

Fall 2005

CONF 320
INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT
Thursday 4:30 to 7:10

Instructor: Carlos E. Sluzki, Research Professor, ICAR

After an introductory review of interpersonal communication and the pragmatics of interactional processes, a panoramic view of interpersonal conflicts and conflict resolution from a systems and cross-cultural perspective will be presented and discussed.

Students are expected to

- (I) attend and participate actively in classes
- (II) maintain an updated reading of the textbooks (weekly reading recommended: no less than 100 pages/week for Watzlawick et al, and no less than 60 pages/week for Willmot and Hocker) and occasional articles distributed at the classroom)
- (III) read at least 12 pertinent articles throughout the course
- (IV) write 10 one-to-two page critical reviews-essays on each of those articles, and
- (V) prepare in collaboration one presentation to the class (last class).

There will not be a one-to-one correlation between readings and the classes' subject. Students are expected to have read Watzlawick et al. (280 pages, very easy reading) by September 22, and Willmot and Hocker (300 pages) by December 1.

- I. Sept 1** Introduction and overview. The thin boundaries between intra and inter. The systems perspective. The punctuation of the sequence of events (20" by librarian on search and references)
- II. Sept 8** Escalations, symmetry/complementarity, game theory, zero and non-zero games.
- III. Sept 15** Communicational traps. Double bind theory. The strength of the "victim" position. (Catch 22, I Robot)
- IV. Sept 22** Shame, humiliation and redemption (Film Closetland)
- V. Sept 29** And what about intra-personal conflicts? Do they exist? Ethical dilemmas, vocational quagmires, choice of careers
- VI. Oct 6** From open conflict to reconciliation: stages and emotions. Victimization and violence. Pitbulls and cobras.
- VII. Oct13** Couples in conflict. Families in conflict: Wars, money, sex (Film The War of the Roses) (mediating session Sluzki and couple)

- VIII. Oct 20** Conflicts and culture. Migration and conflict
- IX. Oct 27** Conflict in the workplace, race and gender issues.
Ombudsmanship
- X. Nov 3** Negotiation
- XI. Nov 10** Management/moderation –Appreciative enquiry, reframing, curiosity.
- XII. Nov 17** Other third-party interventions. The international scene:
Culture-rooted ceremonies, tribunals.
=====Break
- XIII. Dec 1** Retributive and restaurative justice. Transcendence, reconciliation.
- XIV. Dec 8** (last) Presentations by students

Assigned books:

Watzlawick, P. J.H.Beavin, D.D.Jackson (1967) Pragmatics of Human Communication: A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies, and Paradoxes. NY Norton (

Wilmot, W.W. and Hocker, J.L. (2005): Interpersonal Conflicts (Sixth Edition). Boston, McGraw-Hill (340 pages)

Evaluation:

- Participation in class (20%)
- Evaluation of weekly homework: students are expected to submit weekly one review/discussion of an original and pertinent article of their choice on interpersonal conflict. The review/discussion should not exceed 2 pages, and should include summary of the article and an original discussion/comment/analysis. (A librarian assigned to program should present ways of accessing sources, writing references, etc.) (60%)
- Group presentation: Analysis of conflict in a film Movies analysis by teams of 2-3, as assignment for final project (20%)

Dr. Sluzki will be available to meet with students as needed on Thursdays from 1 PM to 4 PM at his office in Robinson B, #413A.

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Part-time research assistant will be assigned by Susan.

Guest lectures:

- Howard Gadlin, Ph.D., Ombuds of NIH= Racial disputes/grievances in organization (IX)
- Sandy Cheldelin, Professor, ICAR: Appreciative inquiry (XI)
- Sara Cobb, Ph.D., Director, ICAR: Peace and justice (XIII)
- (some graduate/doctoral students may enjoy also presenting)

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