

CONF 101 Section 004
Conflict and Our World: Introduction to Conflict Analysis and
Resolution
Fall 2010

Tuesdays, 4:30 – 7:10 p.m.
Innovation Hall, Room 207

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Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution
Office hours by appointment

Course Overview

Across all human societies, conflict is 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 the ongoing events in Darfur, Democratic Republic of Congo and Middle East. 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 shown by the effects of civil rights demonstrations in the U.S. in the 1950s and 1960s. Our increased interconnection as a global society, as well as the upsurge in certain forms of violence, 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 extended case study of a conflict, an examination of several forms of intervention, and finally a consideration of new directions in conflict studies. We will highlight the societal, structural, and cultural factors that play a part in 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.

Course Requirements

Participation (15%)

Regular attendance and consistent participation in class discussions is expected. It is critical to complete the assigned readings prior to each class in order to learn the subject matter and to be prepared to fully engage in discussions.

Exams (50%)

There will be three in-class exams. The first two exams will be non-cumulative, and the final exam will be cumulative. The schedule for the exams follows:

- October 5 (15% of grade)
- November 9 (15% of grade)
- December 14 – Final exam (20% of grade)

Research Paper (35%)

You will write a 6-8 page research paper on a topic related to the main themes we will be discussing during the course of the semester. In your research paper you will present the results of your research while incorporating the concepts we have studied in class. In analyzing your material you will draw upon *at least one theoretical perspective* we have studied in the course. Early in the semester I will provide you with more detailed guidelines for researching and writing this paper. It is always a good idea to start thinking about your topic early in the semester. If you have difficulties deciding what to research or would simply like to talk about your paper, I encourage you to contact me for an appointment. A one-paragraph typed proposal of what you plan to research is due by **Oct. 19**. I will respond to your proposal within a week with comments and suggestions (this is not a graded assignment). **This research paper is due on Dec. 7**. Late papers will be accepted only in cases of documented personal illness or emergency.

Honor Code and Plagiarism

All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. You can find a copy of the Honor Code at academicintegrity.gmu.edu. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review. With specific regards to plagiarism, three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor.

ICAR requires that all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit a student's work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. ICAR's policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace or substitute for it.

E-reserves

Readings for this course will be available through the university's electronic reserves system.

To access e-reserves:

1. Go to <http://oscr.gmu.edu>
2. Click on the green box "e-reserves"
3. Using the drop-down boxes, select the course (CONF 101-004) and instructor (Cerasani)
4. Enter the password (**will be provided in class**) and click "submit" to view items. It is case sensitive.

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>).

Library Services

The CAR library liaison is Melissa Johnson (703.993.2212). Do not hesitate to contact her with specific questions about holdings and research in these areas or whom to contact for materials still in the Fenwick Library on the Fairfax Campus.

Required Reading

Pruitt, D.G. & S. Kim. 2004. *Social Conflict: Escalation Stalemate, and Settlement*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Assefa, H. and P. Wahrhaftig. 1990. *The MOVE Crisis in Philadelphia: Extremist Groups and Conflict Resolution*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Additional course readings:

Abramson, Lauren and Donald Moore. 2002. “The Psychology of Community Conferencing.” In: *Repairing Communities through Restorative Justice*. J. Perry, ed. Lanham, MD: American Correctional Association. 123-139

Burton, John. 1997. Needs Theory. In: *Violence Explained*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 32-40.

Galtung, Johan. 1999. Cultural Violence. In: *Violence and its Alternatives: An Interdisciplinary Reader*. Steger and Lind, ed. New York: St. Martin’s. Pp. 39-53.

Hulse, Jessica. 2005. Hurricane Katrina. Inventory of Conflict and Environment (ICE) Case Studies. 160, Dec. < <http://www1.american.edu/ted/ice/katrina.htm>>. Web.

Menkhaus, Ken. 2008. The rise of a mediated state in northern Kenya: the Wajir story and its implications for state-building. *Afrika Focus*, Vol. 21, Nr. 2. pp. 23-38.

Mennonite Conciliation Service (MCS). 2000. *Mediation and facilitation training manual*. 4th Ed. Akron, PA: Mennonite Conciliation Service.

Moore, Christopher W. 1996. *The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Pp. 231-243.

Morrison, Stephen J. and Alex de Wall. 2005. Can Sudan Escape its Intractability? In: *Grasping the Nettle: Analyzing Cases of Intractable Conflict*. Crocker, Chester A., Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, eds. Washington, DC: USIP Press.

Ricigliano, Robert. 2003. Networks of Effective Action: Implementing an Integrated Approach to Peacebuilding, *Security Dialogue*, Dec 2003; vol. 34: 445 - 462. **(e-journal)**

Volkan, Vamik. 1997. Chosen Trauma: Unresolved Mourning. In: *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*. Boulder: Westview Press. Pp. 36-49.

Warfield, Wallace. 2002. Is This the Right Thing To Do? A Practical Framework for Ethical Decisions. In: *In the Eye of the Storm: A Handbook for International Peace Building*. John Paul Lederach and Janice Moomaw Jenner, eds. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Pp. 213-224.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

INTRODUCTION

August 31: Introduction to the course

- Welcome and introductions
- Review syllabus
- Develop discussion guidelines and other class protocol

DEFINING CONFLICT

September 7

- Overview of Conflict
- Nature and Sources of Conflict

Reading to be completed for class:

- Pruitt and Kim, chapters 1 and 2
- Burton, pages 32-40

September 14

- Strategic Choice
- Contentious Tactics

Readings to be completed for class:

- Mennonite Conciliation Services, pages 78-83
- Pruitt and Kim, chapters 3 and 4

ANALYZING CONFLICT

September 21

- Escalation and Structural Change
- Approaches to Analyzing Conflict

Reading to be completed for class:

- Pruitt, chapters 5 and 6
- Ramsbotham, Miall and Woodhouse, pages 3-31

September 28

- Structural and Cultural Violence

Readings to be completed for class:

- Galtung, pages 39-53
- Krishnan, pages 759-775

CONFLICT IN PROCESS

October 5 (1st in-class exam)

- Conditions of escalation

Reading to be completed for class:

- Pruitt and Kim, chapter 7

October 12: Columbus Day Holiday

October 19 (Research paper proposal due)

- The Persistence of Escalation
- Stalemate and Settlement

Readings to be completed for class:

- Pruitt and Kim, chapters 8 and 9
- Asefa and Wahrhaftig, pages 3-94

RESOLVING CONFLICT

October 26

- Problem Solving, Ethics
- Third Party Intervention

Readings to be completed for class:

- Pruitt and Kim, chapters 10 and 11
- Warfield, pages 213-224

November 2

- Conflict transformation
- Community Conferencing

Readings to be completed for class:

- <http://www.restorativejustice.org/10fulltext/lederach>
- Abramson and Moore, pages 123-139

November 9 (2nd in-class exam)

- Peacebuilding

Reading to be completed for class:

- Ricigliano, pages 445-462

APPLICATION AND INTEGRATION

November 16

- Case Study: Wajir (Kenya)
- Film: Wajir Story

Reading to be completed for class:

- Menkhaus, pages 23-38

November 23

- Case Study: Hurricane Katrina (U.S.)
- Film: When the Levees Broke

Reading to be completed for class:

- <http://www1.american.edu/ted/ice/katrina.htm>

November 30

- Case Study: Darfur (Sudan)
- Film: All About Darfur

Reading to be completed for class:

- Morrison and de Waal, pages 161-182

December 7 (Research paper due in class)

- Case Study: Matewan (U.S.)
- Film: Matewan

Reading to be completed for class:

- Moore, pages 231-243

December 14

- Final exam, wrap-up, and course evaluation