**Course Title: War Economy and the Conflict Trap**

**Discipline:** Peace and Conflict Studies  
**Level:** MS   
**Course Duration:** 16 Weeks  
**Credits:** 3

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**Course Description:**

This course examines the political economy of armed conflict, focusing on how war economies emerge, function, and perpetuate cycles of violence (the "conflict trap"). Students will analyze the interplay between economic interests, governance, and violent conflict, assessing policies and interventions aimed at breaking these cycles.

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of this course, students will

1. Understand the economic dimensions of armed conflict.
2. Analyze how war economies sustain violence and undermine peace.
3. Evaluate the role of local and global actors (warlords, corporations, states) in conflict economies.

**Week-by-Week Course Outline:**

**Week 1:** Introduction to War Economies

* Definitions: war economy, shadow economy, conflict trap
* Key theoretical perspectives (greed vs. grievance, political economy of conflict)

**Week 2**: Globalization and Conflict Financing

* Transnational networks (arms dealers, mercenaries, dark web markets)
* Case study: Syrian conflict and foreign funding

**Week 3:** The Role of Great Powers & Proxy WarsS

* Cold War legacies (Afghanistan, Nicaragua)
* Contemporary cases (Ukraine, Yemen)

**Week 4:** The Conflict Trap

* How wars become self-sustaining
* Case studies: DRC, Colombia, Afghanistan

**Week 5:** Resource Wars & Extractive Industries

* Diamonds," oil, minerals, and conflict financing
* Case study: Sierra Leone, Angola

**Week 6:** Illicit Trade & Shadow Networks

* Drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and human trafficking
* Case study: Syria’s war economy

**Week 7:** Role of External Actors

* Foreign governments, multinational corporations, and mercenaries
* Sanctions, embargoes, and their effectiveness

**Week 8:** Warlords, Rebels, and Criminal Networks

* How armed groups fund themselves (taxation, looting, kidnapping)
* Case study: Al-Qaeda and ISIS’s economic model

**Week 9:** State Collapse & Informal Governance

* Parallel economies in failed states (Somalia, Libya)
* The role of corruption and kleptocracy

**Week 10 & 11:** Post-War Economic Recovery

* DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration) challenges
* Economic diversification vs. resource curse

**Week 12:** International Interventions & Peacebuilding

* UN sanctions, Kimberley Process, and accountability mechanisms
* Critiques of neoliberal peacebuilding

**Week 13 & 14:** Alternative Approaches

* Local peace economies, community-based recovery
* Case study: Rwanda’s post-genocide economic reforms

**Week 15:** Climate Change & Conflict Economies

* Scarcity, displacement, and new war economies

**Week 16:** Emerging Trends (Cyber Wars, AI, and Conflict Finance)

* Cryptocurrencies, dark web markets, and digital warfare

**Week 17 & 18:** Student Presentations & Debates

**Suggested Readings**

* **Duffield, M.** Global Governance and the New Wars (2001).
* **Harvey, D.** The New Imperialism (2003).
* **Pugh, M.** Whose Peace? Critical Perspectives on the Political Economy of Peacebuilding (2008).
* **Sharman, J.** The Despot’s Guide to Wealth Management (2017).
* **Collier, P.** The Bottom Billion (2007)
* **Le Billon, P.** Wars of Plunder (2012)
* **Keen, D.** Conflict & Collusion in Sierra Leone (2005)
* **Andreas, P.** Illicit Globalization (2013)
* **Duffield, M.** Global Governance and the New Wars (2001)
* **Nitzan, J. & Bichler, S.** The Global Political Economy of Israel (2002)