

CONF 302-001: IDENTITY CONFLICTS AND THEIR RESOLUTION

INSTRUCTOR: RICHARD E. RUBENSTEIN

FALL TERM 2006

Welcome to the CAR course on identity and conflict. The class meets on Mondays from 1:30-4:10 in Room 173 of Enterprise Hall. The instructor is Richard Rubenstein, professor of conflict resolution and public affairs at ICAR. He may be contacted either through the CAR office on the Fairfax campus, or at his Arlington campus office, 703-993-1307. His email address is rrubenst@gmu.edu, and his website is www.richrubenstein.com. Office hours will be held on the Fairfax campus on Mondays after class. Students are encouraged to come in to discuss any matters of interest, whether relating directly to the course or not.

PURPOSES OF COURSE

The course is designed to explore the role played by identity in causing serious social conflicts, in influencing their dynamics, and in resolving or mitigating them. It has several other purposes as well: to assist students to become better conflict analysts and resolvers; to help them become more conscious of the role played by their own identities in analyzing conflicts; and to assist them to write clear and cogent papers.

This course is intended to fulfill the intensive writing requirement of the CAR major. Three short papers will be assigned and returned to students with detailed feedback from the instructor. The third of these papers will be rewritten and resubmitted and will be graded as a fourth paper. At the end of the term, students will be asked to choose between taking an essay-style exam and writing a research paper; in either case, 10% of the grade will be based on the quality of the writing.

GRADES AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students in this course are required to attend every class, except where permission to be absent has been granted or attendance is impossible due to illness, and to be fully prepared to discuss the week's readings.

Grades will be computed as follows:

- First two short papers: 5% each
- Second two short papers: 10% each
- Midterm exam: 30%
- Final exam or paper: 40%

Final grades of Incomplete will not be given except in cases of medical emergency attested to by a medical professional.

All exams are take-home exams in which students choose one topic from a list provided by the instructor and write on that topic. They should be typed or word-processed in 12-point type, double spaced, and submitted in hard copy in class on the dates indicated in the schedule of classes and assignments, below. All students are expected to be familiar with the GMU honor code and policy on plagiarism and to adhere strictly to these policies. Anyone with a question about possible plagiarism should discuss it with the instructor before taking the chance of violating the code.

READINGS AND OTHER COURSE MATERIALS

The following books are required reading:

Sudhir Kakar, *THE COLORS OF VIOLENCE* (University of Chicago, 1996)
Vamik Volkan, *BLOODLINES* (Westview Press, 1998)
Benedict Anderson, *IMAGINED COMMUNITIES* (Verso, 2006)
Julie Bettie, *WOMEN WITHOUT CLASS* (University of California, 2002)
R. Sennett and J. Cobb, *THE HIDDEN INJURIES OF CLASS* (Norton, 1993)
[Alternative selection to Sennett and Cobb: A novel or biography drawn from a list provided by the instructor.]

The following books are recommended for those who wish to do additional reading:

Alice Eagley et al., *THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF GROUP IDENTITY AND SOCIAL CONFLICT* (American Psychological Association, 2004)
Peter G. Filene, *HIM/HER/SELF* (Johns Hopkins, 1999)

In addition, periodic handouts on conflict theory and conflict resolution processes will be distributed in class or made available through E-reserves, and the class will view at least one film, *The Terrorist*.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Aug. 28: What do we know about identity and conflict? Definitions and preliminary overview of topic; discussion of personal identities. No reading assigned. For Sep. 11, read first half of *BLOODLINES* and emailed paper on "Theories of Identity."

Sep. 4: Labor Day holiday

Sep. 11: Discuss ethnic conflict and "Theories of Identity." Continue discussion of personal identities. For Sept. 18, complete *BLOODLINES* and write first short paper on personal identities (specifications handed out in class).

Sep. 18: Submit first short paper. Discussion of papers. Continue discussion of ethnic conflicts. For Sept. 25, read first half of THE COLORS OF VIOLENCE.

Sep. 25: First short papers returned and discussed. Discuss the relationship between ethnic and religious conflict. For Oct. 2, complete THE COLORS OF VIOLENCE.

Oct. 2: Discuss THE COLORS OF VIOLENCE. Guest appearance by expert on Hindu-Muslim relations in India and conflict resolution processes. For Oct. 10, write second short paper on religious identity and conflict (specifications handed out in class).

Oct. 10 (Tuesday, Columbus Day schedule): Movie: "The Terrorist." Second short papers returned and discussed. For Oct. 16, read first third of IMAGINED COMMUNITIES.

Oct. 16: Discuss national identity and conflict. For Oct. 23, read second third of IMAGINED COMMUNITIES.

Oct. 23: Continue discussion of national identity conflicts. For Oct. 30, complete IMAGINED COMMUNITIES and write third short paper on national identity and conflict (specifications handed out in class).

Oct. 30: Third short papers returned and discussed. Discuss national identity and conflict resolution processes. For Nov. 6, read first half of WOMEN WITHOUT CLASS.

Nov. 6: Discuss the relationship between racial, gender, and class identities. For Nov. 13, complete WOMEN WITHOUT CLASS.

Nov. 13: Continue discussion of racial, gender, and class identities. Guest appearance by expert on racial and gender conflicts and conflict resolution processes. For November 20, write fourth short paper on racial, gender, and class identities. Read first half of HIDDEN INJURIES OF CLASS. *Alternatively*, you may spend the last three weeks of class reading a novel or biography taken from a list to be supplied by the instructor.

Nov. 20: Fourth short papers returned and discussed. Discuss class identities and conflict. For Nov. 27, continue reading either HIDDEN INJURIES OF CLASS or your novel/biography, and read Rubenstein paper (emailed) on "Structural Sources of Conflict."

Nov. 27: Complete HIDDEN INJURIES OF CLASS or your alternative selection. Discuss the readings done for this week and the problems of resolving structural conflicts. Specifications for final exams and papers handed out and discussed in class.

Dec. 4 Review and evaluation of course. Movie: "Crash"

Dec. 12: Final exams or papers due

