

CONFLICT 101
Conflict and Our World
Conflict Analysis and Resolution
Spring, 2008

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Office: Robinson Hall B365
Office Hours: By appointment

Class Sessions: **Tuesdays & Thursdays**
10:30 AM – 11:45 AM – Fairfax Campus
Krug Hall Room 210

Course Description

Across all human societies, conflict is a part of daily life. Sometimes it may be an annoyance, such as arguing with a sibling over the last cookie; sometimes it is more serious, such as the debate over human cloning; and sometimes it is tragic, as in recent events in the Middle East and in Kenya. Conflict can be destructive, for example, when it damages relationships among neighbors or relatives or destroys homes and livelihoods. Conflict can also be constructive, as demonstrated by the effects of civil rights demonstrations in the U.S. in the 1950s and 1960s or the Solidarity movement in Poland in the 1980s. Our increased interconnection as a global society has heightened the need for more attention to determining how humanity can deal with conflict productively.

This course introduces the interdisciplinary study of conflict analysis and resolution. We will examine how and why conflict occurs in human society, and what we can do to mitigate its destructive aspects. The course includes an overview of the field including the central approaches to analyzing conflict, an intensive case study of a contemporary conflict, an examination of several forms of intervention, and finally a review of new directions in conflict studies. We will highlight the societal, structural and cultural factors that play a part of conflict and its resolution. At the end of the course, you should be able to analyze a conflict, to appreciate the contextual factors that influence conflict, to know the major conflict resolution techniques, and to understand the complexities of the most pressing contemporary conflicts. Conflict 101 fulfills the University General Education requirement for Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Basic Course Requirements

1. Students should arrive to class on time and be prepared to participate in class discussions and activities. Classes will involve discussions and activities which require your preparation. The quality of our discussions will depend on the level

- of preparation by the entire class. *In our pursuit of serious scholarly inquiry we will explore difficult and controversial topics, concepts and issues. It will be our collective responsibility to maintain an intellectually rigorous and respectful environment.*
2. Barring exceptional circumstances, you are expected to attend all classes for the full time scheduled.
 3. Please turn in your assignments on time. In keeping with departmental policy, incomplete grades will be given only in cases of personal or immediate family illness.
 4. Written work must be typed, double spaced and in the Times New Roman 12 point font. All papers must have page numbers, and endnotes or footnotes when appropriate. Please remember to put your name and date on the first page of the paper.
 5. Make up exams and extensions of time for assignments will be arranged **ONLY** for documented personal illness or family emergency. Students with documented disabilities should make arrangements early in the semester by contacting the instructor.
 6. Guidelines for preparing essays and the final paper will be provided in class.

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 Writing Center. You can find them on the Fairfax Campus in Robinson Hall A, Room 114, by phone at 703-993-1200 or online at: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>
- You are responsible for knowing, understanding and following Mason's Honor Code, which is found at <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12> Be certain 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 work.

Course Requirements:

Class Participation 10 points

- All students are expected to participate in this class. Absences will be excused only in exceptional circumstances. Class participation will be evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Three Short Essays (2-4 pages each) 30 points

- Guidelines for preparing the short essays will be provided in class. The first essay will focus on mapping an interpersonal conflict. The second essay will focus on the analysis of the Baraka School case. The final essay will focus on your

reflections of this course. I want you to write about several lessons and or skills you have learned that will be useful in managing or mitigating conflict in your daily lives.

Two tests held in class 30 points

Final take home exam 30 points

Bonus Points 5 points maximum

- Throughout the semester you will have several opportunities to attend lectures and participate in activities related to contemporary conflicts. If you choose to attend any of these lectures and/or activities, you will have an opportunity to share your experience with your colleagues in class and qualify for up to 5 bonus points.

Required Readings

(1) Pruitt, Dean G. and Sung Hee Kim, 2004.
Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement.
New York: McGraw-Hill.

(2) Assefa, Hizkias and Paul Wahrhaftig, 1990.
The Move Crisis in Philadelphia: Extremist Groups and Conflict Resolution.
Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

(3) Introductory Reader in Conflict Analysis and Resolution. Contents are listed on the final page of this syllabus and will be available on the GMU Library electronic reserve.

It is highly recommended for this course, and for your undergraduate career, that you seek out information about current events in your community and in the world. This may be achieved by reading daily the New York Times, the Washington Post, the British Broadcasting Corporation or National Public Radio News among others. Please make your readings a central part of our discussions in class and do not be afraid to present views that stimulate conversation. ***It will be our collective responsibility to maintain an intellectually rigorous and respectful environment.***

Schedule of Topics and Readings

January 22

Introduction to the course

Defining Conflict

January 24	What is Conflict? Pruitt and Kim 3-14
January 29	Nature and Sources of Conflict I Pruitt and Kim 15-36; Barna 322-330
January 31	Nature and Sources of Conflict II Pruitt and Kim 56-62; Avruch 1-13
February 5	Nature and Sources of Conflict III Burton 32-40; Galtung 39-40; Mennonite Conciliation Services 78-83

Analyzing Conflict

February 7	Strategies Pruitt and Kim 37-56
February 12	Tactics Pruitt and Kim 63-84 First Short Essay Due
February 14	Approaches to Analyzing and Resolving Conflict Kriesberg 51-77 Review for Exam I
February 19	Exam I

Conflict in Process

February 21	Pruitt and Kim 87-100; Assefa & Wahrhaftig 3-44
February 26	Pruitt and Kim 121-168; Assefa & Wahrhaftig 45-62
February 28	Pruitt and Kim 171-188; Assefa & Wahrhaftig 63-118
March 4	Assefa & Wahrhaftig 119-152 Video: <i>The Bombing of West Philly</i>
March 6	Spring Break March 10th – March 16th
March 18	Alternatives to Violence Ackerman and Duvall 305-333 Review for Exam II

March 20

Exam II

Resolving Conflicts

March 25

Interpersonal Conflict Third Party Roles
Pruitt and Kim 226-258

March 27

Transforming Interpersonal Conflict
Bush and Folger 41-84

April 1

Mediation
Pruitt and Kim 189-225
Guest Speaker: TBA

April 3

Group, organizational and public conflict Part I
Dugan 9-19; Goldstein
Video: "*The Boys of Baraka*"

April 8

Group, organizational and public conflict Part II
Video: "*The Boys of Baraka*"
Lederach 3-33

April 10

Ethnopolitical Conflict
Volkan, 36-49 "Ethnic Tents" and "Chosen Trauma"

April 15

International Conflicts
Miall, et al 95-121
Video: "*And Then There was Silence*"
Second Short Essay Due

The Future of Conflict

April 17

International Conflict
Saunders, 251-293

April 22

What is Reconciliation?
Hamber and Kelly, 6 -11 and 36-48

April 29

Reconciliation as Part of a Peace Process
Hamber and Kelly, 59-63

May 1

Review for Final Exam
Third Short Essay Due
Take Home Final Exam Distributed

May 8

Final Exam due at Robinson Hall B365 by 11:45

Introductory Reader

1. Barna, LaRay. 1988. "Stumbling Blocks in Intercultural Communication." In: *Intercultural Communication: A Reader*. L. Samovar and R. Porter. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 322-330.
2. Avruch, Kevin. 2002. "Cross-Cultural Conflict" In: *The Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS)*, Oxford, UK: UNESCO, Eolss Publishers.
<http://www.eolss.net>
3. Burton, John. 1997 Needs Theory. In *Violence Explained*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 32-40.
4. Galtung, Johan. 1999. Cultural Violence. In: *Violence and its Alternatives: An Interdisciplinary Reader*. Steger and Lind, ed. New York: St. Martin's Press. 39-53.
5. Mennonite Conciliation Service (MCS). 2000. *Mediation and Facilitation Training Manual*. 4th Ed. Akron, PA: Mennonite Conciliation Service.
6. Kriesberg, Louis. 1997. The Development of the Conflict Resolution Field. In: *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques*. I. William Zartman and J. Rasmussen, eds. Washington, DC: USIP Press 51-77.
7. Ackerman, Peter and Jack Duvall. 2000. The American South: Campaign for Civil Rights. In: *A Force More Powerful*. New York: Palgrave. 305-333.
8. Bush, Robert and Joseph Folger. 2005. A Transformative View of Conflict and Mediation. In: *The Promise of Mediation: The transformative Approach to Conflict*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 41-84.
9. Volkan, Vamik. 1997. Chosen Trauma: Unresolved Mourning. In: *Bloodlines: from Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*. Boulder: Westview Press. 36-49.
10. Miall, Hugh, et al. 1999. Preventing Violent Conflict. In: *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. New York: Polity Press. 95-121.
11. Saunders, Harold. 2000. Interactive Conflict Resolution: A View for Policy Makers on Making and Building Peace. In: *International Conflict Resolution after the Cold War*. National Academic Press. 251-293.
12. Hamber, Brandon and Grainne Kelly. 2005. A Place for Reconciliation? Conflict and locality in Northern Ireland. Belfast: Democratic Dialogue, Report 18. 6-11; 36-48; and 59-63.