

# SYLLABUS

## CONF 651: COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY PLANNING

Semester: Fall Semester 2015  
Location: Arlington Campus. Founders Hall 481  
Class Meetings: 10AM-5PM, October 24, 31; November 14, 15, 21; and December 5

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### COURSE BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

All communities have conflicts, some much more severe than others. And there are predictable issues in issues, often driven by deep racial and ethnic divisions, economic inequity, complex community problems, and environmental degradation. Many community conflicts are triggered by a proposed change, whether a new law or a new streetcar line. These are among the many issues that effective, inclusive, collaborative community planning processes can help address. One of the goals for this course is for you to deeply understand and operationalize these key concepts: inclusive, effective, and collaborative.

Community planning processes happen every day. Some rely upon experts, others marginalize the opponents, and some try to be collaborative but do not succeed. Students in this course will learn how to construct effective collaborative planning processes that employ a wide range of design options ranging from small group dialogue to facilitated consensus building and online engagement to thousand-person town meetings.

Equity issues thread through almost every community issue and, therefore, are woven, implicitly or explicitly, through every community planning process. We will explore how collaborative community planning processes address equity issues, or not.

Lastly, while the primary emphasis of this course is on collaborative approaches that are informed by conflict resolution theory and practice, we will also explore how other fields are informing this body of work.

## COURSE FORMAT

The class will meet in a compressed schedule on five Saturdays and a Sunday between October 24<sup>th</sup> and December 5<sup>th</sup>. These sessions will include presentations, discussion, role plays, and exercises. Between sessions, students will actively engage in reading and completing assignments as described.

## CLASS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### GRADING

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Students are responsible for completing assignments on time. You will be penalized for assignments that are submitted after their deadline.

Some class assignments and readings will be sent via e-mail and students are responsible for keeping up-to-date with these. Your grade will be based on the following criteria:

#### CLASS DISCUSSIONS AND PARTICIPATION (35%)

This class is interactive and elicitive. Attendance and participation in class activities is important and will account for thirty-five percent of your grade. All students are expected to participate actively in class discussions. To successfully participate in the class, you will need to read the assigned materials prior to class.

Oral communication and presentation skills are an essential competency in conflict resolution and collaboration. Your grade for participation will include an assessment of your preparation for and delivery of presentations.

Absences will be excused only in exceptional circumstances.

#### WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS (65%)

All written assignments are expected to reflect graduate level research, analysis, and composition.

There are three written assignments. The first assignment is due on **November 1**. It is worth 10% of your final grade. The second assignment is due on **November 16**. It is worth 25% of your grade. The final assignment is due by **8:00 am on December 16th**. It is worth 30% of your grade.

Writing a memo to a community leader recommending a collaborative process is quite different from writing an academic paper. Writing assignments in this class are focused on the kind of professional writing that practitioners need to be able to do well. This type of writing is clear, concise and to the point. Your ability to write in this way will be assessed as a part of your grade.

In addition, writing assignments are graded based on how well you integrate the readings, presentations, and discussions with your own creativity and analysis. Papers are also graded on presentation, grammar, and style.

## HONOR CODE AND PLAGIARISM

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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](http://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.

## STUDENT SUPPORTS

English Language Institute. The English Language Institute offers free English language tutoring to non-native English speaking students who are referred by a member of the GMU faculty or staff. For more information, call 703-993-3642 or email [malle2@gmu.edu](mailto:malle2@gmu.edu).

The Writing Center. The Writing Center is a free writing resource that offers individual, group, and online tutoring. For general questions and comments please contact us at [wcenter@gmu.edu](mailto:wcenter@gmu.edu) or call: 703-993-4491.

Disability Resource Center: The Disability Resource Center within the Office of Disability Services assists students with learning or physical conditions affecting learning. Students with learning differences that require special conditions for exams or other writing assignments should provide documentation provided by the Disability Resource Center. You must let me know before class begins if you have a learning or physical disability so that I can accommodate you. You will find more information at <http://ods.gmu.edu/> or may call 703-993-2474.

## TEXTBOOKS AND READINGS

The main textbook for this course is:

*The Collaborative Leadership Fieldbook*, David D. Chrislip. Jossey Bass, 2002.

### OPTIONAL READINGS

Effective practitioners need to be able to rapidly absorb large amounts of information and to draw creatively from multiple sources in developing and implementing a collaborative process. To this end, you are strongly encouraged read materials beyond the assigned readings and to incorporate materials from other courses as well as your personal and professional experiences.

These texts may also be of interest.

*How to Make Collaboration Work: Powerful Ways to Build Consensus, Solve Problems, and Make Decisions*, David Straus and Thomas Layton. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2002. David Straus was one of the early pioneers on collaborative community planning. His first book, which he co-wrote with his business partner Michael Doyle, called *Making Meetings Work*, was once ubiquitous (found in airport bookstores everywhere) and ushered in an approach to practice that dominates to this day. This book, which he wrote near the end of his career to capture the many lessons he learned, complements the chapter on process design that will be shared in class.

*Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey*, Michael Winer and Karen Ray. Amherst Wilder Foundation, 2000. This book is recommended for those students who would like more background on the specific mechanics and tactics of collaborative processes.

*Consensus Building Handbook*, Lawrence Susskind, Sarah McKernan, and Jennifer Thomas-Larmer. Sage, 1999. This comprehensive textbook provides the most complete overview of consensus building practice. Leading practitioners wrote chapters on virtually every topic of significance. Numerous case studies, most focused on communities, enliven the theory and describe some of the most significant collaborative processes of the day.

*Democracy as Problem Solving: Civic Capacity in Communities around the Globe*, Xavier de Souza Briggs. MIT Press, 2008. I used this excellent book the first time I taught this class because it effectively roots the discussion of collaborative processes in democratic theory and practice. It also includes several great case studies of efforts outside the US (which compliments the US focus of the Chrislip book). Using two textbooks in this short course was too much reading. Those with interests in democratic theory and collaboration and/or non-US case studies are encouraged to delve into this book.

Much of this course is focused on helping students develop their capacities to design large scale collaborative processes. Each of these publications provide more information and guidance on process design.

*Process Design, A Practical Guide to What to do When and How for Facilitators, Consultants, Managers and Coaches: Making it Work*, Dorothy Strachan and Paul Tomlinson. Jossey-Bass, 2008. This book, while focused on organizational settings, provides an excellent step-by-step guide to process design.

*The Change Handbook: The Definitive Resource on Today's Best Methods for Engaging Whole Systems*, Peggy Holman, et al. Berrett-Koehler 2007. The reference book describes over 50 unique participatory processes from Appreciate Inquiry to the DrumCafe,

*Gather: The Art and Science of Effective Convening*, The Monitor Institute. The well-designed guidebook offers clear guidance for organizations and intervenors designing big meetings and collaborative processes.

*Designing Public Participation Processes*, John Bryson, et al. This short article offers 12 design principles.

Finally, these two websites also contain a wealth of information.

- <http://www.community-problem-solving.net/>. This site, by Xav Briggs, includes several very helpful how-to guides.
- <http://ncdd.org/>. The National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation website has resources from many different parts of the field.

## CLASS DESCRIPTIONS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

See attached graphic.

## ASSIGNMENTS

### ASSIGNMENT #1: DUE IN CLASS ON NOVEMBER 2<sup>ND</sup>

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Select a community planning process/case from your course readings or any other source. There are two options:

- If the case you selected primarily used a “typical” planning process, write a 3–4 page essay that (a) describes the “typical,” community planning process employed, (b) offers an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the typical community planning processes that was employed, (c) offers a brief description of how a collaborative process

might have been used, and (d) contrasts typical community planning processes with a collaborative processes, using the case as a reference.

- If the case you selected primarily used a “collaborative” planning process, write a 3-4 page essay that (a) describes the collaborative process employed, (b) offers an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of collaborative planning processes, (c) offers a brief description of how a “typical” planning process might have been used, and (d) contrasts typical community planning processes with a collaborative processes, using the case as a reference.

In addition to your essay, please prepare two, two-column charts. The first chart should summarize the advantages and disadvantages of a collaborative planning process, the second, a “typical” planning process. Be prepared to present your paper in class.

### **SELECTING A CASE: DUE IN CLASS ON NOVEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup>**

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Nominate the conflict or situation you wish to use for the November 16<sup>th</sup> assignment. The nomination should include a 2-3 sentence description and several bullet points which explain why you think this is a good situation to use for the November 16<sup>th</sup> assignment.

### **ASSIGNMENT #2: DUE IN CLASS ON NOVEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup>**

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Select a case in consultation with the instructor. The case may be contemporary or historical.

The primary objective of this assignment is to prepare a packet of materials to educate and persuade a leader(s) who is in a position to make a decision about the process that a collaborative process would work well in their situation. The packet should include a 4-6 page briefing memo, an accompanying PowerPoint-style presentation document of no more than six slides, and a 1-2 page visual depiction of the proposed process. The briefing memo must (a) analyze the advantages and disadvantages of proceeding along the current path (b) make a case for why a collaborative approach would be more effective, (c) describe a proposed collaborative process and how it would proceed and (d) propose next steps.

Guidance for the memo:

- The recipient(s) of the memo should be those persons who are in a position to determine whether or not a collaborative process will be used
- The briefing memo must be written for a point in time in the situation where choosing a collaborative process is feasible (e.g., not at the end of the case nor when the parties are fully invested in a particular approach).

- You may invent appropriate standing for yourself and/or your team (e.g., you are from SCAR, a community mediation service, a planning firm, an NGO, or ???.)
- You may invent some appropriate context that establishes a relationship between you/your team and the process. For example, “In response to your invitation to interview key stakeholders . . . . “
- Feel free to be creative while being reasonably pragmatic
- Organize the memo as an executive briefing. Ensure the key points are presented concisely and clearly at the beginning of the memo. Consider the appropriate level of detail for a decision maker.

The presentation deck should be no longer than six slides. For your deck, you may use any software (e.g., MS PowerPoint or Apple Keynote) or any of the many (free) online services (e.g., Prezi, Open Office, Zoho, SlideRocket, Google Slides or others).

The visual depiction can be prepared with software (e.g., Visio, drawing tools in PowerPoint or MS Word, or others), online tools (e.g., such as Gliffy, DrawAnywhere, LucidChart, or others) or simply drawn by hand.

Be prepared to present your assignment in class.

### **ASSIGNMENT #3: DUE BY 8:00 AM ON DECEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup>**

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You may pursue one of the following writing projects or negotiate a project/paper that requires similar effort with the instructor. Further guidance on these assignment options will be provided in class.

- A. A proposal to funder. Develop an 8-10 page proposal to a prospective funder asking for support for a conflict resolution/collaborative process or the development of a collaborative. Pursuing this option will require identifying a situation, developing a process design, making a case for the proposed approach, researching possible funders, developing a budget, and other steps.
- B. Detailed process design with facilitator guidance. Develop a detailed process design for a complex challenge and detailed guidance for the facilitator and meeting planners for each meeting in the early stages of the process. This product can include a combination of a memo for facilitators, a slide deck, and visuals.
- C. Detailed Critique of Case where a Collaborative Process was employed. Write an 8-10 page paper that offers a detailed critique of a case where there was an intentional use of a structured collaboration process. Discuss choice points in the process and alternatives that might have been employed.

- D. Power and Equity Analysis. Write an 8-10 page paper that analyzes a case using power and equity lenses and discuss how process choices can balance (or not) the playing field.



## Class Descriptions and Reading Assignments

	OCTOBER 24	OCTOBER 31	NOVEMBER 14-15
LEARNING THEMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss organization of course, assignments, and readings.</li> <li>• Explore topics of interest to students</li> <li>• Explore conceptions of “good” and “bad” community planning</li> <li>• Introduction to situation assessment</li> <li>• Discuss process and other types of advocacy</li> <li>• Explore key concepts of collaboration and community planning including advantages of collaborative processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharpen analysis of “good” and “bad” community planning</li> <li>• Develop understanding of basic phasing and staging in collaborative processes</li> <li>• Explore process design frameworks</li> <li>• Explore different kinds of processes through examining the Neighborhood Action case in DC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore case studies of collaboration and community planning</li> <li>• Deeper exploration of complex process design</li> <li>• Explore different perspectives and disciplines in community collaboration</li> <li>• Exploration of dynamics of consultation, negotiation, and consensus building</li> </ul>
READINGS		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chrislip, Parts 1, 2 and Chapter 13</li> <li>• Explore various conflicts/situations so you can nominate a case for your November 16 assignment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chrislip, Part 3</li> <li>• Find and read a participatory budgeting case study</li> <li>• Creating Spaces for Change (found at <a href="http://www.wkkf.org/knowledge-center/resources/2010/creating-spaces-for-change.aspx">http://www.wkkf.org/knowledge-center/resources/2010/creating-spaces-for-change.aspx</a>)</li> </ul>
	<p>In addition to the above assignments, students will be asked to select one of the following articles, each of which brings a different lens to collaboration. You might want to scan them before the first class. <b>These need to be read by November 14<sup>th</sup>.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labs: Designing the Future. MaRS Solution Labs. Design thinking and social labs are rapidly growing in use both as distinct processes and as elements that can be incorporated into other methodologies. If you get the social labs bug, you can also pick up Zaid Hassan’s book, The Social Labs Revolution.</li> <li>• Large Systems Change: An Emerging Field of Transformation and Transitions. Steve Waddell, et al. Steve is one of a small set of practitioners that is inventing and applying global collaboration frameworks. These approaches use networking theory and a myriad of other social technologies.</li> <li>• 21<sup>st</sup> Century Civic Infrastructure: Under Construction. Jill Blair and Malka Kopell. Civic capacity is often seen as the key to being able to use collaborative processes as the way a community conducts its public business. To root this discussion in democratic capacities, read The Essential and Inherent Democratic Capacities of Communities by Patrick Scully and Alice Diebel.</li> </ul>		

## NOVEMBER 21

- Explore how collaborative processes fail
- Further develop process design frameworks and skills for extended layered and phased processes
- Explore case studies of collaboration and community planning

What's Next Alexandria? Handbook for Civic Engagement. (found at [http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/special/CivicEngagement/web\\_boxes/WNA%20HANDBOOK%20FINAL%20reduced\\_3\\_2014.pdf](http://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/special/CivicEngagement/web_boxes/WNA%20HANDBOOK%20FINAL%20reduced_3_2014.pdf))

Strengthening Participatory Approaches to Local Governance: Learning the Lessons from Abroad. John Gaventa. National Civic Review, Winter 2004.

## DECEMBER 5

- Explore collaborative governance frameworks for ongoing community planning efforts
- Exploring the role of collaboration and conflict resolution in strengthening democracy and reshaping political culture.
- Student selected topics

- Chrislip, Chapter 12
- Building Sustainable Community Politics: Synergizing Participatory, Institutional, and Representative Democracy, Potapchuk. National Civic Review, Fall 1996.