



## **Peacebuilding “From Below”: The Relevance of “The Local” in Peace Building Processes**

This one-week intensive course focuses on the importance of peacebuilding “from below”, and the relevance of “the local” in peace building processes is documented in numerous studies. Initiatives such as UNSCR 1325 demonstrate a general agreement on the value of including all relevant actors in peacebuilding and peacekeeping. UNSCR 1325 reflects the insights of feminist security studies (FSS), illustrating problems arising from maintaining peacebuilding and peacekeeping as exclusive realms of the (frequently male) powerbrokers rather than inclusive processes drawing on experiences at the local level. FSS have also been instrumental in developing methodologies for obtaining a better understanding of “the local”, including understanding security processes as practice, engaging in reflexive inquiry, understanding affect and emotion, learning from ethnographic methods, and using an “intersectional” lens to better understand the roles and power differentials between the local, national, and international.

This course has two objectives: the first is to introduce and apply different methodological approaches to peacebuilding/peacekeeping analysis; the second is to interrogate the assumptions around “the local” with regard to peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

This course critically examines the assumptions inherent in this literature and evaluates how “the local” is studied and understood. We examine the assumptions behind the category of “the local” by applying different methods and lenses to various conflict scenarios. We question how it is constructed, and to what degree dominant constructions reflect empirical studies. A core, but challenging and innovative, question is how and why “the local” is valued in particular ways? On what basis can claims be made that peacebuilding and peacekeeping are somehow more effective (and what is meant by effective?) if “the local” are included? To examine “the local”, we explore the notion of “civilian agency” and the ways in which local actors have practiced security in different conflict settings. We question how “the local” has been framed in light of today’s evidence regarding civilian agency in war. In light of our explorations we try to readdress the question: who actually should “be at the table” in peace negotiations/building and why?

This course is innovative in combining advanced, critical methodologies with an analysis of what “the local” means in today’s peacebuilding and peacekeeping rhetoric. It both ensures that students are up-to-date on the latest research regarding local and/or non-state actors in peacebuilding and peacekeeping, but also that they interrogate the assumptions made around visions of the local. We challenge some of the predominant ideas around peacekeeping and peacebuilding today, using scholarly methods to do so.

### **Students will have the following learning outcomes:**

1. overview and understanding of various critical methodological approaches to peacebuilding and peacekeeping
2. comprehensive understanding of the development of “the local” in peacebuilding literature



3. familiarity with cases of peacebuilding and “the local”, identifying various actors and practices and assessing them through methodological approaches

Assessment will be in the form of participation and a presentation of a theme in a group of 2-3 students. The theme will be first discussed with the course coordinator before the students proceed to develop the presentation. The presentation will be 15-20 minutes in length.

Students will be expected to present without the aid of a manuscript (point form notes will be accepted).

Tentative day-to-day work programme:

**Day 1:**

Introduction

Module 1: how do we know “the local” - review of the literature

**Day 2:**

Module 2: assumptions about the local and contrary evidence? – when the local is not advancing peacebuilding or peacekeeping

Module 3: critical methodologies

**Day 3:**

Module 4: an in depth focus on intersectionality as a method and lens

Module 5: applying methodologies to cases – examples

**Day 4:**

Module 5: cases for analysis

Module 6: workshopping the cases – students form groups and work together to better understand the cases they have chosen

**Day 5:**

Module 7: presentations

Conclusion

Participants are graduate students from all the partners in the consortium six promising students from each partner (in this case, **only University of Sarajevo students are eligible to apply**). The students selected for the programme should have exceptional qualifications, but they can come from a variety of different disciplines, including peace and conflict studies, political science, anthropology, gender studies, law and human rights. This intensive programme will be the first of three, laying the groundwork for the creation of the modules for the MOOC.