

Conf. 650 - Advanced Skills, Fall 2015
Section 001

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Location: Arlington, Founder's Hall Room 479

Class Days:

Oct. 24-25, 2015	10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Nov. 14-15, 2015	10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Dec. 5-6, 2015	10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Welcome to the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution and especially to the Certificate Program! I am delighted to have you in class and look forward to an engaging learning experience. My hope is to partner with you on creating an environment that promotes learning, discussions, reflection and integration.

Course Overview

This course is designed to help certificate students engage in critical thinking with regard to the intersection between conflict resolution theory and practice.

Course topics will investigate issues pertaining to the articulated nexus between theory and practice with special attention to the challenges of translation, adaptation and transfer of these models.

The three-day weekends will address the following objectives:

- Create a learning community through readings on theory, class and on-line discussions, class exercises and engaging in constructive learning experiences;
- Provide a forum to discuss, analyze and critique the application, integration and evaluation of discussed approaches;
- Learn from each others valuable experiences as individuals, professional, students and more importantly members of the global community;
- Provide you with an opportunity to envision, develop & design, and gain practical experiences in applying conflict resolution practice; and
- Prepare you for real practice.

Course Philosophy

As faculty for this class, we would like to acknowledge that our personal and professional experience, ethnic and cultural heritage, and religious identity impacts

the way we understand the issues and the way we select to present them. In light of this acknowledgement, we would invite you to:

- a) Respect all points of view regardless of where you are on these issues;
- b) Listen to gain insight; reflect on what the other person is trying to communicate;
- c) Accept that we are here as a learning community – in which each person is a teacher and a learner.

Course Expectations

Due to the intensive nature of the three-day weekend format, the following expectations will ensure that you get the most rewarding and engaging experience from the class. Our shared commitment includes:

Attendance: consistent attendance is required. Failure to do so will be noted. Please let us know if you are facing circumstances beyond your control and inform me as soon as possible. The highest grade to expect is a “B” if you happen to miss one full weekend.

Participation: You are expected to participate fully in class discussions and activities. Structured exercises will support that objective. Please do not hesitate to let us know about your experience during class. We are happy to respond to any concerns that might impede your participation.

Preparation: The success of this class is dependent on our ability to discuss class readings. There may be opportunities to engage in on-line assignments, but first and foremost, in-class participation is a must. Please come prepared to discuss all readings including the first day of class. We are aware that many of you juggle personal and professional responsibilities that might impede your completion of class readings. Please do your best. We all contribute to the success of the class and consider it a shared responsibility.

Class Completion: Please note that departmental policies dictate that an incomplete grade is granted in cases of personal or immediate family illness.

Class assignments: *Complete all pre-class readings and class assignments on time.* Please request prior permission should you not be able to do so. Should there be any additional assignments and readings, they will be sent via email. You are responsible for keeping up with these up to date assignments.

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. Each Mason campus has a location; 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/>
- 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.

Pre- Class reading list: (REQUIRED)

Books:

1. Ron Kraybill and Everlyn Wright: Little Book of Cool Topics for Hot Topics
2. Kay Pranis: Little Book of Circle Processes
3. David Brubaker and Ruth Hoover Zimmerman. The little Book of Healthy Organizations
4. Carolyn Yoder: The Little Book of Trauma.

Online Resources: (Required)

USAID Conflict Assessment Tool, CAF 2.

<https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=UN+CDA+conflict+assessment+tool+2015&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>

Conflict Development Analysis, United Nations (a more updated copy will emailed)
http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/documents/cpr/documents/prevention/CDA_complete.pdf

Additional Reading Resources and may be of interest (optional):

Maiese, Michelle. "Elicitive Training." *Beyond Intractability*. Eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Posted: September 2004
<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/prescriptive_elicitive_training/>.

Agyris, Chris et al. (1985) *Action Science*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Windslade, John. "Mediation with a Focus on Discursive Positioning." *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, Vol. 23, no. 4, Summer pp: 501-515 (please retrieve from e-journal data base)
- Kardia, Diana and Todd Sevig. "Embracing the paradox: Dialogue that incorporates both individual and group identities." In *Intergroup Dialogue: Deliberative democarcy in school, college, community and workplace*. Edited by David Schoem and Sylvia Hurtado. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press. Pp 247-265
- Abdalla, A. (2000-2001). Principles of Islamic interpersonal conflict intervention: A search within Islam and western literature. *Journal of Law and Religion*, 15, 51-184.
- Abu-Nimer, M. (1997). Conflict resolution training in the Middle East: Lesson to be learned. *Journal of International Negotiation*, Fall, 1- 24.
- Paul Salem. "A Critique of western conflict resolution from a non-Western Perspective. In *Conflict Resolution in the Arab World: Selected Essays*. American University of Beirut Publications, 1997. 11-24
- Babbit, E. & Pearson D'Estree, T. (1996). An Israeli- Palestinian women's workshop: Application of the interactive problem-solving approach. In C. Cocker, F. Hampson, & P. Aall (Eds.), *Managing global chaos: Sources of and responses to international conflict* (pp. 501-529). U.S.: United Institute of Peace.
- Mitchell, C. (1993a). The process and stages of mediation: The Sudanese cases. In David Smock (Ed.), *Making war and waging peace* (p. 147) Washington, D.C: United Institute for Peace Press.
- Wing, L. and Rifkin, J. "Racial Identity Development and the Mediation of Conflicts." In C. L. Wijeyesinghe and B.W. Jackson (eds.), *New Perspectives on Racial Identity Development: A Theoretical and Practical Anthology*. New York: New York University Press, 2001.
- Ronald J. Fisher.(1997) *Inter-Active Conflict Resolution* Syracuse University Press.
- Peacebuilding; A Field Guide edited by Luc Reychler & Thania Paffenholz (Boulder, CA; Lynne Reinner; 2001)
- Mediation and Facilitation Training Manual 4th edition. Mennonite Conciliation Services (Akron, PA; MCC Resources; 2001)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Assignment #1 : (10%)

Due: Friday, Nov. 13, 2015

Choose an organization that you are either working at or have access to and: a) find out all that you can about its conflict management systems to include formal and informal processes to resolve conflict, b) talk with an employee who is a user of such processes or someone who is responsible in implementing such processes.

Write a reflective paper on what your experience has been with regard to completing this assignment, what did you learn about the organizational approach to resolving conflict, others perspectives on these approaches, and provide any additional insights that you may have gained. If all of your efforts fail at gaining access to identify and meet with someone who is a user or implementer of such processes, write up the reflective paper on your assessment of why that is the case. Submissions should be between 8-10 pages.

Assignment #2 : (40 percent)

Due: Monday, Nov. 30, 2015

2 (a): Choose someone to interview regarding a conflict with which they have personal experiences. Preparation for your interview will include creating interview questions and considering how to establish a climate of openness within the interview. Interviews should be recorded to complete.

2 (b). After the interview, capture immediately your immediate reflections and reactions. Come to class ready to share 3-5 lessons learned / insights with regard to that particular experience.

2 (c): Using your handwritten notes and recording of the interview, transcribe the interview (word by word) to include any additional comments that you may have shared throughout the interview. Use the transcript to identify recurring themes that you might identify throughout the interview. These themes should be marked to include points in the narrative to support a theme, metaphor, symbols and stories told by the respondent.

Submit a 8- 10 page paper summarizing your analysis and linking it to course readings and concepts. (25 %) Please submit all relevant documents: questions, transcript, and paper

Assignment #3 : (30 percent)

Class presentations: Dec. 5-6, 2015

Group Project (2 – 4 working groups)

Select an on-going conflict (community, national, international, organizational, environmental, . . .) that is of interest to you and other members of the group.

- Research, explore, and analyze on-going efforts that may have been initiated to address the conflict. It is advised that the conflict is more

than 3 years old or has enough published data for you to be able to research.

- Evaluate these efforts from a conflict resolution perspective and in light of class discussions and readings.
- Select and evaluate a process to address the conflict that might build on existing efforts or changes the way the conflict is being understood or addressed. Be ready to defend your choice of process. As a third party, what skills sets will you and your team need to have to make it a success and why? What were the resources made available to you and what barriers do you anticipate? Ethical dilemmas to consider?
- Prepare a group presentation for class members. The purpose of your presentation is to educate your listeners in a *brief presentation* on the conflict, its sources, dynamics and current outcome. Your proposed design should speak to the rationale behind your approach, assessment and intervention tools that you deem appropriate. You are encouraged and will be rewarded on the interactive nature of your group presentation. Additional criteria will be developed by the entire class. Your class presentation should end with a lessons learned slide with regard to the group's experience.
- Write a reflection paper (no more than 5 pages) about your group experience. Reflect on your own participation. **(Due: Dec. 8, 2015)**

Please submit an electronic copy by close of business day (COB) of the assigned dates. THANKS!

Class Participation, preparation and discussions (20 percent)

In addition to in-class exercises and participation, there may be some discussion topics based on class readings and discussion questions generated in the classroom that will be posted to the course online discussion board in WebCT.

CLASS PLAN

All required readings should be completed before class.

Week 1: Oct. 24-25, 2015 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Conflict Resolution Practice: Overview

In the first week we will attempt to respond to the following questions:

Why an advanced course in conflict resolution practice?

What do we know about practice?

When we speak about the nexus between theory and practice, what do we mean?

What are the commonly used approaches?

Class activities and exercises (TBD)

Guest practitioner (contingent on availability)

Week 2: Nov. 14-15, 2015 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Practice: Challenges and opportunities

Lead voices - Discussion

Class activities and exercises (TBD)

Guest practitioner (contingent on availability)

Week 3: Dec. 5-6, 2015 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Integration, reflection and conclusion

In this final week, we will attempt to respond to discuss:

What did we learn about our own theories of practice, opportunities and limitations.

In reflection and if we had advice to provide to other conflict resolution

practitioners, what would they be? Who do we need to partner with and why?

Class activities and exercises (TBD)

Group presentations / CELEBRATION