

Individual Major Proposal by Jong Kim

Course Rationale

the Individual

Arguably, the smallest unit of society and perhaps at the heart of our conglomerate existence as humans is the individual. In societal conflicts that involve a group or groups of people, the individuals are paramount not only in the formation of those groups, but more so in the possibilities they intrinsically possess for peaceful resolutions that may not exist in a group (vs. an individual) due to the individuals' socialization.

PHIL 121 Philosophy and Morality

This course is a prerequisite for higher level philosophy courses; but more importantly, the course offers a multi-faceted study of morality that examines its major theories and practical controversies. Wikipedia defines morality as “a system of principles and judgments shared by cultural, religious, and philosophical concepts and beliefs, by which humans determine whether given actions are right or wrong.”¹ This broad study of morality will allow me a greater understanding in the discussion of the morality of violence (war).

PHIL 204 Ethics

This course, from one point-of-view, is a continuation of the study of morality in PHIL 121, more in depth and with greater emphasis on the theories of ethics. The study of ethics is essential for systemic survey of those aspects of social conflict that bid moral and/or ethical investigation.

PHIL 210 Existentialism

Existentialism, a movement in philosophy, is intimately attached to the individual and the meaning of life as subjective experience and understanding of the world. Its subjectivity and its faith in the human experience (especially the emphasis on choice and freedom) are invaluable in engendering alternatives to the violent means of conflict resolution, as well as in healing the aftermath of war (violence).

PSYC 219 Cognitive Psychology

No two persons can perceive the world in the exact same way; however, some degree of understanding between the two individuals can, in fact, almost always be reached. Therefore, the study of how one learns, and therefore, how one forms one's perception(s), is imperative to understanding how an understanding can be realized between opposing parties in any conflict, which often stems from misunderstanding and inability to “step in the other person's shoes.” In an effective and peaceful resolution to any conflict, such misunderstanding and inability must be acknowledged and resolved.

¹ Morality. 4 Aug. 2005. Wikipedia. 4 Aug. 2005 <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morality>>.

the History

Though inescapably subjective, history, when adequately compensated, tells the story of our (as humans) past, the story from which we may gain new insights into our present and the future. By studying in depth the parts of history most relevant to the study of peace and social conflict, I will gain a deeper understanding of the conflicts past, and in turn, of the present-day world and the possibilities of peace in the now and the future.

AAST 219 The Freedom Movement: Civil Rights and Black Power

A guiding principle founding the American Civil Rights Movement was non-violence. This course, which examines the many meanings of freedom under different circumstances and different contexts, and analyzes the Civil Rights Movement and its importance in African American and U.S. history, will offer a case-study (whether successful or not) of non-violence.

HIST 226 World War II and the Making of the 20th Century

This course, which studies the development and the global consequences of World War II, as well as its experience from several different angles, offers a case-study of a major global conflict. By studying World War II in depth, I will attain a greater understanding of the forces at play in international conflicts.

HIST 357 Non-Violent Opposition to British Imperialism: M. Ghandi

This course offers another case-study in the historical usage of non-violence.

POLT 221 Democratization and Development in Late Industrializing States

Many late industrializing states, in their democratization and/or industrialization, (seem to me) to experience a period of general social unrest, including often powerful changes in political, economical, cultural, and ideological bearings. An example is South Korea in the latter half of the 1900's, which saw massive student protests, many corrupt government officials, and tight economic policies as well as the people's embracement of capitalism. By conducting case-studies of several industrialized and industrializing nations, I will gain insights into variables that engendered either a peaceful or a violent transition.

the Society

Social conflict involves a group or groups of people, and a group often holds together by similarities in the beliefs and interests of the individuals within that group. Thus, the study of society and its properties are important in understanding the mechanisms (processes) of conflicts where those properties are involved. Furthermore, because groups of people with similar beliefs and interests have often in history been of similar cultural backgrounds as well, a broad understanding of the word and world *culture*, as well as its principles and theories is critical to an effective resolution of any social conflict.

AAST 208 Slavery and Freedom in the Western Hemisphere

Slavery is an affront to humanity. In its many guises it has and does afflict many people around the world. It is an important topic in the study of social conflict, because it can be (and sometimes is) a manifestation of total violence, by which the victim is subjugated absolutely by the agent or agents that have power.

ANTH 101 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology

In addition to being a prerequisite course for higher level anthropology courses, this course provides an introduction to the theories and principles in cultural anthropology and its practice(s).

ANTH 278 Human Rights, Universalism, and Cultural Relativism

Cultural relativism is paramount to the study and understanding of cultures, because it honors the multiplicity of individuals and of our existence. Universalism is also important in our pursuit of solidarity as humans. In the study of conflict resolution, where one must endeavor to understand as much as possible the two parties in conflict, both cultural relativism and universalism play indispensable roles. The study of the two approaches and especially their relationship to one another (as at times they oppose each other) is requisite to the study of conflict resolution.

ANTH 353 Culture Theory

This course “critically examines . . . major issues in the study of culture over the past century and a quarter...” and covers many major theoretical topics including but not only cultural revolution and materialism, as well as political economy, all topics highly relevant to the other courses in this program and also to the program itself. By delving deep into the study of cultures, I will learn how to understand cultures (including my own) in general and in the context of social conflict.

ECON 101 Principles of Economics

In addition to being a prerequisite for higher level economics courses, this course will help me better understand the elemental mechanisms of the human economy, and in turn, their implications to the security of the global community.

ECON 227 International Trade and Finance

Many social (i.e. international) conflicts are of economic nature. Many Middle Eastern conflicts of the industrial and modern era, for example, have involved, at least in part, economic interests of one or multiple of the conflicting parties. Imperialism from the turn of the 20th century (and in fact, from all of human history, including the present) can also be cited as an example of a type of conflict stemming from reasons of at least partly economic origin. Thus, this course, by providing an overview of global economics and international economic relationships (trade), will help me understand international conflicts from the its economics point of view.

POLT 121 Introduction to International Relations

This course, which “examines historical watersheds from which policy makers frequently draw lessons,” is an introduction to international relations, a topic central to international conflict resolution. In addition to being a recommended prerequisite for higher level courses, this course offers a broad overview of international politics that will be useful in the study of conflict resolution, especially its survey of contemporary issues in international security and causes of war.

POLT 227 War, Weapons, and Arms Control

POLT 329 Seminar: Globalization

This course, which examines globalization and its consequences in as well as the reactions from the world, offers an understanding of the modern international political climate as influenced by globalization. Examining the impact of

globalization on the world and the resulting reactionary social movements will help me observe each international conflict with a broader perspective.

PSYC 204 Cultural Psychology

In the study of social conflict resolution, it is important to understand the past (history) as well as the present and the future. This course, by examining the impact of culture on child development, offers an understanding of our (as human individuals) differences, and in the case of their conflict, of the possibilities of its peaceful resolution through understanding and celebration of our uniqueness.

PSYC 430 Seminar in Social Conflict

This course is the topic course. Its description and relevance to the program are discussed in a later section, *topic course description*.

RELG 101 Introduction to Religion: Religion as a World Phenomenon

Religion, as the course title suggests, in fact seems to be a world phenomenon that occupies an important position in many cultures. This course, which “identifies common structures and functions that cut across religions,” offers not only a broad understanding of several world religions, but also a comparative study of world religions. Such an understanding is necessary when studying social conflicts in which religion is an active agent.

SOCI 125 Sociological Analysis of Society

This course is a prerequisite for higher level sociology courses. In addition, this survey course will offer a general but broad understanding of elementary sociological methods and principles, a crucial knowledge for studying society.

SOCI 222 Introduction to Social Psychology

This course, which examines the relationship between the individual and society, offers a scientific understanding of behavior of and within a group (society) as governed by numerous psychological, group, and social processes. This understanding will help me understand, in turn, the behavior of groups and societies that are involved in any social conflict.

PSYC 218 Social Psychology

This course is an alternative course to **SOCI 222**.

the Environment

The role of the environment in our everyday, individual lives as well as in small and large communities—including the global community—is vital. Thus, most, if not all, social conflicts are enormously influenced by the environment and any environmental issues at hand. One example is the modern- and present-day conflicts in the Middle East, in which the supply of crude oil plays a significant role (i.e. motive). The present-day reliance on fossil fuels and the intrinsic philosophy in its propagation cannot be ignored as major contributing agents in the conflicts. As such, the study of the environment is critical in fully understanding any conflict.

ENVS 101 Environment and Society

This course offers a broad understanding of the environmental problems of the modern- and present-day society. Through the study of various causes and agents of these problems, the course encourages the discussion of future possibilities.

ENVS 208 Environmental Policy

This course more closely examines contemporary environmental problems, especially their political agents. Through discussion of possible political solutions to environmental problems, I will gain a greater understanding of (political/diplomatic) resolution possibilities in conflicts over or caused by the environment.

ECON 231 Environmental Economics

In conjunction with **ENVS 208**, this course, through the examination of economics used in the making of environmental policy, will help me gain a greater understanding of (political/diplomatic) resolution possibilities in conflicts over or caused by the environment.

PSYC 221 Environmental Psychology

This course, by studying our individual and social relationship to cultures of material consumption, provides an overview of our perceptions of nature and of our relationship(s) to it. Because we are so intimately (inherently) connected to our environment, the study of our relationship to the environment will prove useful in long-term resolution of social conflicts where cultures of material consumption (i.e. consumption of fossil fuels) are involved.

PHIL 225 Environmental Ethics

In conjunction with **PHIL 204 (Ethics)**, this course offers a survey of approaches to the resolution of environmental issues in a social conflict. By examining the ethics of our environmental practices, the course also encourages discussion of environmental policy and economics.

HIST 337 Colloquium in the Environmental History of Oil

Since the industrial age, crude oil has been one of the most valued natural resources by humanity. In par with much of human history, many social conflicts, in fact, have taken place due to various groups' interest over the scarce resource. This key course, which explores U.S. history as influenced by oil, will be a case-study of resource scarcity and organized aggression.

the Possible Additions

PSYC 101 Study of Behavior

This course is a prerequisite for higher level psychology courses.