**Theory and strategy of international negotiations**

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Consultations by appointment

**Course description**

International negotiations are a tool of foreign policy used when interests clash – be it in a trade dispute or an armed conflict. States negotiate ceasefires, peace agreements, rules that govern international relations, CO2 reduction targets and arms control agreements, to name just a few. Negotiation is a core discipline of diplomacy, which is arguably the most potent tool to achieve lasting peace and find solutions to common problems that transcend borders. At times when international rule-based order and multilateral organisations are increasingly under strain, with armed conflict and great power competition gaining center stage, understanding the theory and practice of negotiations is imperative.

This course deals with negotiation strategies, with a focus on international negotiations, and is strongly oriented towards developing related professional skills. It provides students with relevant theoretical knowledge (through seminal texts and concepts) combined with interactive practical exercises, including a role game simulating the multilateral negotiation process at the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The principal learning objectives of the course are a) knowledge of basic theories of negotiations, different negotiation strategies and core concepts, such as ZOPA, BATNA, red lines and mutually hurting stalemate; b) acquisition of relevant professional skills and techniques through practical negotiation exercises; c) a better understanding of the OSCE coupled with a hands-on experience of a multilateral negotiation through an OSCE simulation game.

The course intends to strengthen a variety of skills such as analytical strategic thinking, negotiation skills, collective deliberation, individual persuasion and public speaking. Hence the course has a strong practical angle and intends to teach students skills that will be useful in their jobs in the areas of diplomacy, international organisations or business.

The course is taught by a think-tanker with an academic background in foreign and security policy and an eight-year work experience in the policy world, including close cooperation with the OSCE and implementation of Model OSCE simulation games with young participants from across the OSCE space.

Students are encouraged to have a look at the following resources that can serve as a useful background or source of further reading throughout the course:

* Paul C. Stern and Daniel Druckman (2000) (eds.): *International Conflict Resolution After the Cold War*
* Roger Fisher and William Ury: *Getting to Yes: Negotiating an Agreement without Giving In*. Random House Business Books (several editions available)
* Harvard Program on Negotiation, <https://www.pon.harvard.edu>

**Requirements**

Students are encouraged to read the course readings to familiarise themselves with core concepts to be able to implement them in practice. They are also required to do some preparation ahead of the simulation game (getting to know your role, anticipating the priorities and red lines of the other game participants, thinking of a strategy etc.) The lecturer will give additional information in the course. Each session will be interactive.

**Course Schedule**

The first four sessions will provide an overview of negotiation theories and strategies and introduce the most important concepts. In each session, we will practice different negotiation techniques and skills.

The final two sessions (combined in one for the sake of having more time) will be dedicated to a role game, in which we will simulate an OSCE negotiating process. Students can decide which scenario they will play (the lecturer will offer a few scenarios to choose from).

**Week 1. Essentials of negotiations (9.4.2025)**

What is a negotiation? Which types of negotiations are out there? Who negotiates with whom, what and how?

We will receive an overview of major theories and fundamental approaches to negotiations.

We will also familiarise ourselves with essential negotiation skills and practice some of them in interactive exercises.

Readings:

* *Negotiation Skills: Negotiation Strategies and Negotiation Techniques to Help You Become a Better Negotiator*. Program on Negotiation: Harvard Law School.
* Roger Fisher and William Ury: *Getting to Yes: Negotiating an Agreement without Giving In*. Random House Business Books, pp. 49-70.

Exercise:

* What is your negotiation style?

**Week 2. Basic concepts, core negotiation strategies and skills (16.04.2025)**

We will take a closer look at two negotiation strategies: distributive bargaining (also called competitive bargaining) and integrative bargaining (also referred to as cooperative problem solving).

We will get to know core concepts, such as ZOPA (zone of possible agreement), BATNA (best alternative to negotiated settlement), red lines and winning proposals, among others.

We will engage in some interactive exercises to test some of the core concepts in practice.

Readings:

* Tanya Alfredson and Azeta Cungu. 2008. *Negotiating Theory and Practice: A Review of the Literature*. EASYPol Online Resource Materials for Policy Making.
* *BATNA Basics: Boost your Power at the Bargaining Table*. Program on Negotiation: Harvard Law School.

Exercise:

* Preparing a negotiation: what are your and your counterparts’ preferences, limitations, bottom lines and BATNAs?
* Practicing BATNA in a two-party negotiation

**Week 3. Diplomatic negotiations (23.04.2025)**

In this session we will look at the specificity of negotiations in international relations.

What are the necessary conditions for starting a negotiation? What are the factors of success or failure? We will explore central concepts such as “conflict ripeness” and “mutually hurting stalemate”. We will also discuss central values such as equality, justice and peace.

Readings:

* United Nations: “Negotiations”, available at: <https://www.un.org/en/model-united-nations/negotiation>
* I. William Zartman (2000): Ripeness: The Hurting Stalemate and Beyond, in Paul C. Stern and Daniel Druckman (eds.): *International Conflict Resolution After the Cold War*, pp. 225-250, available online at: <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/9897/chapter/7>
* ~~Fen Osler Hampson and I. William Zartman (2015): The Tools of Negotiation. In: Crocker, Chester, Hampson, Fen Osler and Pamela Aall (eds):~~ *~~Managing Conflict in a World Adrift~~*~~, pp. 377-396.~~

Exercise:

* Integrative bargaining in a multi-party negotiation

**Week 4. Negotiating conflicts in international politics: the case of the OSCE (30.04.2025)**

In this session we will familiarise ourselves with negotiations in the context of the OSCE and learn the difference between negotiation, mediation and dialogue. We will touch upon current international conflicts and discuss opportunities and obstacles in the case of potential negotiations between Ukraine and Russia (and which role the OSCE can play).

In the practical part, we will lay the groundwork for preparing for our roles in the simulation game.

Readings:

* Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe: *Mediation and Dialogue Facilitation in the OSCE. Reference Guide*, pp. 9-24
* I. William Zartman (2023): The Effect of Ukraine and Entropy in Negotiation, in Geneva Centre for Security Policy: PINpoints 52, pp. 7-10 THIS TEXT WILL BE REPLACED TO ACCOUNT FOR RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Exercise:

* Preparing for Model OSCE: negotiating agenda of the meeting; informal consultations with stakeholders ahead of the negotiation.

**Week 5. Model OSCE: simulating negotiations at the OSCE (7.05.2025)**

*Attention, the session is double and will last 200 minutes.*

Preparatory material will be distributed prior to the session.

Final 15 minutes: questions, feedback and evaluation

Followed by drinks (optional)