

**CONF 101 DL- Conflict and Our World**  
**Introduction to Conflict Analysis and Resolution**  
**Fall 2015**

Instructor: Gul M. Gur  
Meeting Space: Blackboard 9.1 (fully online)  
Email: [gmesciog@gmu.edu](mailto:gmesciog@gmu.edu)  
Phone: 5713312347  
Office Hours: By appointment (via skype or phone)  
Weekly Schedule: Each week runs Monday-Friday starting on August 31, 3 credits course

**Course Description:**

Welcome to the Course and to S-CAR!

This course is designed as an Introduction to the field of Conflict Analysis and Resolution. In this class, you will have a chance to understand the core concepts, theories and approaches to conflicts and to analyze different types of conflicts by dealing with their root causes. With the skills that you will gain throughout the course, you will also practice resolving conflicts through case studies. Contrary to the idea that all conflicts are destructive, conflicts are natural phenomena in human beings' lives. Depending on their intensity, conflicts are expressed sometimes in violent or nonviolent ways. Conflicts are everywhere. They occur between individuals, groups, institutions and/ or states. In this course, we will examine how and why conflicts occur in human society, and what we can do to mitigate their destructive aspects while reinforcing their constructive potential. At the end of this course, you should be able to identify the basic concepts, frameworks, and techniques in the field of conflict resolution, you should be able to analyze a conflict, appreciate the contextual factors that influence conflict, and understand the complexity of the most pressing contemporary conflicts.

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

## **Course Objectives**

- ❖ To help familiarize students with basic terminology, theories and models of conflict analysis and resolution associated with different types of conflicts (interpersonal, intergroup, international)
- ❖ To help students approach different types of conflicts with analytical and critical thinking
- ❖ To assist students to learn and implement the core skills of conflict analysis and resolution
- ❖ To encourage students learn bridging theory, research and practice on conflict cases related to interpersonal, intercommunal, international settings

This course will use distance learning (DL) format; the primary meeting space will be on Blackboard 9.1 and we will use other means of keeping in touch such as email, telephone, and Skype. In a typical week, we will cover one topic and you will have one assignment (you can see type of assignment related to each week under “assignments and dates” .

## **Netiquette for Online Discussions:**

Our discussion should be collaborative, not combative; you are creating a learning environment, sharing information and learning from one another. Respectful communication is important to your success in this course and as a professional. Please re-read your responses carefully before you post them so others will not take them out of context or as personal attacks. Be positive to others and diplomatic with your words and I will try my best to do the same. Be careful when using sarcasm and humor. Without face-to-face communications your joke may be viewed as criticism. Experience shows that even an innocent remark in the online environment can be easily misconstrued. Netiquette prepared by Charlene Douglas, Associate Professor, College of Health & Human Services, GMU.

## **Course Requirements (Assignments and Dates)**

Your final grade will be calculated based on your completion of the below mentioned assignments, tests, and papers.

## **Discussions:**

Mostly every week (please see the course agenda for exceptions), you will have discussion prompts to answer on blackboard (under “discussion board”). Some weeks, I will provide videos (short clips, documentaries, movies) on a specific case and will ask you to answer some questions based on the readings, lectures and the content of the video. The main purpose of these discussions will be to evaluate how you connect all of the course content in association

with a real life case. Some weeks, I will ask you to have a discussion over a topic from the readings of that week. In this type of discussions, you will reflect on the readings and critically approach the answers of your classmates to create student-led learning environment.

### **Midterm Exam**

Midterm exam will be in the form of a test based on the topics you learned so far until the midterm week. It will include different types of questions such as multiple-choice, true-false, fill in the blank, short answer questions and some others.

The exam will be completed in 30-40 minutes and you will not have a chance to retake it. The exam will include around 15 questions. Therefore, you really need to be prepared for the exam.

You can take your exam any time between October 12-16.

### **Liberia Experiential Learning Activity (ELA)**

This Experiential Learning Activity (ELA) has been developed as part of the Undergraduate Experiential Learning Project (UELP), A U.S. Department of Education, Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE)-funded initiative that aims to enhance conflict Analysis and Resolution (CAR) pedagogy in order to improve undergraduate learning.

This specific Liberia ELA activity is an introduction to conflict mapping and data evaluation. The exercise asks students to conduct a basic conflict assessment in the town of Voinjama, Liberia following deadly clashes that strained community relations.

#### **1. Liberia ELA 1:**

In the first exercise, the students will be divided into 4 teams. Each team will be provided conflict summary, student materials (one packet per student), and student photo supplement (one packet per group). Students will be asked to **develop an analysis and map of the conflict using the guiding questions and information provided in their packet.**

The Students will prepare a power point presentation based on their analysis and map of the conflict. The students will work together on blackboard under "Liberia Exercise". Teams will not see the discussions of other teams until they post their presentation on general "discussion board".

After that point, there will be a debrief part in that the students will individually reflect on their experience as well as the presentations of other teams with guiding questions that will be provided by the instructor.

The grading in this activity will be as such:

1. **Brainstorming (5pts).** In order to prepare the conflict mapping presentation, students need to brainstorm on the content of the presentation. One student can start the discussion and other students can continue contributing the discussion. Active participation into the brainstorming part is critical for interactive group discussion. If there is no brainstorming in the group or if some of the team members do not contribute to the brainstorming, these students cannot earn any points from that part of the exercise.
2. **Preparing the presentation (5 pts).** Each student in the team should take the responsibility of helping the preparation of the presentation. At this point, the working procedure is up to team members. You will basically need to organize your thoughts that you had in the first part (brainstorming) and present it to the other teams.
3. **Debrief (5pts).** After the completion of the presentation, each team will post the presentation on blackboard under “discussion board” at certain date and time. The instructor will announce this later.

Note: Please be careful not to be dominant in teamwork and to respect the ideas of the other team members. This is a collaborative work and you will also display how harmoniously your team is working. However, this does not mean that you have to wait the answer of a group member who never responds your questions. I will be observing the whole discussion and if there is a team member who does not take any responsibility throughout the activity, I will be taking note of that.

## 2. Liberia ELA 2:

In the second Liberia exercise, student will have a chance to develop an intervention to solve the conflict that each team dealt with in the first exercise. Students will work with the same team members and each team will represent an organization. These organizations are:

- Group 1: International Service Corp
- Group 2: QUEST for Understanding, Solidarity, and Transformation
- Group 3: Interfaith League of Lofa County
- Group 4: National Commission on Human Rights and Reconciliation

The students are expected to develop an intervention for the conflict from the perspective of their roles using the guiding questions provided in their materials. Each team will be provided a student package and based the information provided in this package, they will prepare a presentation. This presentation will be posted on blackboard under “discussion board” at certain date and time. The instructor will announce this later.

The grading policy is same with the first Liberia exercise (5 pts each for brainstorming, presentation and debrief).

**Final Research Paper:**

Final Paper will be a research paper based on your previous readings and your research. There are several options about the topic. You can pick an interpersonal conflict, organizational conflict, or an international conflict. Your paper will be based on a conflict mapping, theory implementation and conflict intervention design. If you need an advice on the topic that you picked, if you have no idea about which topic you should write on or if you have questions about the paper format, you will post your question to “discussion board”. Your question will be answered in a day. The paper should be between five to seven pages (5-7) in length, be double spaced and 12pt Times New Roman font. *The exam submissions will be on blackboard safe assign.* Deadline is December 12nd.

Papers should include at least one page worth of bibliographic references. Your research librarian at Fenwick Library is Mary Oberlies (moberlie@gmu.edu-703- 993-3709). Do not hesitate to contact her with specific questions about Library holdings and more general research methods. I also highly recommend using Zotero for your research, citations, and bibliographies. (See zotero.org).

**SUMMARY OF THE ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES and POINTS**

**Discussions- Check the dates on syllabus and discussion board (You will have 10 discussions which will be 30pts in total)**  
**Midterm- W7 (15pts)**  
**Liberia ELA 1: Brainstorming and presentation W8, Debrief W9 (15pts)**  
**Liberia ELA 2: Whole activity W14 (15pts)**  
**Final Paper- W15 (25pts)**

**Grading:**

The course will be graded according to the following:

Points Accumulated	Grade	Points Accumulated	Grade
95-100	A+	70- 74	B-
90-94	A	65-69	C
85-89	A-	60-64	C-
80-84	B+	50- 59	D
75-79	B	0-49	F

### **Instructor Videos:**

Course lectures will be uploaded to blackboard under “course content” each week on Monday mornings around 9AM. Please read the assigned chapters and articles before reviewing the lecture. If you experience a difficulty to watch/listen the lecture, please contact me as soon as possible so we can fix the problem for you.

### **Special Notes about Grades and Assignments**

- Late Assignments/Returns: Please see the rubric specific to the assignment if late return is allowed or how many points will be deduct for late return.
- All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review.
- All assignments should be submitted to the blackboard. Please see the rubric specific to the assignment to where you will submit your paper.
- Assignments NOT listed on the schedule may be assigned upon the discretion of the instructor. The instructor reserves the right to change this schedule as circumstances may dictate. All changes will be announced.
- Once you submit an assignment and receive a grade, you cannot resubmit corrections for more points!

### **Earning Extra Points:**

Students can earn an extra 4 points in the course. In order to earn them, you should attend on campus or virtual events (2 events) and write a reflection paper on them.

The event should have information online so the instructor can analyze the information and approve its relevancy to the class. Then, the student can attend it and write a 1-2 page double-spaced reflection on the event by answering these questions:

1. Who was the speaker (s)?
2. What was the topic of the event?
3. What were the main arguments of the speaker (s)?
4. Did you agree/disagree the speech (es) and why?
5. What was the most interesting information that you’ve received from the event?

### **General Online Course Guidance Blackboard (Available on June 1, 2015)**

We will use Blackboard 9.1 for the course. Additional guidance on individual assignments and discussion questions will be posted there. Use the Blackboard assignment drop box to submit your work for grading. Please visit our Blackboard site regularly. Access Blackboard 9.1 by following these steps:

1. Go to <http://mymason.gmu.edu>.
2. Login using your NETID and password,
3. Click on the 'Courses' tab.
4. Double-click on the course link under the "Blackboard 9.1 Course" heading.

### **Instructor-Student Communication**

I will respond to your emails within 48 hours. If I will be away from email for more than two days, I will post an announcement in the Blackboard course folder.

Before sending an email, please check the following for information which may answer your question (available on your Blackboard course menu) unless the email is of a personal nature:

1. Syllabus
2. Help forum (Feel free to respond to other students in the Help forum if you know the answer.)
3. Blackboard videos and Q&A on how to use Blackboard features
4. Technology Requirements

### **Mason EMAIL**

- ❖ Mason requires that Mason email be used for all courses. I will be sending messages to your Mason email and you are responsible for making sure you have access to these messages.
- ❖ You may forward your Mason email to other accounts but always use your Mason e-mail when communicating with me to allow verification of your identity.
- ❖ You are required to check your Mason email account regularly and to keep your mailbox maintained so that messages are not rejected for being over quota.
- ❖ When you email me, be sure to include CONF101 at the beginning of the subject heading to alert me that I have received a message from one of my online students.

### **University Resources and Assistance**

Writing Center

- ❖ The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing. <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

#### Disability Services

- ❖ If you have a documented learning disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with Office for Disability Services to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) talk with the instructor to discuss your accommodation needs the first week of class. Contact: 703-993-2474 <http://ods.gmu.edu/>

#### University Libraries

- ❖ University Libraries provides resources for distance students. <http://library.gmu.edu/distance>.

#### Counseling and Psychological Services

- ❖ The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance. <http://caps.gmu.edu>

#### Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

- ❖ The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), also known as the "Buckley Amendment," is a federal law that gives protection to student educational records and provides students with certain rights. <http://registrar.gmu.edu/privacy>

#### University Policies

- ❖ Students must follow the university policies. <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu>

#### Responsible Use of Computing

- ❖ Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing.
- ❖ <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing>

#### University Calendar



- ❖ Details regarding the current Academic Calendar. <http://calendar.gmu.edu>

### **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: <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/> All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review.

With specific regards to plagiarism, three fundamental 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. Also, please let me know how your final paper relates to your previous academic work—it is a problem if you just recycle a previously-written paper. While a powerful tool, please use the internet with caution. Reference your sources, resist the temptation to cut and paste material into your own work, and use independent validation of the information where appropriate. 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. You should review requirements regarding use and citation of sources prior to submitting your final work.

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. 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.

For each major assignment in this course, students will include a signed statement:

"On my honor, the work represented in this assignment is my own without any unauthorized assistance."

### **Diversity**

George Mason University is committed to creating a welcoming, respectful and inclusive educational environment that values diversity. Students should review the syllabus at the beginning of the term to determine if there are any conflicts between class time and religious observance. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of these conflicts within the first week of the semester. <http://ulife.gmu.edu/calendar/religious-holiday-calendar/>

### **Required Texts and Readings-**

The following books are available to purchase at the University Bookstore.

- Dean G. Pruitt and Sung Hee Kim (2004). *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement*. 3rd Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Students will also be provided online articles and they will be available on blackboard under “course materials” .

Students are responsible for all the readings mentioned in the syllabus.

## **COURSE AGENDA**

Due to the nature of online courses, the weekly schedule is flexible. However, the lectures will be posted on blackboard on every Monday and assignments will have certain deadlines. The way you work throughout the week is up to the student. However, you should meet the deadlines and the course policy is strict on this.

Even if there are no classes on Labor Day and Columbus Day, lectures will be posted on blackboard on Mondays. However, you will not have any assignments for these specific days.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **WEEK 1**

Aug 31-Sept 4

#### **What is conflict?**

Introduction to the Course: Syllabus, Expectations, Course Design

Reading: Pruitt and Kim, pp.3-14

Rioux et al., pp.2-18

**DISCUSSION (Please see the discussion board for the discussion prompt)**

## **CONFLICT NATURE AND SOURCES**

### **WEEK 2**

Sept 7-11

#### **Conflict Nature and Sources (1)**

Reading: Pruitt and Kim, pp15-35

Galtung, pp. 167-191 (on blackboard)

**DISCUSSION (Please see the discussion board for the discussion prompt)**

**WEEK 3**  
Sept 14-18

**Conflict Nature and Sources (2)**  
Reading : Rioux et al., pp.79-97  
Rioux et al., pp.119-145

**DISCUSSION: (Please see the discussion board for the discussion prompt)**

**WEEK 4**  
Sept 21-25

**Conflict Nature and Sources (3)**  
Readings: Rioux et al., pp.146-188  
Collier, pp.197-216 (on blackboard)

**DISCUSSION: (Please see the discussion board for the discussion prompt)**

## CONFLICT ANALYSIS

**WEEK 5**  
Sept 28-Oct 2

**Conflict Strategies and tactics**  
Reading: Pruitt and Kim, pp.37-85  
Rioux et al., pp.212-235

**DISCUSSION: (Please see the discussion board for the discussion prompt)**

**WEEK 6**  
Oct 5-9

**Conflict Escalation**  
Reading: Pruitt and Kim, pp.85-167

**DISCUSSION: (Please see the discussion board for the discussion prompt)**

**WEEK 7**  
Oct 12-16

**Conflict Stalemate and Deescalation**  
Reading: Pruitt and Kim, pp.169-188

**MIDTERM EXAM (Exam questions are on blackboard under "assessment")**

**WEEK 8**

Oct 19-23

blackboard)

**Conflict Mapping Models and Liberia ELA 1**

Readings: Spitcerow and Sandole's 3-pillar framework (on Jeong, pp.20-39

**LIBERIA ELA 1 (brainstorming and presentation)****The details of the activity is on blackboard under "Liberia ELA"****CONFLICT RESOLUTION****WEEK 9**

Oct 26- 30

**Third Party Roles and Problem Solving**

Reading: Pruitt and Kim, pp.189-258

**LIBERIA ELA 1 (debrief)****The details of the debrief is on blackboard under "discussion board"****DISCUSSION****WEEK 10**

Nov 2-6

**Peacebuilding, Civil Society and Non-Violence**

Reading: Barnes, "Civil Society and Peacebuilding: Mapping Functions in Working for Peace"

Haus, "Civil Society" Available at:  
<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/civil-society>

Sharp, G. , "Part One" and "Part Two", pp.1-50

Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail,"

Available at:  
[http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles\\_Gen/Letter\\_Birmingham.html](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html)**DISCUSSION (Please see the discussion board for the discussion prompt)****WEEK 11**

Nov 9-13

**Gender, War, and Peacebuilding**

Reading: Cheldelin and Eliatamby, "Women Waging War and Peace"

Ramsbotham et al., pp.305-316

**DISCUSSION (Please see the discussion board for the discussion prompt)**

CONF 101 DL

Fall 2015

12

**WEEK 12**  
Nov 16-20  
**Reconciliation**  
Readings: Lederach, "Reconciliation: The Building of Relationship"  
Ramsbotham et al., pp.246-261

**DISCUSSION (Please see the discussion board for the discussion prompt)**

**WEEK 13**  
**Thanksgiving Recess-No classes**

**WEEK 14**  
Nov 30- Dec 4  
**LIBERIA ELA 2 (brainstorming and presentation)**  
**LIBERIA ELA 2 (debrief)**  
**The details of the brainstorming and presentation part of the activity is on blackboard under "Liberia ELA"**  
**The debrief is under "discussion board"**

**WEEK 15**  
Dec 7-12  
**Wrap up of the course**  
**FINAL PAPER IS DUE ON DEC 12<sup>ND</sup> MIDNIGHT**

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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