

CONF 659
LEADERSHIP IN CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND RESOLUTION

Semester: Spring 2009
Dates: March 21, April 4 and 5, April 18, May 2 and 3
Class Time: 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Location: Arlington: Original Building 303
Instructor: Robert C. Fisher, JD
703-765-0999, rfisher4@gmu.edu
Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The field of conflict analysis and resolution has focused historically on the role of individuals and groups in the promotion and resolution of conflict. Individuals and groups engage in conflict in a number of settings: home, work place, communities, and political realms. Individuals, acting singularly or in teams, attempt to resolve conflict utilizing a variety of approaches. Frequently, the role of leadership is a missing ingredient in the study of conflict and conflict resolution. For example, we tend to analyze conflict as competing interests, values, and cultures and sometimes deep-rooted needs, and do not consider the role of leadership in relation to those factors. Leadership in conflict situations occurs at the interpersonal, group, and systems level.

We will explore the implications of leadership across a range of conflict scenarios, with an emphasis on collaborative leadership. In many instances, leadership roles are imbedded (and not necessarily visible) in a conflict, and part of the activity in this course will be to examine particular conflicts to determine how the leadership contributed to the emergence, maintenance, and resolution of conflict. Case modeling and experiential learning approaches will be used to emphasize different aspects of leadership roles in conflict. Students also will integrate reflective practice with personal leadership development.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: In this course we will examine the:

- Role of leaders and leadership in conflict and conflict resolution;
- Nature of collaborative leadership;
- Role of culture, gender, and race/ethnicity in leadership;
- Study of leadership; and
- Implications for third party roles.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

1. *Consistent attendance.* Students are expected to attend all weekend sessions for the full time scheduled.
2. *Effective preparation.* Class will involve discussions and activities that depend on preparation.
3. *Course completion.* In keeping with departmental policy, incomplete grades will be given only in cases of personal or immediate family illness.
4. *Integrity* is expected of everyone in all academic work.

5. *Reflective learning.* You are expected to examine your ideas and world perspective.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

1. *Participation.* **15 percent**
Full and Active Participation is expected: class participation and demonstration of familiarity with concepts, theories, and models discussed in the literature and readings. Lively discussion is anticipated. There also may be several discussion topics posted to the course online discussion.

2. *Leadership Interview* **15 percent**
As a means to deepen your understanding of the leadership role, each student will interview a leader. Specific guidelines for conducting the interview will be provided. Due: April 5th.

3. *Book Review* **15 percent**
Readings for each class will be assigned. Each student also will read and report on a book tailored to your individual leadership interests. Specific guidelines will be provided. Due: April 18th.

4. *Leadership in Action Group Project* **25 percent**
Leadership is a group activity. Small groups will be formed during the first class to explore the leadership aspects of a particular conflict. Specific guidelines will be provided. Each student must take an active role and it will be necessary to commit some time outside of scheduled classes to complete the project. The groups also will meet during class. Each group will make a brief presentation of lessons learned to the class. Due: May 4th.

5. *Paper* **25 percent**
Final Paper: A paper (5-10 pages) analyzing a conflict (1) in which you were an actor, or (2) publicized in the media, and the leadership lessons to be learned from it. Due: May 4th. A brief abstract describing the topic and your approach is due no later than April 18th.

READINGS:

Texts

David Chrislip and Carl E. Larson, *Collaborative Leadership: How Citizens And Civic Leaders Can Make A Difference*, Jossey-Bass Publishing Co., 1994.

Brad Jackson and Ken Parry, *A Very Short, Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap Book About Studying Leadership*, Sage Publications, Inc., 2008.

Other Readings

You will be directed to several short articles and resources.

The following "Essays on Leadership" from the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict are highly recommended and can be accessed on line at:

<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/subsites/ccpdc/pubs/essays/esfr.htm>

- Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "Leadership and Conflict"
- Jimmy Carter, "Searching for Peace"
- Mikhail Gorbachev, "On Nonviolent Leadership"
- Desmond Tutu, "Leadership"

CLASS AGENDA

March 21

- Introduction and Expectations
- Overview of Leadership Concepts and Models
- Perspectives on Leadership and Conflict
- Leadership Competencies
- Interview and Book Review Protocols
- Group Projects and Topics
- Reflection

Please be prepared to discuss an example of leadership in interpersonal conflict from your own experience.

Readings:

Boutros-Ghali, "Leadership and Conflict" (recommended)
 Chrislip and Larson, Part One
 Jackson and Parry, pp. 1-60

April 5 and 6

- Culture and Leadership
- Gender Roles in Leadership
- Leadership Competencies
- Group Project Meetings
- Leadership Interview presentations (Email brief write-up to instructor)
- Reflection
- Mid-Course Evaluation

Please be prepared to discuss an example of leadership in an organizational conflict from your own experience.

Reading for Class:

Jackson and Parry, pp. 61-96
 Tutu, "Leadership" (recommended)

April 18

- Leadership in Conflict Settings
- Leadership Competencies
- Book Review Presentations (Email brief write-up to instructor)
- Paper Abstracts (Email write-up to instructor)
- Reflection

Please be prepared to discuss an example of leadership in a community, racial or ethnic conflict from your own experience.

Reading for Class:

Carter, "Searching for Peace" (recommended)
Jackson and Parry, pp. 96-130

May 2 and 3

- Collaborative Leadership – Opportunities and Limits
- Leadership Competencies
- Group Presentations
- Personal Leadership
- Integration
- Reflection
- Course Evaluation

Reading for Class:

Chrislip and Larson, Parts Two and Three
Gorbachev, "On Nonviolent Leadership" (recommended)

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES AND ASSISTANCE

- If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.
- The Writing Center is available to all Mason students and offers online and individual consultations as well as workshops and mini-courses. Writers at all levels can benefit. You can find them on the Arlington Campus in the Original Building, Room 334C, by phone at 703 993-4491 or online at: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>
- Academic integrity: You are responsible for knowing, understanding, and following Mason's Honor Code, found at: <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12>. Be sure that all work submitted is your own and that you use sources appropriately. I strongly recommend that you review requirements regarding use and citation of sources prior to submitting your final work.