

**CONF 340-DL1 “Global Conflict Analysis and Resolution”
FALL 2012
School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution**

Instructor: Dr. Vandy Kanyako

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Office Hours: By appointment (in person, by phone, or by Skype)

Office Location: Robinson Hall B, Room 365, GMU Fairfax.

NOTE: This course is entirely online and there are no scheduled classes. It requires a lot of planning and discipline. Please read this syllabus very carefully to be sure you understand all aspects and requirements of the course.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- 1- Demonstrate knowledge of conflict analysis and resolution theories and models applicable to a wide range of global conflicts through collaborative group activities and online discussions, research assignments, and blog postings.
- 2- Identify basic elements of a conflict: causes, conditions, parties, issues, objectives, means, and conflict handling orientations.
- 3- Articulate the significance of the underlying root causes, relational, systemic and structural sources of conflict, and the interconnectedness between interstate and intrastate conflicts
- 4- Objectively analyze case studies of various types of global conflict, and design intervention strategies based on multi-track and multi-sectoral frameworks.

Required Course Material

Available at the GMU bookstore:

1. Ramsbotham, Oliver, Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. 3rd ed. Polity Press: 2011

Other required readings can be found online at the GMU libraries e-reserves, electronic databases, or an online link provided in the syllabus.

E-Reserves Access

- Go to <http://library.gmu.edu/>
- Click on the "E-reserves" Tab highlighted in green
- Select the course: CONF 340 - Section – Fall 2012
- Select the instructor: Vandy Kanyako
- Type the password: (to be provided later)
- Make sure not to use CAPS for password and no spaces.
- Click Submit

COURSE LOGISTICS

This course is completely online, and students should be prepared to undertake a great deal of responsibility for learning.

You are expected to spend approximately 18-20 hours on a *weekly* basis to complete all assigned readings, tasks, activities, and participate in online discussions, in a timely fashion. The course is designed as a 16-week full semester course. (Please note that in a conventional 16 week classroom environment, students have approximately 2.5 hours of classroom time each week; additionally, they are required to allocate about 7.5 hours in preparation for the class at home, including readings and assignments).

- Late submission of assignments will be penalized. Please refer to the section on “Late Work” under **Academic Policies and Information** below.
- A thorough knowledge of the theoretical content in the required texts is a fundamental requirement for successful performance in all class activities and assignments.

Blackboard

Blackboard 9.1 will be used for the course. 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 [CONF-340 DL1](#) under the “Blackboard 9.1 Course” heading.

Students must refer to the weekly schedule on Blackboard that will specify all required weekly activities and assignments. A weekly folder will be available on the ‘Course Contents’ tab in the course menu in Blackboard.

How to Contact Me?

You may contact the instructor by e-mail at anytime throughout the course.

The preferred method for asking questions about the course is to post your query in a discussion board titled **HELP FORUM**.

To access the forum, click on the “Help” tab on the Course Menu.

You may also email your questions, comments and concerns to me.

Before you e-mail me however, be sure to read the course FAQs by clicking the “FAQs” tab on the Course Menu.

A link to the FAQs in your Blackboard Course Folder can be found on the menu on the left side of the screen.

I will keep updating the FAQs on Blackboard as I respond to queries from students in the **HELP FORUM**.

If for any reason I am going to be away from email for a period of time, I will inform you in advance.

Please refer to your Blackboard course folder at least twice a week for updated information on the FAQs.

Office Hours

An in-person meeting, phone call and/or Skype meeting may also be scheduled during my office hours specified above.

I will respond to your query within 1-2 days, although I will make every effort to respond as soon as possible.

During the first week, I will be online and checking email and the FAQs’ **Help Forum** on Blackboard frequently, and will try to answer all questions on the same day.

Email Requirements

You may forward your GMU emails to other accounts but always use your GMU email when communicating with me to allow verification of your identity. All primary contact in the course will be via email and Blackboard; thus, you are **required** to check your Mason email account regularly and to clear it often so that messages are not rejected for being over quota.

Technology Requirements for the Course

Refer to the link titled Technology Requirements in the Blackboard course menu for downloading links and instructions.

- **PowerPoint**
- **Firefox 3.6 Browser**
- **Skype** (*optional*--one method for office hours)
- **Adobe Acrobat Reader**

- **Quicktime**
- **Real Media Player**

Course Description

Welcome to the course! Conflict analysis and resolution (CAR), is a multi-disciplinary field, which has grown fairly rapidly since the 1980s. It offers a variety of: a) theoretical frameworks; and b) problem-solving models at various levels including the individual, state, society, and the global environment. Various theories and concepts you will study in this course will help you to analyze conflicts and design systematic interventions for their resolution. Conflict theory provides the lens to analyze the global environment of conflict, which is of particular interest to this course.

The purpose of the course is to study deep-rooted and intractable conflicts, through the examination of under-lying causes, conditions, and drivers. You will develop the skills to mitigate the sources of, and preferably transform the conflict environment. Thus, you will acquire the tools to map various types, symptoms, and patterns of conflict. The dynamics of a conflict process such as escalation and de-escalation will be discussed. Students will also acquire a thorough knowledge of a range of conflict intervention strategies including: prevention, management, reconciliation, resolution, and transformation.

The class will identify various elements of global conflicts: parties involved (e.g. state and non state actors, individuals, organizations and groups); and connectedness between interstate conflicts (across governments and societies), and intrastate conflicts (in-country conflicts between the state and society, and/or between groups).

Through online discussion with your peers, the class will extrapolate a spectrum of economic, political, social, structural, and cultural factors that contribute to the genesis, manifestation and exacerbation of conflict attitudes and behavior relevant to specific global conflicts.

Through the course of the session students will apply various theoretical models to conflict hotspots around the world, such as South and Central Asia; the Middle East; Africa; Latin America, and other regions of interest.

Students may also reflect upon the sources of conflict across the world's economic regions, such as the rift between the Global North and South; and across religions and civilizations, such as tensions between the Islamic world and the West, among a host of global and ecological conflict scenarios. Other examples of global conflicts of interest to students may include: terrorism; human trafficking; narcotics trafficking and proliferation; the vertical and horizontal proliferation of small arms, conventional weapons, and weapons of mass destruction; the ensuing regional and international arms races; and climate change, inter alia.

Online discussions, activities, and assignments have been designed to collectively and individually consider the extent to which theory helps to explain the underlying causes and conditions of conflict, as well as to effectively respond to conflict. Active student participation in weekly discussions and projects, and familiarity with assigned readings are imperative for making online learning a successful experience.

Course Assignments and Grades

Your grade in this course is based on 5 separate components. The grading distribution and requirements for successful performance are given below. All assignments (except the final) are due on Fridays at 4:00 pm. They can be submitted earlier but **not after** the deadline.

- i. **1** short essay. Due Friday of week 6 (15%)
- ii. 3 Discussion board contributions (15%), Due Weeks 4, 7 and 9
- iii. 1 Collaborative Group project about a global conflict: Due Friday Week 12 (20%)
- iv. **4** blog entries: 20% of final grade. Due Week 2, week 3, week 5 and week 8 (300-400 words). *NOTE: For the Week 8 blog assignment you will be required to respond to the blog posting of two classmates. More details will be provided
- v. **1** final paper: 30% of final grade. **Due December 14**

1. 1 Short Essay (4 pages) (15%)

Due Date: On Friday of Week 6. More details will be provided in due course

2. Discussion Board contributions (15%)

Three times in the course of the semester I will pose a question on some current event around the world and solicit your response. Your contribution should be brief and succinct and should build upon but not duplicate what others have already stated. This will be due on the Friday of the week that the question is posted. Be original and creative.

3. Collaborative Group Project (20%):

Due Date: on Friday at 4:00 pm of Week 6.

You will be a member of one of five research teams (3 students max). The teams will prepare a PowerPoint presentation (not a paper) of a case study of an international conflict. While it's fine for groups to divide project work among team members, the final presentation should represent a single and conceptually linked piece of work. In your PowerPoint, you should map the conflict, analyze conflict resolution approaches that have been used and comment on the role of the international community in this conflict situation. The PowerPoint is due by email to the professor in Week 12. Even though it is a group assignment, each participant will be graded individually using the 360 degree method. If a group is having trouble with a member not fulfilling his/her work obligation, then the group needs to bring the problem to the instructor's attention.

Each group will have a private discussion board (that can be accessed by clicking on "Groups" in the Course Menu) to conduct the exercise. Discussions should refer to concepts and theories discussed in readings, and link them to the theme of the simulation. Each group is expected to

submit a one-page proposal (topic, brief background of case study, individual assignments etc) of their case study by week 10 at the very latest. This should be posted on the general discussion board for all to see and should include name of topic, brief summary of the topic as well as who among the group members will be doing what. The proposal is not graded. It is for you to start thinking about your case study and working in the group, and for me to see what conflicts you have selected and provide feedback. The group should assign one member to post it on the group's behalf in an open discussion board (a separate link will be provided in the weekly course folder). All the group members must share the responsibility for writing and editing the summary discussion equally, but a different member should take the responsibility for posting the summary on Blackboard. The discussion board will be open for viewing by all students and the instructor.

Grading

The instructor will monitor student activity on Blackboard for grading individual effort. Additionally, peer assessments of Blackboard discussion groups will be used for grading purposes. Peer assessment forms will be provided and due to the instructor via email after each activity has been completed.

Netiquette For Online Discussions for Blackboard Group Discussions¹

The 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 communication your joke may be viewed as criticism. Experience shows that even an innocent remark in an online environment can be easily misconstrued.

4. Blog Entries (3 blog entries): 20% of total grades

Purpose: The blog is intended to help you reflect on a theme or conflict case study in light of weekly readings and to help you integrate different concepts and theories learned.

Blog entries are due on Fridays (4pm latest) in the following weeks:

Week 2: blog entry # 1

Week 3: blog entry # 2

Week 5: blog entry # 3

¹ Netiquette prepared by Charlene Douglas, Associate Professor, College of Health & Human Services, GMU.

Week 8: blog entry # 4. For the final blog you will be expected to engage the issues raised by two classmates in their previous blogs.

Each student will be responsible for writing blog entries in the weeks specified above.

Weekly deadlines for posting assignments: Blog entries must be posted by Friday at 4:00 pm latest during the weeks they are due (unless otherwise specified). You should also refer to the “Weekly Course Schedule” of this syllabus to plan assignments ahead of time.

Blog Entry Instructions: Your blog entries should be approximately 300-400 words in length (in addition to any images and diagrams). Feel free to exercise creativity and originality in building your blog to make it interesting for other readers.

5. Final Paper (30%)

Deadline: Friday December 14 at 4:00 p.m. via e-mail to instructor.

The final paper will be your capstone project and will have two components:

- i) You will analyze a conflict case study with reference to theories and concepts learned through the course of the semester.
- ii) You will recommend intervention strategies designed to resolve the conflict based on theoretical analysis.

Instructions for Final Paper: The paper will be approximately 8-10 pages maximum excluding the bibliography and footnotes. It should demonstrate a sound understanding of the theory and practice related course content.

Your paper should be organized under the following headings:

- 1) A brief historical timeline of the conflict.
- 2) Identification of primary and secondary parties to the conflict: local and international.
- 3) An analysis of the conflict referencing theories learned in the course.
- 3) A review of domestic, regional, and wider international efforts to resolve the conflict.
- 4) Recommended conflict resolution strategies (based on theoretical analysis) for consideration by the international community and/or local state and civil society actors.

Final Research Paper Format: The final research paper course should be typed, double-spaced, have 1” margins, and use a common 12-point font. Headers should include only the course number CONF 340 DL1. **Papers should have a title, your name and the instructor’s name.**

Sources should be cited using a single standard academic citation format. The final paper must include a bibliography even when footnotes are provided.

Grading Scale

A+ 97% - 100%	B + 87% - 89%	C+ 75% - 78 %	D 61% - 68 %
A 93% - 96%	B 83% - 86%	C 72% - 74%	F < 60%
A- 90 % - 92%	B - 79% - 82 %	C- 69% - 71%	

Academic Policies and Information

Academic Honesty and Collaboration

GMU has an Honor Code with guidelines regarding academic integrity. It is designed, “to promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community” (www.gmu.edu/catalog/policies). Plagiarism is a serious offense, and all written work for this course should include proper citations in a standard citation format (MLA, APA, etc.). *If you are unsure about how to cite a direct quotation or concept from course or outside readings, then ask for help.* “I wasn’t sure how to cite a source, so I left out the reference,” is not an acceptable defense for plagiarism. Copies of common style manuals are available at the GMU library reference desk 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.

Late Work

In general late assignments will not be accepted unless in cases of documented personal illness or family emergency. Should such arise an extension may be given, in which case, the assignment must be turned in by the agreed deadline. Should major issues arise that prevents the student from meeting certain deadlines for assignments they should inform the instructor promptly and not wait after the fact.

Student Resources

GMU Writing Center

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” (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>).

Disability Support Services

Students 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 (993-2474) to determine the possible accommodations you might need; and 2) contact the instructor to discuss reasonable accommodations. GMU is committed to providing appropriate services and 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. The staff of the Disability Resource Center coordinate and determine reasonable services and accommodations on the basis of disability, and act as a liaison between students and faculty/administration on concerns relating to services and accommodations” (<http://www.gmu.edu/departments/advising/dss.html>).

Library Services

The CAR library liaison can be reached at (703-993-2212). Don’t hesitate to contact her with specific questions about holdings and research regarding the CAR field.

Weekly Course Schedule

Refer to the weekly schedule in the “Course Contents” tab on Blackboard on a weekly basis for additional activities and tasks including links for videos, readings and supplementary course material.

Remember to read the FAQs on Blackboard for quickly finding answers to many of your questions.

Course Schedule and Assignments:

Part A: Origin and Evolution of Conflict Resolution

Week 1 (August 27-31)

i) Course Orientation; expectations

Course Orientation Activities

- Verify Blackboard access
- Listen to “Course Welcome” on Blackboard
- View the PowerPoint “Getting StartedB01”
- Review course syllabus
- Review FAQ’s on Blackboard
- Post your bio and (re)view bios of your peers posted online and give feedback

Assignment

Publish a short bio and photo in designated space in your Week 1 Folder on Blackboard. Bio should be about a paragraph long. Photo is optional but is *strongly recommended*. You can also review and respond to the bios of your classmates in the first week of class to build classroom community.

Tips for writing your bio

You may consider providing the following information in your bio:

1. What brought you to the program?
2. Where are you currently employed?
3. What kind of work do you want to do when you graduate?
4. What are your long-term career goals or dreams?
5. What subjects do you enjoy studying?
6. What kind of computer tools can you use?

Week 2 (September 3-7) Introduction to global conflict resolution: origins and evolution

Weekly Readings

Ramsbotham et al, Chapters 1, 2, and 3

L. Kriesberg, “The Growth of the Conflict Resolution Field”, in *Turbulent Peace (E reserve)*

Assignment: Blog Entry # 1 due Friday September 7

Week 3 (September 10-14) Understanding the Sources and Dynamics of Global Conflict

Readings: Ramsbotham et al, Chapters 4 and 5

J. Levy, “International sources of interstate and intrastate War” in *leashing the dogs (E-reserve)*

Assignments Due: Blog entry # 2 (due by Friday September 14).

Part B: Key themes in contemporary conflict

Week 4 (September 17-21) Gender and the Environment

Readings: Ramsbotham et al, Chapters 12 and 13

Assignment Due: Discussion Board contribution #1 (due by Friday September 21).

Week 5 (September 24-28): Economic Resources and conflict

Readings

- Collier, P. 2001. "Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and Their Implications for Policy," in Crocker et al (eds) *Turbulent Peace*, pp. 143-162. (E-reserve)

Assignments Due: Blog entry # 3 (due by Friday September 28).

Week 6 (October 1-5): Terrorism

Readings

- Tim Dunne, "Terrorism", in *Issues in World Politics (E reserve)*
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DkxRdSZzeGc>, (Moscow theater attack)

Assignment: Short Essay Due (Due Friday October 5)

Week 7: October 8-12 Arts and the Media

- Ramsbotham et al., Chapters 16 and 17

Assignment: Discussion Board contribution # 2

Part C: Managing conflict: intervention and post-war reconstruction

Week 8 (October 15-19): Conflict Prevention

Readings: Ramsbotham et al: Chapter 5

Assignment: Blog Entry # 4

Week 9: (October 22-26) Peacekeeping and Peacemaking

Readings

- Ramsbotham et. al. Chapters 6, and 7

- (NATO and Libya)
Assignment: Discussion Board #3

Week 10 (October 29-November 2): Post-war Reconstruction

Readings:

Ramsbotham et al, Chapters 8 and 9: Reconstruction and peacebuilding
Assignment: 1 page proposal for week 12 assignment latest due date

Week 11: November 5-9: Reconciliation

Readings:

Ramsbotham et al: Chapter 10

Week 12 (November 12-16)

Assignments Due: Group PowerPoint (due Friday November 16 via email to instructor).

Week 13: November 19-23 (No class) Thanksgiving Recess

Week 14: November 26-30: Managing Intractability

Readings:

Ramsbotham et al chapter 18

Week 15: December 3 -7: Theories and Critiques/ The Way Forward

Readings:

Ramsbotham et al: Chapters 19 and 20

Week 16: December 10-14 EXAMS

Assignments Due

- Final Research Paper, due by December 14 by 4:00 p.m. via e-mail to instructor.
- Course evaluations (will be made available online).

Instructor will remain available online and in person to respond to e-mail queries and telephonic and Skype meetings concerning final research paper requirements.