



## Contextualizing Conflict in Northern Uganda

AFRS 3000 (3 Credits, 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:  
Uganda: Post-Conflict Transformation

### Course Description

*Contextualizing Conflict in Northern Uganda* is a multidisciplinary course designed to offer students the contextual and contemporary circumstances surrounding conflict in Uganda, exploring social, political, economic, cultural, linguistic, and ecological issues. The course examines issues of national and ethnic identity and the role of these constructions in conflict. In addition to the main focus on Northern Uganda, the course provides a comparative approach to conflict in the region. Lectures contextualize the roots and impact of conflict in the Great Lakes region, while an excursion to Rwanda provides the context for a comparative view of post-genocide transformation. Course lecturers include leading Uganda academics and professionals working in the areas of post-conflict transformation, justice and development.

### Methodology

*Contextualizing Conflict in Northern Uganda* consists of three interdependent modules that offer students a broad understanding of conflict in Uganda, Rwanda and the Great Lakes region. Modules build on one another and develop from overviews of historical, socio-political and economic factors of conflict, to analyses of human displacement and forced migration. Lectures and readings give students the contextual grounding and academic engagement with the seminar topics while field visits broaden the depth of understanding and provide the experiential dimension of the pedagogical approach. Lecturers are drawn from Gulu University and Makerere University in Kampala in addition to other program partners and professionals working in the fields of community building, justice and development.

### Course Objectives

*Contextualizing Conflict in Northern Uganda* has an interdisciplinary, integrative, and critical focus encompassing 45 academic hours (3 credits). Its main objectives are to:

- Provide students with the historical framework through which to understand conflict in Uganda;

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- Investigate the role of the economic, political, religious and ethnic factors that have congealed to create and maintain conflict in the northern sub-region;
- Develop self-understanding, cross-cultural awareness, and respect for different ways of life while complementing the skills of *Research Methods and Ethics*;
- Stimulate students to analyze and author their own experiences and learning;
- Expand background knowledge for further intensive study of the culture during the ISP and beyond.

## Expected Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the historical circumstances that have led to situations of conflict in Uganda and, to some degree, the Great Lakes region;
- Articulate the social and political factors that have created the context for Uganda's turbulent past and contemporary conflict and post-conflict history;
- Formulate an informed, culturally appropriate, and intellectually rigorous independent research project grounded in seminar readings, lectures, discussions, and excursions.

## Course Requirements

### Readings

Students are responsible for all the required readings, and should be prepared to bring them to bear on discussions in class. The readings will help you place the classes in their context, to challenge and engage lecturers, to generate questions for class discussions and to deepen your knowledge of particular aspects discussed in class. They are not necessarily tailor-made for each and every class.

Acker, F.V. (2004) "Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army: The New Order No One Order." *Journal of the Royal African society* 103: 335-357.

Atkinson, Ronald R. *The Roots of Ethnicity: The Origins of the Acholi of Uganda*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers Ltd., 2001.

Ginyera, Pinyawa, A. G. 1989. Is there a Northern Question? In *Conflict Resolution in Uganda*. Rupesinghe, Kumar. Ed. Oslo: International Peace Research Institute.

Jones, Adam. ed. 2004. *Gendercide and Genocide*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Kasozi, A.B.K. 1999. *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*. Kampala. Fountain Publishers Ltd.

Mukama, R. "The Linguistic Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict", In *Conflict Resolution in Uganda*, edited by Kumar Rupesinghe, 178-206. Oslo: International Peace Research Institute, 1989.

Mutibwa, Phares. *Uganda since Independence: A Story of Unfulfilled Hopes*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers Ltd., 1992.

Nsibambi, Apolo. *Decentralization and Civil Society in Uganda: the Quest for Good Governance*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2000.

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Nzita, Richard and Mbagwa, Niwampa. *Peoples and Cultures of Uganda*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1998.

## **Thematic Modules, Lectures and Site Visits**

### ***Module 1: The Social and Political History of Conflicts in Uganda***

#### **Description**

This module provides for students the necessary background and context for understanding the historical and political factors that have shaped conflict in Uganda. Students will learn about the colonial dimension to this issue, the relevant social and political factors that come into play, the role of Uganda's neighbors in exacerbating conflict and the role of the military in Uganda's conflict history. As a result of this lecture series, students will have the necessary socio-historical framework through which to understand the contemporary context of conflict in the country.

#### **Methodology**

The *Social and Political History of Conflicts in Uganda* module integrates lectures from leading academics in the field with assigned readings and site visits to appropriate locations. This combination of approaches will give students the capacity to understand and think critically about these foundations elements in Uganda's history.

#### **Sample Lectures**

- "The Colonial Legacy and the Origins of Conflict in Uganda," Dr. William Komakech, SIT Gulu
- "Socio-Political History of Conflicts in Uganda," Dr. Jacinto Ogwal, Gulu University
- "The Political Dimension of the Conflict in Northern Uganda," Hon. Ojara Martin Mapenduzi, Gulu District Speaker
- "International Dimensions of Conflict in Uganda," Louis Okello, Director GUSCO, Gulu
- "Conflict Analysis, Resolution, and Prevention," Opira Robert, Peace Advocate, Gulu
- "The Role of the Military in Conflict and Peace Building in Uganda," Samuel Oduny, Retired Soldier, Gulu
- "Land Related Conflicts, Resettlement and Recovery in Northern Uganda," Ojera Alex, Gulu District Land Officer, Gulu
- "War, Trauma, and Recovery," Dr. David Kitara, Gulu University

#### **Field Visits**

Baker's Fort, Gulu

Justice and Peace Commission, Gulu – Uganda

### ***Module 2: National and Ethnic Identity***

#### **Description**

By the time the British arrived in East Africa, there were over thirty ethnic and cultural groups in what is today Uganda. This module is designed to give students an understanding of the ethnic and cultural makeup of post-colonial Uganda. Secondly, students will explore the nexus between ethnicity, cultural identity and conflict. From this module, students will gain an appreciation for the post-colonial context that has led to multiple cultural and linguistic groups living within colonial-constructed states and how this arrangement provides an important factor in issues of conflict in Uganda.

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## **Methodology**

This module integrates lectures, readings and site visits to appropriate locations and program partners. Lecturers are drawn largely from Gulu University and students will also have the opportunity to visit the Buganda Parliament - the Buganda being the largest ethnic group in Uganda.

## **Sample Lectures**

- “The Peoples and Cultures of Uganda: History and Evolution of National Ethnic Identity in Uganda,” Felix Opio, former Caritas Director, Gulu
- “Acholi Ethnicity and Community Building,” Ochola Baker, Retired Anglican Bishop of Kitgum, Gulu
- “Role of Language in Defining Identity in Uganda,” Jackline Atingo Owacgiu, War child Holland, Gulu
- “National, Regional and Group Identity as Causes of conflicts,” Tolit Charles, Justice and Peace Commission, Gulu
- “Non-formal Education in Peace-building,” Okello George Albert, Gulu Core PTC, Gulu
- “National, Regional and Group Identity as Causes of conflicts,” Tolit Charles, Justice and Peace Commission, Gulu
- “The Role of Culture in Conflict and Peace building in Northern Uganda,” Okello P’Layeng, Acholi Traditionalist, Gulu
- “Stereotypes and Ethnicity in Uganda,” Khisa Moses, Lecturer at Makerere University, Kampala
- “Folklore and Conflict Resolution and Management,” Dr. William Komakech, SIT Gulu

## **Field Visits**

Lwero Triangle, North of Kampala

Kasubi Tombs and the Buganda Parliament, Kampala

## ***Module 3: Rwanda: History of Genocide and Anatomy of Conflict***

### **Description**

This Module is offered in Rwanda and provides an overview of the historical context, national identity politics and regional and international political context which accentuated conflict and led to the genocidal outbreak in this East African country. Students will learn about the origins of ethnic conflict in Rwanda, the economic and political power balance between Tutsis and the Hutu and the social, psychological and political consequences of the 1994 genocide. The Module will also provide an understanding of genocide indicators and mechanisms of genocide prevention, conflict analysis and peace-building. Cutting across these themes, the students will eventually develop an understanding of comparative approach to genocide.

### **Methodology**

This Module integrates lectures by leading Rwandan historians and political scientists, readings and field visits. The lectures and readings provide an entry point for conceptual reflection on the historical indicators of genocide and its consequences while field visits provide the students with an opportunity to discuss with survivors and rescuers the impact of the 1994 genocide on their lives and the ways in which they have been able to cope with the post-genocide trauma. At the end of the Module, students will write a research paper (5 to 8 pages) on aspect of the themes the Module has addressed.

### **Sample Lectures**

- Pre-Genocide Identity Politics, Prof. Bernard Rutikanga, historian and lecturer, The National University of Rwanda

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- Political Development Pre-Genocide, Prof. Bernard Rutikanga, historian and lecture, The National University of Rwanda
- The Arusha Peace Accords and the 1990 RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Front) Invasion, Prof. Paul Rutayisire, Director of the Center for Conflict Management at the National University of Rwanda
- The 1994 Genocide and Its Consequences, Prof. Paul Rutayisire, Historian and Director of the Center for Conflict Management at the National University of Rwanda
- Conflict Analysis and Peace-building, Bosco Habyarimana, Research Fellow and Deputy Director of the Center for Conflict Management at the National University of Rwanda
- Comparative Analysis of Genocide, Prof. Paul Rutayisire, Director of the Center for Conflict Management at the National University of Rwanda

### Field Visits

Gisozi Memorial Center, Gisozi, Kigali

Discussion with survivors and rescuers at “Memos - Learning from History”

Kigali Belgian Memorial, Kigali

PLEASE NOTE: COURSE CONTENTS, LECTURERS AND READINGS MAY BE MODIFIED AS NEEDED. SHOULD ANY CHANGE OF CLASS TOPICS OR LECTURERS BE NECESSARY, STUDENTS WILL BE PROMPTLY NOTIFIED.

### Evaluation and Grading Criteria

#### Assignments

Timely completion of all assignments is expected. Late hand-ins will be penalized. All assignments are evaluated according to organization, analytical quality, and depth of understanding, argumentation and presentation of evidence.

Participation and Attendance	20%
Literature Review	20%
Discussion Leadership	15%
Lecture Analysis Paper	15% (due two days after lecture)
Comparative Case Study	30%

#### Grading

Papers will be graded on style and form, content, depth of analysis, and understanding of readings and lectures as demonstrated by their appropriate incorporation into written assignments. Participation will be graded by observing attendance, attitude, preparation, active involvement in class discussions, and culturally appropriate behavior on excursions.

**Grading Scale:** The grading scale is as follows:

94-100%	A	74-76%	C
90-93%	A-	70-73%	C-
87-89%	B+	67-69%	D+
84-86%	B	64-66%	D
80-83%	B-	Below 64	F
77-79%	C+		

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## **Grading Criteria**

An “A” grade for an assignment entails superior (not just “very good”) performance in terms of structure and organization of assignments, analysis, logical argumentation and consistency, and the provision of factual, numerical and/or historical evidence. In terms of Class Participation, an “A” grade refers to full attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all Academic Seminar lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. The level, frequency, and quality of the students` participation will be monitored and taken into account.

## **Student Expectations**

### **Class Participation**

Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all lectures, discussions, educational excursions and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior.

**Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad handbook** for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process. Also, refer to the specific information available in the Student Handbook and the Program Dossier given to you at Orientation.

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