

**Intensive Introduction to Conflict Analysis and Resolution**  
**CONF 502 Section 001 Fall 2013**

Class Time:           Saturday, August 24<sup>th</sup>                               Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup>  
                              Saturday, September 7<sup>th</sup>                               Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup>  
                              Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup>                               Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup>

Location:                Founders Hall 479  
                              Course Blackboard site online: [mymason.gmu.edu](http://mymason.gmu.edu)

Instructor:             Mara Schoeny, Ph.D.  
                              (703) 993-9191, [mschoeny@gmu.edu](mailto:mschoeny@gmu.edu)

Office hours:           Wednesdays, 5:00 to 7:00 and by appointment

**Course Description and Objectives**

Welcome to the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution and the course: an introduction to the field of conflict analysis and resolution. Our focus is the study of human social conflict, including the practices and strategies for responding to conflict and frameworks for understanding and explaining conflict dynamics. It is designed to introduce you to the history and current developments in conflict resolution and to help you to think systematically and analytically about conflicts and conflict interventions.

This course will be run as a learning community—discussions, written assignments and in-class activities will facilitate the exchange of thinking and experience. Please read the assigned books and articles prior to class. Active participation is expected, both in-class and online. The compressed course format means a quick pace for the class and the need to carefully plan for reading and research time. Participants will work together in small groups and individually to analyze and suggest responses to cases of small group, community, inter-group or international conflict, bringing together current cases, analytical frameworks and theoretical lenses.

The five weekends will address the following objectives:

- ◆ Class participants will critically examine the worldviews, values, and assumptions underlying the conceptual frameworks people use when analyzing and responding to conflict.
- ◆ Conflict resolution practices reflect the assumptions used to understand conflict, conflict behavior and interventions. Class participants will study the relationship between analyzing conflict and attempting to resolve it.
- ◆ Students will become more proficient in identifying conflict dynamics that are both specific to context and type of conflict and those that are more generally identified as elements of conflict.
- ◆ Class participants will develop their ability to apply theories and frameworks of conflict resolution to particular cases.

## Course Expectations

*Consistent attendance:* Barring exceptional circumstances, you are expected to attend all weekends for the full time scheduled.

*Effective preparation:* The quality of class discussions and activities depends on you.

*Active participation:* Engage actively in the course in whichever of the formats you are most comfortable with: large group discussions, small group work, class exercises, etc.

*Course completion.* In keeping with departmental policy, incomplete grades will be given only in cases of personal or immediate family illness.

## Course Requirements

1. *Participation, in-class exercises, journaling and online discussions* **20 percent**  
In addition to in-class exercises and participation, there will be some shared discussion topics and a journal space posted to the course online discussion board. These short assignments should not take more than a half hour and are opportunities for you to reflect on course concepts between classes. These are graded only as completed or not and contribute to your participation grade. I hope you will also learn from reading the insights of your colleagues and the developing discussions.
2. *Short essay assignment* **20 percent**  
In place of a midterm, you will have a short essay assignment, handed out in class and due by the date specified. Your answers to the short questions should be typed and returned via email. Due: Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup>
3. *Group project—in-depth study of conflict resolution intervention* **25 percent**  
Groups of 3 to 4 students will be formed during the first two weekends and will work together to examine a particular form of conflict intervention (chosen in consultation with the course instructor.) The groups will work together to apply the concepts, theories, and ideas presented in the course to analyze the underlying assumptions, appropriate applications and distinguishing features of your type of intervention. Your project should include an example of your intervention type applied to a conflict. There will be some time for groups to meet during class time, but outside meetings will also be necessary. Each group will give a 30 minute presentation to the class with supporting materials made available online. Further guidelines available online. Due: Sat., October 5<sup>th</sup> (Focus statement due September 14<sup>th</sup>)
4. *Individual analysis/assessment of a conflict* **35 percent**  
In consultation with the instructor you will choose a conflict (either from your experience or one supported by researchable and credible documents) for an analytical conflict assessment and recommendations for next steps. The paper should be 12-15 pages and is a synthesis and application of the conflict concepts covered in the course. The topics will be agreed upon by October 1<sup>st</sup>. Further guidelines available online. Final paper due: Wednesday, October 16<sup>th</sup>

## Readings

### Texts

The required texts are available at the GMU Arlington Bookstore or from online booksellers:

Hizkias Assefa and Paul Wahrhaftig, *The MOVE Crisis in Philadelphia: Extremist Groups and Conflict Resolution* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990).

Morton Deutsch, Peter T. Coleman and Eric C. Marcus, eds. *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. (Jossey-Bass, 2006).

Pruitt, Dean and Sung Hee Kim, *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. (McGraw-Hill, 2004)

Shirch, Lisa, *Conflict Assessment & Peacebuilding Planning: Toward a Participatory Approach to Human Security*. (Kumarian Press, 2013).

### Other readings

You will be directed to additional assigned readings and resources online, see full list at end of the syllabus and the daily agendas for specific readings. Many of these readings are PDF files and can be read using an Adobe reader, available for download on the library webpage or the course homepage. Please let me know if you need assistance with this technology.

### Library Research Orientation

An optional library research orientation will be scheduled for the class, outside of regular class time. An overview of current research resources and support will be provided, as well as hands-on assistance with initial searches on your topics of choice. Day and time to be announced.

**Notes:**

## **AGENDA WEEKEND ONE: SATURDAY**

### **Introduction**

- Class members: introductions, interests
- Course overview and organization, course tools
- Introduction to the field: Conflict, Conflict Analysis, and Conflict Resolution
- Current issues, challenges and opportunities, conflict cases

### **Frameworks for Analysis**

- Analytical concepts and frameworks
- Analytical frameworks' assumptions of human nature and social structures

### *Reading for Weekend One:*

#### ***In advance of class:***

Burgess & Burgess, Intractability and the Frontier of the Field (webpage)

Burton, Conflict Resolution as a Political Philosophy (webpage)

Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, Chapter 1 (webpage)

#### ***Review:***

Deutsch, et al, Introduction and Chapter 1: Cooperation and Competition

Pruitt and Kim, Chapter 1-Overview

#### ***Optional Readings:***

Dukes, Why Conflict Transformation Matters: Three Cases (webpage, link)

### *Assignments:*

1. Shared discussion online assignment, due by September 3<sup>rd</sup>
2. Private journal reflection (after class)

## WEEKEND TWO: SATURDAY

### Analyzing Complex Conflict

1. MOVE in Philadelphia
2. Mapping a conflict and frameworks for understanding

### Conflict Dynamics and Responses to Conflict

- Understanding responses to conflict
- Dynamics and sources of conflict

#### *Reading for Weekend Two:*

Deutsch, Coleman & Marcus, Chapters 2 & 8 (Justice and Conflict, Intergroup Conflict)  
Pruitt & Kim, Chapters 2, 3, 4,5 & 6 (Sources, Strategic Choice, Contentious Tactics, Escalation, Structural Change)  
Assefa & Wahrhaftig, all  
Mitchell, "How much do I need to know?" (webpage)

#### *Optional Readings:*

Interview with Dr. Sara Cobb on Narrative Analysis

Audio: [http://www.beyondintractability.org/audio/sarah\\_cobb/?nid=2423](http://www.beyondintractability.org/audio/sarah_cobb/?nid=2423)

Dugan, A Nested Theory of Conflict (webpage)

#### *Assignments:*

1. Begin forming groups for intervention study (in-class and brainstorming online)
2. Online journal reflection

## WEEKEND THREE: SATURDAY

### Conflict Context, Structure and Challenges

- Power
- Structure
- Values, Worldview, Morals
- Culture and Identity
- Violence

#### *Reading for Class:*

Deutsch, Coleman & Marcus, Chapters 5, 23, 24 & 25

(Power, Aggression & Violence, Intractable Conflict, Moral Conflict)

Schirch, Chapters 4 & 5

Avruch, Culture and Black, Identities (webpage)

Erickson. "Ethnic Identity, National Iden....Sig. of Personal Experiences" (webpage)

Values and Moral conflicts: (audio/transcript and summary links on webpage)

Docherty: <http://www.beyondintractability.org/audiodisplay/docherty-j-1-worldview-problem1>

Maiese, "Moral or Value Conflicts." *Beyond Intractability*.

<http://www.beyondintractability.org/bi-essay/intolerable-moral-differences>

#### *Assignments:*

1. Group focus statement due in class
2. Short essay due: by Thursday, September 19th. Email as attachment to instructor.

## WEEKEND FOUR: SATURDAY

### Role play

#### **Change: Conflict De-escalation, Rebuilding Relationships, Addressing Concerns**

- Dynamics of de-escalation and change
- Positions, Interests, Needs...Frames, Narratives

#### *Reading for Class:*

Deutsch, et al., Chapters 4, 6, and 20 (Trust..., Communication..., and Change & Conflict)  
Pruitt & Kim, Chapters 9 & 10 (Stalemate, Problem Solving)  
Schirch, Chapters 6 and 7 (Who: Stakeholders” and “Why: Motivations”)

Simulation role and background (handout and email before class)  
Botes, Chapter 15 (Informal Roles)

#### *Assignments:*

1. Journal reflection (after class)

## WEEKEND FIVE: SATURDAY

### **Roles, platforms, possible practices**

- Complementarity and coordination
- Leadership roles
- Conflict assessment for intervention

### **Issues in Conflict Resolution Practice**

- Neutrality, Impartiality, Standing
- Defining success
- Social justice

#### *Reading for Class:*

Pruitt and Kim, Chapter 11 (Intervention of Third Parties)  
Schirch, Chapters 8, 9, 10 (What, How, When)

Laue & Cormick, Ethics of Community Intervention (webpage)  
Schoeny & Warfield, “Reconnecting systems maintenance to social justice” (webpage)  
*The Third Side*, (webpage links)

*Optional reading:* Fisher, Methods of Third Party Intervention (webpage)

#### *Assignments:*

Ongoing group work for presentation

## **WEEKEND SIX: SATURDAY**

### **Group Presentations on Interventions**

Forms of intervention, critiques, strengths and applications

### **Summary and Integration**

- Problem Solving, Settlement, Management and Conflict Transformation
- Mapping the field—concept maps and metaphors
- New directions

### **Course Evaluations**

#### *Reading for Class:*

Appropriate reading for group projects. See Cheldelin (chapters online) and Deutsch text for initial resources leading to library research. Also Track and setting specific readings, TBA (online)

#### *Assignments:*

1. Preparation, rehearsal and presentation. Supporting materials posted to course webpage.
2. Individual analysis/assessment of a conflict due: Wednesday, October 16<sup>th</sup>



## University Resources and Assistance

- If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.
- The Writing Center is available to all Mason students and offers online and individual consultations as well as workshops and mini-courses. Writers at all levels can benefit. Each Mason campus has a location. You can find them on the Arlington Campus in the Original Building, Room 334C, by phone at 703 993-4491, by email at [wcenter@gmu.edu](mailto:wcenter@gmu.edu), or online at: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>
- 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 see: <http://eli.gmu.edu/about/eli-support-services/> or contact 703-993-3660 .
- Academic integrity: 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.

- Individual and Group Work: One project in this class is designed to be completed with a study group. With collaborative work, names of all the participants should appear on the work. Collaborative projects may be divided up so that individual group members complete portions of the whole, provided that group members take sufficient steps to ensure that the pieces conceptually fit together in the end product. *My expectation is that the group will share one grade, but it is possible that group members may receive higher or lower grades than the group grade, depending on contributions and in consultation with the group.*

Other work is designed to be undertaken independently. In the latter case, you may discuss your ideas with others and conference with peers on drafts of the work; however, it is not appropriate to give your paper to someone else to revise. You are responsible for making certain that there is no question that the work you hand in is your own. If only your name appears on an assignment, your professor has the right to expect that you have done the work yourself, fully and independently.