

CONF 302

IDENTITY CONFLICTS AND THEIR RESOLUTION

Conflict Analysis and Resolution Program, George Mason University

CONF 302 Section 001

Spring 2013

Prof. Kevin Avruch

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Class: West 1004, Thursday 1.30-4.10

Office: Robinson B365 (Fairfax); 703-993-3607 (Arlington Office)

Office hours: Thursday 11.00-12.00

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course explores the role played by identity in serious social conflicts. Highlighting major theorists who have examined identity and conflict, we will examine how identity dynamics may influence the development and intensification of conflict and, more hopefully, how identity can be channeled in aid of resolving, mitigating, or transforming serious social conflict. Course materials will address the question of how identity/self/subjectivity are constituted, as well as aspects of identity such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, class, and nationalism. Special emphasis will be placed on the relationship of identity to violence. Readings, films, class discussions, and assignments are designed to help students: 1) become better conflict analysts and resolvers; 2) gain awareness of the role played by their own identities in analyzing conflicts; and 3) write clear and cogent papers.

CONF 302 fulfills all or in part the writing-intensive requirements for the Conflict Analysis and Resolution (CAR) major through the assignments listed on this syllabus. Details on each assignment will be handed out in class. Students are encouraged to visit the Writing Workshop for additional assistance.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance in class is crucial to success in this course. Some material relevant for completing assignments will be discussed only in class, not in the readings. You should complete the assigned readings prior to each class. Ask in class if you have not understood a term or idea. Come prepared to participation in classroom discussion.

Delays, deferrals, or a grade of “incomplete” for the course will be given only in cases of personal or immediate family crisis.

Please note: I use your GMU mail account as my primary means of communication outside normal class hours. You will need to activate this account and/or make sure any

other account you use forwards your mail to it.

Classroom etiquette: Come to class on time and prepared. Turn off cell phones, pagers, beepers, iPods, etc. Use laptops, if you use them, only for class-related work.

Honor Code. The legalese: *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. 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.*

To clarify: In this class I will ask for all written assignments to be turned in to me in hardcopy; you should however have electronic versions of all assignments available.

The bottom-line: If you have questions about Honor Code issues or are uncertain about how to cite a source, please speak with me before turning in the assignment!

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Class Participation: 10%

Written Assignments: 90%

Specific instructions for each assignment will be handed out in class

Assignment # 1: Your Self: A Reflective Personal Essay
750 words, 10%

Assignment #2 : Short Paper: Analysis and Argument
1,000 words., 20%

Assignment #3: Identity Politics in American Elections
1,000 words, 20%

Assignment #4: Identity Conflict Case Study
1,500 words, 35%

Assignment #5: Rewrite: You must rewrite one assignment in a timely way
(no later than 5/2/13), 5%

READINGS

The following required books are available in the GMU Bookstore:

Ishmael Beah, *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*
Harold Isaacs, *Idols of the Tribe: Group Identity and Political Change*
Marc Howard Ross, *Cultural Contestation in Ethnic Conflict*
Vamik Volkan, *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*

The following additional readings are available through E-Reserves (I will give out the password in class):

Kevin Avruch, "Culture Theory, Culture Clash, and the Practice of Conflict Resolution"
Peter W. Black, "Identities"
Samuel R. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations"
Howon Jeong, "Sources of Social Conflict"
Daniel Rothbart and Karina Korostelina, "Moral Denigration of the Other"

COURSE PROGRAM

- Wk 1 /24:** Course Orientation. The Concept of Identity: An Introduction
Assignment #1 handout
- Wk 2 1/31:** Theories of Identity, Self, and Subjectivity
Read: Isaacs, pp. 1-45; Volkan, pp. 19-35, Black (E-reserve)
Assignment #1 Due
- Wk 3 2/7:** "Basic Group Identities"-I: The Body, Names, and Language
Read: Isaacs, pp. 46-114
- Wk 4 2/14:** "Basic Group Identities"-II: History, Religion, Nationality
Read: Isaacs, pp. 115-219
Assignment #2 handout
- Wk 5 2/21:** Identity and Social Conflict: Selves and Others
Read: Ross, pp. 1-29; Jeong (E-reserve)
Assignment #2 due
Assignment #4 (final paper) handout
- Wk 6 2/28:** A Special Case? "The Clash of Civilizations"
Read: Huntington (first; E-reserve); Avruch (E-reserve)

- Wk 7 3/7:** Identity: Violence, Victims, and Victimization
Rothbart & Korostelina (E-reserve)
- Wk 8 3/14:** **Mid-Semester Recess: No Class**
- Wk 9 3/21:** Narrating Collective Identities-I, Cultural Performances and Parades in Northern Ireland
Read: Ross, pp. 30-126
Assignment #3 handout
- Wk 10 3/28:** Narrating Collective Identities-II, Case Studies in Nationalism, Memory, Flags and Dress
Read: Ross, pp. 127-223, 280-328
- Wk 11 4/4:** Narrating the Self (In Times of Trouble)
Read: Beah, pp. 5-125
Assignment #3 due
- Wk 12 4/11:** Traumatized Identities-I, Enemy Images and Chosen Traumas
Read: Volkan, pp. 3-18, 36-115
- Wk 13 4/18:** Traumatized Identities-II, Trauma, Victimhood, and Violence
Read: Volkan, pp. 116-201
Assignment #4 due
- Wk 14 4/25:** Trauma Recovery and Reconstructing Identities
Read: Beah, pp. 126-218; Ross, pp. 224-279
- Wk 15 5/2:** Identity Conflict and Conflict Resolution
Read: Volkan, pp. 202-227
Assignment rewrite due on or before today, 5/2