

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution

AN INTRODUCTION TO INSIGHT MEDIATION THEORY AND PRACTICE

Spring 2011

DATES:

Friday, March 25 from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Saturday March 26 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Sunday March 27 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00

INSTRUCTOR:

Professor Cheryl Picard, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada
Email: cheryl_picard@carleton.ca
Phone: 613-520-2600 extension 2678

LOCATION: Truland Building, Room #TBA

DESCRIPTION:

This is an elective one-credit course for graduate students interested in the theory, processes and skills involved in Insight mediation, a learning-centered approach to mediation that sees patterns of interaction as cornerstones of conflict and conflict resolution. The course will focus on the interactive nature of conflict and communication largely within interpersonal and small group conflict. Students will learn key skills and strategies that help parties in conflict gain insight into the values being threatened through the patterns of interactions that are part of the conflict. These new insights are what de-link the inevitability of the threat experience, resulting in parties experiencing shifts in attitude that can lead to positive change and conflict resolution.

LEARNING GOALS:

- 1) To provide students with a basic understanding of the theory of Insight mediation and an experience of the skills and strategies used in this approach to mediation.
- 2) To build and advance students communication, conflict resolution and mediation skills through practice and skill building activities.
- 3) To ground students' experience through reflective practice.

LESSON PLAN AND TOPICS TO BE COVERED:

On Friday night students will be introduced to the theory behind the Insight approach to conflict and mediation, while on Saturday and Sunday they will be involved in integrated theory and practice activities designed to build upon their current knowledge and skills in interpersonal and small group communication, conflict resolution and mediation. Teaching methods will be varied and include short lecturettes, small group activities and simulated mediation practice designed to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills to real-life

situations. Practice sessions will receive coaching and constructive feedback. Topics to be covered will include:

- Rethinking conflict from an Insight perspective
- Conflict as an experience of threat-to-cares that results in defend-attack patterns of interaction; how changing the pattern can change the conflict
- Mediation as a learning process and how learning facilitates change
- How Lonergan's operations of learning help mediators facilitate learning in parties
- Discovering cares & de-linking threats so different cares can co-exist without threat
- Stages in the Insight mediation process: 1) Attend To Process 2) Broaden Understanding; 3) Deepen Insights; 4) Explore Possibilities; 5) Make Decisions
- The importance of understanding not only the intended message but also what was interpreted by the other
- Feelings as pathways to discovering cares and threats; feelings as embodied learning
- Responsive intentionality and deepening for meaning
- Putting the practice of mediation into perspective

In addition to the above topics, a number of communication skills will be taught:

- Noticing the interaction
- Wondering about meaning
- Focusing on threats to discover cares
- Listening for insights and verifying insights
- Asking questions that broaden and deepen understanding
- Linking the present with the past and future
- De-linking incorrect interpretations
- Changing defend-attack patterns of interaction

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING SCHEME:

i) *Preparation for Class, Participation and Attendance (20%)*

Students are expected to have read all readings in advance of class and come prepared to offer informed and analytical interventions. Assessment will be based on a student's willingness to participate in the class activities, to ask questions that advance their own understanding and build knowledge for others, to participate in class discussions that deepen the conversation, encourage participation of others and attend to group process. Students will be assessed on the quality, fullness and consistency of their participation.

ii) *Learning Journal (15%)*

Students are required to keep a learning journal which is to be handed with their final essay. Instructions on how to do a *Learning Journal* will be provided.

iii) *Conflict Mapping Assignment (25%)*

Using concepts from the Insight approach, students will be asked to create a conflict "map" by illustrating aspects of a conflict situation in which they are involved or are familiar with; this map is to be handed in with their final paper assignment.

v) *Final Paper (40%)*

Forty percent (40%) of the final grade will be based on a short paper of no more than 10 to 12 typed, double-spaced pages. Students are to contrast the Insight approach to conflict and mediation with any other approach to conflict they have learned about or experienced as part of their studies at ICAR, or in real life. I will be looking for students to engage with the ideas both practically and theoretically, either through a case study, or a real or simulated mediation experience that allows them to highlight some of the strengths and limitations of the two approaches given the dynamics of the conflict situation they have chosen. Cogent reasoning, sound use of references and a bibliography are required.

All three (3) assignments are to be sent by email to the Instructor no later than Monday April 11, 2011.

REQUIRED READING LIST:

Course Text:

Melchin, Kenneth and Cheryl Picard, *Transforming Conflict through Insight*. University of Toronto Press, 2008, chapters 2, 3 and 4.

Articles and on-line lecture:

(Please note that all articles and the on-line lecture are available on the CCER Website at: <http://www2.carleton.ca/ccer/insight-approach-to-conflict/articles-and-publications/>

Picard Cheryl and Kenneth Melchin, "Insight Mediation: A Learning Centered Mediation Model," *Negotiation Journal*, Vol. 23 No 1, January 2007:35-54.

Picard, Cheryl, "Learning about Learning - The Value of Insight", *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* Vol. 20 No. 4, 2003:477484.

Sargent, N., C. Picard, and M. Jull, "Rethinking Conflict: Perspectives from the Insight Approach," *Negotiation Journal*, forthcoming 2011.

On-line lecture: Picard, C., N. Sargent and M. Jull, Rethinking Conflict it from an Insight Perspective