Reflective Practice & Multiparty Engagement
in Conflict Resolution
CONF 620 – ML2 / 820 – N01

Class Time: 9:30 – 2:30, Monday through Friday
                       May 18 – May 29, 2015

Location: Founders Hall Room 324

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

Course Description and Objectives

Conflict is an inescapable part of our lives—in our personal relationships, at work, in community, and in society. Sometimes it is a process in which we struggle over scarce resources, sometimes over misunderstandings or differences in meaning-making, and sometimes because of the positions we find ourselves in through narratives or stories that we have created or that others have created in our behalf. To make it even more complex, conflict is always embedded in culture, history, identity, and value systems. Reflective practice is the process of exploring a pattern of action, making adjustments during the action, or thinking about past action. In an elemental sense, most of us perform some form of reflective practice virtually every day. To the extent that reflective practice incorporates theory and experience, even the most mundane of activities are anchored in aspects of experiential learning and nascent theory.

Conflict resolution is frequently a process that involves emotional intensity and relational complexity. This can be a factor in dyadic disputes, but is significantly present in deep-rooted multiparty conflicts. Because of this it is critical that as practitioners we become skilled at integrating theory and experiential learning into practice minimally at three stages of an intervention: (1) in analyzing or assessing the conflict in preparation for intervention; (2) during the intervention itself; and (3) in post intervention reflection. In this way, reflective practice is a form of "meaning making"—attempting to make sense of phenomena occurring around us through an interdependence of theory, experience and practice. It may also be a process of altering meaning-making systems designed toward transformation of the relationships for the parties in conflict.

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 articles and documents 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.

<u>During the two weeks, class participants will</u>:

✱ 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 through explicit theories of change.

✱ 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.

✱ Practice conflict assessment and resolution approaches through role plays and simulations as points for reflection and analysis.

Course Expectations

1. <u>Consistent attendance</u>. Barring exceptional circumstances, you will be expected to attend all class days during the time scheduled.
2. <u>Effective preparation</u>. Class involves discussion and activities that depend on your advance preparation.
3. <u>Appropriate participation</u>. 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.
4. <u>Course completion</u>. In keeping with departmental policy, incomplete grades will be given only in cases of illness, either personal or in an immediate family member.
5. <u>Timely completion of assignments</u>. 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. <u>Participation and in-class exercises</u>   **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. <u>Short essay assignment</u>   **20%**
   In place of a midterm, a short essay assignment will be handed out in class and due by the date specified.

3. <u>Small group reading presentation</u>   **15%**
   Small groups will be formed the first day of class and each group will select a reading that they will study in depth and present to the class on the day the reading is scheduled. Presentation guidelines will be available on blackboard.

4. <u>Small group theory presentation</u>   **20%**
   Small groups will explore theoretical linkages around a particular topic presented in the course: (1) learning and change; (2) ethics and practice; or (3) reflexivity and practice. Presentations will take place on the final day of class.

4. <u>Video Essay</u>   **25%**
   Each student will upload a 15 minute video to the private course YouTube channel in response to an essay prompt.

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

<u>All readings are available on course Blackboard site.</u>

Theories of Change
Aryal, Archana et al., 2012. *Theories of Change in Peacebuilding: Learning from the Experiences of Peacebuilding Initiatives in Nepal*. CARE Nepal.

CARE International UK. ND. *Peacebuilding with Impact: Defining Theories of Change.*

CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. 2009. *Reflecting on Peace Practice: Participant Training Manual.*

Church, Cheyanne and Mark Rogers. 2011. Chapter 2, Understanding Change. In *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Activities.* Search for Common Ground.

Lederach, John Paul et al. 2007. *Reflective Peacebuilding: A Planning, Monitoring, and Learning Toolkit.* South Bend: The Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame.

OECD. 2012. *Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settlings of Conflict and Fragility: Improving Learning for Results.* http://dx.doi.org.

UNICEF. 2012. *Theories (Assumptions) of Change* (draft). Education for Peacebuilding Practitioners.

Practice Approaches

Arai, Tatsushi. 2015. Engaging Conflict History: Toward an Integrated Method of Conflict Resolution Dialogue and Capacity Building. In *Conflict Resolution Quarterly,* Vol. 32, No 3(277-298).

Goldberg, Rachel M. 2009. How Our Worldviews Shape Our Practice. In *Conflict Resolution Quarterly.* Vol. 26, No. 4(405-431).

Kraybill, Ron. 2004. *Facilitation Skills for Interpersonal Transformation.* Bergdorf Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management. http://www.berghof-handbook.net.

Maiese, Michelle. 2006. Engaging the Emotions in Conflict Intervention. In *Conflict Resolution Quarterly.* Vol. 24, No. 2(187-195).

McGuigan, Richard and Sylvia McMechan. 2005. Integral Conflict Analysis: A Comprehensive Quadrant Analysis of an Organizational Conflict. In *Conflict Resolution Quarterly.* Vol. 22, No. 3(3490363).

Nan, Susan Allen. 2011. Consciousness in Culture-Based Conflict and Conflict Resolution. In *Conflict Resolution Quarterly.* Vol. 28, No. 3(239-261).

Critical Conflict Resolution

Hansen, Toran. 2008. Critical Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice. In *Conflict Resolution Quarterly.* Vol. 25, No. 5(403-427).

Jones, Wendell and Scott H. Hughes. 2003. Complexity Conflict Resolution, and How the Mind Works. In *Conflict Resolution Quarterly.* Vol. 20, No. 4(485-494).

Mitchell, Christopher R. 2005. *Conflict Social Change and Conflict Resolution: An Enquiry.* Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management. http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/dialogue5_mitchell_lead-1.pdf.

Learning & Ethical Reflection

Cheldelin, Sandra I. and Wallace Warfield with January Makamba. 2004. *Reflections on Reflective Practice.* Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution.

Cohen, Perrin, Melissa McDaniels and Donna M. Qualters. 2005. Air Model: A Teaching Tool for Cultivating Reflective Ethical Inquiry. In *College Teaching.* Vol. 53, No. 3(120-127).

Eilertsen, Soren with Kellan London. 2005. *Modes of Organizational Learning.* Kollner Group. http://http://www.kollnergroup.com.

Warfield, Wallace. 2002. Is This the Right Thing to Do? A Practical Framework for Ethical Dilemmas. In *A Handbook of International Peacebuilding: Into the Eye of the Storm.* John Paul Lederach and Janice Moomaw Jenner, eds. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Yuthas, Kristi, Jesse F. Dillard, and Rodney K. Rogers. 2004. Beyond Agency and Structure: Triple Loop Learning. In *Journal of Business Ethics.* Vol. 51, No. 2(229-243).

Class Agenda

Section 1   Critical Conflict Resolution & Change

Week 1

Day 1 – May 18 (Critical Conflict Resolution Folder)
    Readings:
    Hansen
    Hughes et al.
    Mitchell

Day 2 - May 19 – Attend Genocide Conference in Metropolitan Building

Day 3 – May 20 (Learning & Ethical Reflection Folder)
    Readings:
    Yuthas et al
    Eilertsen & London
    Cohen et al.

Day 4 – May 21 (Learning & Ethical Reflection Folder)
    Readings:
    Cheldelin et al.
    Nan
    Warfield
        Short Essay Assignment Guidelines Distributed

Day 5 – May 22 (Theories of Change folder)
    Readings:
    Reflecting on Peace Practice
    SGC Theories of Change (Church & Rogers)
    Defining Theories of Change

Section 2   Synthesizing Learning, Reflection, Change, & Practice
Week 2
Day 6 – May 25   **Memorial Day Holiday!**

Day 7 – May 26 (Theories of Change Folder)
    Readings:
    Theories of Change in Nepal
    UNICEF
    Reflective Peacebuilding (particular theories of change material)

Short Essay Due in Class

Day 8 – May 27 (Practice Approaches folder)
    Readings:
    Goldberg
    Maiese
    McGuigan & McMechan

Day 9 – May 28 (Practice Approaches Folder)
    Reading:
    Arai
    Kraybill

Day 10 – May 29
    Theory Presentations
    Course wrap up

Video Essay Due Thursday, June 4

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