

CONF 501 Section 610
Introduction to Conflict Analysis and Resolution
Fall 2010
October 4 through October 14
University of Malta
MA in Conflict Resolution and Mediterranean Security
Dr. Daniel Rothbart
Professor of Conflict Analysis and Resolution
email: drothbar@gmu.edu

Description:

This course introduces students to the central themes, categories and doctrines of conflict analysis and resolution. Through analysis we acquire an understanding of a conflict's social/political setting, its root causes, the conditions that gave rise to negative relations among protagonists, and the consequences on the conflict parties and others. Particular attention is given to the sources of negativity among the conflict parties. Careful analysis of the conflict is critical to the work of conflict resolution practitioners. Not limited to one specific sort of intervention, conflict resolution refers to a range of possible activities that are intended to limit or reduce the negativities associated with relations among the conflict parties. Closely associated with such a goal are efforts by practitioners to settle, manage, mitigated, de-escalated, contained, terminated, prevented, or avoid conflicts. Of course, there are no "quick fixes" to any protracted conflict and no one sort of intervention that suits all conflict settings. Many viable interventions seek to address the conflict's root causes, deal with long-term grievances that damaged the relationship between the protagonists, and strive towards long-term and meaningful resolution.

In Unit I, we examine the means for a systematical analysis of conflicts, and Unit II addresses major topics of conflict management and resolution. Case studies are explored in both units. Throughout the course, we prioritize the tasks of reflecting critically on conflicts, drawing attention to its conditions, causes, and dynamics, as well as an evaluation of "what works" (or not) from various interventions.

Objectives

- a) Introduction to a systematic study of analysis and resolution of conflicts
- b) Examine alternative models for the causes of protracted conflicts.
- c) Demonstrate how skillful intervention by a practitioner requires critical reflection on the techniques deployed.
- d) Test interventionist techniques against case studies, revealing comparative strengths and weaknesses of various methods.
- e) Show the ethical underpinnings of practice by exposing for each method the value-commitments towards, for example, peace, equality, or justice.
- f) Show the close connections among conflict theories, research findings, and modes of practice.

Required Reading:

John Paul Lederach, Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies Washington, DC. United States Institute of Peace, 1997. ISBN 1-878379-73-9 (paper).

Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall, Contemporary Conflict Resolution: the prevention, management and transformation of Deadly Conflicts, Oxford: Polity Press, 2005 (Second Edition): 0-7456-3213-0 (paperback) [CCR]

Sandole, Byrne, Sandole-Staroste and Senehi, eds., Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, Routledge, 2009. (paperback) [HCAR]

Roger Coate and Jerel Rosati, "Human Needs in World Society," Chapter 1 in the Power of Human Needs in World Society.

John W. Burton, "Human Needs Versus Societal Needs," Chapter 3 in the Power of Human Needs in World Society.

Avruch, Kevin and Black, Peter (1993). "Conflict resolution in intercultural settings: problems and prospects," in Dennis J.D. Sandole and Hugo van der Merwe, (Eds). Conflict resolution theory and Practice. Manchester University Press. (ereserve)

Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, peace and peace research. Journal of Peace Research, 6 (3): 167-191.

Tanner, Victor, Rule of Lawlessness: Roots and Repercussions of the Darfur Crisis Sudan Advocacy Coalition

Daniel Rothbart and Karina V. Korostelina, "Moral Denigration of the Other" Chapter 3, in Identity, Morality, and Threat: Studies in Violent Conflict

Sudan Task Group, "Darfur 2009-2010: toward breaking the impasse: an inclusive consultation"

"Basic Training: Promoting Unity among the Factions in Darfur"

"Suggestions for third Party Team"

Junne, Gerd and Willemijn Verkoren, "The Challenges of Postconflict Development," in Postconflict Development, edited by Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren, Chapter 1.

Salomons, Dirk "Security: An Absolute Prerequisite," in Postconflict Development, edited by Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren, Chapter 2.

Brown, Richard "Reconstructing Infrastructure," in Postconflict Development, edited by Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren, Chapter 6.

Course Schedule:

UNIT I: CONFLICT ANALYSIS

October 4

Introduction. Course themes, objectives, requirements, and activities.

October 5 From Needs to Conflict

Ramsbotham, et. al., "Introduction to Conflict Resolution: Concepts and Definitions" Chapter 1, CCR.

Ramsbotham, et. al., "Conflict Resolution: Foundations, Constructions and Reconstructions," Chapter 2, CCR.

Ramsbotham, et. al., "Statistics of Deadly Quarrels," Chapter 3, CCR.

Roger Coate and Jerel Rosati, "Human Needs in World Society," Chapter 1 in the Power of Human Needs in World Society.

October 6 The Social Psychology of Conflict

John W. Burton, "Human Needs Versus Societal Needs," Chapter 3 in the Power of Human Needs in World Society.

Avruch, Kevin and Black, Peter (1993). "Conflict resolution in intercultural settings: problems and prospects." In Dennis J.D. Sandole and Hugo van der Merwe, (Eds). Conflict resolution theory and Practice. Manchester University Press. (E-Reserve)

Galtung, J. (1969). "Violence, peace and peace research." Journal of Peace Research, 6 (3): 167-191. (e-reserve)

October 7 Identity and Difference in Violent Conflict

Celia Cook-Huffman, "The role of identity in conflict", Chapter 1, pp. 19-31, in Sandole, et. al., eds., Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, Routledge, 2009 [HCAR]

Tanner, Victor, Rule of Lawlessness: Roots and Repercussions of the Darfur Crisis Sudan Advocacy Coalition

UNIT II: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION

October 11 Peacebuilding and The New Wars

Ramsbotham, et. al., “Containing Violent Conflict: Peacekeeping” Chapter 6, CCR.

Ramsbotham, et. al., “Ending Violent Conflict: Peacemaking” Chapter 7, CCR.

Ramsbotham, et. al., “Post-War Reconstruction” Chapter 8, CCR.

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

Oct. 12 Simulation of Interactive Conflict Resolution

Ronald J. Fisher, “Interactive Conflict Resolution” Chapter 23, in Sandole, et. al., eds., *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution*, Routledge, 2009 [HCAR]

Basic Training: Promoting Unity among the Factions in Darfur

Suggestions for third Party Team

Oct 14: Peacebuilding

Sudan Task Group, “Darfur 2009-2010: toward breaking the impasse: an inclusive consultation”

Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren, “The Challenges of Postconflict Development,” in *Postconflict Development*, edited by Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren, Chapter 1.

Dirk Salomons, “Security: An Absolute Prerequisite,” in *Postconflict Development*, edited by Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren, Chapter 2.

Richard H. Brown, “Reconstructing Infrastructure,” in *Postconflict Development*, edited by Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren, Chapter 6.

October 15: Integrating theory, research, and practice. The future of the Field

Esra Cuhadar Gurkaynak, et. al., “Evaluation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding” Chapter 20, pp. 286-299 in Sandole, et. al., eds., *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution*, Routledge, 2009

Dennis J. D. Sandole, “Critical systematic inquiry in car” Chapter 30, pp. 420-436, in Sandole, et. al., eds., *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution*, Routledge, 2009.

Course Requirements:

Each class session will include a discussion-component that calls for active participation. Of course, regular attendance is expected.

The course grade will be determined by an evaluation of a take-home exam, a team presentation, a written paper, and a final exam.

1. Take-home Exam. A take home exam will be distributed on October 8 and returned on October 11. 25% of course grade.

2. Team presentation. The class will be divided into teams with each team focusing on a particular protracted conflict. The primary objective of the presentation is to provide a critical reflection on the case, focusing on an analysis of the conflict setting, activities of conflict protagonists, the evaluation of interveners and an assessment of what went wrong and/or right. Such reflection draws attention to certain commitments that lie just below the surface of research activities, yet are pivotal to why and how conflict analysts do research. The background information is given in the readings provided, but the group is encouraged to rely on additional readings. Of course, the group is expected to rely on the concepts, models, and themes presented during the course. The presentations will be scheduled for October 14 and October 15.

25% of Course grade.

3. Final exam/report.

This assignment seeks to fulfill the objectives for both a final exam and a term paper [report]. The term paper offers a relatively detailed case study of a contemporary conflict, giving due attention to at least one critical issue/topic/element of the conflict, while relying on a central model or theory to give coherent and depth to the analysis. The term paper calls for reasoned judgment [your opinion] about the issue/topic/element, or a critical reflection on an intervention, depending on your topic.

For the final exam you will examine the particular model or theory uses for your case study, which calls for a careful formulation and a critical assessment of the model or theory deployed in your case.

This is due Sunday October 17 at noon.

50% of course grade.

HONOR POLICY

All students are expected to abide by the Honor Code:

Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work. Failure to comply with this code may result in academic penalty in accordance with the procedures of the Honor Committee.

For details refer to the honor code for GMU.