

CONF 210-001
THEORIES OF CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND RESOLUTION

Spring 2014

Monday & Wednesday 5:55 pm - 7:10 pm

Instructor: Mohammed Cherkaoui, PhD
Location: Johnson Center 336 - Meeting Room F

Email: mcherkao@gmu.edu
Office Hours: by appointment

Objectives:

The multi- and inter-disciplinary nature of Conflict Analysis and Resolution (CAR) entails the need for a nuanced knowledge of the works of the parents of the field as well as other theories derived from Psychology, Sociology, International Relations, Political Science and other social sciences. Before considering the objective of resolving or at least transforming social conflict, the imperative of analyzing issues, motives, positions, and trajectories, either among individuals, groups, states, or other stakeholders, requires a minimum familiarity with leading conceptual frameworks which offer various interpretations of how the world works. Throughout the fifteen-week course, we study four main types of theories. In addition to several models of resolution known in non-Western communities [Islam, Buddhism, Ubuntu, Gacaca and others]: a) Theories of *structure*, b) Theories of *human nature*, c) Theories of *culture and meaning-making*, and d) Theories of *collective action*.

The objectives of this course include:

1. Examining and critiquing social theories that may prove useful in analyzing various types of social conflict;
2. Exploring the ways of systematizing theories before applying them on particular cases and problems.
3. Evaluating the usefulness of these social theories by applying them to specific conflict situations.

The Course Format:

The course will be run as a combined lecture and seminar with an emphasis on discussion of the readings and students' reflections. It is therefore imperative that students read the assigned material prior to class. Active participation based on **thoughtful consideration** of the literature will be expected. In evaluating class participation, the instructor will look for evidence that you **have done the readings** with sufficient attention that you can contribute to the discussion.

Theorists' Corner:

The course includes selected segments of video presentations of several theorists and critics to help reinforce the readings and enrich the class discussion. For example, Johan Galtung elaborates on his fifty-year work in conflict and peace studies, Kenneth Waltz and John

Mearsheimer discuss the transformation of Realism in the 21st century, and Edward Said critiques Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory. In addition, students are encouraged to follow and critically examine daily news reports on current events related to social conflict, and read relevant articles in *Journal of Conflictology*, *American Sociological Review*, *World Politics*, *Foreign Policy*, *Foreign Affairs*, and other leading journals.

Course Materials:

The following book is required and available for purchase at the bookstore and the rest of the reading material is posted on Blackboard or emailed directly:

✓ **Demmers, Jolle.** 2012. *Theories of Violent Conflict: An Introduction*. Taylor & Francis.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

Your overall grade in this course is based on four separate assignments. The grading distribution and requirements for successful performance are given below:

1. **Class Participation:** Grades are based upon the **quality** and **consistency** of your contributions to our class discussions and group exercises. Each week, you should be prepared not only to summarize what you have read and to discuss the authors' main points, but to provide a critical perspective on our texts and their relation to other social theories and to issues of conflict analysis and resolution, both broadly and in particular settings. Some of the questions you should be asking yourself as you read for class include:
 - What are the authors' main concerns?
 - Are their arguments logically compelling?
 - How can we relate their arguments to the field of conflict analysis and resolution?
 - How might they help us to better understand particular conflicts and their transformation?
 - What might be left out of a particular analysis that it would be important to explore?

Class participation is worth **20%** of your final grade.

2. **First Essay:** You need to answer a total of **two** questions from a multiple-choice list with **800 words for each answer**, and make sure you cite all source material as endnotes. The exam shall evaluate your familiarity with various theories and analytical models studies thus far. Grading will be based primarily on your superior understanding of course material and demonstration of critical thinking. The essay questions will be emailed February 24th and due Monday, March 3rd at 6 pm. This is worth **20%** of your final grade.

3. **Second Essay:** You need to answer a total of **two** questions from a multiple-choice list with **800 words for each answer**, and make sure you cite all source material as endnotes. The exam shall evaluate your familiarity with various theories and analytical models studies thus far. Grading will be based primarily on your superior understanding of course material and demonstration of critical thinking. The essay questions will be emailed April 4th 28 and due Monday, April 14th at 3 pm. This is worth **20%** of your final grade.

Final Paper: You will write a 12-page research paper on a case study. In this paper, drawing from theories we learn in the course, you will discuss the basic parameters of a contemporary conflict and offer suggestions for resolving the conflict. This final paper is worth **40%** of the final grade and due Monday, May 10th at 6 pm.

a) Analyze a conflict drawing on at least two theories discussed in the course. Your writing needs to reflect clear understanding of theories you have chosen to use in your case. You also need to explain why the theories you use are relevant to the case you explore.

b) Demonstration of knowledge of the given conflict system: Throughout the paper you need to show that you have done a sound research and that you understand the different parameters of the conflict you explore (background, parties, causes, issues, relationships, dynamics etc).

c) Overall organization and clarity: The reader needs to be able to follow easily what is being presented in the paper. Thus, your paper needs to be a cohesive narrative rather than an unstructured body of information. You may have done an excellent job in your research, but throwing information out there without a structure and in a disorganized way does not help the reader understand what you write.

Your paper should be organized under the following headings:

1. A brief historical timeline, contentious issues, and dynamics of the conflict (2 pages)
2. Identification of primary and secondary parties to the conflict: local and international (1 page)
3. An analysis of the conflict referencing theories learned in the course (7 pages)
4. Recommended conflict resolution strategies (based on theoretical analysis) for consideration by the international community and/or local state and civil society actors (2 pages)

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| Summary: | * Class discussion: | 20% |
| | * First Essay: | 20% - due Monday, March 3 rd at 6 pm |
| | * Second Essay: | 20% - due Monday, April 14 th at 6 pm |
| | * Final Paper: | 40% - due Sunday, May 10 th at 6 pm |

Honor Code Policy:

I expect you to understand and abide by the University's policy regarding the Honor Code, which may be found at <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode>. In short, the University's policy regarding the Honor Code prohibits any form of cheating on exams or written assignments. It also prohibits plagiarism, so be certain to properly cite all information that you use in your papers.

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, contact 703-993-3642 or 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 or call: 703-993-4491.

Academic Honesty and Collaboration:

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. 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.

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/>

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-210-001** under the "Blackboard 9.1 Course" heading.

Schedule of Classes

Week 1: January 22 Introduction

- Self-introductions
- Course protocol, overview and expectations
- Verify Blackboard access and (re)view bios of your peers posted online and give feedback. Your bio should be about two paragraphs long [photo is optional]. You can also review and respond to the bios and interests of your classmates in the first week of class to build classroom community.
- Class discussion: *Theorizing Conflict: Causality, Transformation, and Resolution*

Readings:

- ✓ Burton, John. "Conflict Resolution as a Political System", *The International Journal of Peace Studies*, http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol6_1/Burton2.htm

Week 2: January 27 - 29 Growth of CAR and Complexity of Global Conflict

- ✓ **Demmers, Jolle.** *Theories of Violent Conflict*, Introduction pp. 1-17 and Ch. 3 pp. 53-76
- ✓ **Rubenstein, Richard.** "Some Thoughts about Conflict Theory: Short Answers to Common Questions"
- ✓ **Burton, John.** (1998) "Conflict Resolution: The Human Dimension", *The International Journal of Peace Studies*, ISSN 1085 7494, Volume 3. No 1
http://www.gmu.edu/academic/ijps/vol3_1/burton.htm

Short video: *Johan Galtung: 50 Years in the Pursuit of Peace and Conflict Studies*

Week 3: February 3 - 5 Structuralism, Realism, and Conflict

- ✓ **Mearsheimer, John.** (2006) "Structural Realism", ch. 4, in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity* by T. Dunne et al., Oxford University Press
- ✓ **Walt, Stephen M.** "Kenneth N. Waltz, 1924-2013", *Foreign Policy*, May 13, 2013
- ✓ **Shimko, Keith.** (2009) "Realism, Neorealism, and American Liberalism" in *War, Peace, and Political Realism*, University of Notre Dame Press, ch. 16, pp. 321-341

Short video: *The Melian Dialogue and John Mearsheimer: Through a Realist's Lens*

Week 4: February 10 -12 Psychodynamic Theory

- ✓ **Freud, Sigmund.** (1955) "Psychoanalysis: The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychoanalytical Works of Sigmund Freud", vol. XVIII, pp. 235-254
- ✓ **Freud, Sigmund.** (1932-36) "Why War: The Freud-Einstein Correspondence"
- ✓ **Volkan, Vamik.** (1997) "Chosen Trauma", pp-36-49, "We-ness", pp. 81-100, in *Bloodlines: from Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Short video: *Psychoanalysis – Freud's Innovation of Free Association*

Week 5: February 17 -19 Frustration-Aggression & Relative Deprivation

- ✓ Dougherty, James E. and Pfaltzgraff, Robert L. Jr. (2001) "Microcosmic Theories of Violent Conflict", in *Contending Theories of International Relations*, 5th ed., ch. 6, pp. 231-263 (Emailed)
- ✓ Gurr, Ted R. "Psychological Factors in Civil Violence", *World Politics*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Jan. 1968), pp. 245-278
- ✓ Gurr, Ted R. (1970) "Relative Deprivation and the Impetus to Violence", in *Why Men Rebel*, Ch. 2, pp. 22-58

Recommended readings:

- ✓ Davies. James C. (1972) "Toward a Theory of Revolution", *American Sociological Review* , Vol. 27, No. 1 (Feb., 1962), pp. 5-19 in *Anger, Violence and Politics*, Ed. I.K. Feierabend, R.L. and T. R. Gurr., pp. 67-84

Short video: *France's Riots of 2005*

Week 6: February 24 – 26 Basic Human Needs

- ✓ **Burton, John.** (1979) "Institutional Values & Human Needs" in *Deviance, Terrorism, and War: The Process of Solving Unresolved Social and Political Problems*, pp. 55-84
- ✓ **Galtung, Johan.** (1991) "International Development in Human Perspective", in *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*. Ed. John Burton, pp. 301-335
- ✓ **Rubenstein, Richard E.** (1996) "*Basic Human Needs: Steps Toward Further Theory Development*" www.gmu.edu/academic/ijps/vol6_1/Rubenstein.htm

Short video: *John Burton: Needs Theory: 'Utopian' or 'Practical' Framework of CAR*

*** First Essay – Due Monday, March 3rd at 6 pm**

Week 7: March 3 - 5 Social Identity

- ✓ **Demmers, Jolle.** Theories of Violent Conflict, Ch. 1, 2 pp. 18-53
- ✓ **Kriesberg, Louis.** "Identity Issues" *Beyond Intractability*. Eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Research Consortium, July 2003
- ✓ **Tajfel, Henri. & Turner, John.** (1979) "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict", in WG Austin & S. Worchel *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, pp. 33-47

Week 8: March 10 - 12 Spring Break - No classes

Week 9: March 17 - 19 Cultural Theory

- ✓ **Huntington, Samuel.** (1993) "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*. Summer, vol. 72
- ✓ **Myers, Linda.** (2008) "Toward Fuller Knowledge in Peace management and Conflict Resolution: The Importance of Cultural Worldview", in *Re-centering Culture and Knowledge in Conflict Resolution*, Trujillo, Mary. et al. (Eds), Syracuse University Press, ch. 2, pp. 20-31
- ✓ **Avruch, Kevin.** (2012) "Culture Theory, Culture Clash, and the Practice of Conflict Resolution", in *Context and Pretext in Conflict Resolution: Culture, Identity, Power, and Practice*, Paradigm publishers, Ch. 6, pp. 81-95

Short video: Samuel Huntington: "*The Clash of Civilizations*"
Edward Said: "*The Myth of the Clash of Civilizations*"

Week 10: March 24 - 26 Protracted Social Conflict Theory

- ✓ **Azar, Edward E. Jureidini, Paul. and McLaurin, Ronald.** "Protracted Social Conflict; Theory and Practice in the Middle East", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1. (Autumn, 1978), pp. 41-60
- ✓ **Ramsbotham, Oliver.** "The Analysis of Protracted Social Conflict: A Tribute to Edward Azar", *Review of International Studies* (2005), 31, 109–126

Week 11: March 31- April 2 Discursive Approaches & Positioning Theory

- ✓ **Demmers, Jolle.** Theories of Violent Conflict, ch 6, 116-138
- ✓ **Van Langenhove, L. et al.** (edited Harré, R et al.) Chapter 2: "Introducing Positioning Theory", *Positioning Theory: Moral Contexts of Intentional Action*. Oxford (1999) pp. 14-29

Week 12: April 7 - 9

Contentious Politics and Social Mobilization

- ✓ **Demmers, Jolle.** Theories of Violent Conflict, Ch. 4 pp. 77-99
- ✓ **Boulding, Elise.** (1986) The Changing Nature of Peace Movements: Interview with Elise Boulding
- ✓ **Tarrow, Sidney** (1998) Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics (2nd ed.), Cambridge University Press, pp. 10-25 and 71-90

*** Second Essay – Due Monday, April 14th at 6 pm**

Week 13: April 14 – 16

Dilemma of Power

- ✓ **Roy, Beth.** (2008) "Power, Culture, Conflict", in *Re-centering Culture and Knowledge in Conflict Resolution*, Trujillo, Mary. et al. (Eds), Syracuse University Press, ch. 14, pp. 179-194
- ✓ **Avruch, Kevin.** (2012) "Conflict Resolution and the Dilemma of Power", in *Context and Pretext in Conflict Resolution: Culture, Identity, Power, and Practice*, Paradigm publishers, Ch. 9, pp. 141-175

Recommended readings:

- ✓ Hedges, Chris. (2002) War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning, Public Affairs

Week 14: April 21 – 23

Non-Western Perspectives of Conflict Resolution: Islam and Buddhism

- ✓ **Walker, Polly.** Decolonizing Conflict Resolution: Addressing the Ontological Violence of Westernization, *American Indian Quarterly*. Summer/Fall 2004, Vol. 28 Issue 3/4, pp. 527-549.
- ✓ **Salem, Paul.** "In Theory: A Critique of Western Conflict Resolution from a Non-Western Perspective", *Negotiation Journal*, 9:4 (1993) 361-9
- ✓ **Abu-Nimer, Mohammed.** (2010) "An Islamic Model of Conflict Resolution", in *Crescent and Dove: Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam*, Qamar Ulhuda (Ed.), USIP, ch. 4, pp. 73-92
- ✓ **Galtung, Johan.** (1988) Peace and Buddhism: An Evaluation of Strong and Weak Points. *Transarmament and the Cold War: Peace Research and the Peace Movement*, pp-369-380

Short video:

Polly Walker on Non-Western Approaches to CR
Qamar ul-Huda Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam

Week 15: April 28 -30

Non-Western Perspectives of Conflict Resolution: Ubuntu and Gacaca

- ✓ **Masina, Nomonde** (2000) Xhosa Practices of Ubuntu for South Africa. *Traditional Cures for Modern Conflicts*. Edited by I.W. Zartman. pp. 169-181
- ✓ **Molenaar, Arthur**. Gacaca: Grassroots Justice after Genocide, *African Studies Centre*, Research Report 77/2005, pp. 1 – 45

Short video:

*Desmond Tutu and Bill Clinton on Ubuntu
Justice on the Grass in Rwanda*

Week 16: May 5

Postmodernism

Wrap-up discussion: Toward Conflict theory

- ✓ **Hurd, R. Wesley**. (1998) Postmodernism, McKenzie Study Center
<http://www.mckenziestudycenter.org/philosophy/articles/postmod.html>
- ✓ **Lyotard, Jean-François** (1979) "The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge"

*** Final paper - Due Sunday, May 10th at 6 pm**

