

**SCHOOL FOR CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND RESOLUTION (S-CAR)
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

**CONF 340
GLOBAL CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND RESOLUTION**

Semester: Spring 2012
Class Time: Monday, 7:20 - 10:00 pm
Location: Fairfax Campus, Robinson A243
Instructor: Dr. Dennis J.D. Sandole
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the causes and conditions of *violent conflicts* within and between states. The objective is to explore to what extent this knowledge can be used as a basis to better understand and respond to violent conflicts through either their *prevention, management, settlement, resolution* and/or *transformation*. Examples include conflicts that led to the genocidal implosion of former Yugoslavia (e.g., Bosnia and Kosovo), challenged successor states of the former Soviet Union (e.g., Azerbaijan, Georgia, and the Russian Federation), or have escalated to post-9/11 terrorism (e.g., Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Prerequisites:** Acceptance into S-CAR's BA/BSc. program and successful completion of CONF 101, or permission of the instructor.
2. **Class Format:** Classes will follow an *interactive seminar format*. Hence, class attendance, participation, and the *completion of relevant readings prior to class* are required.
3. **Assessment:**

[a] A **midterm paper**, worth 40% of the final grade, in which each student identifies, discusses and assesses, from the required course readings, the *major causes* of violent global conflict, war and terrorism within and between states. In other words, according to our readings, what are the major causes of violent conflict?(10-15 double-spaced pages [i.e., 250-300 words per page]). (NOTE: This is a **pillar 2 analysis**.) Due 19 March 2012.

[b] A **final paper**, also worth 40% of the final grade, in which each student (1) analyzes a complex violent conflict and (2) provides recommendations on how, according to the required course readings, it should be handled by the international community (10-15 double-spaced pages [i.e., 250-300 words per page]). (NOTE: This is a **pillar 1-2-3 analysis**.) Due 7 May 2012.

NOTE: Since these two (2) papers are meant, among other things, to demonstrate that students have been in the course, *the papers should contain appropriate references to course concepts and the corresponding readings*. For further clarification -- including about the GMU Honor Code (e.g., avoiding any hint of plagiarism at all costs) -- please feel free to consult with the instructor.

[c] **Student presentations:** Each student will be invited to lead a discussion on one or more chapters from the readings by Clemens; Hewitt, Wilkenfeld, and Gurr; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall; Sandole (2007); and/or Sandole (2010) (see "Required Readings," below). **In each case, the rest of the class will be expected to have read the same material to facilitate a rich discussion. Please consult with our course assistant about your preferences and the order and dates on which you want to make your presentations (which may be jointly given, involving more than one student per presentation).** Presentations should be aimed at distilling from the readings *their relevance to the themes of the midterm and final papers*; e.g., the causes of violent conflict, with implications for dealing with them, including those resulting in terrorism. Students are also expected to participate in *scenario development exercises* (see below) (worth 20% of final grade).

Overall in-class *participation* will determine whether a "borderline" final grade of, for example, B+/A- remains in the B or A category.

5. Office Hours: 10:00 - 10:30 pm following each class, either in the classroom or in the CAR Office, located at Robinson B365, or by appointment.

6. Withdrawal: The last day to drop the course without any penalty is 31 January 2012.

REQUIRED READINGS

(1) Clemens, Jr., Walter C. (2004). *Dynamics of International Relations: Conflict and Mutual Gain in an Era of Global Interdependence. 2nd Edition.* Lanham (MD), New York, and Oxford (UK): Rowman & littlefield.

(2) Hewitt, J. Joseph, Jonathan Wilkenfeld, and Ted Robert Gurr (2012). *Peace and Conflict 2012.* Boulder and London: Paradigm Publishers.

(3) Ramsbotham, Oliver, Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall (2010). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts. 3rd Edition.* Malden (MA) and Cambridge (UK): Polity Press.

(4) Sandole, Dennis J.D. (2002). "Virulent Ethnocentrism: A Major Challenge for Transformational Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding in the Post-Cold War Era." *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, vol. 1, no. 4, June, pp. 4-27. (Simply insert "virulent ethnocentrism dennis sandole" into Google and a number of sites for this article will appear.)

(5) Sandole, Dennis J.D. (2007). *Peace and Security in the Postmodern World: The OSCE and Conflict Resolution.* London and New York: Routledge (Taylor & Francis Group).

(6) Sandole, Dennis J.D. (2010). *Peacebuilding: Preventing Violent Conflict in a Complex World.* Cambridge (UK) and Malden (MA): Polity

Press.

COURSE SYLLABUS

- 23 Jan I. Introduction: Course Overview.
- 30 Jan II. The Problem: Conflict, Violence, and War.
- A. The Subject Matter.
1. *Latent Conflict (LC)*.
2. Conflict Processes.
- a. *Manifest Conflict Process (MCP)*.
- b. *Aggressive Manifest Conflict Process (AMCP)*.
- (1) Post-Cold War Ethnic Conflicts.
- (2) Post-9/11 Terrorism.
- B. Why is a Course on Violent Conflict Necessary?
1. Violent Conflict Trends in the United States.
2. Violent Conflict Trends Worldwide.
- a. Domestic: The *spillover potential* of *intrastate* conflicts.
- (1) *Functional Spillover*.
- (2) *External Intervention*.
- [a] Ethnic Kin Intervention.
- [b] Humanitarian Intervention.
- (3) *Multiplier-Effect Systemic Contagion*.
- b. *Interstate/Trans-societal*(including post-9/11 terrorism and the "Clash of Civilizations").
- C. Three Theoretical *and* Practical Questions:
1. How Can **MCPs** be *Prevented* from Becoming **AMCPs**?
2. What are the *Causes* of **AMCPs**?
3. How Do We Conduct *Research* on **AMCPs**?
- READ: Clemens, Chapter 4;
Hewlett, et al., all;
Ramsbotham, et al, Chapters 1-3; and
Sandole, 2007, Chapters 1, 4 and Appendix A.
- 6 Feb/ 13 Feb III. An Enhanced Basis for Understanding *and* Dealing with the Problem.
- A. Three levels of Conflict Reality.
1. *Conflict-as-Symptoms* (Perceptible/Measurable Indicators of Underlying Causes and Conditions).
2. *Conflict-as-Process* (Underlying Conflicted Relationships).
3. *Conflict-as-Start-up Conditions* (Underlying Deep-Rooted Causes and Conditions of the Conflicted Relationships).
- B. A Comprehensive Mapping of Conflict and Conflict Resolution: *A 3-Pillar Approach (3PF)*.
- READ: Sandole, 2007, Chapters 2, 5 and Appendix B
Sandole, 2010 Chapters 1-2.

(Review Hewlett, et al.)

1. **Pillar 1: Conflict (Dependent Variable).**
 - a. Parties.
 - b. Issues.
 - c. Long-term Objectives.
 - d. Means.
 - e. Preferred Conflict-Handling Orientations.
 - f. Conflict Environments.

- 20 Feb 2. **Pillar 2: Conflict Causes and Conditions (Independent Variables).**
 READ: Clemens, Chapters 1, 3-8;
 Ramsbotham, et al., Chapter 4 and
 Sandole, 2007, Chapter 6.
 - a. *Individual Level (Image I)*
 - [1] Biological Theories.
 - [2] Physiological Theories.
 - [3] Learning Theories.
 - [4] Dissonance Theories.

 - 27 Feb b. *Societal/National level (Image II).*
 - [1] Domestic-Foreign Conflict Nexus.
 - [2] Crisis Decisionmaking.
 - [3] Action-Reaction Dynamics.
 - [4] Power Distance.
 - [5] Imperialism (and "Lateral Pressures").

 - c. *Trans-societal/International level (Image III).*
 - [1] [Endogenous vs. Exogenous Systems.
 - [2] Bi- vs. Multipolar Systems.
 - [3] Tendencies toward the "Unit Veto" System.
 - [4] International Distribution of Wealth ("Marxist Delight"): Income Inequality.

 - d. *Global/Ecological Level (Image IV).*
 - [1] Environmental Degradation.
 - [2] Global Warming.
 - [3] The "Malthusian Nightmare" Revisited.

- 5 Mar 3. **Pillar 3: Conflict Intervention.**
 READ: Clemens, Chapters 2, 9-15; and
 Ramsbotham, et al., Chapters 5-10.
 - a. 3rd Party Objectives.
 - [1] Violent Conflict *Prevention*
 [= **Preventive Diplomacy**].

 - [2] Conflict *Management*
 [= **Peacekeeping**].

 - [3] Conflict *Settlement*
 [= **Coercive Peacemaking**].

[4] *Conflict Resolution*
[= **Noncoercive Peacemaking**].

[5] *Conflict Transformation* [*Prevention*]
[= **Peacebuilding**].

b. 3rd Party Approaches for Achieving Goals.

[1] *Confrontational* and/or *Collaborative*
Processes.

[2] *Negative* and/or *Positive Peace*
Orientations.

[3] *Track-1* and/or *Multi-Track* Actors and
Techniques.

12 Mar SPRING BREAK (no class)

19 Mar MID-TERM PAPERS DUE

19 Mar/
26 Mar IV. Application of Theory: Dealing with Violent Conflict,
War and Terrorism Globally.

 READ: Clemens, Chapter 16;
 Ramsbotham, et al., Chapters 11-16;
 Sandole, 2002, all;
 Sandole, 2007, Chapters 3, 7-10; and
 Sandole, 2010, Chapters 3-5.

2 Apr/
9 Apr/
16 Apr/
23 Apr V. Putting it All Together "in Practice" - *Scenarios*
Development Exercises.

A. Identify a *Conflict* (Current, Developing or
Potential) that Could Worsen or Improve during the
Next 5-10 Years (**Pillar 1**).

B. Explore *Conflict Trajectories*:

1. Identify the Factors -- "*Drivers*" --
That Could Make the Conflict Worse
or Better (**Pillar 2**).

2. Construct a *Scenario* Indicating How
These Factors Could Combine to Make the
Conflict Worse (**Worst-Case Scenario**=*Negative*
Trajectory) or Better (**Best-Case Scenario**=
Positive Trajectory) (**Pillar 2**).

C. Design a *Strategy* for Responding to these Factors
("Drivers") to Either *Undermine* their Potential
Negative Impact or *Enhance* their Positive Impact
on the Conflict over Time (**Pillar 3**).

30 Apr VI. Conclusion.

7 May

FINAL PAPERS DUE