Conflict and Humanitarian Intervention: Blurring Humanitarian, Development and Security Policy
Prof. Rebecca Wolfe
TA: TBD
PPHA 35570
Mon, Wed 10:50 AM – 12:10 PM

Overview
When do States and the International system intervene in humanitarian crises? How are those decisions made? What are the ethical dilemmas? And if and how are humanitarian principles maintained in conflict-related crises? Is there a case for non-intervention? Traditionally, the ideal form of humanitarian interventions was about saving lives. However, as humanitarian aid has become politicized, more humanitarian spending is focused on protracted, conflict-related crises, and the closing of humanitarian space due to State and Non-State actors, the ability to maintain these principles is increasingly challenged. If and how does the humanitarian system need to change?

In this course we will cover various topics related to humanitarian interventions, including:

- Principles of humanitarian intervention
- Conflation of humanitarian aid and security policy
- Politics of (non) intervention
- Coercive humanitarianism
- Humanitarian access and security
- Critical and local perspectives on humanitarian sector
- New models of humanitarian intervention

The course will include a number of readings (more on that below) and guests who will shed light on the perspectives of various actors—states, multilaterals, implementers and recipients.[1]

After this course, students will have strong knowledge of the core debates in the humanitarian field. They also will learn how to analyze the politics of future interventions, understanding the incentives and constraints on actors, and strategize how to move actors in support of intervention (or not). [2]

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[1] I spent time debating which word to use: recipient, beneficiary or participant. I chose recipient to not mask the power imbalances inherit in aid. While there are numerous movements to change this dynamic, there's a long way to go.
[2] For this course, I pulled from Jeremy Konyndyk's Field Operations for Humanitarian Assistance and Nick MacDonald's Conflict & Development courses, with permission. As well as took many people's very good recommendations.

Course Structure: This course combines lectures and discussions. There are no clear-cut answers to many of the questions we will explore in the course. My aim is to have you become more comfortable with the questions and think through how to wrestle with the dilemmas they pose and think critically about the ethical and political arguments for or against intervention. Mondays will typically have a longer lecture than Wednesdays. All classes will by synchronous, with recordings posted within 24 hours of class.

Communication: Direct all administrative questions (e.g., finding a reading, Canvas issues, etc) to the TAs. They are very happy to help you. This also allows me to focus my time on the content of the course, grading and substantive questions.

In terms of replies, you can expect replies from me or the TAs during the hours of 8 AM to 6 PM CT. You may receive replies outside of these times. However, if you contact us after 6 PM, there is a good chance you will not receive a reply until the next day. Even before COVID, it was important to take breaks from our screens. It's even more important now, so want to instill some norms around communication.

We also will have a Slack channel for the course, where we can answer quick questions relevant for

Office Hours: I will conduct offices hours between 9 AM and 11 AM on Tuesdays. Please make an appointment with me in advance via this sign up sheet: https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0/selfsched?sstoken=UUUxd2dNb0o4NnJZfGRlZmF1b HR8MDlkOGIyODg5YzMwZWRhOTdlYmM1ZjVmYWVmMTY0ZTg. Other appointments can be made by email as necessary.

Assignments
Note: All written assignments are expected to be single-spaced, 12 point font, with one inch margins. Those submitted that don't follow these instructions will not be graded.

Weekly Reading and Class Participation (20%): It is expected students come to discussions prepared to discuss the topic and some of the readings. This is your opportunity to engage more with the material, ask me questions, and debate the thorny issues that are at the heart of humanitarian interventions. In your professional career, you will need to back your opinions with evidence (most of the time), and so use class as an opportunity to hone those skills.

To help prepare for the discussions in class and foster more interaction between me and students, please submit 2-3 bullet points on the readings by Wednesday morning at 9 AM CT via Canvas. These could be reflections, questions, etc. Quality is more important the quantity. Over the course of the term, you may take 1 "pass" and not submit the bullet points. The weekly bullet points also help students who are not able to participate synchronously engage with me more regularly.

For additional discussion, we will also use a Slack channel.

Op-Ed (25%): You will pick a current crisis and write an op-ed either for or against a government to intervene in a humanitarian disaster. The crisis may be "natural" or man-made. Papers are due on Fridays by 12 AM via Canvas. Consider the political implications both home and abroad when making your arguments. **Due: April 30, midnight.** *Submissions over 800 words will not be accepted.*

Perspective-taking reflection paper (25%): In this course, we will spend considerable time discussing the politics of intervention. However, there are people who suffer while those in power decide what to do. That does not mean intervention is always the answer, but I want you to think about how these crises impact people. For this, you will pick a memoir, film/documentary, a piece of art, a poem or novel created by someone who has lived through a humanitarian crisis (I will provide some suggestions on Canvas), and reflect how that perspective changed or provided you new insight into the crisis. For the paper, provide a brief overview of the crisis, including statistics on displacement, food security, injured, killed, etc, and if and how the international community intervened (no more than 1 page), and then how the piece influenced your thinking. **Due: May 14, midnight.** *Submissions over 2 pages will not be accepted.*

Final Paper, Group Project (30%): From the perspective of a UN, State or INGO country representative, students will prepare a briefing packet for decision-maker of their agency (Secretary, Director, CEO, etc) on whether or not the organization should get involved in a current crisis, and how. Please pick a conflict/protracted crisis or a slow-onset emergency (e.g. famines). The packet will include a 1-page summary of the evidence and your recommendation; background on the crisis (2 pages); an analysis of how other actors are responding or not (2 pages); and an analysis of the political incentives and constraints on intervening (2 pages). This exercise will assess writing and analysis skills and understanding of the various issues shaping decisions on whether or not to intervene, and how. Group size: 3-4 students. **Due: June 4.** *Submissions over 7 pages will not be accepted*

Late policy: Unless arrangements are made in advance, any assignment that is late will receive 10% penalty for each day late.

Academic Integrity: All University of Chicago students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Among other things, this means that students shall not represent another's work as their own, use un-allowed materials during exams, or otherwise gain unfair academic advantage. All students suspected of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Harris Dean of Students for investigation and adjudication. The disciplinary process can result in sanctions up to and including suspension or expulsion from the University. In addition to disciplinary sanctions, I will impose a grade penalty of 0 on the assignment and cannot earn higher than a C in the course for students who have committed academic dishonesty. The Harris policy and procedures related to academic integrity can be found at https://harris.uchicago.edu/gateways/current-students/policies. The University of Chicago

Policy on Academic Honesty & Plagiarism can be found at
https://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/academic-policies/academic-honesty-plagiarism/

Pass/Fail Option: Students who wish to take the course pass/fail rather than for a letter grade must use the Harris Pass/Fail request form (https://harris.uchicago.edu/form/pass-fail) and must meet the Harris deadline, which is generally 9am on the Monday of the 5th week of courses. Students who take the course pass/fail must attend class meetings and turn in all assignments, achieving marks on assignments that are overall commensurate with at least a C- letter grade.

ADA student accommodations: The University's policies regarding students with disabilities are available here. Students who have disability accommodations awarded by the University Student Disability Services Office should inform the Harris Dean of Students office by the end of the first week of class. The Harris Dean of Students Office will work with the student and instructor to coordinate the students' accommodations implementation.

Diversity and Inclusion: The Harris School welcomes, values, and respects students, faculty, and staff from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, and we believe that rigorous inquiry and effective public policy problem-solving requires the expression and understanding of diverse viewpoints, experiences, and traditions. The University and the Harris School have developed distinct but overlapping principles and guidelines to insure that we remain a place where difficult issues are discussed with kindness and respect for all.
- The University's policies are available here. Specifically, the University identifies the freedom of expression as being "vital to our shared goal of the pursuit of knowledge, as is the right of all members of the community to explore new ideas and learn from one another. To preserve an environment of spirited and open debate, we should all have the opportunity to contribute to intellectual exchanges and participate fully in the life of the University."
- The Harris School's commitments to lively, principled, and respectful engagement are available here: "Consistent with the University of Chicago's commitment to open discourse and free expression, Harris encourages members of the leadership, faculty, student body, and administrative staff to respect and engage with others of differing backgrounds or perspectives, even when the ideas or insights shared may be viewed as unpopular or controversial." We foster thought-provoking discourse by encouraging community members not only to speak freely about all issues but also to listen carefully and respectfully to the views of others.

Some Specific Points Related to Teaching in this Moment:

Class Timing Accommodations: I recognize that there are host of things that may make class attendance challenging: time zones, child or dependent care, illness, etc. All lectures are

recorded to provide students' with flexibility. If you are concerned with your participation grade due to attendance challenging, please reach out to me.

Recorded material policy: The University has developed specific policies and procedures regarding the use of video/audio recordings: these policies are explicitly described in the University's student manual as well as in the guidelines for instructors available here. A couple of points I want to highlight here:

> *By attending course sessions, students acknowledge that:*
> i. *They will not: (i) record, share, or disseminate University of Chicago course sessions, videos, transcripts, audio, or chats; (ii) retain such materials after the end of the course; or (iii) use such materials for any purpose other than in connection with participation in the course.*
> ii. *They will not share links to University of Chicago course sessions with any persons not authorized to be in the course session. Sharing course materials with persons authorized to be in the relevant course is permitted. Syllabi, handouts, slides, and other documents may be shared at the discretion of the instructor.*
> iii. *Course recordings, content, and materials may be covered by copyrights held by the University, the instructor, or third parties. Any unauthorized use of such recordings or course materials may violate such copyrights.*
> iv. *Any violation of this policy will be referred to the Area Dean of Students.*

Self Care: This is a highly uncertain time, and uncertainty elevates anxiety. I want to encourage you to take care of yourself (on Twitter, you will may see pictures of my elaborate meals). If you find yourself overwhelmed, please do not hesitate to reach out to Student Counseling Services.

Note: All SCS services are covered by the Student Life Fee, and there is no additional cost for students to access their services. See https://wellness.uchicago.edu/mental-health/student-counseling-service-spring-quarter-faq/. Students seeking new services/resources can call 773.702.9800 during business hours (Monday–Friday 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.) and ask to speak with a clinician. **Students needing urgent mental health care can speak with clinicians over the phone 24/7 by calling the SCS at 773.702.3625.**

Readings: This is a relatively heavy writing and reading course. However, I offer alternatives when possible—podcasts, documentaries, research summaries.

Books for the Course: There are a number of books that I will rely on for the course. I rarely assign all of the book, but many of them are compelling reads in their own right, and are available used (for example, there are copies of Reiff's *A Bed for the Night* for as low as $1.50).

Reiff, D. (2002) *A Bed for the Night: Humanitarianism in Crisis.* NY: Simon & Schuster

Power, S. (2002). *"A Problem from Hell": America and the Age of Genocide.* NY: Perenial.

Power, S. (2019). *An Education of an Idealist: Memoir.* NY: Dey Street Books (also available as an audio book)

Barnett, M. (2011). *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press

Course Schedule and Readings:

Weeks 1-2: Introduction to Humanitarian Intervention

March 29: Introduction and course expectations

- "Alms Dealers" – Philip Gourevitch:
  http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/10/11/alms-dealers
- "First, Do No Harm" – Samantha Power:
  http://articles.latimes.com/2002/oct/06/books/bk-power6

March 31: History of humanitarian intervention: When did the world start intervening?

- Barnett: Introduction and Chapter 1
- Power: A Problem From Hell, Chapters 1-3
- Dromi, S. (2020). Chapter 1

Alternatives
  o Interview with Samantha Power (podcast):
    https://www.npr.org/2011/04/03/135095054/tracing-origins-of-humanitarian-interventions
  o A Brief History on R2P (film): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zql34A4elhY

April 5: Humanitarian Principles

- "The Politics of Principle: the Principles of Humanitarian Action in Practice" – Kate Mackintosh, ODI: https://www.odi.org/resources/docs/305.pdf

- Code of Conduct for the ICRC and NGOs in Disaster Relief - https://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/publication/p1067.htm
- "The Humanitarian Ethos In Action" (Overview of the four core humanitarian principles and their application) - https://www.icrc.org/en/download/file/18997/irc_97_1-2-1.pdf
- SPHERE Handbook - READ the Humanitarian Charter – https://handbook.spherestandards.org/en/sphere/#ch003 \

Week 3: Types of Crises: Natural vs. Man-made Disasters

April 7: "Natural" Disasters.

- De Waal, A. (2019). Mass Starvation is A Crime—It's Time We Treated it That Way. Boston Review. http://bostonreview.net/global-justice/alex-de-waal-mass-starvation-crime%E2%80%94its-time-we-treated-it-way
- De Wall, A. (2008). On Famine Crimes and Tragedies. The Lancet. https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(08)61641-4/fulltext
- Cohen, C., & Werker, E. D. (2008). The Political Economy of ``Natural'' Disasters. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *52*(6), 795–819. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002708322157
- Ferris, E. (2010). Natural Disasters, Conflict and Human Rights: Tracing the Connections. Brookings: https://www.brookings.edu/on-the-record/natural-disasters-conflict-and-human-rights-tracing-the-connections/
- Kurtz, J. & Scarborough, G. (2012). From Conflict to Coping. Mercy Corps. (READ pp 3-12; SKIM rest): https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/from_conflict_to_coping_-_final.pdf
- Cases: Ethiopia and Yemen

April 12: Protracted Crises: What's Different?

- Mercy Corps (2015), Root Causes of Complex Crises (on Canvas)
- OCHA (2015). An End in Sight: Multi-year Planning to Meet and Reduce Humanitarian Needs in Protracted Crises. https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/An%20end%20in%20sight%20Multi%20Year%20Planning.pdf
- Yemen conflict piece (TBD)
- Case: Yemen (part II)

Weeks 4-5: Politics of Intervention—Perspectives from States & Multi-laterals

April 14: Overview of actors, tools and the calculus of intervening

- Gerrit Kurtz & Philipp Rotmann (2016) The Evolution of Norms of Protection: Major Powers Debate the Responsibility to Protect, Global Society, 30:1, 3-20, DOI: 10.1080/13600826.2015.1092425
- Kondyndyk, J. (2019). The most effective way to help Venezuelans: Stop politicizing aid. Washington Post). https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/03/01/most-effective-way-help-venezuelans-stop-politicizing-aid/?noredirect=on
- Keck, T (2017). https://intercrossblog.icrc.org/blog/what-you-need-to-know-about-safe-zones
- Harvey, P., Stoddard, A., Harmer, A., & Taylor, G. (2009). The State of the Humanitarian System, Chapter 2. https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/5825.pdf
- Oakford, S. (2017). The Battle of the Future of US Food Aid. https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2017/08/08/battle-over-future-us-food-aid

April 19: Coercive Humanitarianism

- Reiff, Chapter 4 & 6
- Powers, Problem, Chapter 9
- Sweitzer, B. (2004). https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-review-of-the-red-cross/article/moral-dilemmas-for-humanitarianism-in-the-era-of-humanitarian-military-interventions/BC03E197813B0E9182161C41653045EF
- Cases: Bosnia and Kosovo

Alternatives:
- Death of Yugoslavia (film): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URZA6r5LLtk
- NATO bombing of Serbia (podcast): https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3csywx7

April 21: Is intervention always the answer? Examining short and long-term objectives

- Reiff, Chapter 5
- Powers, Problem, Chapter 10
- TBD
- Case: Rwanda

April 26: Idealism vs. Reality: Use of Aid to Enhance National Security

- Power, An Education of An Idealist (Focus on the 2nd half of the book)
- Dayal, A (2019). Deterrence, Mass Atrocity and Samantha Power's The Education of an Idealist. Medium: https://medium.com/@akd2003/deterrence-mass-atrocity-and-samantha-powers-the-education-of-an-idealist-32231fb2bab4

- Rhodes, Ben (2018):
  https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/06/inside-the-white-house-during-the-syrian-red-line-crisis/561887/

Case: Syria (Guest Lecturer, TBD)

Alternatives:
- Global Dispatch podcast with Vanessa Jackson:
  https://www.globaldispatchespodcast.com/why-are-so-many-aid-workers-being-killed-in-the-line-of-duty/
- Obama at War (film): https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/obama-at-war/

Weeks 6-7 : Politics of Intervention: Perspectives from Implementers

April 28: Maintaining humanitarian principles

- Reiff, Chapter 7
- Barnett, Chapter 10
- Stoddard, A. *Necessary* Risks. Chapter 2
- The Syria Campaign (2016): https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/2861241-Taking-Sides-the-United-Nations-Loss-of.html
- Dromi, S. Chapter 5.
- Case: Syria (Part II)

May 3: Closing of humanitarian space

- Kurtzer, J. (2019). Denial, Delay, Diversion: https://www.csis.org/analysis/denial-delay-diversion-tackling-access-challenges-evolving-humanitarian-landscape
- Stoddard, A. (2020). Necessary Risks, Chapter 1
- Fast, L. (2014) *Aid in Danger.* Chapter 3
- Case: Afghanistan (Guest Lecturer)

Alternatives
- The E-team: https://www.netflix.com/title/70299286
- Displaced podcast with Bob Kitchen: https://podcasts.voxmedia.com/show/displaced
- Global Dispatch podcast with Abby Stoddard:
  https://www.globaldispatchespodcast.com/why-are-so-many-aid-workers-being-killed-in-the-line-of-duty/

Weeks 7-8: Politics of Intervention: Perspectives from Recipients

Perspective-taking reflection assignment due: May 13

May 5: Paternalism and the political economy of humanitarian interventions

- Barnett, Chapter 10
- Polman, Linda. *Chaos Caravan* (Chapters TBD)
- Mahmood Mamdani (2010) Responsibility to Protect or Right to Punish?, JOURNAL OF INTERVENTION AND STATEBUILDING, 4:1, 53-67, DOI: 10.1080/17502970903541721

May 10: Local perspectives on interventions

- Dionne, KY (2018). *Doomed Interventions.* Chapter 6
- Autesserre, S. (2014). *Peaceland.* Chapter 3
- Other readings TBD
- Guest Lecturer

May 12: Protection, safeguarding and abuses

***Note we will talk about sensitive issues in this class

- SPHERE Handbook – Protection Principles (READ pp 25-48)
- "Sexual Violence and Exploitation" – landmark 2002 report by Save the Children and UNHCR: https://humanitarianlibrary.org/sites/default/files/2014/02/UNHCR-SCF_SexualExploitationOfRefugeesInWestAfrica.pdf
- https://www.theguardian.com/society/2002/feb/27/voluntarysector
  - *The Humanitarian #MeToo Movement*
- "At what cost? A reflection on the crisis at Save the Children UK" – Jonathan Glennie – Parts 1: https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/at-what-cost-reflection-on-crisis-at-save-children-uk/ and 2: https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/at-what-cost-second-reflection-on-crisis-at-save-children-uk/
- https://www.irinnews.org/investigations/2018/02/13/exclusive-oxfam-sexual-exploiter-haiti-caught-seven-years-earlier-liberia
- https://www.irinnews.org/2018/03/23/humanitarian-metoo-moment-where-do-we-go-here (Review summary article; watching event video is optional)
- UK Parliament Review of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in the Aid Sector (Read Introduction and Conclusion; further reading/skimming optional) https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmintdev/840/84002.htm

Cases: Save the Children and Oxfam

Weeks 9: Has humanitarian interventions worked, and for what?

May 17 & 19: How do we measure success? Saving lives vs extending crisis

- Lyall, J. (2019). Civilian Casualties, Humanitarian Aid and Insurgent Violence in Civil Wars. International Organization, 73(4), 901-926. https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-organization/article/civilian-casualties-humanitarian-aid-and-insurgent-violence-in-civil-wars/1FB75B177E3B15D7539BBD2E240C3558
- https://scholar.harvard.edu/nunn/publications/us-food-aid-and-civil-conflict
  - USAID response: https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/USAID%20food%20aid%20technical%20brief.pdf
- Other readings TBD

May 24: No Class

May 26: Fixing the Humanitarian System: New Models and Reform

- Scott, R. (2014). Imagining More Effective Humanitarian Aid. OECD. https://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict-fragility-resilience/docs/Imagining%20More%20Effective%20Humanitarian%20Aid_October%202014.pdf
- Konyndyk, J. (2019). Five Takes on the Future of Humanitarian Reform. Center for Global Development: https://www.cgdev.org/publication/five-takeaways-future-humanitarian-reform
- Miliband, D. & Gurumurthy, R. (2015). Improving Humanitarian Aid. Foreign Affairs. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2015-06-16/improving-humanitarian-aid
- IPI (2018). Humanitarian Action and Sustaining Peace: https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/0306-Humanitarian-Action-and-Sustaining-Peace.pdf

Alternatives:
- Constructive destruction (podcast): https://www.odi.org/opinion/podcast-constructive-deconstruction
- Displaced Podcast with Jeremy Konyndyk: https://podcasts.voxmedia.com/show/displaced

Optional:
- Beal, D., Brinton, C. & Young, D. (2020). Building Resileince Through Humanitarian Investing. Boston Consulting Group: https://www.bcg.com/publications/2020/building-resilience-through-humanitarian-investing.aspx?linkId=81109920&redir=true
- Gingerich, T & Cohen, M. (2015). Turning the Humanitarian System on Its Head. Oxfam America. https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/rr-turning-humanitarian-system-local-capacity-270715-en.pdf
- Dubois, M. (2020). Searching for the nexus: Why we're looking in the wrong place. http://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/opinion/2020/1/7/triple-nexus-international-aid-Marc-DuBois

- Redvers, L. & Parker, B. (2019). Searching for the nexus: It's all about the money.https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/special-report/2019/12/3/triple-nexus-aid-development-humanitarian-donors-cooperation?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=social