The Dilemma of Human Rights in Peacebuilding
Syllabus

SHARINPEACE Report #3

The Dilemma of Human Rights in Peacebuilding: Syllabus
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Human rights and peace as key elements of Europe's shared values and as corner-stones of our democratic constitutions are fundamentally challenged by today's multi-faceted crises. SHARINPEACE addresses these encounters and aims at qualifying the decision-makers of tomorrow in conceiving and practising human rights as intrinsic part of peacebuilding. SHARINPEACE offers an innovative approach to deal with the challenges of social, ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity in Europe and beyond. Through SHARINPEACE, students and educators increase their awareness on how to include human rights in the training of conflict management. The core objective is the implementation of an EU-wide organised two-part module. Students will first gain central competences in the interrelated domains of human rights and peacebuilding and, in the second part, put their gained competences in a network-wide Crisis Intervention Simulation (CRIS) into (simulated) practice.

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Justus Liebig University Giessen (DE)
Singidunum University/ Faculty of Media and Communications (RS)
Södertörn University (SE)
University of Lodz (PL)
University of Southern Denmark (DK)

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Content

Executive Summary

The Erasmus+ project "Simulating Human Rights in Peacebuilding (SHARINPEACE)" aims to address contemporary crises affecting human rights and peace, and to integrate human rights education into peace-building practices. The project highlights the importance of human rights as a fundamental element in building sustainable peace, and proposes an educational framework to instill these principles in future peace and policymakers. Through an interdisciplinary two-part university module, SHARINPEACE seeks to promote a deeper understanding of human rights as an integral part of peacebuilding and to encourage collaboration be-tween educational and policy initiatives. The SHARINPEACE project outlines several objectives to achieve this educational integration. Key among these are embedding human rights in peacebuilding education, establishing a Crisis Intervention Simulation (CRIS) for hands-on learning, and engaging peace and policymakers in educational development.

This report presents a general syllabus for the module implemented in SHARINPEACE. It is an innovative, interdisciplinary programme designed to explore the intersection of human rights and peacebuilding in conflict and post-conflict societies. It runs for 8-12 weeks and combines theoretical foundations with practical skills through immersive, role-based simulations. The curriculum consists of three modules: foundational lectures, role development supported by expert insights, and a culminating simulation exercise in which students take on stakeholder roles to navigate real or fictional conflict scenarios. The course promotes critical thinking, inclusivity and professional skills such as diplomacy and conflict resolution. Flexible in format (face-to-face, hybrid or online), it caters for diverse student groups and is adaptable to different institutional requirements. Assessment emphasises participation, analytical essays and reflective learning. By integrating real-life case studies such as the Cyprus conflict or customised scenarios, the course equips participants with the analytical tools and experiential knowledge needed for effective engagement in peacebuilding processes.

Introduction

Human rights and peace as key elements of Europe's shared values and as cornerstones of our democratic constitutions are fundamentally challenged by today's multifaceted crises. The Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership project "Simulating Human Rights in Peacebuilding (SHARINPEACE)" addresses these challenges and aims at qualifying the decision-makers of tomorrow in conceiving and practising human rights as an intrinsic part of peacebuilding. Through SHARINPEACE, students and educators increase their awareness on how to include human rights in the training of conflict management. Organisations in the domain of peacebuilding are invited to become partners in this education process within SHARINPEACE.

We are convinced that this topic deserves greater attention. It is of significant value to understand human rights as an inclusive part of peacebuilding processes and that it is correspondingly relevant to introduce this into teaching and learning. Hence, the core objective of the project is the EU-wide introduction and implementation of an interdisciplinary two-part university module on human rights and peacebuilding.

We aim to achieve this through the following four sub-items:

1) Introducing human rights in peacebuilding education
2) Implementing a network-wide Crisis Intervention Simulation (CRIS)
3) Involving policy and peacemakers
4) Planning joint MA modules

In this module, the participating students will first gain central skills in the interrelated areas of human rights and peacebuilding and, in the second part, put their newly acquired expertise into (simulated) practice.

To facilitate this learning experience, the SHARINPEACE project en-visages six Project Results (PR1-6) which are tangible results of indi-vidual Work Packages. The first Work Package dedicates itself to map-ping the nexus of human rights education and peacebuilding. The re-sults of PR1 form the basis for PR2, which explores needs and experi-ences by focusing on the stakeholder's perspectives; PR3 addresses the contents of the learning materials for teaching human rights in peacebuilding; technical tools for teaching and learning are subject of PR4; then, PR5 consists of the implementation of a pilot project of the module "Simulating Human

Rights in Peacebuilding". Finally, PR6 is a policy brief on how to teach and learn human rights in peacebuilding within the EU.

This curriculum is a comprehensive guide to help university educators replicate and adapt the Crisis Intervention Simulation (CRIS) and its preparatory module. While the case of the Cyprus conflict has been the focus of previous iterations, this framework provides sufficient flexibility to integrate other conflict scenarios. This report provides a general overview of the two-part module that we have developed and implemented in SHARINPEACE. It focuses on the courses on peace, human rights and human rights in peacebuilding. CRIS is described in more detail in a separate report.

Course Overview

Title: Crisis Intervention Simulation: Bridging Peacebuilding and Human Rights
Duration: 8–12 weeks (flexible to fit semester or modular formats)
Credits: 5–10 ECTS (adjustable based on institutional requirements)
Format: In person, hybrid or online

Course Description

This course introduces students to the intersection of peacebuilding and human rights in conflict and post-conflict societies. It integrates theoretical foundations with practical skills development through a simulated crisis intervention exercise. The course begins with thematic and conceptual classes (module 1), which is especially relevant when students come from different disciplines and backgrounds and have different levels of knowledge. In model 2, students develop their role profiles and receive lectures and additional input from peacebuilding practioners. The course culminates with a hands-on simulation where students adopt roles of key stakeholders (module 3). Scenarios can range from historical and ongoing conflicts (e.g., Cyprus) to fictional cases, offering flexibility in pedagogical approaches and allowing professors to tailor content to their expertise or regional focus.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Grasp key theories and debates on peacebuilding and human rights in conflict settings.
2. Develop analytical skills applicable to real-world case studies.
3. Understand the dynamics of international and local organizations in conflict management.
4. Apply critical thinking to navigate dilemmas in peace negotiations and human rights advocacy.
5. Enhance professional skills, including actor mapping, diplomacy, and problem-solving.
6. Build inclusivity and teamwork capabilities essential for conflict resolution.
7. Reflect on their roles within broader institutional and policy frameworks.

Target Audience

The course is ideal for students of Peace and Conflict Studies, political science, international relations, or related disciplines. It accommodates both undergraduate and graduate students from diverse academic backgrounds. It is desirable to have students from different countries and academic institutions involved, rather exchange students or through a hybrid or online modality. We recommend a group size of about 25 to 30 students.

Course Structure

Module 1: Foundational Theories and Context

Unit 1: Peacebuilding and Human Rights—An Introduction
Unit 2: International Interventions and Peacebuilding
Unit 3: Media and Human Rights

Module 2: Simulation Preparation

> **Role Development**: Students research and create realistic profiles for their assigned roles, informed by interviews with practitioners or desk research.
>
> **Special Lectures**: Invited experts provide deeper insights into the case study.

Module 3: Crisis Intervention Simulation (CRIS)

> **Simulation Day(s)**: Students engage in role-playing exercises to negotiate, strategize, and draft action plans.
>
> **Evaluation and Reflection**: Post-simulation debriefs to discuss learning outcomes, challenges, and skills acquired.

Assessment

1. Participation and Engagement: 20%
2. Case Study Analysis (Individual/Group Paper): 30%
3. Reflection Essay: 50%

Recommended Methodology

- Interactive Lectures: Foster student engagement, critical thinking and building a common knowledge basis.
- Blended Learning: Combine asynchronous materials with synchronous discussions. Synchronous discussions are crucial to bring students together and foster interaction between them, especially if they do not know each other. A certain level of prior familiarity between the participants in CRIS facilitates the creation of bonds of community and trust that improves interaction and subsequent participation in the simulation.
- Guest Speakers and Interviews with Practioners: Provide real-world perspectives and networking opportunities.

Schedule Example

> **Week 1–3**: Lectures (Units 1–3, see below for detailed examples).
> **Week 4–6**: Preparation for Case Study and Role Development.
> **Week 7**: Special Lectures
> **Week 8**: Simulation and Debrief.

Case Study Selection

While this syllabus incorporates Cyprus as a case study, instructors are encouraged to substitute it with conflicts relevant to their regions or academic focus (e.g., South Sudan, Bosnia, or fictional scenarios).

The selection of an appropriate case study is a pivotal preparatory step for the teaching staff before launching a course that involves role-play or simulation-based learning, such as the Cyprus Conflict in CRIS. This decision not only influences the structure of the activity but also defines the scope of engagement and learning outcomes for the participants. A real-world case study offers unique advantages, such as grounding the simulation in tangible historical and geopolitical contexts, enhancing students' understanding of complex dynamics, and fostering direct interaction with practitioners and stakeholders. This approach supports experiential learning, equipping students with knowledge, skills, and networks that are relevant to their academic and professional aspirations.

Alternatively, a fictional case study also presents distinct benefits. By crafting an entirely new scenario, teachers can tailor the simulation to emphasize specific learning goals or explore innovative conflict dynamics free from the constraints of historical accuracy. Fictional scenarios encourage creativity, as students are given more flexibility to imagine diverse constellations of actors, strategies, and outcomes. This can foster a more inclusive environment where students feel empowered to experiment without the risk of misrepresenting real-world entities. Both approaches have their merits, and the choice should align with the desired learning outcomes, resources available, and the context of the course. By carefully selecting the case study, professors establish a robust foundation for meaningful and impactful student engagement.

Detailed Lecture Examples (Module 1)

Unit Title 1 – Peacebuilding and Human Rights: An Introduction

Brief description

This lecture is the introductory lecture for the module. It draws up the broad outline for the course, focusing on the connection and tensions between peacebuilding and human rights in theory and practice. It traces the development of peace through the conceptualisation of negative and positive peace and gives a brief historical overview of the development of the UN architecture of peacebuilding that developed in conjunction with the Human Rights paradigm. In an interactive mode, the lecture helps students to critically reflect upon challenges, possibilities and limitations of peace processes, especially discussing how local, transnational and global actors may interact. The lecture also explores the intersection of human rights and peacebuilding, examining how different interpretations of human rights and legal frameworks impact peacebuilding processes. It provides a nuanced understanding of navigating the key tensions between immediate peace efforts and long-term accountability for harmdoing. Questions related to empowerment and marginalisation, e.g. in relation to gender, i reflected upon.

Unit Content

Introduction to the discourse and practice of human rights in peacebuilding.

Methodology/Didactic

Lecture-based learning, inquiry-based learning, interrelational discussional learning.

Pedagogical goals

- Understanding the connection between peacebuilding and human rights
- Being able to identify key process and actors in peace processes

- Being able to engage in the following parts of the module with necessary basic insights about the role of human rights in peace-building

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Unit Title 2 – International Interventions in Conflicts and Their Roles in Peacebuilding

Brief description

The lecture was structured into two parts. In the first part, we focused on a particular type of international intervention, namely United Nations peacekeeping. This started with offering definitions and reviewing key principles of UN peacekeeping and sketching the historical evolution of UN peacekeeping from the 1950s to the present day across the so-called four generations. Further, we unpacked particular challenges associated with the integration of liberal peacebuilding elements into peacekeeping as a practice and reviewed peacekeeping's robust turn, i.e. mandates that allow for the use of force to protect civilians. In the second part, we zoomed into a case study to highlight the role played by non-

governmental organisations (NGOs) in peacebuilding, specifically in the case of early warning and the protection of civilians.

Unit content and pedagogical goals:

This lecture introduced students to the significant changes of and challenges to UN peacekeeping as a key international intervention practice. We aimed for the following sets of pedagogical goals:

- Understand how and why the mandates of UN peacekeeping missions since the 1950s.
- Be aware of the diversity of civilian actors that are necessary for implementing UN peacekeeping missions that include peacebuilding elements beyond military personnel, e.g. UN system organisations, international and national NGOs.
- Understand key critiques brought against UN peacekeeping missions that include liberal peacebuilding elements, such as tensions between international and local standards of legitimacy.
- Understand what kind of roles NGOs can play in shaping peacebuilding practices.

Methodology/Didactic

The lecture was delivered using power point slides as visual aids and included discussion questions at interim points.

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Unit Title 3 – Media Coverage: The Complexities of Contemporary Communication

Brief description

The lecture is composed in two parts – the interactively delivered content covering the main topic and specifically addressing the themes and motives relevant to the course, and the interactive workshop, where students could practically apply the knowledge gained in the first part of the lecture. The lecture touches upon the question of the nature of media (in theoretical and applied discourses) and of media as biotechnoenvironment (mediasphere), with the special focus on the power of image in media reporting in contemporary times. The lecture also explores the connection of media and human rights, and the changes and challenges of media and human rights in the 21st century (in the actual hypersphere). An important part of the lecture is concentrated on identifying the ethical issues of reporting/communicating the field situation in relation to the human rights, and in relation to the overall effect that the report style can have in peacebuilding negotiation processes. In the interactive conversation with the students, the lecture aims to build a critical, responsible stance towards contemporary technoinformational

sphere, and to add to a deeper understanding of the effects and conse-quences of the interrelation of the informational world and its material, field referent. The workshop, planned for the second part of the lecture, opens up a practical platform for textual and semiotic deciphering of the news, together with their impact on a material, living society.

Unit content:

- nature of media (in theoretical and applied discourses)
- media as biotechnoenvironment
- understanding media in the context of a mediasphere (Debray, 2000)
- the power of image in media reporting in contemporary times
- the connection of media and human rights
- the changes and challenges of media and human rights in the 21st century
- identifying the ethical issues of reporting/communicating the field situation in relation to the human rights, and in relation to the overall effect that the report style can have in peacebuilding negotiation processes
- interactive conversation with the students
- short interactive workshop: identifying the forms and effects of news onto the society

Methodology/Didactic

Topic-related mapping, lecture-based learning, inquiry-based learning, interrelational discussional learning, workshop-based learning.

Pedagogical goals

- Understanding the connection between media and its material surroundings
- Being able to interpret existing media images and texts in the light of human rights and the influence of the media on the peacebuilding process
- Being able to compare the effect of different media messages to different groups of people and their surroundings
- Being able to critically analyze media activities as part of peace-building process

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