

Drafts of Proposed Course Syllabi
Part of the Presentation on Research and Teaching Agenda
As a Postdoctoral Researcher in Comparative Politics
University of Osnabrück

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*All proposed syllabi drafts can be adjusted to align with existing courses and module structures,
as well as the strategic plans of the department.*

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Military, Politics and Society

Lecturer:

- Markéta Odlová, odlovm@tcd.ie

Course Details:

- To be delivered in summer 2025
- Envisioned class size approximately 25 postgraduate students

Course Topic:

- In this interdisciplinary course, we will examine military institutions as significant political and societal actors. The course will begin by exploring key theoretical debates and topics from the fields of civil-military relations and military sociology. Key questions to be addressed include: What is the ideal relationship between military institutions and civilian authority in a modern state? What role do military institutions play in shaping national identity? How do military institutions function within democratic and authoritarian contexts? What are the unique characteristics of the military environment, and how do they impact political behavior and attitudes? Additionally, we will investigate the role of military institutions in social change, particularly in terms of the inclusion of women and LGBTQ+ individuals.
- In the final three sessions, we will focus on current issues related to military institutions. These will include international military collaboration, the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, and debates surrounding the reintroduction of conscription or national service.
- The course adopts a strong comparative approach, through inclusion of presentations that illustrate the discussed issues within chosen national contexts. Students will be required to write a policy brief that demonstrates their theoretical and empirical knowledge, as well as their critical thinking, analytical, and communication skills. This task may be particularly relevant for those considering careers in diplomacy and policy-making.

Learning Objectives :

- Understand the role of military institutions as key actors in politics and society through active engagement with theoretical and empirical approaches to the study of civil-military relations, military sociology, conflict studies, gender and ethnic studies.
- Compare and analyze variations in the political and societal role of military institutions across different national contexts.
- Develop informed perspectives on the role of military institutions in the 21st century.
- Synthesize existing research to deliver presentations and policy briefs grounded in theoretical and empirical evidence.

Assessment:

- 10 % reflection at the beginning and end of the semester (2x 250-500 words)
- 10% class participation
- 20 % group presentation
 - List of topics associated with each of the session to be added
 - E.g. *British versus French military tradition, Integration of ethnic minorities, women and LGBTQ+ people to the military in the US and Israel, Conscription in Sweden and Norway, Opening of combat roles to women in Ukraine and Germany.*
- 60 % policy brief (3000 words without references) + oral exam
 - As a newly appointed policy advisor to the Minister of Defense in a country of your choice, you are tasked with providing your advice on a potential policy change / issue related to the role of military institutions in given national context. Provide the minister with a comprehensive overview of the

issue, explore different perspectives on the topic (drawing on relevant theoretical frameworks and existing evidence), and offer a well-supported recommendation which will be discussed by the governmental cabinet in the upcoming weeks.

- During the oral exam, we will discuss your topic choice, your understanding of the associated theoretical concepts, and your reasoning for proposing specific solutions to the problem or issue.
 - **Scenario 1:** We are a post-conflict, multi-ethnic society with a history of prolonged conflict between major ethnic groups. Due to security concerns, the second-largest ethnic group has historically been exempted from otherwise mandatory conscription, which is perceived as unfair by other groups. Should we now consider including this group in the military service?
 - **Scenario 2:** We face significant international pressure to open military roles to female personnel in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325. However, our society has low levels of gender equality, and public opinion may be resistant to this change. What should we do?
 - **Scenario 3:** We recently faced a major scandal involving our military forces during a peacebuilding mission. The public is highly antimilitarist as a result and calls for prioritising economic development over investments into military and peacekeeping. How can we restore the public image of the institution?
 - **Scenario 4:** Rising militarisation and evolving security threats have led us to concerns about our national security. We are concerned that our professional army may not have enough of military personnel in the event of a large-scale conflict. What should we do?

Topics:

Theme:	Session topic:	Presentation ideas (max 2 per session; TBD):
Civil-Military Relations	Key theoretical debates: control, autonomy and professionalism	UK, France
	Military and the state: loyalty, integration, and representation	Israel, South Africa
	Military and regime type: change, stability	Turkey, Chile, Egypt
Military Sociology	Military and the soldier: socialisation and culture	USA
	Military and the others: women, minorities and LGBTQ+	Hungary, Germany, Sweden, Norway, China, South Korea, North Korea, Japan
	Military and public opinion: antimilitarism, conscientious objection, alternative forms of service	Israel Russia
Current challenges	Women, peace and security agenda	Selected countries in Africa and Latin America
	Future of military institutions in 21 st century	Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Morocco

Readings:

TBD

Data Sources:

TBD

Fieldwork and Interviewing: Methods, Ethics, Analysis

Lecturer:

- Markéta Odlová, odlovm@tcd.ie

Course Details:

- To be delivered in summer 2025
- Envisioned class size approximately 15 postgraduate students

Course Topic:

- This practice-based course covers all aspects of collecting, conducting, and analysing various types of qualitative interviews in the context of political science research. It explores the role different types of interviews play in broader research design and addresses key questions such as: How can an interview guide be designed in accordance with a research question? What ethical issues need to be considered beforehand, and how can ethics be practiced in daily interactions with participants? What are the various approaches to qualitative data analysis? How can robust qualitative data be presented clearly and effectively to an audience?
- The course also covers practical aspects of collecting data directly from research participants, such as effectively networking to recruit research participants, maintaining personal safety as a researcher, collaborating within research teams, and navigating challenges such as failure or loneliness during the data collection process.
- The course adopts a practical, hands-on approach, with assessment methods designed to maximize students' applied learning experiences and preparedness for independent data collection.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify when interviews are appropriate for data collection and integrate them into overall research design; conduct various types of interviews.
- Design key documents for data collection, such as interview guides and consent forms.
- Navigate ethical considerations when interacting with research participants.
- Address key aspects of fieldwork, including teamwork, networking, safety, positionality, emotional challenges.
- Understand data management, protection, transcription, and approaches to qualitative data analysis.
- Present findings of qualitative research effectively.

Assessment:

- 20 % research proposal for ethical approval application
- 20 % key documents: leaflet, consent form, interview guide
- 20 % data collection¹
- 20 % navigating the unexpected
 - Role playing simulation of challenging situations
 - E.g. being questioned by security forces during fieldwork; interviewing someone who is not sure whether they want to be interviewed.
- 20 % findings presentation

Topics:

Theme:	Session topic:
Research design	Interviews as part of research design
	Types of interviews and questions

¹ I would apply for an ethical approval in my name in order to be able to let students collect data from real participants.

	Sampling
Preparation	Interview guide
	Ethical approval application, authorities and consent; fieldwork checklist
Navigating the field	Conducting interviews ethically
	Navigating teamwork, networking, safety, emotions and positionality during data collection
Data and findings	Data protection, management and transcription
	Various approaches to data analysis
	Presentation of findings
Other	Q&A session with a guest speaker

Readings:

Gerson, Kathleen, and Sarah Damaske. 2020. *The Science and Art of Interviewing*. Oxford Academic.

Mosley, Layna (Ed). 2013. *Interview Research in Political Science*. Cornell University Press.

TBD

Case Study: Israel/Palestine

Lecturer:

- Markéta Odlová odlovm@tcd.ie

Course Details:

- Envisioned class size approximately 20 postgraduate students

Course Topic:

- TBD

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the geography of the region and the temporal development of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.
- Understand key ethnic, religious, socio-economic, and political cleavages in both Israeli and Palestinian societies.
- Understand the role of international actors in the conflict.
- Understand varying perspectives of different groups, actors, states, and societies on the conflict.
- Relate the conflict to broader theoretical concepts and frameworks within Conflict Studies, as discussed in other courses and modules.

Assessment:

- 10 % reflection at the beginning and end of the semester (2x 250-500 words)
- 10 % attendance and participation in class discussion (in accordance with civil discourse principles)
- 20 % presentation
- 20 % essay proposal and anonymised peer review
- 40 % academic essay

Note on class discussions:

- All students are expected to engage in class discussions **respectfully and constructively**, in accordance with principles of civic discourse. The goal this course is to deepen our understanding of the discussed topics beyond simplistic, black-and-white perspectives. Accordingly, all discussions should focus on the issues themselves, and should be supported by **evidence and reasoned arguments**, and must not become personal. **Any form of personal attack is unacceptable.**

Topics (TBD):

Session topics:
Conceptualisation: Introductory session aimed at students' orientation in the topic Overview: map, timeline, key groups, key actors
Ottoman Empire British Mandate Palestine Arab Nationalism and Zionism Ethnic divisions in the Levant region
Partition plans Establishment of Israel Expulsion of Jews from Arab countries and Iran Nakba and Palestinian diaspora
Israeli-Arab conflict Israel and Palestine as part of the Middle East
Palestinian Movement and its leadership Ethnic and religious cleavages in Palestinian society + politics

Intifadas Ethnic and religious cleavages in Palestinian society + politics
Oslo accords The role of international actors
Disengagement and the Gaza Wars Ethnic and religious cleavages in Israeli society + politics
The Nation State Law Israeli non-Jewish citizens + politics
October 7 and its aftermath Foreign perspectives: Ireland, US, Germany

Additional resources:

- *Below is a list of books, movies, and documents covering various aspects of conflict and life in Israel/Palestine. Students are encouraged to add their own recommendations so that they can be shared with their colleagues and discussed in class.*
- Books:
 - Sayed Kashua – Dancing Arabs
 - Collum McCann – Apeirogon
 - Daniel Efron – Killing a King; The Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and the Remaking of Israel
 - Joe Sacco – Palestine
- Movies and documents:
 - Ronit Elkabetz, Shlomi Elkabetz – To Take a Wife; Shiva; Gett
 - Radu Mihaileanu - Live and Become
 - Rachel Leah Jones, Philippe Bellaïche – The Advocate
 - Ari Folman - Waltz with Bashir
 - Eran Riklis - Syrian Bride
 - Dror Moreh - The Gatekeepers