

**CONF 300:002 - Conflict Resolution: Techniques & Practices
Fall Semester 2015**

**Friday, 10:30 Am – 1:10 p.m. Where: Robinson Hall B # 108
Office hours by appointment. Online consultation will be available any time.**

**Instructor: Innocent Rugaragu
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Phone: 202 – 594 – 5824 (call or text)
GMU – S-CAR – School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution**

Class Expectations:

Walk the Talk. “*The harder I work, the luckier I get.*” – by Samuel Goldwyn.
The class will seek to develop women and men who are capable of avoiding, interrupting and ending the cycles of violence. As global citizens, students in this class will develop awareness of the techniques & practices critical for participating in conflict resolution in our shared universe.

Course Overview

What does it take to end or interrupt violent conflict? In other words, if violent conflicts were to be a disease, what would be the cure? Like water, we can't live without conflict¹ but we can dismantle the vision of violent conflict and replace it with the vision of peace. This course will seek to answer the above question. This class focuses on advanced consideration of CONF 101 topics, provides an introduction of the core notion of reflective practice, conflict resolution techniques, practices, third party roles, and ethics. The emphasis will be on techniques and practices of conflict resolution. Think for a moment if we had just and fair systems, processes, structures, and institutions; how many violent conflicts could have been avoided in our families, groups, communities, legal, policies, political, economic, social, and cultural systems.

The techniques and practices learnt will be geared toward empowering students to live with a bold vision and self confident discipline of imagination that embraces the discipline of CR & peace.

Through class reading materials, discussions, films, case studies, and a simulation of real-world conflicts, both the past and ongoing, students will develop and strengthen their ability to interrupt the cycles of violence.

Description and Objectives of this course

- This course explores a variety of theories and frameworks for analyzing and responding to conflict. Students will move from conflict analysis to exploring

¹ Cathy A. Costantino and Christina Sickles Merchant. *Designing Conflict Management System: A guide to creating Productive and Healthy Organization* (San Francisco: Jossey- Bass, 1996), ix.

techniques, process models, and third-party roles to constructively intervene in conflict. Because this class emphasizes building conflict resolution skills and abilities, a significant portion of the class will be experiential, engaging in simulated conflict scenarios and subsequent reflection.

- The class will also introduce students to unique forms of practice and allow time for students to use analytic frames to assess a conflict and then design a resolution process based upon context dynamics, theories of change, and critical analysis. Interpersonal, small group, organizational, community, and international conflict will all be discussed in the course, but special emphasis in practice will be placed on interpersonal and small group conflicts as the building blocks for doing conflict resolution in larger and more complex social environments and with diverse stakeholder groups.
- At the end of the course, students will have learned theories and techniques for assessing conflicts, be able to make informed summaries of conflict intervention options, and have a set of skills and techniques to help parties in conflict have constructive conversations in order to move conflicts toward resolution. While students will learn and practice several conflict resolution process models and roles, the goal is not to be fully trained as mediators or facilitators, although this course will be an excellent introduction should students decide to pursue further training or credentialing in such areas. Students will appreciate the relationship between conflict analysis and resolution.

My Teaching Philosophy

- ❖ I deeply believe in higher education and I know that it takes the whole person, a union of heart and mind to succeed in this endeavor. Hence, as a teacher, supporting and encouraging a disciplined innovative and creative imagination is vital in conflict analysis and resolution. Good intellectual results in this field require full commitment to techniques and practices of what has worked in the field and what students in this class may discover that might work in the future.

Paper Format and Course Completion

Papers for the course should be typed, double-spaced, have 1” margins, and use a common 12-point font. Headers should include only the course number, CONF 300- 002. Papers should have a title, a school, your name, paper #, page numbers, the instructor’s name and due date.

Make-up exams and extensions of time for assignments will be arranged only if needed e.g. for documented personal illness or family emergency. Students with documented disabilities should make arrangements early in the term by contacting me.

Classroom etiquette

Please come to class on time and prepared. Turn off your 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, having fun on Facebook, twitter, email etc. Do not surf the web unless I ask you to look up some relevant information. The class is a safe place to be yourself and freely discuss some of the most disturbing conflicts around us. Please be mindful of the sensitivities of others in your comments. Again, no fear, an open conversation, discussion and genuine intellectual dialogue shall remain our goal as we journey together to challenge our selves and our communities. As Socrates reminds us in his wisdom “Be nicer than necessary to everyone you meet. Everyone is fighting some kind of battle.” After all, we have more than enough conflicts to study and interrupt.

GMU email accounts

Students must activate their GMU email accounts to receive important university information, including messages related to this class.

Course Reading Requirements

Wanting to work is so rare a merit, that it should be encouraged, – A. Lincoln²

Required Textbook

1. Bolton, Robert. 1986. *People Skills: How to Assert Yourself, Listen to Others, and Resolve conflicts*. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc.
2. Costantino, Cathy A. and Christina Sickles Merchant. 1996. *Designing Conflict Management Systems: A Guide to Creating Productive and Healthy Organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
3. Trujillo, Mary Adams, S. Y. Bowland, et al. editors. 2008. *Re-Centering Culture and Knowledge in Conflict Resolution Practice*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

N:B For those without sufficient conceptual background on conflict Analysis and Resolution, I highly recommend you read at your own leisure the following books. I've copies you can borrow.

1. Dean G. Pruitt & Sung Hee Kim. *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement – 3rd Ed, 2004*
2. Ramsbotham, Oliver, Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution, 3rd edition. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011.*

² Gene Griessman. *The Words Lincoln Lived by: 52 Timeless Principles to Light Your Path*. New York: Fireside, 1997: p. 30.

Other Readings: Articles to be posted on Blackboard

Assessment

[i] Mason, Simon and Sandra Rychard. 2005. *Using Conflict Analysis Tools*. Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Conflict Prevention and Transformation Division (COPRET).

Theories of Change

[ii] CARE International UK. ND. *Peacebuilding with Impact: Defining Theories of Change*.

[iii] Church, Cheyanne and Mark Rogers. 2011. Chapter 2, Understanding Change. *In Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Activities*. Search for Common Ground.

[iv] Lederach, John Paul, Reina Neufeldt, and Hal Culbertson. 2007. *Reflective Peacebuilding: A Planning, Monitoring, and Learning Toolkit*. Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame.
<http://kroc.nd.edu>.

Critical Conflict Resolution

[v] Hansen, Toran. 2008. Critical Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice. *In Conflict Resolution Quarterly*. Vol. 25, No. 5(403-427).

[vi] Jones, Wendell and Scott H. Hughes. 2003. Complexity Conflict Resolution, and How the Mind Works. *In Conflict Resolution Quarterly*. Vol. 20, No. 4(485-494).

Learning & Ethical Reflection

[vii] Cheldelin, Sandra, Wallace Warfield, and January Makumba. 2004. Reflections on Reflective Practice. *In Research Frontiers in Conflict Analysis and Resolution*, George Mason University, 64-78.

[viii] Eilertsen, Soren with Kellan London. 2005. *Modes of Organizational Learning*. Kollner Group. [http://http://www.kollnergroupp.com](http://www.kollnergroupp.com).

[ix] Warfield, Wallace. 2002. Is This the Right Thing to Do? A Practical Framework for Ethical Dilemmas. *In A Handbook of International Peacebuilding: Into the Eye of the Storm*. John Paul Lederach and Janice Moomaw Jenner, eds. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Practice

[x] Kraybill, Ron. 2004. *Facilitation Skills for Interpersonal Transformation*. Bergdorf Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management. <http://www.berghof-handbook.net>.

[xi] Owen, Harrison. 1993. *Open Space Technology: A User's Guide*. [Open Space Technology](#).

[xii] Owen, Harrison. ND. *Open Space Technology: An Introduction*. [Open Space Technology](#).

[xiii] Search for Common Ground. 2003. *A Conversation About Conflict: Facilitator's Guide*. <https://www.sfcg.org>.

[xiv] UNDP. 2009. 2009. *Why Dialogue Matters for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding*. <http://www.undp.org>

[xv] World Café Resource Guide. <http://theworldcafe.com>

Blackboard

This course will utilize Blackboard to house documents pertinent to the course, to submit assignments, and to provide a space for discussion and collaboration. Students are expected to check the site regularly. Instructions for access will be provided the first day of class.

Class Attendance and Participation (20%)

A success story starts here. Since this course involves in-class experiential learning, participation is a vital component of the student's grade. Latecomers to the class without my prior permission and those who do not actively participate, will receive a poor participation grade.

Regular attendance and consistent engagement in class discussions is expected and highly encouraged. It is critical to complete the assigned readings prior to each class in order to learn the subject matter and to be prepared to fully engage in discussions and in-class exercises if you desire to have an "A" grade.

Papers – Two reflection papers (30%)

There will be two (2) reflection papers. Each paper will be 4-5 pages in length, each worth 15% of the student's total grade.

Pick an ongoing conflict familiar to you, then apply conflict resolution skills, techniques and/or practices observed in the class and in the real world. Students must learn by doing and this class will be hands on class (we will practice as we learn). The papers should integrate course readings, as well as in-class discussions / observations/

and participation in the conflict resolution processes. The objective of these papers is to practice... for practice makes perfect in the real world.

Each student should choose a formal citation style he or she prefers: APA, MLA or Chicago style, and then employ it consistently throughout. Papers are due on

October 2nd and November 13th.

Group Project (25%)

4 - 5 students will partner in a group to work on a conflict that I will assign each group. In collaboration, students will identify the best techniques and practices for preventing/ de-escalating/ managing or resolving the conflict. Each group will have 20 – 30 minutes to present the results of their research to the class in a visual format (eg. a recorded video, a power point presentation, etc.). Please send me a copy beforehand to distribute to entire class. Make sure you leave 10 minutes for questions and comments from your colleagues.

Final Written Exam (25%)

The final exam will be an open-book, take-home essay of 5 pages. You will receive the exam in class on **December 4th** and it will be due on **December 13th at 1:10 p.m.**, submitted online – by email. No late exams will be accepted except in extreme circumstances with the approval of the instructor.

Papers and Exam Grading Rubric (100 points – Maximum)

- a) Abstract (summary of the paper (maximum 150 words) = 10 points Maximum
- b) Introduction/ statement of purpose /problem = 20 points maximum
- c) Body or explanation – logical and concise = 40 points maximum
- d) Conclusion = 10 points maximum
- e) Writing – free from grammatical errors = 10 points maximum

Group Project (100 points maximum)

- a) A clear understanding of the topic/ conflict = 10 points Maximum
- b) A clear presentation of the conflict = 20 points Maximum
- c) Reflection of group project by members = 60 points Maximum
- d) Responding to questions and class discussion = 10 points Maximum

Extra Credit Policy (3 points max – 1 short paper (2- 3 double spaced paper)

Opportunities for extra credit may be offered during the semester, at the instructor's discretion. Such opportunities are available to students who have completed all required assignments and are passing the course. Due dates and other requirements for extra credit assignments will be provided on a case-by-case basis. A student will have to participate in the court community mediation and then write a **500-750word** reflection on the process. Or

attend events 3 **points** (each). Approved events will be posted on Blackboard and feel free to suggest some relevant events you may judge very informative and relevant.

Grading Scale

All submissions start with 100% grade, points are deducted for anything that is incorrect (e.g. missing a vital perspective in an analysis, missing key information, misspelling, incorrect formatting, missing assignment requirements, incorrect citations, etc.).

A: represents - Outstanding work that shows creative original thinking, well organized, and flawlessly written.

B: represents - 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: represents - 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: represents - Serious flaws in every aspect of the work: a lack of understanding of basic principles, poor organization, and writing that make it difficult for me to understand the author.

F: represents - Unacceptable and/or incomplete, of a nature that if re-writing was permitted, the student would be required to re-write to earn a passing grade.

Points Accumulated	Grade
98-100	A+
93-97	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
79-82	B-
75-78	C+
72-74	C
69-71	C
61- 68	D
0- 60	F

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.

The school for Conflict Analysis and Resolution 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. ICAR's policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace or substitute for it. Please, Never submit one assignment paper for more than one class.

Student Resources

GMU Writing Center, <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>. "The Writing Center seeks to foster a writing climate on campus and beyond by offering free writing support to George Mason students, faculty, staff and alumni. No matter what your writing abilities are, writing specialists can help you develop the skills you need to become a successful writer. Free services include: One-on-one 45 minute sessions with a writing specialist; online writing lab; one-on-one sessions with an ESL specialist; workshops on such topics as documenting sources, grammar and punctuation; writing handouts on a variety of subjects; a library of handbooks and writing manuals; [and an] online chat with a tutor about papers submitted to the Online Writing Lab."

Disability Support Services, <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/advising/dss.html>
Support available here to any student with documented learning disabilities or other conditions that may affect academic performance. Make sure this documentation is on file with the Office of Disability Support Services (993-2474) to determine the possible accommodations you might need. "George Mason University is committed to providing appropriate services and 4 accommodations that allow self-identified students with disabilities to access programs and activities at the university as stated in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990...."

Library Services

The School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution library liaison is Mary K. Oberlies (moberlie@gmu.edu). Do not hesitate to contact her with specific questions about holdings and research in these areas or whom to contact for materials in Fenwick Library.

Required Readings

All the required class books mentioned have been ordered at the University Bookstore. All other readings will be available through Blackboard.

CLASS TOPICS & READINGS

Week 1: September 4th: Introduction and general overview of the course

“What is called wisdom is concerned with primary causes” - Aristotle

• Welcome and Introductions

- Review of syllabus: Working definition of conflict, techniques and practices.
- Develop discussion guidelines and other class protocol.
- Self – systemic and structural approach towards conflict and conflict Resolution.
- Overview of triangle of what causes conflict (power, resources & identity).
- Self assessment in conflict & resolution – Thoman Kilmann’s exercise
- Conflict self-awareness and the art and science of peace (reflective practice).
“Peace (CR) , like charity, begins at home” – by Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Readings to be completed

- Richard E. Rubenstein. *Conflict Resolution and distributive Justice: Reflection on the Burton–Laue debate.* (<http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/pcs/Rubenstein61PCS.html>)
- Wallace Warfield. *From Conflict Resolution to Social Justice, Ch. 8, p.125-135*
- Galtung triangle

Watch in class – You tube:

- Thomas Kilmann Explained – 7:21’

Week 2: September 11th - Frameworks for Assessing and Critically Analyzing Conflict Resolution

Levels of analysis (positions, interests, values, world views, needs & desires) – Christopher Moore’s satisfaction triangle:

http://www.auroraproject.com.au/sites/default/files/15_satisfaction_triangle.pdf & Dual concern level

Contextualizing conflict and practice

Readings to be completed for class

- SPITCEROW & Dennis Sandole’s “Three Pillars in mapping a conflict
<https://cis.uchicago.edu/outreach/summerinstitute/2010/documents/sti2010-ruckstuhl-resources.pdf>
- Toran, Jones & Hughes

Week 3: September 18th – The Art and Science of Active Listening and Mindful Speaking (Communication, Dialogue & Non violence): Peacemaking and Restorative Justice - strategies and practices for peace and systemic change / transformation.

Readings

- Bolton. *People skills, chapter 1 & 2*
- Eilertsen & London

Week 4: September 25th – Listening and understanding: Cultural Transformation

Readings

- Bolton Chapters 3, 4 & 5
- Trujillo, Mary Adams, S. Y. Bowland, et al – chapter 1 & 2
- Kevin Avruch, (in Sandole's book), p. 131-145
-

Week 5: October 2nd – Reflection: Race & Gender - Negotiation

Readings

- Reflection, race, & gender
- Cheldelin et al.
- Trujillo Chapters 4 & 5
- Bolton Chapters 6 & 7
- Docherty, pp. 18-22, 38-46, 72-83 (Life is about how you negotiate)

Week 6: October 9th – Reflection & Change – Mediation

- Care
- Church & Rogers
- Lederach
- Search for Common ground facilitator's guide
- John Winslade & Gerald Monk. Narrative Mediation – Chapt 1

Med-tem reflection paper due

Week 7: October 16th – Power, Justice & culture

Readings

- Trujillo chapters 8, 9, & 10

Week 8: October 23rd – Facilitation v.s Arbitration (culture, justice & reconciliation

Readings

- Schwarz, Part 1; How facilitation helps groups, p. 3-17
- Trujillo chapters 15, 19, 21 & 22
- Case studies to be discussed
- A guest Speaker

Week 9: October 30th –Conflict, Systems & Organizations

Readings

- Constantino & Merchant – chapters 1-4
- Guest Speaker - John Horejsi: SA-L-T

Week 10: November 6th – Systems, Design & Resolution: Appreciative Inquire (AI) v.s Problem Solving (PS)

Readings

- Constantino & Merchant – chapters 5-9
- Bolton. *People skills*, p. 232 - 256
- Watkins, *Chapt: 3 - Appreciative inquiry as a process*

Week 11: November 13th – Resistance, culture & Change

Reading

- Constantino & Merchant – chapters 12 & 13

2nd reflection paper due

Week 12: November 20th - Ethics of CR & Peace: Best Practices and Leadership

Readings

- Wallace Warfield – Is this the right thing to do?
- Mary Anderson – *Do No Harm – Proceduralization* (youtube 8:16')
- “Everything rises and falls on leadership” - in all triple pillars of any society – leadership is at the center of every institution for change

Week 13: November 27th - (No Class – Thanks Giving 25 – 29th)

Week 14: December 4th – Hurricane Katrina Simulation or human made Crisis simulation

Week 15: December 11th - Class wrap up, Truth, Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Readings

- Frederic Luskin, *Forgive for Good*, Desmond Tutu & E t c
- Philpott, D. “An Ethic of Political Reconciliation,” *Ethics and International Affairs*, Vol 23(4), winter 2009.

“ We used to wonder where war lived, what it was that made it so vile. And now we realize that we know where it lives, that it is inside ourselves”. – Albert Camus. (And so is CR& Peace - Experience – Reflection – Action = CR & Peace)

December 13, 2015: Final term papers due at 1:10 Pm
via email & Happy Holidays