

FALL-2025  
Course 26886 – LAS 4935  
Course 26884 - LAS 6938

## Knowledge, Conflict and Environmental Peacebuilding *-Honoring the Centenary of Orlando Fals Borda (1925-2025)-<sup>1</sup>*

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392 Grinter Hall

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 9:30 am-11:30am (and with an appointment)

**Class Meeting Times and Location:**

Friday 12:50 – 3:50pm (F- Period 6-8).  
Grinter Hall 376

**NOTES:**

- Graduate Seminar open to advanced undergraduate students
- This course fulfills the requisites for international studies.
- Completing this seminar will meet the writing requirements for UFL students.
- This course fulfills the requisites for students seeking a minor in Latin American Studies

**Course Description:**

Latin American societies and their ecosystems face a complex web of interconnected risks. The region remains the most dangerous for environmental leaders, with increasing conflicts over land, water, and resource extraction. The recent COP16 Conference introduced the concept of “*Peace with Nature*”, highlighting the multiple crises and socio-environmental

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<sup>1</sup> Several of the planned sessions, which include topics directly related to the work of Orlando Fals Borda, will be held in collaboration with academics from universities in Latin America (Colombia, Argentina, Mexico, and other countries). These sessions, presentations and speakers will be confirmed at the beginning of the semester.

conflicts affecting both the region and global ecosystems. To build a more just and sustainable future, it is crucial to explore pathways for social justice and environmental peacebuilding—where diverse knowledge systems and ways of life can coexist and thrive.

This course offers an interdisciplinary exploration of participatory action research (PAR) as both a method and an epistemology rooted in the legacy of Orlando Fals Borda and expanded through contemporary debates in science and technology studies (STS), environmental justice, and decolonial theory.

Students will critically examine dominant forms of knowledge production -particularly those linked to ecological destruction, militarization, and post-conflict contexts- while engaging with alternative frameworks that emerge from peasant and Indigenous communities. Through historical and contemporary case studies, including participatory mapping, truth commissions, and territorial struggles, the course interrogates how knowledge is legitimized, contested, and mobilized in contexts of environmental and epistemic violence.

A strong emphasis is placed on co-learning and dialogic pedagogies inspired by Fals Borda's work, with hands-on activities such as mapping controversies, participatory labs, and a One Health case study exercise that bridges ecological, social, and health dimensions. Ultimately, the course aims to equip students with methodological tools and critical frameworks to co-create situated, reparative, and socially transformative knowledge.

### **Audience**

This course is designed for graduate (and advanced undergraduate) students in fields such as political science, environmental studies, conflict studies, and international relations. It aligns with the interdisciplinary goals of several master's programs in the University of Florida. It provides students with analytical tools to navigate the intersection of environmental governance, development, and conservation, fostering critical engagement with pressing socio-environmental challenges.

### **Learning Objectives**

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

- Understand the possibility of existing connections between critical Latin American social theory with recent works on environmental peacebuilding, in response to violence (physical, political, epistemic) and extractivism.
- Analyze participatory and community-based epistemologies as responses to scientific and technological knowledge that have contributed to environmental violence in contexts of war, displacement and dispossession.

- Study the possibilities of dialogues and tensions between scientific knowledge and vernacular knowledge, in the framework of extractivism and struggles for ecological justice.
- Investigate how local communities participate and offer solutions in response to environmental harm and exclusion in contexts of war. Understanding the scope and challenges of approaches such as “nature-based solutions” and “rights of nature”.
- Study and apply methodological tools from participatory action research (PAR), participatory mapping, science and technology studies (STS), and mapping of controversies, to co-produce knowledge and engage with real-world cases of environmental conflict, resistance, and peacebuilding.

Students will be evaluated on their ability to critically engage with complex environmental controversies, synthesize diverse knowledge systems, analyze participatory methodologies, and communicate arguments effectively through written, oral, and visual formats.

Assignments will emphasize case study analysis, mapping controversies, and interdisciplinary research methodologies.

### Detailed Assignments

Assignment	Description	Weight
<b>Forum Contribution – Posts Based on Readings (Canvas)</b>	For each class, students must: (a) Identify and copy a key quote from the readings, placing it in quotation marks and citing the page number. (b) Provide a brief personal reflection on the readings and/or videos, discussing connections, critiques, or insights inspired by the material. These contributions should be concise but thoughtful, demonstrating engagement with course themes.	20%
<b>Reading Discussion Leader &amp; Questions</b>	Each student will lead one class discussion by preparing a brief (5–10 minute) introduction to the key themes of the assigned readings. Each student should offer topics—for example, through questions—for discussion and conversation about the materials and concepts read.	15%
<b>Exercise – Participatory Mapping &amp; Mapping a Controversy</b>	Students will select a case study involving an environmental or social conflict (e.g., mining conflicts, water governance, biodiversity conservation, or climate policy). Departing from the case, students will work on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing a participatory mapping activity</li> <li>- Developing a mapping of controversy method</li> </ul> Students can use community drawing and mapping (cases from literature, or worked on in class); and also visual tools (such as concept maps, actor-network diagrams, or digital cartography). The aim is to analyze and illustrate the relationships between key actors, interests, scientific debates, policies, and	20%

	narratives. A short written reflection (750 words) will accompany the map, explaining its significance and the insights gained. The objective is to discuss the differences and complementarities between PAR methods and controversy mapping.	
<b>Exercise – One Health Approach Analysis</b>	Students will apply a One Health framework to a selected case study that connects human, animal, and environmental health (e.g., deforestation and zoonotic diseases, pesticide exposure and public health, antibiotic resistance in food systems). The analysis should identify the key ecological, social, and economic dimensions of the issue and propose interdisciplinary strategies to address it. Students will submit a 750–1000-word report integrating course concepts and research.	15%
<b>Class Attendance and Participation</b>	Active participation in class discussions, group activities, and exercises is expected. Students should demonstrate engagement with readings, ask questions, and contribute thoughtfully to debates. Attendance is essential, and unexcused absences may affect this portion of the grade.	10%
<b>Final Project – Case Study Analysis</b>	A 3,000-word research-based final paper integrating course concepts to analyze an environmental and social issue in-depth. Students will select a case study (approved by the instructor), apply relevant theoretical frameworks (e.g., political ecology, Science and Technology Studies, environmental justice, decolonial approach), and use empirical evidence to support their analysis. The paper should include a discussion of key actors, knowledge production, governance structures, and socio-environmental dynamics.	20%

### Grading Scale:

A 94 – 100%	C 74 – 76%
A- 90 – 93%	C- 70 – 73%
B+ 87 – 89%	D+ 67 – 69%
B 84 – 86%	D 64 – 66%
B- 80 – 83%	D- 60 – 63%
C+ 77 – 79%	E <60

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

**Course Outline** (*The schedule and sessions may be subject to change*).

Date	Topic	Reading(s)
22-Ago	Introduction to the course. Critical epistemologies against violence. Peace with nature, environmental peace, and environmental justice. Fals Borda's critique of dominant knowledge and the call for participatory, situated science. Use STS to contextualize PAR as both a method and epistemology for environmental justice.	Matthew, R. A., & Brown, O. (2021). The past and future(s) of environmental peacebuilding. <i>International Affairs</i> , 97(1), 1-17. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iaa188">https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iaa188</a>
29 Ago	Epistemologies of war and peace. Knowledge & Ecological Destruction. Historical case studies through the lens of epistemic violence. How PAR can expose militarized knowledge systems and co-create knowledge with affected communities.	<p>Tucker, R. P., &amp; McNeill, J. R. (2025). <i>War and the Environment. A Companion to Global Environmental History</i>, 314-330.</p> <p>Dunlap, A. (2022). The self-reinforcing cycle of ecological degradation and repression: Revealing the ecological cost of policing and militarization. In <i>Enforcing ecocide: Power, policing &amp; planetary militarization</i> (pp. 153-176). Cham: Springer International Publishing.</p> <p>Travis, C. (2024). <i>Environment as a Weapon: Geographies, Histories and Literature</i>. Springer Nature. (Chapter to be defined).</p>
5-Sep	Fals Borda's contribution to peasant studies in Latin America (OFB)	<p>Fals-Borda, O. (1988). <i>Knowledge &amp; People's Power</i>. Apex Press.</p> <p>Gutiérrez, J. (2016). Participatory Action Research (Par) And The Colombian Peasant Reserve Zones: The Legacy Of Orlando Fals Borda. <i>Policy &amp; practice: a development education review</i>, (22).</p>

12-Sep	Dialogue between Mapping Controversies and IAP (PAR). Contrast technocratic vs. community-generated maps. Critique positivist claims to “objectivity” using STS. OFB' tools for participatory mapping	<p>Elam, M., Solli, A., &amp; Mäkitalo, Å. (2019). Socioscientific issues via controversy mapping: Bringing actor-network theory into the science classroom with digital technology. <i>Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education</i>, 40(1), 61-77.</p> <p>Cruz, V. (2024). Carlos Walter Porto-Gonçalves. La Amazonía y la construcción de un horizonte metodológico descolonial del hacer geográfico. <i>Utopía y praxis latinoamericana: revista internacional de filosofía iberoamericana y teoría social</i>, 29(107), 9.</p> <p>Macal, C. (2024). Body mapping: A decolonial method towards intergenerational healing. <i>Social Science &amp; Medicine</i>, 352, 117021.</p> <p>Cruz-López, L., Digón-Regueiro, P., &amp; Méndez-García, R. M. (2022). Social cartography as a participatory process for mapping experiences of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship: an account of the design. <i>International Journal of Research &amp; Method in Education</i>, 45(2), 212-224.</p>
19-Sep	PAR methods & science in Truth Commissions. How PAR methodologies can inform forensic ecology and truth-seeking processes. Whose knowledge is legitimized in reparations processes.	<p>Lyons, K. (2023). “Nature” and territories as victims: Decolonizing Colombia's transitional justice process. <i>American Anthropologist</i>, 125(1), 63-76.</p> <p>Killean, R. (2021). Imagining future reparations for environmental destruction. In <i>Futures of International Criminal Justice</i> (pp. 136-156). Routledge.</p> <p>Killean, R. (2021). From ecocide to eco-sensitivity: ‘greening’ reparations at the International Criminal Court. <i>The International Journal of Human Rights</i>, 25(2), 323-347.</p>
26-Sep	PAR Methodologies' Lab (OFB)	Lomeli, J. D. R., & Rappaport, J. (2018). Imagining Latin American social science from the global south: Orlando Fals Borda and participatory action research. <i>Latin American Research Review</i> , 53(3), 597-612.
3-Oct	Indigenous knowledge & nature as a subject of rights. "Ecocide" debates & struggles for epistemic and environmental justice. How critical thinking (Fals Borda, etc.) envisioned reparations beyond	<p>Rodeiro, M. (2024). Responding to ecocide through transitional justice. <i>Diálogos</i>, 47-79.</p> <p>Branch, A., &amp; Minkova, L. (2023). Ecocide, the anthropocene, and the international criminal court. <i>Ethics &amp; International Affairs</i>, 37(1), 51-79.</p>

	material terms. Emerging critical "reparations" approaches	
10-Oct	Fals-Borda, Epistemology in Latin America and/or Dialogues with decolonial theory (OFB)	<p>Fals Borda, O. (2015). <i>Por una sociología sentipensante para América Latina</i>. CLACSO (1a). Siglo XXI Editores. (Pages to be confirmed).</p> <p>Herrera, Nicolas (2023), Apuntes sobre la ciencia moderna. En: Herrera, Nicolás. <i>Reflexiones sobre la modernidad y la noción de «sujeto» de la epistemología tradicional</i>. APEX Udelar, pp. 112-142.</p>
17-Oct	Homecoming week – No class	
24-Oct	PAR methods, feminist and chicanx dialogues. How local women's and migrants' knowledges shape alternatives and solutions for current inequalities and crises (OFB)	Lorenzetti, L., & Walsh, C. A. (2014). Is there an 'F' in your PAR? Understanding, teaching and doing action research. <i>The Canadian Journal of Action Research</i> , 15(1), 50-63.
31-Oct	Socio-spatial and territorial studies. PAR methods and territorial studies in Latin America (OFB)	<p>Fals Borda, O. (2000). <i>Acción y espacio: autonomías en la nueva república</i>. Tercer Mundo Editores. (Pages to be confirmed).</p> <p>Fals Borda, O. (2001). Kasiyadu: registro del reciente despertar territorial en Colombia. <i>Revista Colombiana de Sociología</i>, 6(2), 57-80</p> <p>Arango, V. M. (2024). Fals Borda y la comprensión raizal/decolonial de las regiones y las provincias. Trasegar por páramos, riberas y humedales. <i>Geopolítica (s)</i>, 15(2), 449.</p>
7-Nov	Analyze how "green" agendas reproduce colonial control. Introduce participatory conservation models and the role of counter-cartographies.	<p>Dutta, A., &amp; Simlai, T. (2022). If the army cuts trees, why can't we? Resource extraction, hunting and the impacts of militaries on biodiversity conservation. In <i>Enforcing Ecocide: Power, Policing &amp; Planetary Militarization</i> (pp. 199-225). Cham: Springer International Publishing.</p> <p>García, N. A., &amp; Fold, N. (2022). The colonality of power on the green frontier: Commodities and violent territorialisation in Colombia's Amazon. <i>Geoforum</i>, 128, 192-201.</p> <p>Corredor-Garcia, J., &amp; López Vega, F. (2024). The logic of "War on Deforestation": a military response to climate change in the Colombian Amazon. <i>Alternatives</i>, 49(4), 325-343.</p>

14-Nov	Pedagogies & how to decolonize knowledge through dialogic education and co-learning in environmental peacebuilding.	<p>Millican, J., Kasumagić-Kafedžić, L., Masabo, F., &amp; Almanza, M. (2021). Pedagogies for peacebuilding in higher education: How and why should higher education institutions get involved in teaching for peace?. <i>International review of education</i>, 67(5), 569-590.</p> <p>Brantmeier, E. J. (2013). Toward a critical peace education for sustainability. <i>Journal of peace education</i>, 10(3), 242-258.</p>
21-Nov	Analysis & One Health approach exercise - Case study connecting human, animal, and environmental health (e.g., deforestation and zoonotic diseases, pesticide exposure and public health, antibiotic resistance in food systems). Identify the key ecological, social, and economic dimensions of the issue, proposing interdisciplinary strategies	<p>Randazzo, E. (2021). The local, the 'indigenous' and the limits of rethinking peacebuilding. <i>Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding</i>, 15(2), 141-160.</p> <p>Mato, D. (2016). Indigenous people in Latin America: Movements and universities. achievements, challenges, and intercultural conflicts. <i>Journal of Intercultural studies</i>, 37(3), 211-233.</p> <p>Cortina, R., &amp; Earl, A. (2021). Embracing interculturality and Indigenous knowledge in Latin American higher education. <i>Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education</i>, 51(8), 1208-1225.</p> <p>Cediel-Becerra, N. M., Prieto-Quintero, S., Garzon, A. D. M., Villafañe-Izquierdo, M., Rúa-Bustamante, C. V., Jimenez, N., ... &amp; Garnier, J. (2022). Woman-sensitive one health perspective in four tribes of indigenous people from Latin America: Arhuaco, Wayuú, Nahua, and Kamëntsá. <i>Frontiers in Public Health</i>, 10, 774713.</p>
29-Nov	<b>Thanksgiving</b> - No class	
6-dic	<b>Reading days</b>	
7-13-dic	Final essays	

## Complementary bibliography

Herrera Farfán, N. A., & López Guzmán, L. (2017). *Ciencia, compromiso y cambio social: Textos de Orlando Fals Borda. Antología*. Montevideo: Editorial El Colectivo.

Venturini, T., & Munk, A. K. (2021). *Controversy mapping: A field guide*. John Wiley & Sons.



Swain, A., & Öjendal, J. (Eds.). (2018). *Routledge handbook of environmental conflict and peacebuilding*. New York: Routledge.

### **Attendance Policy, Class Expectations, and Make-Up Policy**

- **Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory, and you are responsible for all announcements made in class.
- **Class Rules:** To maintain a focused and productive learning environment, please avoid using cell phones during class sessions to the maximum extent possible. Cell phones should only be used in cases of emergency or when specifically instructed by the instructor for academic purposes.
- **Assignment Submission:** Please ensure that all work is submitted on time. If you encounter any issues or foresee a delay, contact me immediately. In extreme cases, we can explore flexible alternatives to complete the task.

### **Students Requiring Accommodation**

Students with disabilities who encounter learning barriers and wish to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center at <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important to share your accommodation letter with the instructor and discuss your access needs as early as possible in the semester.

### **UF Evaluations Process**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on providing feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Notifications will be sent when the evaluation period opens, and evaluations can be completed through email, Canvas course menu.

### **University Honesty Policy**

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: 'On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.'" You are also obligated to report any conditions that facilitate academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs.

### **Counseling and Wellness Center**

For support, contact the Counseling and Wellness Center at <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>.