



Conflict and Cooperation

An interdisciplinary exploration of environmental relations in the Middle East

Dr. Rina Kedem

3-hour lectures once a week, 3 credits, Undergraduate

Course description

The course examines theories, models, and examples of the conflict-cooperation continuum in the political arena of the Middle East. The course includes an interdisciplinary approach to development, geography, environment, and peace and conflict studies.

The course aims to:

1. Review and analyze the formal and informal environmental relationship between two countries while focusing on the Israeli- Palestinian environmental history and/or the Jordanian- Israeli environmental history of conflict and cooperation.
2. Study patterns and trends of cooperation and conflict. Which factors hinder cooperation, and which induce conflict?
3. Analyze case studies with an emphasis on local case studies and the topics of climate, water, energy, and biodiversity.
4. Provide a platform to discuss contemporary matters and anecdotes in the environmental relationships between the countries in the Middle East (including a perspective on the recent Abraham Accords).

The first part of the course will review basic environmental notions relevant to the course and introduce concepts from peace and conflict studies (sessions 1 & 2). We will also review the environmental history of chosen case studies and explore specific models and theories of conflict and cooperation pertaining to water management and environment (sessions 3 & 4). In the second part, students will review articles and case studies related to an environmental topic of their choice (water, energy, climate, biodiversity). The students will be divided into small groups and present a discussion of their topic (sessions 5 & 6). The third part of the course will be dedicated to the analysis of case studies and will include a field trip in the region. This part will also include meetings and interviews (prepared by the students, organized in small groups) with Palestinian, Israeli, and Jordanian environmental experts working in collaboration. The last part will also include any other current environmental and political topics that ought to be discussed in class (sessions 7-11).

Grade components:

- Attendance and Participation: 15%
- Class presentation of reading materials: 25% *
- Mid-term assignment: 30%
- Final exam: 30%

*In the second part students will divide into work groups and prepare presentations (15-20 minutes). The presentations should be shared by all team members and must include (a) brief summary of the main arguments; (b) reasoned suggestions for at least 2 additional items beyond the items reviewed that correspond and add to them; And (c) suggest arising questions and areas of inquiry. Presentation should culminate with a stimulating and relatable question for class discussion, moderated by the presenters.

Session 1

Basic environmental theories beyond the tragedy of the commons

Cashore, B., & Bernstein, S. (2023). Bringing the Environment Back In: Overcoming the Tragedy of the Diffusion of the Commons Metaphor. *Perspectives on Politics*, 21(2), 478-501. doi:10.1017/S1537592721002553

Verrax, F. (2019). Elinor Ostrom or the Revolution of the Commons. In: Hoerber, T., Anquetil, A. (eds) *Economic Theory and Globalization*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-23824-7_9

Session 2

Cooperation and conflict- definitions and concepts

Alatout, S. (2006). Towards a bio-territorial conception of power: Territory, population, and environmental narratives in Palestine and Israel. *Political Geography*, 25(6), 601-621. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2006.03.008>

Bar-Tal, D. (2013). Ethos of Conflict. In *Intractable conflicts: Socio-psychological foundations and dynamics* (pp. 174-212). Cambridge University Press.

Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies*. Washington, DC: USIP.

Session 3

Models and trends of conflict and cooperation

Martin, A., Rutagarama, E., Cascão, A., Gray, M., & Chhotray, V. (2011). Understanding the co-existence of conflict and cooperation: Transboundary ecosystem management in the virunga massif. *Journal of Peace Research*, 48(5), 621-635.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343311412410>

Zeitoun, M., & Mirumachi, N. (2008). Transboundary water interaction I: Reconsidering conflict and cooperation. *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics*, 8(4), 297-316. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10784-008-9083-5>

Session 4

Conflict and cooperation ladders and assessment tools

Kedem, R., Feitelson, E., Halasah, S., & Teff-Seker Y. (2023). Towards a typology of environmental cooperation in post-conflict, The Jordanian-Israeli case study. *Global Environmental Politics*.

Wolf, A. T. (2004). *Regional Water Cooperation as Confidence Building : Water Management as a Strategy for Peace*.

Session 5

Water

Bruns, Bryan. 2003. Water Tenure Reform: Developing an Extended Ladder of Participation Politics of the Commons: Articulating Development and Strengthening Local Practices RCD Conference, Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Fischhendler, Itay, S Dinar, and D Katz. 2011. The politics of Unilateral Environmentalism: Cooperation and Conflict Over Water Management along the Israeli-Palestinian Border. *Global Environmental Politics* 11(1):36–61.

Session 6

Climate and energy

Zohar, T. & Abu-Hamed T., (2023).

Methmann, C., Rothe, D., & Stephan, B. (2013). Apocalypse now! From exceptional rhetoric to risk management in global climate politics. In *Interpretive Approaches to Global Climate Governance* (pp. 119–135). Routledge.

Session 7- field trip

Visit and meetings with organizations and individuals leading cooperation projects with countries in the region. The students will prepare questions for the speakers. Meetings with: Prof. Maoz Fine, Samo Samorai, Dr. Hanan Ginat, Naama Ben Ami.

Session 8

Case study policy perspective and track II.

Guest Speaker Dr. David Leherer and Dr. Suleiman Halasah

Ide, T. & Fröhlich, C. (2015). Socio-environmental cooperation and conflict? A discursive understanding and its application to the case of Israel and Palestine, *Earth Syst. Dynam.*, 6, 659–671, <https://doi.org/10.5194/esd-6-659-2015>.

Kyra Marie Reynolds (2017) Unpacking the complex nature of cooperative interactions: case studies of Israeli–Palestinian environmental cooperation in the greater Bethlehem area *GeoJournal Volume 82*, 4:701-719

Session 9

Case studies- conservation.

Guest speaker- Dr. Jessica Schackermann

Brockington, D., & Duffy, R. (2010). Capitalism and conservation: The production and reproduction of biodiversity conservation. *Antipode*, 42(3), 469–484.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2010.00760.x>



Session 10

Case study- community leadership and entrepreneurship.

Guest speaker Malek Abu-Alfiat (Palestine)

Campbell, L. M., & Vainio-Mattila, A. (2003). Participatory Development and Community-Based Conservation: Opportunities Missed for Lessons Learned? *Human Ecology*, 31(3), 417–437. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1025071822388>

Session 11

Environmental relations and contemporary needs and topics

Guest speakers about current environmental relationship with UAE, Bharain and Morocco (H.E Liron Zaslansky from Dubai embassy).

Session 12

Summary and closure – student presentations

Session 13 - Final exam