

**CONF 601**  
**Section 001**

**THEORIES OF CONFLICT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

Semester: Fall 2013  
Time: Wednesdays, 4:30-7:10 pm  
Location: Founders 310  
Instructor: Leslie Dwyer  
Office hours: By appointment

Welcome to CONF 601. In this course we will critically examine a wide range of theoretical frameworks for understanding social conflict. Our purpose is to:

- Present and critique theories for their usefulness in analyzing different types of social conflict
- Evaluate their usefulness by applying them to specific conflict situations
- Assist students to become better and more critical “consumers” of conflict theory and more acute conflict analysts, and;
- Help students to develop their own abilities to construct theories of conflict and conflict resolution.

**Course Requirements**

This course will be run as a graduate seminar. While I will provide background and context, my main role is to facilitate and guide discussion. Your active participation therefore is essential to the success of the course and you will benefit from the discussion to the extent that you have completed the readings and come to class prepared to discuss them.

In recognition of the importance placed on participation in classroom discussions, 10 percent of the total grade will reflect a student’s participation. Participation grades will be based on frequency and quality of your involvement in each week’s class, with an emphasis on the latter. You are not encouraged to speak on every topic simply for the sake of participating but rather are strongly encouraged to find opportunities to contribute in ways that advance and deepen the discussion. Missing more than one or two classes will inevitably reduce your overall participation and hence result in a lower participation grade.

Grades will be based on participation (10 percent), a take-home midterm exam (40 percent), and a take-home final exam (50 percent). These exams will offer a choice among two or more broad questions that will provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate your understanding and assessment of the theories discussed in class. They will be open book but must reflect the student’s own thinking and analysis and all ideas from others explicitly acknowledged through citations. Questions for the midterm exam will be distributed in class on October 9 and due by email on October 16<sup>th</sup> before class. Questions for the final exam will be distributed on the final day of class, with exams due by email by Monday, December 16.

Papers must be submitted as Word formatted attachments to email sent to ldwyer2@gmu.edu. Please label attachments as YOURNAME\_601Paper. Delays, deferrals or a grade of Incomplete will be given only in cases of personal or immediate family crisis, and late assignments will be penalized.

### **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](http://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.

### **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 contact 703-993-3642 or [malle2@gmu.edu](mailto: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 [wcenter@gmu.edu](mailto:wcenter@gmu.edu) or 703-993-4491.

### **Readings:**

All readings are available through Blackboard or through Mason library's e-journals.

### **Course Outline and Assignments**

#### **1. August 28: Introduction**

#### **2. September 4: Realism**

Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, Ch. 1, "A Realist Theory of International Politics."

John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "An Unnecessary War," *Foreign Policy*, no. 134 (Jan-Feb, 2003), pp. 50-59.

Daniel W. Drezner, "Why Obama is Arming Syria's Rebels: It's the Realism Stupid," June 14, 2013. Available at

[http://drezner.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/06/14/why\\_obama\\_is\\_arming\\_syrias\\_rebels\\_its\\_the\\_realism\\_stupid](http://drezner.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/06/14/why_obama_is_arming_syrias_rebels_its_the_realism_stupid)

Justin Logan, "Cynicism, Realism, and Syria," June 14, 2013, available at [http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/06/14/cynicism\\_realism\\_and\\_syria](http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/06/14/cynicism_realism_and_syria)

### **3. September 11: Rational Choice and Exchange Theory**

Jon Elster, *Explaining Social Behavior: More Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), chapters 11 and 12.

Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler, and Dominic Rohner, "Beyond Greed and Grievance: Feasibility and Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 6:1 (2009): 1-27.

Christopher Cramer, "Homo Economicus Goes to War: Methodological Individualism, Rational Choice, and the Political Economy of War," *World Development* 30:11 (2002): 1845-1864.

### **4. September 18: Frustration-Aggression, Relative Deprivation, Basic Human Needs**

Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton University Press, 1970). Ch. 2: Relative Deprivation and the Impetus to Violence."

John Burton, "Needs Theory," in *Violence Explained: The Sources of Conflict, Violence and Crime and Their Prevention* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp. 32-40.

Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6:3 (1969): 167-191.

### **5. September 25: Cultural Perspectives on Conflict**

Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, NY: Basic Books, 1973.

Avruch, Kevin, 2012. *Context and Pretext in Conflict Resolution: Culture, Identity, Power and Practice*. NY: Paradigm Publishers. (Chapter 1, pp. 3-20, Chapter 6, pp. 81-95).

Merry, Sally 2003. "Human Rights Law and the Demonization of Culture (And Anthropology Along the Way)." *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 26:1: 55-77

### **6. October 2: Theories of Cooperation**

Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation*, chapters 1-4.

Frans de Waal, *Peacemaking Among Primates* (Harvard, 1989), chapters 1-2.

### **7. October 9: Social Mobilization**

Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (2nd ed., Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 10-25, 71-90.

Lila Abu-Lughod, "Living the 'Revolution' in an Egyptian Village: Moral Action in a National Space," *American Ethnologist* 39:1 (2012).

### **8. October 16: Psychoanalytical Perspectives**

Vamik Volkan, *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism* (Westview, 1997), Chapter 3, pp. 36-49.

Sigmund Freud, 1915. "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death."

George Orwell, 1931. "Shooting an Elephant."

Didier Fassin, 2008. "The Humanitarian Politics of Testimony: Subjectification through Trauma in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." *Cultural Anthropology* 23(3): 531-558.

### **9. October 23: Narrative in Conflict and Conflict Resolution**

Paul Ricoeur, "The Narrative Function." In Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics & the Human Sciences*.

Sara Cobb, 2004. "Fostering Coexistence in Identity-Based Conflicts: Towards a Narrative Approach." In A. Chayes and M. Minow, eds., *Imagine Coexistence*. Jossey Bass: San Francisco: pp. 294-310.

John Winslade and Gerald Monk, 2000, *Narrative Mediation: A New Approach to Conflict Resolution*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Read Chapter 1, "Narrative Mediation: What is It?" and Chapter 2, "Theoretical and Philosophical Issues in Narrative Mediation."

Dwyer, Leslie 2009. "A politics of silences: violence, memory and treacherous speech in post-1965 Bali." In Alex Hinton and Kevin O'Neill, eds., *Genocide, Truth, Memory and Representation: Anthropological Approaches*. Durham: Duke University Press.

### **10. October 30: Social and Political Life in the Aftermath of Conflict**

Barsalou, Judy, 2005. "Trauma and Transitional Justice in Divided Societies." Special Report 135, The United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC.

Rosalind Shaw 2007. "Memory Frictions: Localizing Truth and Reconciliation in Sierra Leone." *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 1:183-207

Theidon, Kimberly 2007. Gender in Transition: Common Sense, Women and War. *Journal of Human Rights* 6:453-478.

Baines, Erin 2007. "The Haunting of Alice: Local Approaches to Justice and Reconciliation in Northern Uganda." *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 1(1): 91-114

### 11. November 6: Identity

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Verso, 2006), Ch. 1, 2.

Louis Kriesberg and Bruce W. Dayton, *Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Rowman and Littlefield, 2012), pp. 49-59.

### 12. November 13: Trust and Social Capital

Russell Hardin, *Trust* (Polity 2006), chapters 1-4.

Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital" *Journal of Democracy* 6:1 (January 1995): 65-78.

### 13. November 20: Globalization and Political Economy

David Keen, "Incentives and Disincentives for Violence," in Mats Berdal and Davjd M. Malone, eds., *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil War* (Lynne Rienner, 2000), pp. 19-41.

Mark Duffield, "Globalization, Transborder Trade, and War Economics," Mats Berdal and Davjd M. Malone, eds., *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil War* (Lynne Rienner, 2000), pp. 69-89.

Karen Ballentine and Heiko Nitzschke, *The Political Economy of Civil War and Conflict Transformation*, available at [http://www.berghof-handbook.net/articles/BHDS3\\_BallentineNitzschke230305.pdf](http://www.berghof-handbook.net/articles/BHDS3_BallentineNitzschke230305.pdf).

Severine Autesserre, 2009. "Hobbes and the Congo—Frames, Local Violence, and International Intervention (2003-2006)," *International Organization* 63(2): 249-280.

## THANKSGIVING BREAK

### 14. December 4: Power/Knowledge

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1979), chapter 3, pp. 195-228.

Mitchell, Christopher, 2006. "Conflict, Social Change and Conflict Resolution: An Enquiry." Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 5. Available at: [http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/dialogue5\\_mitchell\\_lead-1.pdf](http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/dialogue5_mitchell_lead-1.pdf)

Korppen, Daniela 2006. "The Circularity of Conflict Dynamics: A Critical Review." Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 5. Available at: [http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/dialogue5\\_koerppen\\_comm.pdf](http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/dialogue5_koerppen_comm.pdf)

Jabri, Vivienne, 2006. "Revisiting Change and Conflict: On Underlying Assumptions and the De-Politicization of Conflict Resolution." Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 5 Available at: [http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/dialogue5\\_jabri\\_comm.pdf](http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/dialogue5_jabri_comm.pdf)

Mitchell, Christopher, 2006. "Conflict Analysis, Conflict Resolution and "Politics." Berghof Handbook Dialogue No. 5. Available at: [http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/dialogue5\\_mitchell\\_resp.pdf](http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/dialogue5_mitchell_resp.pdf)