

CONF 341 (001); Fall 2011
Simulation in Global Conflict Resolution
Class Time: Tuesday: 10:30-1:10; Innovation Hall 215G

INSTRUCTOR

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Office Hours: After class or by appointment

Course Description

This one unit course builds on readings, discussions, and research begun in CONF 340, *Global Conflict*, with a focus on global conflict resolution. During each of the meetings, students will focus on specific resolution methodologies and strategies. As they do so they will increase their understanding of the considerations and constraints involved in global conflict resolution approaches. Before and during the first section of the course, students will conduct outside research on the conflict as well as on their assigned stakeholder roles. In doing so, they will prepare themselves to participate in a simulation: *South Sudan, Free at Last? Opportunities and challenges for building sustainable peace in the world's newest nation.*

For the simulation, or practice in peacemaking strategies, each class member will play the part of a representative of a stakeholder group. The simulation reflects dynamics that occur as each stakeholder negotiates, builds relationships, and makes compromises throughout the long peacemaking process. As students take on these roles and experience directly, their understanding and appreciation for individuals grappling with difficult choices in difficult environments increases. As a result, critical thinking and reflective practice abilities also increase.

The instructor will introduce facilitation, dialogue, negotiation, and mediation practices as they relate to global conflict resolution and give students time to briefly practice these techniques in their stakeholder roles as part of the simulation itself. Overall, the course offers students a unique opportunity to put global conflict and global conflict resolution theories into practice in a uniquely personal way.

Objectives

- Understand some of the considerations and constraints involved in global conflict resolution.
- Link conflict analysis skills and the ability to think critically about conflict interventions.
- Explore specific practices and techniques practices as they impact global conflict resolution.
- Consider aspects of culture, ethnicity, gender, history, and economics as they affect both conflict as well as resolution attempts.

Course Materials

All course readings will be posted on the class Blackboard page.

Assigned Readings:

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- Coleman, Peter T. et al. 2008. Reconstructing Ripeness II: Models and Methods for Fostering Constructive Stakeholder Engagements Across Protracted Divides. In *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*. Volume 26, No. 1, pp. 43-69.
- Crocker, Chester A. 2007. *Peacemaking and Mediation: Dynamics of a Changing Field*. Coping with Crisis Working Paper Series. International Peace Academy. (Available on PDF)
- Rothman, Jay and Marie L. Olson. 2001. From Interests to Identities: Towards a New Emphasis in Interactive Conflict Resolution. In *Journal of Peace Research*. Volume 38, No. 3, pp. 289-305.

Selected Background Reading: (OPTIONAL)

- ✚ Eriksson, Mikael and Peter Wallensteen. 2004. Conflict, 1989-2003. In *Journal of Peace Research*. Volume 41, No. 5, pp. 625-636.
- ✚ Sisk, Timothy D. 2001. *Peacemaking in Civil Wars: Obstacles, Options, and Opportunities*. Working Paper.
- ✚ Svensson, Isak. 2007. Bargaining, Bias and Peace Brokers: How Rebels Commit to Peace. In *Journal of Peace Research*. Volume 44, No. 2, pp. 177-194.
- ✚ Optional Readings:
- ✚ Bercovitch, Jacob and Richard Jackson. 2001. Negotiation or Mediation?: An Exploration of Factors Affecting the Choice of Conflict Management in International Conflict. In *Negotiation Journal*. Volume 17, No. 1, pp. 59-77.
- ✚ Bercovitch, Jacob and Gerald Schneider. 2000. Who Mediates? The Political Economy of International Conflict Management. In *Journal of Peace Research*. Volume 37, No. 2, pp. 145-165.
- ✚ Coleman, Peter T. et al. 2008. Reconstructing Ripeness I: A Study of Constructive Engagement in Protracted Social Conflicts. In *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*. Volume 26, No. 1, pp. 3-42.
- ✚ Pearson, Frederic S. 2001. Dimensions of Conflict Resolution in Ethnopolitical Disputes. In *Journal of Peace Research*. Volume 38, No. 3, pp. 275-287.

Assignments

Participation (40 points)

Because this is a one-unit course, attendance is expected and is part of your participation grade. *Just showing up for class does not represent 'A' participation work.*

Students are expected to complete their reading assignments **prior** to class and contribute in class discussions and in the practice exercises (**15 points**). Each student will be graded separately on his or her work in the simulation (**25 points**).

Reflection Papers (60 points)

1. Close to the beginning of the course, students will write a 3-4 page paper that analyzes 2 to 3 aspects of the conflict in South Sudan as pertain most directly with their assigned stakeholder role.

The paper should be based on 2 background articles, at least 2 newspaper articles (posted on Blackboard), and the stakeholder briefing sheet **(20 points)**. **Due date September 13.**

2. At the end of the course, each student will write a 5-6 page reflection paper exploring their new understanding of global conflict resolution. The paper should bring in global conflict theories, course readings and theories, and experiences as part of the simulation **(40 points)**. **Due date October 14.**

GRADES AND GRADING

I know that many of you are concerned about your grades and I will do everything in my power to help you throughout the course. I will not saddle you with high expectations without sufficient support. However, as discussed above, I have high standards for your work. For a typical assignment, I expect the following grade distribution:

_ A: Truly outstanding work that shows creative original thinking, is nearly perfectly organized, and flawlessly written. This level of work forces me to think hard when I read it.

_ B: Good work with a strong argument, sound organization, and solid writing. There are some relatively minor flaws in one or more of these areas, although the work clearly shows potential for an A level grade.

_ C: About average or slightly below average. An overall solid job, but with more obvious organizational, interpretive, creative, and/or stylistic problems that permeate the paper.

_ D: Failing by a small margin. Serious flaws in every aspect of the work: a lack of understanding of some basic principles, poor organization, and writing that makes it difficult for me to understand the author.

_ F: Unacceptable and/or incomplete. Having such serious deficiencies that the student would need to start over to earn a passing grade.

******Late Work/ illness/ re-write***

Class assignments that are submitted late can be penalized by one point for each day they are late. If you have a documented emergency, special arrangements can be made with the instructor. Do not make a habit out of turning in your assignments late. We will discuss standards for specific assignments when the time arrives. Extensions are granted only in extreme cases such as illness or other family emergency and only where the student in question has established a track record of completing work on time. In most such cases, I will require certification of the situation. A student's procrastination in completing his/her work is not a basis for an extension. There will be no-rewrite of papers due to low grade.

Course Policy and Procedures

Classroom Etiquette: Please come to class on time and prepared. Turn off cell phones and other electronic devices. The use of laptops in class is for note-taking only! We will be discussing contentious political issues in this course. You are encouraged to express your opinion and diverse perspectives, however, be mindful and respectful of the sensitivities and views of others in your comments in class.

Academic Honesty and Collaboration: George Mason University has an Honor Code with guidelines regarding academic integrity and which is designed, “to promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community” (<http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/>). The Honor Code lays out strict penalties for cheating and plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense, and all written work for this course should include proper citations in a standard citation format (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.). You can choose any citation format, however, be consistent throughout your work. If you are unsure about how to cite a direct quotation or concept from the course or outside readings, then ask for help. Copies of common style manuals are available at the GMU library or online at <http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/workscited/>.

For individual class assignments, you may discuss your ideas with others or ask for feedback; however, you are responsible for making certain that there is no question that the work you hand in is your own. You may not submit papers or presentations from other courses to fulfill assignments for this class.

Honor Code and Plagiarism:

All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. You can find a copy of the Honor Code at academicintegrity.gmu.edu. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review. With specific regards to plagiarism, three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor.

S-CAR requires that all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit a student’s work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. S-CAR’s policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace or substitute for it.

Paper format: Papers should be typed, double-spaced, have 1” margins, and Times New Roman 12-point font. Make sure that your name, course number, and paper title is on the first page, and pages are numbered. Edit your papers carefully. If you need help, ask the instructor or refer to the GMU Writing Center <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>.

Disability Support Services: Any student with documented learning disabilities or other conditions that may affect academic performance should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with the Office of

Disability Support Services (<http://www2.gmu.edu/dpt/unilife/ods/>) to determine the possible accommodations you might need; and 2) contact the instructor to discuss reasonable accommodations.

Course Agenda

Week 1 August 30: Global Conflict Resolution DH Gold Room

Readings: Coleman et al. article

Integration: Facilitated dialogue of readings/340 theories

Overview: South Sudan simulation & research materials; distribution of stakeholder parts

Short video: South Sudan and the Challenges Ahead:

<http://english.aljazeera.net/programmes/insidestory/2011/07/2011715131948913705.html>

Week 2 September 6 Negotiation

Readings: Rothman & Olson article

Integration: Negotiation activity

Week 3 September 13 Mediation

Readings: Crocker article

Integration: Mediation activity

********Reflection Paper Due***

Week 4 September 20 South Sudan Simulation Part I

Week 5 September 27 South Sudan Simulation Part II

Week 6 October 4: Simulation Debrief

Integration: Debrief of simulation results/experiences.

Course evaluations

Week 7 October 11(Columbus Day recess-No class)

FINAL PAPER DUE OCTOBER 14 AT 4:00 PM ROBINSON B 365

If you have any questions not answered in this syllabus please feel free to ask me.