaking in Rwanda: The Dynamics of Failure* (Boulder CO:
6. 'Post-conflict' peacebuilding (17 Feb)
Is international peacebuilding fundamentally flawed? What are the assumptions of international peacebuilding organisations operating in ‘post-conflict’ environments? Why has it been so difficult to ‘build peace’ in the Great Lakes? Are there alternative routes to peace?


Further readings:


**Assessment**

Your second assignment is a 4500-word research essay displaying significant research and probing in depth one of the themes of the course. Topics should be
approved in advance by the lecturer, and should be related to the topics discussed in Lent term. In some circumstances, students may choose a topic related to a theme from Michaelmas term.

Please give your essay title to your seminar leader by Monday 3 February.

This essay is worth 75% of the final grade and is due at noon on 31 March.

Examples of research essay topics (4500 words):

- The Union of Islamic Courts and conflict in Somalia
- The failure of security sector reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
- The politics of justice in Rwanda
- The politics of conflict and conservation in the Virunga forest in Congo
- Ethnicity and power-sharing in Burundi
- Rwanda and Burundi and contributions to UN/AU Peacekeeping

NOTE: Students taking this option as part of the MPhil in African Studies have a slightly different assessment. Please see lecturer for details.