

Simulation in Global Conflict Resolution

CONF 341 Section 001– Spring 2009

Class Time: Monday, 10:30 am – 1:00 pm

Location: Innovation Hall, Room 215

Instructor: Patricia Maulden, Ph.D.
Northeast Module II, Room 117
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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

This one unit course builds on readings, discussions, and research begun in CONF 340, *Global Conflict*, with a focus on global conflict resolution. During each of the five 2 hour meetings, students will focus on specific resolution methodologies and strategies. As they do so they will increase their understanding of the considerations and constraints involved in global conflict resolution approaches. Before and during the first section of the course, students will conduct outside research on the conflict as well as on their assigned stakeholder roles. In doing so, they will prepare themselves to participate in a simulation: *Sri Lanka: Setting the Agenda for Peace*.

For the simulation, or practice in peacemaking strategies, each class member will play the part of a representative of a stakeholder group. The simulation reflects dynamics that occur as each stakeholder negotiates, builds relationships, and makes compromises throughout the long peacemaking process. As students take on these roles and experience directly, their understanding and appreciation for individuals grappling with difficult choices in difficult environments increases. As a result, critical thinking and reflective practice abilities also increase.

Instructors will introduce facilitation, dialogue, negotiation, and mediation practices as they relate to global conflict resolution and give students time to briefly practice these techniques in their stakeholder roles as part of the simulation itself. Overall, the course offers students a unique opportunity to put global conflict and global conflict resolution theories into practice in a uniquely personal way.

Objectives

- * Understand some of the considerations and constraints involved in global conflict resolution.
- * Link conflict analysis skills and the ability to think critically about conflict interventions.

- * Explore specific practices and techniques practices as they impact global conflict resolution.
- * Consider aspects of culture, ethnicity, gender, history, and economics as they affect both conflict as well as resolution attempts.

Expectations

1. Consistent attendance. As this is a one unit course, you will be expected to attend each class meeting.
2. Effective preparation. Class involves discussion and activities that depend on advance preparation. All assigned readings should be completed PRIOR to class.
3. Classroom etiquette. Please come to class on time and prepared. Turn off cell phones, pagers, beepers, etc. Remain in class unless you have an emergency. Allow others and yourself to learn by refraining from side conversations, passing notes, playing video games, instant messaging, reading e-mail, browsing websites, etc. Open discussion and dialogue are class goals but please be mindful of the sensitivities of others.
4. Course completion. In keeping with departmental policy, incomplete grades will be given only in cases of illness, either personal or in an immediate family member. Class assignments that are submitted late can be penalized by one point for each day thereafter. If a student has a documented emergency, special arrangements can be made with the instructor.
5. Paper format. Papers should be typed, double-spaced, have 1” margins, and use a common 12-point font. The pages should be numbered and stapled together. The first page of the paper should have the title, course number, and your name.

Course Materials

All course readings are posted on the class Blackboard page.

Selected Background Reading:

- Eriksson, Mikael and Peter Wallensteen. 2004. Conflict, 1989-2003. In *Journal of Peace Research*. Volume 41, No. 5, pp. 625-636.
- Ganguly, Rajat. 2004. Sri Lanka’s Ethnic Conflict: At a Crossroad between Peace and War. In *Third World Quarterly*. Volume 25, No. 5, pp. 903-917.
- Harris, Simon. 2004. Gender, Participation, and Post-Conflict Planning in Northern Sri Lanka. In *Gender and Development*. Volume 12, No. 3, pp. 60-69.
- Orjuela, Camilla. 2003. Building Peace in Sri Lanka: A Role for Civil Society? In *Journal of Peace Research*. Volume 40, No. 2, pp. 195-212.
- Sisk, Timothy D. 2001. *Peacemaking in Civil Wars: Obstacles, Options, and Opportunities*. Working Paper.

Svensson, Isak. 2007. Bargaining, Bias and Peace Brokers: How Rebels Commit to Peace. *In Journal of Peace Research*. Volume 44, No. 2, pp. 177-194.

Assigned Readings:

Coleman, Peter T. et al. 2008. Reconstructing Ripeness II: Models and Methods for Fostering Constructive Stakeholder Engagements Across Protracted Divides. *In Conflict Resolution Quarterly*. Volume 26, No. 1, pp. 43-69.

Crocker, Chester A. 2007. *Peacemaking and Mediation: Dynamics of a Changing Field*. Coping with Crisis Working Paper Series. International Peace Academy. (Available on PDF)

Rothman, Jay and Marie L. Olson. 2001. From Interests to Identities: Towards a New Emphasis in Interactive Conflict Resolution. *In Journal of Peace Research*. Volume 38, No. 3, pp. 289-305.

Optional Readings:

Bercovitch, Jacob and Richard Jackson. 2001. Negotiation or Mediation?: An Exploration of Factors Affecting the Choice of Conflict Management in International Conflict. *In Negotiation Journal*. Volume 17, No. 1, pp. 59-77.

Bercovitch, Jacob and Gerald Schneider. 2000. Who Mediates? The Political Economy of International Conflict Management. *In Journal of Peace Research*. Volume 37, No. 2, pp. 145-165.

Coleman, Peter T. et al. 2008. Reconstructing Ripeness I: A Study of Constructive Engagement in Protracted Social Conflicts. *In Conflict Resolution Quarterly*. Volume 26, No. 1, pp. 3-42.

Pearson, Frederic S. 2001. Dimensions of Conflict Resolution in Ethnopolitical Disputes. *In Journal of Peace Research*. Volume 38, No. 3, pp. 275-287.

Academic Policies & Information

Academic Honesty and Collaboration

George Mason University has an Honor Code with guidelines regarding academic integrity and which is designed, “to promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community” (www.gmu.edu/catalog/policies). The Honor Code lays out strict penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Plagiarism is a serious offense, and all written work for this course should include proper citations in a standard citation format (MLA, APA, etc.). *If you are unsure about how to cite a direct quotation or concept from course or outside readings, then ask for help.* “I wasn’t sure how to cite a source, so I left out the reference,” is not an acceptable defense for plagiarism. Copies of common style manuals are available at the GMU library reference desk or online at <http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/workscited/>.

Student Resources

GMU Writing Center

“The Writing Center seeks to foster a writing climate on campus and beyond by offering free writing support to George Mason students, faculty, staff and alumni. No matter what your writing abilities are, writing specialists can help you develop the skills you need to become a successful writer.

Free services include: One-on-one 45 minute sessions with a writing specialist; online writing lab; one-on-one sessions with an ESL specialist; workshops on such topics as documenting sources, grammar and punctuation; writing handouts on a variety of subjects; a library of handbooks and writing manuals; [and an] online chat with a tutor about papers submitted to the Online Writing Lab”

(<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>).

Disability Support Services

Any student with documented learning disabilities or other conditions that may affect academic performance should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with the Office of Disability Support Services (993-2474) to determine the possible accommodations you might need; and 2) contact her or his instructor to discuss reasonable accommodations.

“George Mason University is committed to providing appropriate services and accommodations that allow self-identified students with disabilities to access programs and activities at the university as stated in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

To achieve this goal, the university maintains and supports the Disability Resource Center Office, which is responsible for assuring that students receive the services and accommodations to which they are entitled. The professional staff of the Disability Resource Center Office coordinate services for students with disabilities, determine reasonable services and accommodations on the basis of disability, and act as a liaison between students and faculty/administration on concerns relating to services and accommodations”

(<http://www.gmu.edu/departments/advising/dss.html>).

Assignments

Participation (40 points)

Because this is a one-unit course, attendance is expected and is part of your participation grade. *Just showing up for class does not represent ‘A’ participation work.* Students are expected to complete their reading assignments prior to class and contribute in class discussions and in the practice exercises (15 points). Each student will be graded separately on his or her work in the simulation (25 points).

Reflection Papers (60 points)

Close to the beginning of the course, students will write a 3-4 page paper that (1) analyzes 2 - 3 aspects of the conflict in Sri Lanka as pertain most directly with the stakeholder you will be given on the first week of class, and (2) explores potential resolution strategies to deal each of those 2 - 3 aspects (20 points). The paper should be based on at least 2 background readings

(either from the list above or other academic sources) in addition to materials furnished as part of the simulation.

At the end of the course, each student will write a 5-6 page reflection paper exploring their understanding of global conflict resolution. The paper should bring in global conflict theories, course readings and theories, and experiences as part of the simulation (40 points).

Course Agenda

Week 1 February 23 Global Conflict Resolution (Innovation 215)

Readings: Coleman et al. article

Integration: Facilitated dialogue of readings/340 theories

Overview: Sri Lanka simulation & research materials; distribution of stakeholder parts

Week 2 March 2 Negotiation (SUB II, Rooms 3 & 4)

Readings: Rothman & Olson article

Integration: Negotiation activity

Week 3 March 9 Spring Break (No Class)

Week 4 March 16 Mediation (SUB II, Rooms 5 & 6)

Readings: Crocker article

Integration: Mediation activity

Reflection Paper Due

Week 5 March 23 Sri Lanka Simulation Part I (SUB II, Room 5)

Week 6 March 30 Sri Lanka Simulation Part II (SUB II, Rooms 3 & 4)

Week 7 April 6 Simulation Debrief (Innovation 215)

Integration: Debrief of simulation results/experiences.

Course evaluations

Final Paper Due: Monday, April 13, 5:00 pm (please take paper to Robinson B365)