

Introduction to Conflict Analysis and Resolution

CONF 501 Section A01

Class Time: Monday, Wednesday, Friday
May 18 – June 20
3:45 – 6:45 pm

Location: Founders Hall Room 324

Instructor: Patricia Maulden, Ph.D.
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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description and Objectives

Welcome! The 501 summer course will open the door to the study of conflict analysis and resolution. Taking the foundational theories of the field as points of departure, the class brings in current analytic and practical explorations of conflicts as well as resolution approaches using case materials. Throughout the summer term students will explore theory in relation to context across levels of analysis and examine units of analysis embedded within each level through assessment and mapping strategies. Students will also present their own theoretical and conceptual conflict and/or resolution frames in relation to case material via class YouTube presentations. Primary objectives of CONF 501 are to enhance skills in reflective analysis, encourage creative conceptual engagement, and introduce resolution process design.

The course will be run as a learning community – discussions, written assignments and in-class activities will facilitate the exchange of thinking and experience. Please read the assigned book chapters and articles prior to class. Participants will work together in small groups as well as individually to analyze and suggest responses to specific cases of group, community, inter-group, or international conflict.

During the course class participants will:

- * Examine worldviews, values, and assumptions that underlie the conceptual frameworks people use as they analyze and respond to these conflicts.
- * Explore conflict resolution practices as they reflect and build upon these assumptions and understandings.
- * Study the relationship between analyzing conflict and attempting to resolve it.
- * Gain skills that facilitate the analyzing of conflict dynamics, the exploring of considerations and constraints inherent in contextual realities, and enhance critical and systematic thinking.

Course Expectations

1. **Consistent attendance.** Barring exceptional circumstances, you will be expected to attend all weekends for the time scheduled.
2. **Effective preparation.** Class involves discussion and activities that depend on your advance preparation.
3. **Appropriate participation.** Actively engage in the course in as many formats as you are able including large group discussions, homework assignments, small group work, and class exercises. Individual and group exploration of course issues is essential. With that end in mind computer use should be kept to a minimum – note taking and occasional group project in-class research only. Cell phones must be put away during class.
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.
5. **Timely completion of assignments.** Assignments not received by the due date will be subjected to a penalty in the grade assigned. Please contact the instructor prior to assignment due date about any difficulties pertaining to completion of assignment.

Course Requirements

1. **Participation and in-class exercises** 20%
The format of the class makes student participation even more essential to student and class success. Each student will participate in class discussion as well as large and small group projects designed to increase (1) understanding of course concepts as well as (2) build skills in linking concept, theory, and context through analysis and conflict resolution process design.
2. **Short essay assignments** 40%
Two essay prompts will be distributed. Response to each prompt needs to focus on course readings to that point using a formal academic style and reference list. Each essay should be from 4 to 5 pages (not counting the reference list).
4. **Final video essay** 30%
Students will be given a written set of guidelines, will watch a video, and then record a 12 to 15 minute video of themselves responding to the guidelines in relation to the case study presented in the film. The response will need to incorporate course theories and readings, verbally citing them during the presentation. The individual video responses will be uploaded to a course site and will be available to viewing and comment by course members.
5. **Final reflection essay** 10%
Students will be given essay guidelines around which to engage reflectively about course materials.

University Resources and Assistance

- * If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703.993.2474. All accommodations must be arranged through that office.

- * The Writing Center is available to all Mason students and offers online and individual consultations as well as workshops and mini-courses. Writers at all levels can benefit. Each Mason campus has a location. You can find them on the Arlington Campus in the Original Building, Room334C, by phone at 703 993-4491 or online at: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>.
- * Academic integrity: You are responsible for knowing, understanding, and following Mason's Honor Code, found at <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12>. Be sure that all work submitted is your own and that you use sources appropriately.

All written assignments MUST be run through SafeAssign on the student Blackboard page and corrected for any possible plagiarism issues.

Course Readings

Required books

Lederach, John Paul. 1997. *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Mitchell, Christopher. 2014. *The Nature of Intractable Conflict: Resolution in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Nordstrom, Carolyn. 2004. *Shadows of War: Violence, Power, and International Profiteering in the Twenty-First Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Required Online Books (open source):

Freire, Paulo. 1993. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum Publishing Company. <https://libcom.org/files/FreirePedagogyoftheOppressed.pdf>

Schirch, Lisa. 2013. *Conflict Assessment & Peacebuilding Planning: Toward a Participatory Approach to Human Security*. Boulder: Kumarian. <http://www.conflict-assessment-and-peacebuilding-planning.org>

All articles are available on course Blackboard site.

Agathangelou, Anna M. and L. H. M. Ling. 2004. Power, Borders, Security, Wealth: Lessons of Violence and Desire from September 11. *In International Studies Quarterly*. Volume 48 (517-538).

Avruch, Kevin. 2013. Does our Field Have a Centre? Thoughts from the Academy. *In International Journal of Conflict Engagement and Resolution*. Volume 1, No. 1 (10-31).

Burton, John W. 2001. Introducing the Person into Thinking About Social Policies. *In The International Journal of Peace Studies*. Vol. 6, No. 1. <http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps>.

Burton, John W. 2001. Where Do We Go From Here? . *In The International Journal of Peace Studies*. Vol. 6, No. 1. <http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps>.

Burton, John W. 1993. Conflict Resolution as a Political Philosophy. *In Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice: Integration and Application*. Dennis J.D. Sandole and Hugh van der Merwe, editors. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Galtung, Johan. 1990. Cultural Violence. *In Journal of Peace Research*. Vol. 27, No. 3 (291-305).

Rubenstein, Richard E. 2001. Basic Human Needs: The Next Steps in Theory Development. *In The International Journal of Peace Studies*. Vol. 6, No. 1. <http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps>.

Class Agenda

Week 1 – May 18, 20, & 22 - Foundations

Introductions

Course overview – preliminary case study choices

Introduction to the field of conflict analysis and resolution

What are conflicts?

Levels & units of analysis

Conflict Assessment

Individual conflict styles

Foundational Folder Readings:

Avruch article

Burton articles

Galtung article

Rubenstein article

Mapping Folder Readings

Review assessment documents plus the Schirch website

Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, Miall (RWM)

Chapter 1

Week 2 – May 27 & 29 – Conflict Processes

Readings:

Mitchell Chapters 1 through 4

Nordstrom Chapters 1 through 6

First short essay assignment distributed – due Friday, June 5 in class

Week 3 – June 1, 3, & 5 – Building Peace

Readings:

Lederach (entire book)

Mitchell Chapters 9 through 11

Friday, June 5: First short essay assignment due

Second short essay distributed – due Friday, June 12 in class

Week 4 – June 8, 10, & 12 – Conflict, Peace, & Legacy

Readings:

Nordstrom Chapters 7 through 14

Agathangelou & Ling Article

Friday, June 12: Second short essay assignment due

Final assignments distributed – due Sunday, June 21

Week 5 – June 15, 17, & 19 – Dialogue, Gender, & Possibility

Readings:

Freire Chapters 1 through 4

Final Assignments Due by 6:00 am Monday, June 22

Grading Scale

Points Accumulated	Letter Grade
94-100	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
60-69	D
0-59	F