

CONF 658
Diversity and Difference in Conflict Analysis and Resolution
School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution
Spring, 2011

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(please include both accounts in your communication)

Office Hours: By appointment
Contact: 703-993-1300 & 703-850-4919

Class Sessions:

March 26, 2011 / April 2, 2011 / April 16-17, 2011, 2011 / April 30 – May 1, 2011.
10:00 AM – 4:00 PM,
Arlington Campus, Founders Hall, Room 468

Welcome to the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution and especially to the Certificate Program! I am delighted to have you in class and look forward to an engaging learning experience. My hope is to partner with you on creating an environment that promotes learning, discussions, reflection and integration.

Course Description

This course is intended to be an intensive exploration of the most critical elements of cultural diversity while building understanding and awareness of one's self in relation to others. Together we will investigate creative strategies of approaching and dealing with issues of diversity that are intertwined with perceptions of identity, boundaries and worldviews on the individual, communal, organizational, national, international and global levels. During this course we will consider meaning making, develop an awareness of the dynamics of diversity, and understand the potential impact of critical turning points in conflict situations. We will examine the importance of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, class, age and ability in understanding and mitigating conflict as well as work experientially through self reflection, participant-observation and case studies.

Course Objectives

1. Define, discuss and engage in conversation about what is meant and encompassed by the term diversity and difference;
2. Gain a better understanding of issues pertaining to culture, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, class, age and ability and their role in conflict engagement;
3. Identify the various characteristics that shape social identity and explore the difference between internal and external perceptions of one's identity and its impact on social conflict;
4. Provide an environment to discuss one's understanding of self and others and implications for interaction, collaboration, integration and problem solving; and
5. Develop strategies to better mitigate and address issues of diversity, difference and culture.

Course Philosophy

As faculty for this class, I would like to acknowledge that my personal and professional experience, ethnic and cultural heritage, and religious identity impacts the way I understand the issues and the way I select to present them. In light of this acknowledgement, I would invite you to:

- a) Respect all points of view regardless of where you are on these issues;
- b) Listen to gain insight; reflect on what the other person is trying to communicate;
- c) Accept that we are here as a learning community – in which each person is a teacher and a learner.
- d) Participate in the shaping and framing of discourse on the topics of study to shape the emerging conversations on these important and critical topics.

Basic Course Requirements

- Students should arrive to sessions on time and be prepared to participate in class discussions and activities. Seminars will involve discussions and activities which require your preparation. The quality of our discussions will depend on the level of preparation by the entire class. ***In our pursuit of serious scholarly inquiry we will explore difficult and controversial topics, concepts and issues. It will be our collective responsibility to maintain an intellectually rigorous and respectful environment.***
- Barring exceptional circumstances, you are expected to attend all weekends for the full time scheduled.
- Please turn in your assignments on time. In keeping with departmental policy, incomplete grades will be given only in cases of personal or immediate family illness. Late assignments will be penalized (5 percent for each day of delay unless permission is granted).
- Written work must be typed, double spaced. All papers must have page numbers, and endnotes or footnotes when appropriate. **Please remember to put your name and date on the first page of the paper (OR add your name as a header or footer on all pages.)**

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 Writing Center. You can find them in the Arlington Campus in the Original Building, Room 334C, by phone at 703-993-4491 or online at: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>
- You are responsible for knowing, understanding and following Mason's Honor Code, which is found at <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12> Be certain that all work submitted is your own and that you use sources appropriately. I strongly recommend that you review requirements regarding use and citation of sources prior to submitting your work.

Grading Criteria

- Class participation and written work should demonstrate critical thinking and the ability to provide and include one's analysis of the readings.

- Written submissions should demonstrate and include discussion of concepts, theories, and themes discussed in class and covered by the readings. I highly encourage you to show how it links.
- Class presentations should show and demonstrate your ability to lead, discuss and deal with group dynamics and difficult conversations.

Required Readings

Books:

1. Cornell West (2001) Race Matters. Boston: Beacon Press. ISBN: 0-8070-0972-5
2. Chandra Talpade Mohanty. Feminism without Borders (4th ed., 2004) US: Duke University Press ISBN:10-0743412435
3. Dave Eggers, Zeitoun. US: McSweeney's Books. ISBN: 978-1-934781-63-0
4. Gary Okihiro. (1994) Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture. ISBN: 9780295973395
5. Tim Wise. (2008) Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son. US: Soft Skill Press. ISBN 1-932360-68-9

Additional Readings and References: (please retrieve through library resources or online)

- Edward Said. (1979) *Orientalism*. Please visit some on line resources such as: <http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/Orientalism.html> - to read a general review of the theory and his work.
- Docherty, J. S. (2006). The unstated models in our minds. In A. K. Schneider & C. Honeyman (Eds.), *The negotiator's fieldbook: The desk reference for the experienced negotiator* (pp. 7-16). Washington, DC: American Bar Association, Dispute Resolution Section.
- Caton Campbell, M., & Docherty, J. S. (2006). What's in a frame? In A. K. Schneider & C. Honeyman (Eds.), *The negotiator's fieldbook: The desk reference for the experienced negotiator* (pp. 37-46). Washington, DC: American Bar Association, Dispute Resolution Section.
- Docherty, J. S. (2004). Culture and negotiation: Symmetrical anthropology for negotiators. *Marquette Law Review*, 87(4), 711-722.
- Goldston, Jack. The New Population Bomb: The Four Megatrends That Will Change the World. *Foreign Affairs*. Jan. Feb, 2010. Pg. 31-43.

Course Requirements:

a) Class Participation (15 percent)

Your attendance and participation in on-going class discussions is crucial to the success of this class, your learning and will be a critical measure of evaluation. Attendance: Should you miss a day or a few hours of class for circumstances beyond your control, please notify me immediately so we can discuss how best to address the situation. Participation in class means: demonstrating active listening skills, participating in large and small group

discussions and exercises, demonstrating interest and engagement in the classroom to mention a few.

b) Book Review: (15 percent) submit no later than April 26th.

Write a of 1-2 page review of one of the assigned book readings for this course.

c) Reflection Journals: (15 percent) submit final entries no later than May 1

Start a journal and make entries at your own pace throughout the semester. I am interested in reading about your personal reactions to the content of a chapter, a situation, an issue, a comment, a dimension in the books and articles that: you identified with, surprised you; information or insights that you gained or did not understand, created a strong reaction, intrigued you, made no sense and or required that you revisit some of your working assumptions . . . to list a few. I request 5 Journal submissions, each no longer than 2-3 pages single space. We will discuss possible on line entries on blackboard>. You are also welcome to email them on weekly basis or partial entries throughout the course. The grading for this journal is based on the demonstration of analytical thinking and personal reflection on the readings and class discussions.

d) Team facilitation of readings: (15 percent)

Teams of students will be formed on the first day of class to lead a one hour class discussion related to the assigned readings.

e) Group work (40 percent)

In groups (size of group will be discussed), select a conflict situation that has its roots on an issue pertaining to diversity, difference and culture (local, national, international, global, environmental, organizational . . .). Submit a paragraph on the topic of research **April 2st**.

Group Project: Research the conflict and prepare: 1) An annotated bibliography of at least 5 – 7 references to be handed to the class on the day of your presentation; 2) An interactive group presentation to educate your peers on the sources of the conflict, theory (ies) that help explain the sources and dynamics of the conflict; 3) Ties and links to class readings; 4) propose two to three recommendations to address the conflict.

1-2 page single space reflection paper on your experience researching and working on the project (individually submitted by group members **due May 6th**) to include research and group issues you have been able to address, discuss or manage ; and finally: 5) Your group presentation should be highly interactive, demonstrates strong academic inquiry and research of the topic, with includes well thought out communication tools (multi-media, power point presentation, visuals, handouts etc. . .)

Please note that the grading for this assignment will include peer evaluation with regard to your work with the group and instructor evaluation. Additional details will be shared in class.

Course Schedule:

Weekend #1 - Saturday, March 26, 2011

Diversity and Difference: Why study such a topic? Relevance to the field of conflict resolution?

Challenges and opportunities?

- Introductions, approach and expectations;
- Overview of the course and assignments;
- Framing the conversation

- Select groups for project; and
- Housekeeping.
- Guest Speaker (TBD)

Pre- class readings: Zeitoun, Said, Goldstone, start reading Docherty (2006)

Weekend #2– Saturday, April 2, 2011.

Perspectives on issues of diversity and difference

- Check in to discuss questions, comments, etc., from previous seminar;
- There is more to race than black and white;
- Gender and how it is politicized;
- Fault lines and their role in diversity based conflicts;
- Power and the relationship between social identity & social inequality;
- Making meaning - recognizing and understanding worldviews; and
- The role of diversity in conflict settings.
- Student led discussions
- Guest Speaker (TBD)

Pre-class readings: West, Wise, Docherty, Mohanty (Chapters 1, 4, 8, & 9)

Weekend #3 – Saturday and Sunday, April 16 - 17th, 2011

Perspectives on issues of diversity and difference (cont.)

- Check in to discuss questions, comments, from previous seminar.
- Gender revisited;
- Understanding and respecting difference (gender, sexual identification, race, ability and the concept of beauty);
- Fault lines and their role in diversity based conflicts;
- Boundary behaviors – the factors that influence a group’s
- Willingness to expand or limit its membership;
- Behavioral responses to social exclusion.
- Student led discussions
- Guest Speakers (TBD)

Weekend #4 – Saturday and Sunday, April 30 – May 1, 2011

Case studies / group presentations / Pending issues, potential possibilities, moving forward.

- Group Presentations.
- Wrap up and celebration.

“Many thanks in advance for your commitment to learning and for your potential contributions to the success of this course. “ Alma A.H. Jadallah