

Intensive Introduction to Conflict Analysis and Resolution
CONF 502 Section 002 Fall 2009

Class Time: 10:00-4:00
Saturday, August 29th Saturday, October 10th
Saturday, September 12th Saturday, October 17th
Saturday & Sunday, September 26th & 27th

Location: Truland Building, Room 648
Online: courses.gmu.edu

Instructor: David Alpher
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Office hours: Thursdays—5:00 to 7:00 and by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

Welcome to the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution and the course, an introduction to the field of conflict analysis and resolution. Our focus is the study of human social conflict, including the practices and strategies for responding to conflict and frameworks for understanding and explaining conflict dynamics. It is designed to introduce you to the history and current developments in conflict resolution and to help you to think systematically and analytically about conflicts and conflict interventions.

This course will be run as a learning community—discussions, written assignments and in-class activities will facilitate the exchange of thinking and experience. Please read the assigned books and articles prior to class. Active participation is expected, both in-class and online. The compressed course format means that the online component is a key element of your course learning and experience. Participants will work together in small groups and individually to analyze and suggest responses to specific cases of small group, community, inter-group or international conflict.

The five weekends will address the following objectives:

- ◆ Class participants will learn and be asked to critically examine the worldviews, values, and assumptions underlying the conceptual frameworks people use when analyzing and responding to conflict.
- ◆ Conflict resolution practices reflect the assumptions used to understand conflict and conflict behavior. Class participants will study the relationship between analyzing conflict and attempting to resolve it.
- ◆ Students will become more proficient in identifying conflict dynamics that are both specific to context and type of conflict and those that are more generally identified as elements of conflict.

Course Expectations

Consistent attendance. Barring exceptional circumstances, you are expected to attend all weekends for the full time scheduled.

Effective preparation. The quality of class discussions and activities depends on your preparation.

Active participation. Engage actively in the course in whichever of the formats you are most comfortable with: large group discussions, small group work, class exercises, etc.

Course completion. In keeping with departmental policy, incomplete grades will be given only in cases of personal or immediate family illness.

Course Requirements

1. *Participation, short in-class exercises and online discussions.* **20 percent**
In addition to in-class exercises and participation, there will be several discussion topics and short exercises posted to the course online discussion board. Your postings or responses are due by the due date specified. These short assignments should not take more than a half hour and are opportunities for you to reflect on course concepts between classes. These are graded only as completed or not and contribute to your participation grade. I hope you will also enjoy reading the insights of your colleagues and the developing discussions.
2. *Short essay assignment* **20 percent**
In place of a midterm, you will have a short essay assignment, handed out in class and due by the date specified. Your answers to the short questions should be typed and returned via email or the instructor's departmental mail box. Due: Monday, September 21st
3. *Group project—in-depth study of conflict resolution intervention* **25 percent**
Groups of 3 to 5 students will be formed during the first two weekends and will work throughout the course to examine a particular form of conflict intervention (chosen in consultation with the course instructor.) The groups will work together to apply the concepts, theories, and ideas presented in the course to analyze the underlying assumptions, appropriate applications and distinguishing features of your area of study. Your project should include an example of your intervention type applied to a conflict. There will be some time for groups to meet during class time, but outside meetings will also be necessary. Each group give a 20 minute presentation to the class with supporting materials made available online. Due: Sat., October 17th
4. *Individual analysis/assessment of a conflict* **35 percent**
In consultation with the instructor you will choose a conflict (either from your experience or one supported by researchable and credible documents) for an analytical conflict assessment and recommendations for next steps. The paper should be 12-15 pages and is a synthesis and application of the conflict concepts covered in the course. The topics will be agreed upon by September 26th. Final paper due: Monday, October 26th

Readings

Texts

The required texts are available at the GMU Arlington Bookstore or from online booksellers:

Morton Deutsch, Peter T. Coleman and Eric C. Marcus, eds. *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice, 2nd Edition*. (San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 2006).

Dean G. Pruitt and Sung Hee Kim, *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement, 3rd edition* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004).

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

(Recommended: John Paul Lederach, Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997).

Other readings

You will be directed to additional assigned readings and resources online. See daily agendas for specific readings. Many of these readings are PDF files and can be read using an Adobe reader, available for download on the library webpage or the course homepage. Please let me know if you need assistance with this technology.

Class Agenda

WEEKEND ONE (SATURDAY)

Introduction

- Class members: introductions, interests
- Course overview and organization
- Introduction to the field: Conflict, Conflict Analysis, and Conflict Resolution
- Current issues in the field

Frameworks for Analysis

- Analytical concepts and frameworks
- Analytical frameworks' assumptions of human nature and social structures

Reading for Weekend One:

Burton, Conflict Resolution as a Political Philosophy (webpage)

Dugan, A Nested Theory of Conflict (webpage)

Dukes, Why Conflict Transformation Matters: Three Cases (webpage)

Burgess & Burgess, Intractability and the Frontier of the Field (webpage)

Assignments:

1. Online assignment, due by September 7th. Post to class discussion board.

WEEKEND TWO (SATURDAY)

Analyzing Community Conflict

- MOVE in Philadelphia
- Mapping a conflict

Conflict Behavior and Responses to Conflict

- Understanding responses to conflict
- Threats, coercion, and violence/nonviolence, persuasion, and conversion
- Dual concern model

Reading for Weekend Two:

Deutsch, Coleman & Marcus, Introduction and Chapter 2 and 5 (Justice and Conflict, power)

Pruitt & Kim, Chapters 1-3

Assefa & Wahrhaftig, all

Mitchell, "How much do I need to know?" (webpage)

Alpher and Rothbart, "Good Violence and the Myth of the Eternal Soldier"

Assignments:

1. Form groups for forms of intervention study (in-class)
2. Short essay due: by Monday, September 21st. Hard copy or email to instructor directly.

WEEKEND THREE:

Day 1

Library Research Orientation

Simulation preparation

Conflict Dynamics

- Conflict structure
- Conflict escalation and de-escalation

Conflict Context

- Identity
- Power
- Structure
- Culture

Reading for Class:

Deutsch, Coleman & Marcus, Chapters 1, 28
(Cooperation & Competition, Power, Culture)
Pruitt & Kim, Chapters 4-8

Erickson. “Ethnic Identity, National Identity, and the Significance of Personal Experiences” (webpage)
Gross Stein, “Image, Identity, and Conflict Resolution” (webpage)
Laurie Nathan, “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse” (webpage)

Day 2

Conflict Context continued

Conflict De-escalation and Re-building Relationships

- Dynamics of de-escalation
- Third party roles and interventions

Reading for Class:

Pruitt & Kim, Chapters 9, 11
Deutsch, Coleman & Marcus, Chapter 4 (Trust, Trust Development, Trust Repair)
Laue & Cormick, Ethics of Community Intervention (webpage)

Assignments:

1. Online assignment, due by October 5th. Post to class discussion board
2. Group focus statement due in class.

WEEKEND FOUR

Connecting analysis to intervention, third party roles continued

Variety of roles, platforms, possible practices

- Complementarity in multiple approaches
- Leadership roles

Issues in Conflict Resolution Practice

- Defining success
- Social justice

Reading for Class:

Deutsch, Coleman & Marcus, Chapter 23, 24, 25

Lederach, Chapter 5 (Process—webpage)

Saunders, “Prenegotiation and Circumnegotiation...” (webpage)

Schoeny & Warfield, “Reconnecting systems maintenance to social justice” (webpage)

Optional: Cohen, Birken et al, “Managing Conflict During an Org. Acquisition” (webpage)

Assignments:

1. TBA

WEEKEND FIVE

Group Presentations on Interventions

- Forms of intervention
- Applications

Summary and Integration

- Problem Solving, Settlement, Management and Conflict Transformation
- Mapping the field—concept maps and metaphors

Course Evaluations

Reading for Class:

Appropriate reading for group projects. See Pruitt & Kim and Deutsch class texts for initial resources leading to library research.

Assignments:

1. Group project presentation—forms of conflict resolution intervention (*in-class*). Supporting materials posted to course webpage.
2. Individual analysis/assessment of a conflict due: Monday, October 26th

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/>
- 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.

Full List of Other Readings

- Alpher, David and Rothbart, Daniel; Good Violence and the Myth of the Eternal Soldier, in Daniel Rothbart and Karina Korostelina, eds., *Identity, Morality, and Threat: Studies of Violent Conflict*. (Lexington Books, 2006)
- John W. Burton, "Conflict Resolution as a Political Philosophy," in Dennis J.D. Sandole and Hugo van der Merwe, eds., *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice: Integration and Application* (Manchester, 1993).
- Guy & Heidi Burgess, "Intractability and the Frontier of the Field." *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, Vol. 24, no: 2, Winter 2006.
- Cynthia F. Cohen, Stanley J. Birkin, Murray E. Cohen, Monica J. Garfield and Harold W. Webb. "Managing Conflict During an Organizational Acquisition." *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, Vol. 23, no. 3. Spring 2006.
- Gerald Cormick & James Laue. The ethics of intervention in community disputes. *The ethics of social intervention*. G. Bermant, H. C. Kelman & D. Warwick. Washington, DC, Halstead Press: 1978. 205-232.
- Maire Dugan, "A Nested Theory of Conflict." *A Leadership Journal: Women in Leadership*. V.1 1996. pp. 9-19.
- E. Franklin Dukes, "Why Conflict Transformation Matters: Three Cases. *Peace and Conflict Studies*, Vol. 6, no. 1 & 2. November 1999. Retrieve at: <http://www.gmu.edu/academic/pcs/Dukes61PCS.html>
- Thomas Hylland Erickson, "Ethnic Identity, National Identity, and Intergroup Conflict: The Significance of Personal Experiences" in Ashmore, Jussim & Wilder, eds. *Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict, and Conflict Reduction*, (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 42-68.
- C.R. Mitchell, "How Much Do I Need to Know?" in A Handbook of International Peacebuilding: Into the Eye of the Storm. John Paul Lederach & Janice Moomaw Jenner, eds. Jossey-Bass, 2002.
- Janice Gross Stein, "Image, Identity, and Conflict Resolution," in Crocker, Hampson & Aall, eds., *Managing Global Chaos*. (USIP, 1997), pp. 93-111.
- Harold Saunders, "Prenegotiation and Circumnegotiation: Arenas of the Peace Process," *Managing Global Chaos*. Crocker, Osler, Aall, eds. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace. 1996. pp. 419-432.
- Mara Schoeny & Wallace Warfield, "Reconnecting Systems Maintenance with Social Justice: A Critical Role for Conflict Resolution." *Negotiation Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 3, July 2000, pp. 253-268.
- Kristian Berg Harpviken and Hanne Eggen Roislein. "Faithful Brokers? Potentials and Pitfalls of Religion in Peacemaking," *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, Vol. 25, no. 3, Spring 2008. (optional: World Religions and Diplomacy track)

