

CONF 101
Conflict and Our World:
Introduction to Conflict Analysis and Resolution
Fall 2006

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Across all human societies, conflict is part of daily life. Sometimes it may be an annoyance, such as arguing with a sibling over the last cookie; sometimes it is more serious, such as the debate over human cloning; and sometimes it is tragic, as in the events in the Middle East in recent months. Conflict can be destructive, for example, when it damages relationships among neighbors or relatives or destroys homes and livelihoods. Conflict can also be constructive, as shown by the effects of civil rights demonstrations in the U.S. in the 1950s and 1960s. Our increased interconnection as a global society, as well as the upsurge in certain forms of violence, have heightened the need for more attention to determining how humanity can deal with conflict productively.

This course introduces the interdisciplinary study of conflict analysis and resolution. We will examine how and why conflict occurs in human society, and what we can do to mitigate its destructive aspects. The course includes an overview of the field including the central approaches to analyzing conflict, an extended case study of a conflict, an examination of several forms of intervention, and finally a consideration of new directions in conflict studies. We will highlight the societal, structural, and cultural factors that play a part in conflict and its resolution. At the end of the course, you should be able to analyze a conflict, to appreciate the contextual factors that influence conflict, to know the major conflict resolution techniques, and to understand the complexities of the most pressing contemporary conflicts.

Attendance in class is not only mandatory but also crucial if you would like to succeed in this course. Some of the material will be discussed only in class and not in the readings. You should plan to complete the assigned readings prior to each class. Be sure to look up words that are unfamiliar to you but realize that some terms have specialized meanings in the field of conflict resolution. Ask in class if you have not understood a term or idea.

Classroom etiquette: Come to class on time and prepared. Turn off cell phones, pagers, beepers, etc. Do not leave the room during class unless you have an emergency. Do not disturb others by talking, passing notes, playing video games, etc. Be mindful of the sensitivities of others in your comments in class; however, open discussion and dialogue are our goals.

Conflict 101 fulfills the University General Education requirement for Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Assignments, Percentages of Grade, Due Dates

Attendance	Assessed throughout the semester	5%
Web discussion participation	Assessed throughout the semester	15%
Short essay (2 pages)	Due September 19	5%
Three tests	Held in class	60%
Final take-home exam	Due December 14 by 5:00	15%

Make-up exams and extensions of time for assignments will be arranged ONLY for documented personal illness or family emergency. Students with documented disabilities should make arrangements early in the term by contacting Professor Hirsch.

Guidelines for preparing the short essay and the final paper will be provided in class and on the course WebCT page (version 4.1). The short essay will focus on a conflict on George Mason campus. The final take-home exam will include mapping a specific conflict, either interpersonal, organizational/community, or international.

Students are required to participate in a web discussion group monitored by the course assistants. You must post to the discussion two times prior to each exam.

You are expected to abide by George Mason University's Honor Code in preparing all work for this class. If you have any questions about Honor Code issues (e.g., whether you are permitted to discuss an assignment with a fellow student) or are uncertain about how to cite a source, or if you have observed Honor Code violations, please contact Professor Hirsch or one of the course assistants immediately.

Required Readings

- (1) Pruitt, D.G. & S. Kim. 2004. *Social Conflict: Escalation Stalemate, and Settlement*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- (2) Assefa, H. and P. Wahrhaftig. 1990. *The MOVE Crisis in Philadelphia: Extremist Groups and Conflict Resolution*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- (3) Introductory Reader in Conflict Analysis and Resolution. Contents listed below and available on GMU Library electronic reserve.

It is highly recommended for this course, and for your undergraduate career, that you seek out information about current events in your community and in the world generally. This may be achieved by reading daily--either in hard copy or online--*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, or by listening to the BBC news or National Public Radio News. The news outlets you consult should adhere to high standards of journalism. Bring especially interesting examples to class for discussion or refer to them on the discussion board.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

Aug. 29 Introduction to the course

Defining Conflict

Aug. 31 What is conflict?
Pruitt 3-14, White 247-252

Sept. 5 Nature and Sources of Conflict I
Pruitt 15-36; Barna 322-330

Sept. 7 Nature and Sources of Conflict II
Pruitt 56-62; Avruch

Sept. 12 Nature and Sources of Conflict III
Burton 32-40; Galtung 39-53, Mennonite Conciliation Services 78-83

Analyzing Conflict

Sept. 14 Strategies
Pruitt 37-56

Sept. 19 Tactics
Pruitt 63-84
SHORT ESSAY DUE IN CLASS

Sept. 21 Approaches to analyzing and resolving conflict
Kriesberg 51-77

Sept. 26 **EXAM ONE**

Conflict in Process

Sept. 28 Pruitt 87-120; Assefa and Wahrhaftig 3-44

Oct. 3 Pruitt 121-150; Assefa and Wahrhaftig 45-62

Oct. 5 Pruitt 151-168; Assefa and Wahrhaftig 63-96

Oct. 10 Classes do not meet. Monday classes meet.

Oct. 12 ****Pruitt 171-188; Assefa and Wahrhaftig 97-118**

Oct. 17 Assefa and Wahrhaftig 119-152
Video: *The Bombing of West Philly*

Oct. 19 Alternatives to Violence: Historical Perspectives
Ackerman and Duvall 305-333

Resolving Conflict

Oct. 24 **EXAM TWO**

Oct. 26 Mediation Workshop
Pruitt 189-225
Guest speaker: Mediating conflict

Oct. 31 Interpersonal Conflict
Pruitt 226-258

Nov. 2 Transforming Interpersonal Conflict
Bush and Folger 41-84

Nov. 7 Group, organizational and public conflict
Selections from video (Hopi/Navaho)
Schlegel 19-33, Barsh 191-197

Nov. 9 Transforming Ethnopolitical Conflict
Guest speaker: Dr. Rengin Morro
Volkan 36-49

Nov. 14 International Conflict
Miall, et al 95-121
Saunders 251-293

Nov. 16 Zones of Peace Workshop
Guest speaker

The Future of Conflict

Nov. 21 Peace and Reconciliation
Lederach 841-854

Nov. 28 Belief, Ritual, and Peacebuilding
Schirch 145-161, Irani and Funk 53-74

Nov. 30 Global Problems/Global Solutions

Dec. 5 **EXAM THREE**

Dec. 7 Wrap-up

FINAL TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE DATE: Thursday, Dec. 14 by 5:00

Introductory Reader

1. White, T.H. 1987. The Passing of Camelot. Extract in: *Philosophical Perspectives on Peace*. H. Kainz, ed. Pp. 247-252. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.
2. Barna, LaRay. N. 1988. "Stumbling Blocks in Intercultural Communication." In: *Intercultural Communication: A Reader*. L. Samovar and R. Porter. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. 322-30.
3. Avruch, Kevin. 2002. Cross-Cultural Conflict." In *The Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS)*, Oxford, UK: UNESCO, Eolss Publishers. Access at: [Http://www.eolss.net](http://www.eolss.net)
4. Burton, John. 1997. Needs Theory. In: *Violence Explained*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 32-40.
5. Galtung, Johan. 1999. Cultural Violence. In: *Violence and its Alternatives: An Interdisciplinary Reader*. Steger and Lind, ed. New York: St. Martin's. Pp. 39-53.
6. Mennonite Conciliation Service (MCS). 2000. *Mediation and facilitation training manual*. 4th Ed. Akron, PA: Mennonite Conciliation Service.
7. Kriesberg, Louis. 1997. The Development of the Conflict Resolution Field. In: *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques*. I. William Zartman and J Rasmussen, eds. Washington, DC: USIP Press. Pp. 51-77.
8. Ackerman, Peter and Jack Duvall. 2000. The American South: Campaign for Civil Rights. In: *A Force More Powerful*. New York: Palgrave. Pp. 305-333.
9. Bush, Robert A. Baruch and Joseph P. Folger. 2005. A Transformative View of Conflict and Mediation. In: *The Promise of Mediation: The Transformative Approach to Conflict*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
10. Schlegel, Alice. 2004. Contentious But Not Violent: The Hopi of Northern Arizona. In *Keeping the Peace: Conflict Resolution and Peaceful Societies Around the World*. G. Kemp and D. Fry, eds. Pp. 19-34. New York: Routledge.
11. Barsh, Russel. 1999. Indigenous Peoples, Racism, and the Environment. In: *Violence and its Alternatives: An Interdisciplinary Reader*. Steger and Lind, ed. New York: St. Martin's Press. Pp. 191-197.
12. Volkan, Vamik. 1997. Chosen Trauma: Unresolved Mourning. In: *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*. Boulder: Westview Press. Pp. 36-49.
13. Miall, Hugh, et al. 1999. Preventing Violent Conflict. In: *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. New York: Polity Press. Pp. 95-121.
14. Saunders, Harold. 2000. Interactive Conflict Resolution: A View for Policy Makers on Making and Building Peace. In: *International Conflict Resolution after the Cold War*. National Academic Press. 251-293.
15. Lederach, John Paul. 2001. Civil Society and Reconciliation. In *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*. Crocker, Hampson, and Aall, ed. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press. Pp. 841-854.
16. Schirch, Lisa. 2001. Ritual Reconciliation: Transforming Identity/Reframing Conflict. In *Reconciliation, Justice, and Coexistence: Theory and Practice*. Mohammed Abu-Nimer, ed. New York: Lexington. Pp. 145-161.
17. Irani, George and Nathan Funk. 1998. Rituals of Reconciliation: Arab-Islamic Perspectives. *Arab Studies Quarterly*. 20.4:53-74.