

# Territorial Autonomy as a Tool for Diversity Management: Lessons from the Åland Example

**Online course, 5 ECTS**

**Teachers:** Associate Professor of International Law, JD Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark

**Participants:** Max 20

**Charge:** Tuition fee 90 €

**Application by:** 4.9.2017

**Duration:** 18.9.2017 – 11.12.2017

**Format:** The course will be taught online on the digital learning platform “Fronter” through rich selections of resources including course literature, audio and video material and a discussion forum. All participants will get log-in details and further instructions upon registration. The course presupposes an interactive use of the digital course platform by the students. The language of instruction is English. The course is offered in cooperation with the Åland Islands Peace Institute.

**Prerequisites:** The course approaches territorial autonomy from an interdisciplinary perspective, focusing on law and political science. A bachelor’s degree in the humanities (political science, peace and conflict studies, international law, public administration or other relevant disciplines) or equivalent experience and a proficient command of English are recommended prerequisites for successful participation.

**Learning objectives:** The course is an introduction to territorial autonomy and the so-called “Åland Example”. The aim of the course is to provide participants with a broad academic framework for discussing territorial autonomy from different perspectives, among others against the background of concepts such as self-determination, power-sharing and minority rights. After completion of the course the student should:

- have a solid knowledge about territorial autonomy and the Åland Islands case based on a broad academic framework of different perspectives
- be able to relate the concept of autonomy to related concepts such as power-sharing, self-determination and minority rights
- be well acquainted with the characteristics of the Åland Island’s special status regarding demilitarisation, neutralisation and cultural and linguistic safe-guards
- have knowledge about the processes of development of the Åland autonomy within the Finnish national political system
- be able to critically analyse and employ mechanisms of territorial autonomy to different international situations, and
- be able to formulate, analyse and discuss central theoretical concepts of territorial conflict management.





**Contents:** The course encompasses 5 modules, as well as introductory reading materials and a final essay of 4000 words.

- Political Power-Sharing and Institutional Solutions for Autonomy
- Linguistic Safeguards, the Right of Domicile and Diversity Management
- Security issues: Demilitarisation and Neutralisation
- The Challenge of Multi-Level Governance and Regional Integration
- Tools for Conflict Resolution

**Approach:** The Åland Example is used as the main case study. We will discuss the demilitarisation and neutralisation, the autonomy regime as well the cultural and linguistic safeguards pertaining to Åland. A focus will be on the development of the regime over time, including more recent shifts in the regime. The course will also discuss the relevance of territorial autonomy as a possible tool for conflict resolution. Students shall be encouraged to critically reflect upon the relevance of autonomy as a potential solution to ethno-political conflicts.

Successful participants will be awarded 5 credit points based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). The workload thus corresponds to approximately 132 hours of work. Student work includes compulsory reading, audio and video material, regular participation in forum discussions and short essays to be completed within every module. A final essay (4000 words) is due at the end of the course.

**Examination:** A final grade on grading scale A-E (Where A is the highest possible grade) will be awarded for the final essay upon completion of the course. Regular and substantive participation within deadlines across all modules is a prerequisite for being able to submit the final essay.

**Readings:** All compulsory course material will be provided on Fronter. Prior to the start of Module I, participants will be required to read two introductory texts (ca 40 pages).

**Contact person:** Please contact either Research Coordinator Elias Vartio (Elias@peace.ax) at the Åland Islands Peace Institute if you have questions about the course. Associate professor Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark will be the main course teacher. The homepage of the Åland Islands Peace Institute can be accessed through [www.peace.ax](http://www.peace.ax).

*An overview of the course content can be found on the following pages.*





## **Overview of the e-course on territorial autonomies:**

*Prior to the start of Module I participants will be required to read two introductory texts (ca 40 pages)*

### **Module 1 – The Political Dimensions**

#### **Political Power-Sharing and Institutional Solutions for Territorial Autonomy**

In Module I territorial autonomy is placed in the broader debate about accommodation of difference and identity, center and periphery, majorities and minorities, territory and borders and in the evolution of the idea of the state, the nation state and self-determination in international law and relations. Also processes that make territorial autonomy work and evolve will be more closely examined in this module. How is the balance in power-sharing achieved and how does this relate to the democracy and human rights requirements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

### **Module 2 – The Cultural Dimensions**

#### **Linguistic Safeguards, the Right of Domicile and Diversity Management**

In Module II the core identity attributes of language and culture common to most minorities are discussed. The different ways in which these have been protected in territorial autonomy arrangements is examined closer. The right of domicile on Åland is discussed against international and European norms.

### **Module 3 – The Security Dimensions**

#### **Security issues: Demilitarisation and Neutralisation**

In Module III the focus is on the security aspects of territorial autonomy arrangements. In the module the background and content of the Åland island demilitarization regime, which was the first step towards an internationalization of the issues pertaining to the Åland Islands, is presented. Also historical and contemporary challenges to Åland's demilitarization and neutralization regime will be explored.

### **Module 4 – The Larger International Context**

#### **The Challenge of Multi-level Governance and Regional Integration**

The focus in Module IV is on the recent processes where decision-making and legitimation processes take place both at an international (global or regional), as well as at the national and sub-national levels.





## Module 5 – Looking for Durable Solutions

### Tools for Conflict Resolution

Finally, in Module V the relevance of the idea of territorial autonomy in efforts for conflict management and resolution is investigated in greater depth. Several case studies are included in this module.

<b>Important dates</b>	
<b>4.9.2017</b>	Deadline for registrations
<b>18.9 – 1.10.2017</b>	Module 1 - the political dimensions
<b>2.10. – 15.10.2017</b>	Module 2 – the cultural dimensions
<b>16.10. – 29.10.2017</b>	Module 3 – the security dimension
<b>30.10. – 12.11.2017</b>	Module 4 – multi-level governance
<b>13.11. – 26.11.2017</b>	Module 5 – tools for conflict resolution
<b>11.12.2017</b>	Deadline of the final assignment

