

Dietrich Fischer

Dietrich Fischer, born in Switzerland, is a Professor and Academic Director at the European University Center for Peace Studies, Burg Schlaining, Austria (www.epu.ac.at). He is a former MacArthur Fellow in International Peace and Security at Princeton University and member of TRANSCEND, an international peace and development network. He is author of *Preventing War in the Nuclear Age* (1984) and *Non-Military Aspects of Security: A Systems Approach* (1993) and co-author of *Warfare and Welfare: Integrating Security Policy into Socio-Economic Policy* (with Nobel Laureate Jan Tinbergen, 1987), *Winning Peace: Strategies and Ethics for a Nuclear-Free World* (with Wilhelm Nolte and Jan Oberg, 1989), *Conditions of Peace: An Inquiry* (with Grace Boggs, et al., 1991), and *Peaceful Conflict Transformation and Nonviolent Approaches to Security* (with Johan Galtung, 1999). He has published over 200 articles and given more than 300 lectures on peace and security in 30 countries. He has been a consultant to various United Nations agencies on issues of disarmament and development.

The European University Center for Peace Studies (EPU)

The EPU (www.epu.ac.at) is located in Stadtschlaining, Austria, a medieval town between Vienna and Graz. Its offices and a peace museum are located in a castle dating from 1240. It also has a new building with 44 single rooms and seminar rooms, and a peace library with 25,000 books, periodicals and films, mostly in English. The EPU was founded in 1988 by its current President, Dr. Gerald Mader. It has so far educated about 1000 students from more than 100 countries in peace studies and conflict transformation. In 1995 it received the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education.

The EPU program is designed to provide students with the intellectual skills to analyze conflicts and their underlying causes, with practical skills in conflict transformation and peacebuilding, and with the motivation to do everything in their capacity to help create a better world. It seeks to enable and motivate students to help build a more peaceful, equitable and just global society, in harmony with nature.

Those who successfully complete one trimester obtain an Advanced Certificate in Peace and Conflict Studies. Those who complete three trimesters and write a thesis obtain a Master of Arts in Peace and Conflict Studies, approved by the Austrian Ministry of Education. All courses are taught in English, by leading specialists in their field from around the world, including Johan Galtung, one of the founders of the academic discipline of peace research and frequent mediator in international conflicts. EPU offers students a well-rounded program covering Peace with Security, Development, Freedom, Nature and Culture.

EPU's curriculum is intended for students from any discipline interested in peace and conflict resolution, diplomats, government officials, NGO members, teachers, journalists, lawyers, social workers, psychologists, the military, and anyone interested in solving conflicts by peaceful means. A first university degree is required, and preferably some professional experience. EPU does not discriminate on the basis of (among others) gender, race, class, age, religion or national origin.

A Master of Arts Program in Peace and Conflict Studies

by Dietrich Fischer
Academic Director and Student Adviser
European University Center for Peace Studies (EPU)
A-7461 Stadtschlaining/Burg, Austria
(fischer@epu.ac.at, www.epu.ac.at, www.transcend.org)

There is an enormous need in the world for people with skills in nonviolent and creative conflict transformation and peace work in general. By solving conflicts in a peaceful way, creative energy can be released at the personal, social and world levels and material and nonmaterial destruction avoided. Peace studies, like health studies (medicine) are clearly value-oriented: to save and promote life for all, to meet the basic needs for security, well-being, freedom, identity and the needs of the environment.

In 1988, Johan Galtung and George Kent designed a comprehensive curriculum for a "Master's Degree in Peace and Conflict Resolution" at the University of Hawai'i, which has also served as a model for the curriculum offered at EPU. This paper relies extensively on that curriculum design.

Peace studies need to combine a focus both on knowledge and skills (dialogue, role-playing, negotiation training, analysis, case studies). A conflict involves Attitudes ("enemy images"), Behavior (violent or nonviolent, verbal or physical) and Contradictions (incompatible goals), the ABC triangle. Conflicts can rarely be completely "resolved" so that they simply disappear, but they can be transformed from being fought with violent means to being conducted by peaceful means. In this way, conflicts can have a constructive function by helping bring about desirable change. Conflicts are analyzed in terms of diagnosis (sources of a conflict), prognosis (likely trends without intervention), therapy (proposed interventions to reduce violence) and also "counter-factual history" (what could have been done differently in the past, by whom, to prevent or reduce violence).

The courses deal with conflicts at all levels beginning with micro-conflicts within and between persons: how to overcome domestic and work conflicts on a daily basis, particularly useful for couples, parents, teachers, social workers and many others. Meso-conflicts deal with issues on gender and generation, race or class, employers vs employees, where groups of people are in contradiction with each other. Macro-conflicts take place between states and nations, like the numerous conflicts among nations within states for independence or autonomy. Finally, mega-conflicts concern contradictions between East-West, North-South and between civilizations like Christianity-Islam. Conflicts at all of these levels of human society exhibit some similarities, and insights gained at one level can often be applied to other levels. There are many different ways to find solutions to conflicts. If the only tool we have is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail. A good doctor has a comprehensive medicine chest, with a variety of cures for different illnesses.

Peaceful conflict transformation requires empathy (as attitude), nonviolence (as behavior) and creativity (to bridge conflicting goals), to achieve mutually acceptable and sustainable solutions to conflicts.



Peace includes the absence of war, but it is much more. It is the absence of violence in all of its forms and the presence of mutually beneficial cooperation and mutual learning. Just as there is a distinction between negative health (absence of disease) and positive health (the capacity to resist disease) there is a distinction between negative peace (absence of violence, and more particularly absence of war) and positive peace, the capacity to contain violence and to transform conflicts by peaceful means. The distinction between peace-keeping and peace-building resembles the distinction between curative and preventive medicine.

Johan Galtung (in "The Coming One Hundred Years of Peacemaking: Visions of Peace for the 21st Century", a lecture given at the Centenary Conference of the International Peace Bureau in Helsinki on 30 August 1993) distinguishes between four forms of power: military, economic, political and cultural. They correspond to four basic human needs, for survival, economic well-being, freedom and identity (the opposites being death, misery, oppression and alienation). These lead to the distinction between four forms of violence: direct violence (hurting and killing people with weapons), structural violence I (the slow death from hunger, preventable diseases and other suffering caused by unjust structures of society, which now kills over 100'000 people every day), structural violence II (deprivation from freedom of choice and from participation in decisions that affect people's own lives), and cultural violence (the justification of direct and structural violence in education, the media, literature and art, in the form of nationalism, racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination and prejudice).

Peace has then eight components--the absence of these four forms of violence ("negative peace"), and the presence of activities to bring relief for past or present violence and to prevent future violence ("positive peace"), in their military, economic, political and cultural dimensions.

The EPU Curriculum addresses all of these eight components of peace, with courses listed in Table 1. The Masters program requires three trimesters of courses, lasting 12 weeks each (fall, spring and summer). Courses in the fall trimester focus primarily on direct violence and how to avoid it. Courses in the spring trimester focus mainly on structural violence and ways to overcome it. Courses in the summer trimester concentrate on cultural violence and cultural peace. Some courses (e.g. Introduction to Peace Studies, Theories and Methodologies in Peace Studies, Game Theory, Management and Evaluation of Peace Projects, Strengthening the United Nations System, Professionalism in Peace Work, Visioning Peaceful Societies and Peaceful Worlds) relate to all aspects of peace and are therefore not listed in any particular category in Table 1.

Table 1: Eight Components of Peace, and Courses Addressing Them

	Negative Peace	Positive Peace
Military	Violence, Security, Disarmament; Terrorism and State Terrorism: Causes and Prevention; Crises Prevention, Intervention, Reconciliation and Reconstruction	Conflict Transformation by Peaceful Means; Dialogue, Negotiation, Mediation and Arbitration; Nonviolence: From Philosophy to Practical Tool; Working for Peace in Conflict Zones; Unity Based Conflict Resolution; Peace and Social Movements; Transition from Civil War to Peace; Nonmilitary Approaches to Security; Conflict Mitigation



Economic	The Global Economy and Alternatives; Coping with Dangers to the Environment	A Life-Sustaining Economy; Theories of Development; Peace and Business; A Theory of Peace: Positive Peace and Development; Human Security; Gender and Development; The Human Right to Food and Nutrition; Conversion from Military to Civilian Production
Political	Human Rights; Good and Bad Governance, with Case Studies from Africa	Governance and Participation; Community-Based Peacebuilding; The European Union as a Peace Force; Global Civil Society and Global Governance; Democratization; International Law and World Order; International Relations and the Search for Peace; Protection of Minorities and Self-Determination; Research for Social Justice
Cultural	Culture and Conflict; Global Mass Media, Information Warfare and Cyberwar	Peace Education; Culture and Communication; Basic Needs, Deep Structure and Deep Culture; Conflict Culture and Conciliation; Gender and Cultures of Peace; Peace and Ethics; Peace and Religions; Peace Psychology; Utopias of Peace in Literature; Nonviolent Communication; Imagining Cultures of Peace; African Resources and Obstacles for Peace; Facilitating Social Change: Conscientization and Mobilization for Empowerment; Peace Journalism

Descriptions of these courses can be found at www.epu.ac.at.

A total of 72 week-long courses are offered during the three trimesters, meeting 3 hours every day of the week, some in the morning, others in the afternoon. Students are required to take 36 courses for credit. They may audit additional courses if they wish. Students also write a Master's thesis, usually after completing their course work.

Different from most other universities, which have their fixed faculty, EPU has the flexibility to invite the best teachers from around the world within their respective special fields. EPU's more than 50 visiting faculty members come from all continents and from a wide variety of disciplines, with real life experience, offering a great variety in perspectives. As a practical demonstration of cultural peace, EPU seeks to achieve a geographical and gender balance in its teaching faculty. Efforts are made to include women and lecturers from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The courses equally emphasize theory, concrete illustrations, and practical exercises. The students are encouraged to examine what they have learnt from a personal viewpoint to see what consequences emerge for their own vision, life and work. EPU seeks to train peace practitioners, not only theoreticians. Studying about peace without applying it would be as irresponsible as if a doctor were to study sick patients without helping them to reduce their suffering.

In addition to the courses and workshops taught, a valuable aspect of studying at EPU is the immersion in the culture of a society at peace, and the opportunity to learn also from dialogues with fellow students from around the world. Many alumni have said that the time they spent at EPU was one of the best experiences in their lives. This has an effect beyond mere book learning. It is remarkable, for example, that Alexander Yakovlev, Gorbachev's closest adviser and the key architect of perestroika, was a member of the



first delegation of thirty Soviet students who studied a year in the United States with a Fulbright fellowship in 1958. The few thousand dollars for that scholarship did more to end the cold war than billions spent for weapons, which only exacerbated tensions.

At a weekly seminar, students and faculty discuss and compare causes of war, escalation, efforts at mediation, and reconciliation in conflicts and wars in the South, East and West (especially in the Great Lakes region of Africa, in the Balkans, Middle East and Central Asia, and in Northern Ireland and the Basque region of Spain). The key question

is how wars begin and end. We are fortunate to have students from the South (Africa, Asia and Latin America), as well as the East (Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union) and West (Western Europe and North America). Most of our students have already several years of professional experience in governments, NGOs or business. That offers the opportunity to draw on their personal experiences. New insights often emerge when people compare different experiences and approaches toward solutions of problems. At the beginning of each seminar, one or more participants present a conflict with which they are particularly familiar, its causes, development, and attempted solutions (whether successful or not) and efforts to achieve reconciliation. The discussions will not be limited to violent conflicts, one can learn just as much from conflicts where violence was avoided in time, for example how a civil war was avoided by granting a minority the autonomy it desired.

In addition to attending courses, students get to know each other closely and conclude friendships for a lifetime. In summer of 2007, EPU had 50 students from 30 countries from five continents, about half from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Many former students said that studying at EPU was the best time of their life. We are happy that many of our former students now have successful careers in international organizations, NGOs, businesses, universities, or work with their governments.

The MA program at EPU is designed to give a comprehensive overview over all aspects of peace. It is our intention to offer specialization in specific areas in a future doctoral program in peace studies.

A List of Recommended Literature

Barash, David, and Charles Webel (2002) *Peace and Conflict Studies*, Sage Publications. A comprehensive introductory textbook to peace studies.

Chetkoff-Yanoov, Benjamin (1996) *Social Work Approaches to Conflict Resolution: Making Fighting Obsolete*. Binghamton, New York: The Haworth Press. A good introduction with a wealth of personal experience.

Curle, Adam (1995) *Another Way: Positive Response to Contemporary Violence*. Oxford: Jon Carpenter. Based on experience from India and Pakistan, Nigeria, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Ireland, Sri Lanka, Yugoslavia to mention some. Equally recommended is his classic, *Making Peace* (Tavistock, 1971)

Fischer, Dietrich (1993), *Nonmilitary Aspects of Security: A Systems Approach*. Aldershot: Dartmouth. Covers strategies for nonmilitary defense, development, protecting the environment and human rights, at the individual, local, national and global level.



- Galtung, Johan (2004) *Transcend and Transform: An Introduction to Conflict Work*. London: Pluto Press. This book presents a carefully developed theoretical framework, the TRANSCEND approach, and illustrates it with numerous concrete cases based on five decades of experience as mediator, ranging from conflicts at the personal to the global level.
- Galtung, Johan (2000) *Conflict Transformation By Peaceful Means: the TRANSCEND Approach*. Geneva: United Nations. 50 concrete lessons in practical conflict transformation, with exercises for self-study. Available for free at www.transcend.org, where literature on peace and conflict from many authors is posted for free downloading.
- Galtung, Johan (1996) *Peace By Peaceful Means*. Thousand Oaks, California, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications. A comprehensive and concise overview of Peace Theories, Conflict Theories, Development Theories and Civilization Theories (roughly corresponding to direct violence, conflict transformation, structural violence and cultural violence).
- Galtung, Johan (1984) *There Are Alternatives! Four Roads to Peace and Security*. Nottingham: Spokesman. Covers neutrality, nonoffensive and nonmilitary defense, domestic peace, and usefulness for others as national security strategies.
- Lederach, John Paul (1995) *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures*. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse Univ. Press. Based on the author's extensive experience in Latin America, Asia and Africa, and his "elicitive" approach to understand the goals of the parties.
- Mitchell, Christopher and Banks, Michael (1996), *Handbook of Conflict Resolution: The Analytical Problem-Solving Approach*. London: Pinter. Focuses on bringing conflict parties together for a joint workshop, solving problems together.
- Rosenberg, Marshall B. (2004) *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Compassion*. Del Mar, California: Puddle Dancer Press. Focuses on Behavior as a factor in conflict and provides many striking examples of how hostility was turned into friendship.
- Ross, Marc Howard (1993) *The Management of Conflict: Interpretations and Interests in Comparative Perspective*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press. Addresses the assumptions, conscious and subconscious, participants and mediators have about conflicts, and the conditions for a constructive conflict society.
- Sandole, Denis, and van der Merwe, H., eds. (1993) *Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*. Manchester and New York: Manchester Univ. Press. An introduction to different approaches in the field of conflict resolution.
- Thompson, W. S. and Jensen, K. M. eds. (1992) *Approaches to Peace: An Intellectual Map*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace. An outline of mainstream approaches to peace.
- Wehr, Paul, Burgess, Heidi and Burgess, Guy ed. (1994) *Justice Without Violence*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner. Describes nonviolent action against direct and structural violence, in general, in Nicaragua, Eastern Europe, ex-Soviet Union, China, Africa, the Middle East and India.