SYLLABUS

Semester:	Fall Semester 2011
Location:	Arlington Campus
Class Meetings:	10AM-5PM, 10/29, 11/5, 11/19, 11/20, 12/3, and 12/10

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COURSE BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Communities across the globe are faced with an increasing array of challenges from political and racial divisions, to environmental degradation and broken educational systems. Deep divisions, fractured communities and contentious issues require effective collaborative processes that can bridge divides while framing and addressing difficult choices in order to get results.

This course will address the question of *How do we move from conflict analysis to sustainable and inclusive interventions that help stakeholders and the public reach outcomes that matter and strengthen democracy*? Course participants will learn conflict assessment and intervention designs which consider a wide range of approaches ranging from small group dialogue and deliberation and facilitated consensus building to large scale, multi-layered processes.

Students will learn the principles of collaborative process design. Students will also learn how to assess situations for collaboration possibilities, how to apply collaboration principles and theories to real planning and problem solving situations, and how to design collaboration processes to build meaningful and implementable plans, policies, recommendations, or agreements.

We will explore questions such as:

- How do communities make progress on tough and contentious challenges?
- What does it really mean to attend to race, ethnicity and culture in a collaborative process?
- How can communities work with conflicts over land use, development and the environment?
- How can collaborative processes be used to improve life chances for children and families?

COURSE FORMAT

The class will meet in a compressed schedule on five Saturdays and a Sunday between October 29th and December 10th. The activities in these sessions will vary between small lectures, group activities, and skills-building exercises. In between weekend sessions, students will actively engage in reading and completing assignments as described.

CLASS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

GRADING

Students are responsible for completing individual and group assignments on time. You will be penalized the equivalent of a full letter grade for each day the assignment is late.

Some class assignments and readings will be sent via e-mail and students are responsible for keeping up-to-date with these. I will not grant incomplete grades except in cases of personal or immediate family illness or emergency.

Your grade will be based on the following criteria:

CLASS DISCUSSIONS AND PARTICIPATION (35%)

This class is interactive and elicitive. Attendance and participation in class activities is important and will account for thirty-five percent of your grade. All students are expected to participate actively in discussions in this seminar-style class. In order to successfully participate in the class, you must read the assigned materials prior to class.

Oral communication and presentation skills are an essential competency in conflict resolution and collaboration. Your grade for participation will include an assessment of your preparation for and delivery of presentations.

Absences will be excused only in extremely exceptional circumstances.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS (65%)

All written assignments are expected to reflect graduate level research and analysis.

There are three written assignments. The first assignment is due on **November 10**. It is worth 10% of your final grade. The second assignment is due on **November 19**. It is worth 25% of your grade. The final assignment is due by **9 pm on December 17**. It is worth 30% of your grade.

Papers are graded based upon on how well you integrate the readings, presentations, and discussions with your analysis and strategy. Papers are also graded on presentation, grammar, and style as well as your creativity and analysis.

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.

S-CAR 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. S-CAR's policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace or substitute for it.

STUDENT SUPPORTS

English Language Institute. The English Language Institute offers free English language tutoring to non-native English speaking students who are referred by a member of the GMU faculty or staff. For more information, call 703-993-3642 or email malle2@gmu.edu.

The Writing Center. The Writing Center is a free writing resource that offers individual, group, and online tutoring. For general questions and comments please contact us at wcenter@gmu.edu or call: 703-993-4491.

Disability Resource Center: The Disability Resource Center within the Office of Disability Services assists students with learning or physical conditions affecting learning. Students with learning differences that require special conditions for exams or other writing assignments should provide documentation provided by the Disability Resource Center. You must let me know before class begins if you have a learning or physical disability so that I can accommodate you. You will find more information at http://ods.gmu.edu/ or may call 703-993-2474.

TEXTBOOKS AND READINGS

The main textbooks for the course are:

Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey, Michael Winer and Karen Ray. Amherst Wilder Foundation, 2000.

The Collaborative Leadership Fieldbook, David D. Chrislip. Jossey Bass, 2002.

Democracy as Problem Solving: Civic Capacity in Communities Across the Globe, Xavier de Souza Briggs. MIT, 2008.

The Power of Collaborative Solutions. Tom Wolff. Jossey Bass, 2010.

Other readings are listed below. Information on accessing these readings will be provided on the first day of class.

You are strongly encouraged read materials beyond the assigned readings. Ideas for optional readings will be provided in class.

There are two websites you are encouraged to explore:

- http://www.community-problem-solving.net/
- http://ncdd.org/

OCTOBER 29, 2011

LEARNING THEMES

- Discuss organization of course, assignments, and readings.
- Explore topics of interest to students
- Explore conceptions of "good" and "bad" community planning
- Introduction to situation assessment
- Explore process and other types of advocacy
- Explore key concepts of collaboration and community planning including advantages of collaborative processes

NOVEMBER 5, 2011

LEARNING THEMES

- Sharpen analysis of "good" and "bad" community planning
- Explore values and rights inherent in collaborative approaches
- Sharpen situation assessment skills
- Develop understanding of roles in collaborative processes
- Develop process design frameworks and skills for extended layered and phased processes
- Explore case studies of collaboration and community planning

MANDATORY READINGS

- Chrislip, Foreword, Introduction and Parts 1, 2, and 3
- Briggs, Foundations
- Wolff, Chapters 1 and 2
- Read at least one case in both Briggs and Chrislip
- Read about your conflict/situation for your assignment

ASSIGNMENT #1: DUE IN CLASS ON NOVEMBER 5TH

Write a 3-4 page essay that (a) describes "typical," contemporary community planning, (b) offers an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of typical community planning processes, and (c) contrasts typical community planning processes with a collaborative process – drawing from an actual case. Based you're your essay, construct two, two-column charts. The first chart should summarize the advantages and disadvantages of typical community planning processes. The second chart should summarize the advantages and disadvantages of conflict resolution/collaborative approaches to community planning. Additional guidance:

- The essay should primarily draw from the assigned readings
- The case may be drawn from the readings or any other source.
- You may establish parameters for the community planning processes that are being described and analyzed. Possible parameters:

- Particular issue area (e.g., land use planning, school improvement planning, brownfield cleanup, etc.)
- Particular geography (e.g., a place such as a particular country or community)
- Particular setting (e.g., rural, urban, etc.)

- You may use charts with your narrative.
- Use "in-text" narrative citations (e.g., Roger Fisher and Bill Ury in *Getting to Yes* offer five key principles for effective negotiation including . . . .), "in-text" citations or footnotes when drawing from readings or descriptions of your case.

Nominate the conflict or situation you wish to use for the November 19th assignment. The nomination should include a 2-3 sentence description and several bullet points on why you think this is a good situation for the November 19th assignment.

NOVEMBER 19-20, 2011

LEARNING THEMES

- Sharpen analysis of "good" and "bad" community planning
- Explore values and rights inherent in collaborative approaches
- Explore different kinds of processes such as appreciative inquiry, scenario-building, Future Search, etc.
- Explore how collaborative processes fail
- Develop process design frameworks and skills for extended layered and phased processes
- Explore case studies of collaboration and community planning

MANDATORY READINGS

- Chrislip, Chapter 13
- Read two of sections 2, 3, or 4 in Briggs.
- Collaboration Handbook, Appendix A
- Wolff, Chapter 3
- *Community Development: A Guide for Grantmakers on Fostering Better Outcomes through Good Process*. Hewlett Foundation, 2003.
- "Designing a Consensus Building Process using a Graphic Road Map" by David Straus. *Consensus Building Handbook*. Sage, 1999.

OPTIONAL READINGS

TBD

ASSIGNMENT #2: DUE IN CLASS ON NOVEMBER 19TH

Develop a 5-8 page briefing memo, an accompanying powerpoint-style presentation document, and a 1-2 page visual depiction of the proposed process for leaders in a case/situation who are in a position to make decisions about the process. The briefing memo must (a) analyze the advantages and disadvantages of

proceeding along the current path (b) make a case for why a collaborative approach would be more effective, (c) describe a proposed collaborative process and how it would proceed and (d) proposed next steps.

Guidance on selecting a case:

- The case may be contemporary or historical
- The briefing memo must be written for a point in time in the situation where choosing a collaborative process is feasible (e.g., not at the end of the case nor when the parties are fully invested in a particular approach)

Guidance for the memo:

- The recipient(s) of the memo should be those persons who are in a position to determine whether or not a collaborative process will be used
- You may invent appropriate standing for yourself and/or your team (e.g., you are from SCAR, a community mediation service, a planning firm, NGO, or ???)
- You may invent some appropriate context that establishes a relationship between you/your team and the process. For example, "In response to your invitation to interview key stakeholders . . . . "
- Feel free to be creative while being reasonably pragmatic
- Organize the memo as an executive briefing. Ensure the key points are presented concisely and clearly at the beginning of the memo. Consider the appropriate level of detail for a decision maker.

The powerpoint should be no longer than six slides. For your powerpoint, you may use any software (e.g., MS PowerPoint or Apple Keynote) or any of the many (free) online services (e.g., Prezi, Open Office, Zoho, Sliderocket, 280slides, Google Docs or others).

The visual depiction can be hand drawn or prepared with software (e.g., Visio, drawing tools in PowerPoint or MS Word, or others), online tools (e.g., such as Gliffy, DrawAnywhere, LucidChart, or others), or simply drawn by hand.

You will receive in-class guidance on November 11th on how presentations will be handled.

DECEMBER 3, 2011

LEARNING THEMES

- Explore collaborative governance frameworks for ongoing community planning efforts
- Explore evaluation frameworks and metrics for collaborative approaches to community planning
- Explore reconciliation and getting to the table strategies for difficult conflicts

MANDATORY READINGS

- Collaboration Handbook, Stages 3 and 4.
- Wolff, Chapters 6 and 7.
- Briggs, Chapter 10.
- "Getting to the Table: Three Paths." *Mediation Quarterly*. Summer 1988. 20. James H. Laue, et al.

OPTIONAL READINGS

TBD

DECEMBER 10, 2011

LEARNING THEMES

- Exploring the role of collaboration and conflict resolution in strengthening democracy.
- Exploring strategies for successful implementation of consensus agreements
- Addressing topics of interest to students

MANDATORY READINGS

- Briggs, Chapter 12.
- Chrislip, Appendix B
- "Implementing Consensus Based Agreements" by William Potapchuk and Jarle Crocker. Consensus Building Handbook. Sage, 1999.

OPTIONAL READINGS

TBD

ASSIGNMENT #3: DUE BY 9:00 PM ON DECEMBER 17TH

You may pursue one of the following assignments or negotiate a project/paper that requires similar effort with the instructor. Further guidance on these assignment options will be provided in class.

A. **Proposal to funder**. Develop a proposal to a prospective funder asking for support for a conflict resolution/collaborative process or the development of a collaborative. This will require identifying a situation, developing a process design, making a case for the proposed approach, researching possible funders, developing a budget, and other steps.
B. **Detailed process design with facilitator guidance**. Develop a detailed process design for a complex challenge and detailed guidance for the facilitator and meeting planners for each meeting in the early stages of the process.
C. **Detailed Critique of Case with Intentional Use of Collaborative Process**. Provide a detailed critique of a case where a there was an intentional use of a structured collaboration process.