

CONF 709
WAR, VIOLENCE, AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Semester: Fall 2010
Class Time: Tuesday, 7:20-10:00 pm
Location: Arlington Campus, Truland Bldg., Rm. 647
Instructor: Dr. Dennis J.D. Sandole
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to examine the theoretical and empirical literature on the causes and conditions of violence and violent conflict at *all* levels; e.g., among individuals, groups, organizations, states, regions and "civilizations". Course objectives are to:

[a] Evaluate the "*nature-nurture debate*" on the *causes of human violence*, with implications for violent conflict prevention, management, settlement, resolution, and transformation at *all* levels; and

[b] Explore to what extent this information, plus theoretical and practical insights from other disciplines, can be used as a basis for better understanding *and preventing, managing, settling, resolving and/or transforming* violent conflicts (e.g., political, ethnic, racial, and religious conflicts, including their terrorist manifestation) at any level in the United States and worldwide.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Prerequisites:** Acceptance into ICAR's MSc. or Ph.D. program and successful completion of CONF 501 or 801, or permission of the instructor.
2. **Class Format:** Classes will follow an *interactive seminar format*. Hence, class attendance, participation, and the *completion of relevant readings prior to class* are highly recommended.
3. **Assessment:**

[a] A *mid-term paper* will be due on 2 November 2010. The assignment is:

Based upon your course readings, lectures and class discussions (and if you wish, any other readings as well), discuss and attempt to resolve the "*nature-nurture debate*" on the sources of

human aggression. In other words, what does the literature say about the impact of "nature" and "nurture" on the development of human violence and violent conflict behavior at *all* levels? And *despite what the literature says*, what are your views in this regard (and why), given your religious, cultural, political, and other "identities"? (15-20 double-spaced pages: worth 40% of the final grade).

[b] A *final paper* will be due on 14 December 2010. The assignment is:

Using the three pillar framework (3PF) as a point of departure, analyze a violent conflict of your choice (pillar 1), identify and discuss its causes and conditions (pillar 2), and then lay out an intervention into it (pillar 3) (15-20 double-spaced pages, worth 40% of the final grade).

NOTE: Since these two papers are meant, among other things, to demonstrate that students have been in the course, the papers should contain appropriate references to course concepts and the corresponding readings. For further clarification -- including about the GMU Honor Code (e.g., avoiding any hint of plagiarism at all costs) -- please feel free to consult with the instructor.

[c] Student *presentations*: Each student will be invited to lead a discussion on one or more chapters from the readings by Collier; Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff; Gilligan; Garbarino; Hedges; Hewitt, et al.; Mittelman; Rifkin; Sandole; Tomasello; Wilkinson and Pickett; and/or Wrangham and Peterson (see "Required Readings," below). **In each case, the rest of the class will be expected to have read the same material to facilitate a rich discussion.** Please consult with the instructor about your preferences and the order and dates on which you want to make your presentations (which may be done jointly, i.e., involving more than one student per presentation). Presentations should be aimed at distilling from the readings *their relevance to the themes of the midterm and final papers*; e.g., the "nature-nurture debate" and its implications for dealing with violence and violent conflict, including post-9/11 terrorism (worth 20% of final grade).

Overall in-class *participation* will determine whether a "borderline" final grade of, for example, B+/A- remains in the B or A category.

Office Hours: 10:00 - 10:30 pm in the lobby of the Original Building following each class and by appointment.

Withdrawal: The last day to drop the course without academic liability is 1 October 2010.

REQUIRED READINGS

- (1) Paul Collier (2009). *Wars, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places*. New York: Harper (HarperCollins Publishers).
- (2) James Garbarino (2000). *Lost Boys: Why Our Sons Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them*. New York: Anchor Books (Random House).
- (3) James Gilligan (1996). *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic*. New York: Vintage Books (Random House).
- (4) Chris Hedges (2002). *War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*. New York: Public Affairs (Perseus Books).
- (5) J. Joseph Hewitt, Jonathan Wilkenfeld and Ted Robert Gurr 2010. *Peace and Conflict 2010*. Boulder (CO): Paradigm Publishers.
- (6) James H. Mittelman (2010). *Hyperconflict: Globalization and Insecurity*. Stanford (CA): Stanford University Press.
- (7) Jeremy Rifkin (2009). *The Empathic Civilization: The Race to Global Consciousness in a World in Crisis*. London and New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher (Penguin Group).
- (8) Michael Tomasello (2009). *Why We Cooperate*. Cambridge (MA) and London: The MIT Press (A Boston Review Book).
- (9) Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett (2009). *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger*. London and New York: Bloomsbury Press (Penguin Books Group).
- (10) Richard Wrangham and Dale Peterson (1996). *Demonic Males: Apes and the Origins of Human Violence*. Boston and New York: Mariner Books (Houghton Mifflin).
- (11) Sandole, Dennis J.D. (2002). "Virulent Ethnocentrism: A Major Challenge for Transformational Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding in the Post-Cold War Era." *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, vol. 1, no. 4, June, pp. 4-27 (www.ethnopolitics.org, then "archive" [on left side] followed by "volume I" and "issue 4." "Sandole" article is the first one listed).
- (12) Dennis J.D. Sandole (2007). *Peace and Security in the Postmodern World: The OSCE and Conflict Resolution*. New York and London: Routledge (Taylor & Francis).

RECOMMENDED READINGS

(1) Dougherty, James E. and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr. (2001). *Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey*. 5th Edition. New York and London: Addison Wesley Longman.

COURSE SYLLABUS

- 31 Aug I. Introduction: Course Overview.
- 7 Sep II. The Problem: Conflict, Violence, and War.
- A. The Subject Matter.
1. *Latent Conflict (LC)*.
 2. Manifest Conflict.
 - a. *Manifest Conflict Process (MCP)*.
 - b. *Aggressive Manifest Conflict Process (AMCP): Postmodern Warfare*.
 - [1] Post-Cold War Ethnic Conflicts.
 - [2] Post-9/11 Terrorism.
- B. Why is a Course on Violent Conflict Necessary?
1. Violent Conflict Trends in the United States.
 2. Violent Conflict Trends Worldwide.
 - a. Domestic: The *spillover potential* of intranational conflicts.
 - [1] *Functional Spillover*.
 - [2] *External Intervention*.
 - [a] Ethnic Kin Intervention.
 - [b] Humanitarian Intervention.
 - [3] *Multiplier-Effect Systemic Contagion*.
 - b. *International/Trans-societal* (including post-911 terrorism and the "Clash of Civilizations").
- C. Three Theoretical and Practical Questions:
1. How Can **MCPs** be Prevented from Becoming **AMCPs**?
 2. What are the Causes of **AMCPs**? [Status of the "*Nature-Nurture Debate*"?]
 3. How Do We Conduct Research on **AMCPs**? (CONF 610)

READ: Gilligan, Prologue (pp. 1-26);
 Garbarino, Preface (pp. ix-xiii) and Ch. 1;
 Hewitt, et al.;
 and
 Sandole, 2007, Chs. 1, 4 and App. A.

14 Sep/ III. An Enhanced Basis for Understanding and Dealing with
 21 Sep/ the Problem.
 28 Sep

A. Three levels of Conflict Reality.

1. *Conflict-as-Symptoms* (Perceptible/Measurable Indicators of Underlying Problems and Causes).
2. *Conflict-as-Process* (Underlying Conflicted Relationships).
3. *Conflict-as-Start-up Conditions* (Underlying Deep-Rooted Causes and Conditions of the Conflicted Relationships).

B. A Comprehensive Mapping of Conflict and Conflict Resolution: *A 3-Pillar Approach (3PF)*.

READ: Sandole, 2007, Chs. 2, 5 and App. B.

1. *Pillar 1: Conflict (Dependent Variable)*.
 - a. Parties.
 - b. Issues.
 - c. Long-term Objectives.
 - d. Means.
 - e. Conflict-handling Orientations.
 - f. Conflict Environments.

5 Oct 2. *Pillar 2: Conflict Causes and Conditions (Independent Variables)*.

READ: Sandole, 2007, Ch. 6.

a. *Individual Level (Image I)*

- [1] Biological.
- [2] Physiological.
- [3] Learning.
- [4] Dissonance.

READ: Hedges;
 Rifkin, Introduction (pp. 1-3) and Chs.
 1-10;
 Tomasello;
 Wrangham & Peterson, Chs. 1-9;
 (Also review Garbarino and Gilligan);
 and
 D&P, Chs. 2, 6, 11.

12 Oct

Columbus Day Mid-Semester Break

19 Oct

b. *Societal/National level (Image II)*.

- [1] Domestic-Foreign Conflict Nexus.
- [2] Crisis Decisionmaking.
- [3] Action-Reaction Dynamics.
- [4] Power Distance.
- [5] Imperialism (and "Lateral Pressures").

READ: Collier, Introduction (pp. 1-11) and
 Chs. 1-7;
 Gilligan, Chs. 1-10;
 Garbarino, Chs. 2-5;
 Wilkinson and Pickett, Parts 1 and II;
 and
 D&P, Chs. 4, 7, 9.

26 Oct/
 2 Nov

c. *Trans-societal/International level
 (Image III)*.

- [1] [Endogenous vs. Exogenous Systems.
- [2] Bi- vs. Multipolar Systems.
- [3] Tendencies toward the "Unit Veto"
 System.
- [4] International Distribution of Wealth
 ("Marxist Delight").

d. *Global/Ecological Level (Image IV)*.

- [1] Environmental Degradation.
- [2] The "Malthusian Nightmare" Revisited.

READ: Mittelman; and
 D&P, Chs. 3, 8, 10 and pp. 172-174.

Mid-Term Papers Due (2 November)

- 9 Nov 3. *Pillar 3: Conflict Intervention.*
- a. 3rd Party Objectives.
- [1] Violent Conflict *Prevention*
[= **Preventive Diplomacy**].
- [2] Conflict *Management*
[= **Peacekeeping**].
- [3] Conflict *Settlement*
[= **Coercive Peacemaking**].
- [4] Conflict *Resolution*
[= **Noncoercive Peacemaking**].
- [5] Conflict *Transformation* [*Prevention*]
[= **Peacebuilding**].
- b. 3rd Party Approaches for Achieving Goals.
- [1] *Competitive* and/or *Cooperative*
Processes.
- [2] *Negative* and/or *Positive Peace*
Orientations.
- [3] *Track-1* and/or *Multi-Track* Actors and
Techniques.
- 16 Nov/ 23 Nov IV. Integration: Theory as a Basis for Enhanced Practice.
- A. Generic Theory or Disparate Bits and Pieces?
- B. Resolution of the "Nature-Nurture Debate"?
- C. The Need for a "Paradigm Shift": From a One-Dimensional (*Realpolitik-only*) to a Multidimensional (e.g., "4+2") Orientation or "Empathic/Biosphere Consciousness"?
- READ: Rifkin, Chs. 11-15; and D&P, Ch. 12.
- 30 Nov V. Application of Theory: Dealing with Violence and Violent Conflict in the U.S., and *Postmodern Warfare* Globally.
- READ: Collier, Chs. 8-10;

Gilligan, Epilogue (pp. 241-267);
Garbarino, Chs. 6-8 and Appendix (pp. 239-250);
Sandole, 2007, Chs. 3, 7-10;
Sandole, 2002;
Wilkinson and Pickett, Part III; and
Wrangham & Peterson, Chs. 10-13.

7 Dec Course Review and Evaluation.

14 Dec Final Papers Due