

LECTURE / DISCUSSION / DEBATE
PEACE STUDIES THEORY

Terms and concepts to know:

Interdisciplinary
Human rights
Pacifism
Positive peace

Social justice
Negative peace
Personal transformation
Value

Discussion and study questions:

1. What does it mean to take an “interdisciplinary” approach to the study of IR theory? Does this make IR theory easier or more complicated in terms of understanding?
2. Discuss some of the criticisms of peace studies theory. Do you believe that today’s world makes this type of theory “unrealistic”?
3. Under what conditions would the nonviolent approach to resolving conflict be most likely to succeed and most likely to fail?
4. James Whitehead asks: Why might it be argued that an intellectual focus on the conditions of peace is more appropriate than a more traditional focus on the conditions giving rise to war? What are his central arguments and do you agree?
5. Examine the central tenets of Ghandi’s way to peace. Which aspects seem workable and possible to integrate into human thinking? Which seem too idealistic?
6. What are the main points are raised by Swanson’s article “Why War is Not Inevitable”? What concepts in peace studies theory stand out in this article and seem legitimate? What do you think could be dismissed?
7. According to *World Beyond War* Executive Director David Swanson, many anti-war successes are little known by the public. Why is this? Listen to the 55 minute podcast to find out!
8. Ben Dangl argues that looking “back to the history and political vision of the demand for a [U.S. Department of Peace] offers methods for transforming our militaristic culture and provides a political toolbox for peace rather than perpetual war.” In your mind, what is the likelihood that such a department could be created in the U.S. government? Why or why not?
9. Dumasy argues supporting peace is more important than ever. Why? Do her arguments appear valid? Why or why not?

Readings:

Text. *Conflict and Cooperation*, Chapter 10.

Video:

Voices in Wartime.