The birthplace of the nation-state and multi-national empires, Central and Eastern Europe is unique in the world for its heterogeneous mix of peoples who have long identified as distinct nations, ethnic groups and other ascriptively defined groups. It is also unique for its long history of conflict management. From the recognition of religious minorities under the Ottoman Empire and the protection of certain groups in the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia to the modern interventions of NATO and the European Union in post-communist Europe, western governments have a storied history of attempting to resolve the tension between state power and popular movements using methods ranging from ethnic partition, military intervention and ethnic power-sharing to the granting of cultural or language rights—with varying degrees of success. The past century alone has borne witness to three major periods of upheaval in region. Two of these—the fall of the Habsburg, Ottoman, German and Russian Empires at the end of World War I and the fall of the Soviet, Czechoslovak and Yugoslav socialist ethn federalations at the end of the Cold War—coincided with an upsurge of nationalist movements whose leaders sought to alter existing state borders or create new ones. In recent years, populist movements have also emerged in Poland, Hungary, Russia, Macedonia, and Serbia—as popular discontent with neo-liberalism and technocratic governance under European Union suzerainty grows apace.

Given that the region is currently grappling with many of the same kinds of conflicts of the interwar period, scholars would benefit from examining Europe’s historical record to learn which tools are most likely to succeed in resolving sectarian conflicts today. After World War I, the victorious Allied Powers redrew the political boundaries of Eastern Europe’s multi-national empires and forever altered the fate of its people. To prevent ethnic retributions in the wake of this political settlement, the Allied Powers set up a system of minority protection under the League of Nations. In the end, the League failed to prevent the persecution of minorities in Poland, Hungary, Albania, and Romania in the 1920s and 1930s. Populism, a nascent force in interwar Europe, was quickly diverted into fascism in several East European countries.

Questions of ethnic conflict and minority protection reemerged in the 1990s as the European Union prepared to open its doors to ten countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Many of these countries contained minorities that had endured decades of economic or social discrimination. In the context of political transition, numerous self-identified nations and groups have sought self-determination in response to ethnic fears or economic opportunities—in some cases leading to violence. To ensure the stability of the region and prevent a tidal wave of migrants in the wake of EU enlargement, the U.S. and West European governments worked closely with NATO, the EU, the UN, the Council of Europe, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to ameliorate sectarian tensions in the region. Today, the EU and NATO continue to search for solutions to ongoing conflicts in former Soviet Republics of Ukraine and Georgia as well as the new Balkans states of Kosovo and Macedonia. This course examines the successes and failures of Europe’s long history of conflict management to see whether lessons can be drawn from earlier periods of conflict.
management that can help policy makers forge a stable peace in affected countries today. We also assess the newer threat posed by populist movements in order to identify what, if anything, can be done to ameliorate conflict associated with populism.

The goals of the course are to impart upon students both a theoretical and practical understanding of issues surrounding conflict management. The course begins with concepts and definitions of minorities, ethnic groups, and nations. We then consider how these fuel social movements by exploring the factors, actors and processes associated with the emergence of both nationalist and ethnic conflict, and more recently, populist movements. In subsequent weeks, we review the ways in which these movements have shaped states of the region as well as strategies undertaken by the international community to reduce tensions that are associated with these movements—in both historical and contemporary Europe. Third and finally, we assess the use of conflict management principles utilized by policy makers to manage these tensions.

The overriding goal of the course is to give students the tools to analyze critically the origins of nationalist, ethnic, and populist conflict and evaluate competing methods of resolving these struggles. We also interrogate the history of conflict management in the region to assess the record of success of these competing methods. The aim is to explore the intersection of theory and practice in order to impart to students the skills to devise strategies to overcome barriers to conflict management. This experience (intertwining theory and practice) will ideally suggest ways in which future security regimes can be designed to reduce existing conflicts while preventing the outbreak of new ones.

Aims
The course’s main aim is to provide students with a sound understanding of:

1) Theories of nationalism, ethnic conflict, populism and conflict management
2) The role of nationalism and geopolitics in conflicts in Eurasia
3) What makes third party conflict mediation successful
4) The origins, successes, and failures of European security regimes
5) The theory and practice of conflict management strategies

Learning Outcomes
By the end of this course, students will be able to:

✓ Distinguish the causal logics of competing theories of ethnic and nationalist conflict
✓ Assess the explanatory power of ethnic conflict theories using concrete cases
✓ Undertake comparative analysis of different cases of conflict management in different countries and historical periods
✓ Identify the origins and dynamics of specific cases of conflict
✓ Critically evaluate competing solutions for conflict management
✓ Offer policy recommendations for designing regional security regimes

Course Requirements

(1) **Mid-term Exam (30%).** Students will be given an **in-class essay examination** that tests their understanding of different theories of ethnic conflict and peace mediation, using case evidence in Eastern Europe as well as material covered in lectures and readings.

(2) **Final Exam (30%).** As an alternative to an **in-class final exam**, students may write a research paper on a subject related to ethnic conflict management. Should you choose this
option, you must consult with me no later than the fourth week; to avoid delays with the
MA thesis period, this option is not encouraged unless the paper is directly related to the
student’s thesis.

(3) **Class Participation (10%).** Students are expected to attend all the seminars and participate
in class discussions.

(4) **Student Presentations (30%).** Students will provide an assessment of one conflict, either
historical or contemporary, in the Eurasian region. Students will be assigned randomly
into teams, and will be graded on both their participation as part of the team (15%) and as
an individual player (15%) (More details about the presentation will be given in the course
itself.)