

Integration of Theory and Practice

CONF 642 Section 001 – Fall 2007

<u>Class Time:</u>	Monday, 7:20 – 10:00pm
<u>Location:</u>	Arlington Campus, Truland Building, Room 666A
<u>Instructor:</u>	Patricia Maulden, Ph.D. 703.834.5666 pmaulden@gmu.edu
<u>Office Hours:</u>	By appointment

Course Description and Objectives

This course, taken in the final semester of the Master's program, gives students a formal structure in which to organize their thinking around the general field of conflict resolution and around their own studies within that field. Throughout the course, students will look back on theories, intervention strategies, and research methods from all masters' level classes. This reflection will point out links between theory types and conflict and resolution dynamics. On the other hand, theoretical and practical gaps will also emerge. In-class discussion will probe the linkages and the gaps in order to help students develop a more comprehensive, integrated understanding of conflict analysis and resolution.

During the course class participants will:

- ⊖ Review prior course work as well as critique the outline of the master's program.
- ⊖ Examine conceptions of theory and practice and reflect on how these constructions could be useful in other arenas or job situations.
- ⊖ Develop an individualized matrix of conflict analysis, resolution, and research strategies.
- ⊖ Begin the cognitive process of operationalizing what has been learned while at ICAR.

Course Expectations

1. **Consistent attendance.** Barring exceptional circumstances, you will be expected to attend class on a regular basis.
2. **Effective preparation.** Class involves discussion and activities that depend on advance preparation.
3. **Appropriate participation.** Actively engage in the course in as all class formats.
4. **Course completion.** In keeping with departmental policy, incomplete grades will be given only in cases of illness, either personal or in an immediate family member.

Course Requirements

1. **Participation** 20%
Regular attendance is required and excessive absences may result in a failing grade. In the event of your having to be absent more than one of two class meetings, please consult with the instructor. Students are also expected to come to class prepared to engage with the topics and with their fellow students in a learning community format. In addition, each student will have an opportunity to assign readings for and to facilitate one section of class discussion.
2. **Integration Exercise** 20%
On **September 17**, essay topics/questions will be handed out. The essays will be due in class **October 1**. Students will be asked to write one or two essay-style responses reflecting specific questions and demonstrating their understanding and application of the concepts of integration. **Due: October 1.**
3. **Group Presentation** 30%
Small groups will each chose a conflict case. With the case as context, the group will develop a theoretical matrix and analytical framework that will illustrate their findings. The matrix or framework, underpinned by theory, will be the ground upon which the group's research strategy as well as choice of intervention modality will be constructed.
The main purpose of the group project will be to develop an integrated approach to analyzing, researching, and proposing an intervention strategy within a particular conflict context.
Group case study choices due September 17.
Group presentations on November 19.

4. Research Paper

30%

This paper is designed to let each student develop a conflict analysis and resolution map of their own particular program interests and foci. From the point of view of your own writing, research, and practice, what does your conflict map look like? What theories underpin these components of practice and research? How does this all come together for you? The paper should be 20-25 pages, double-spaced.

A brief proposal outlining your paper is due Tuesday, October 9.

Conflict map paper due Monday, December 10.

Readings

Required Book

Ramsbotham, Oliver, Tom Woodhouse, and High Miall. 2005. *Contemporary Conflict and Resolution*. Second Edition. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Suggested Reading

Schellenberg, James A. 1996. *Conflict Resolution: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Articles found on E Reserves

Argyris, Chris and Donald A. Schon. 1992. Theories of Action. *In Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers.

Clements, Kevin. 2003. Theory, Research, and Practice. *In Conflict: From Analysis to Intervention*. Cheldelin, Sandra, et al., eds. New York: Continuum.

Nader, Laura. 1998. Harmony Models and the Construction of Law. *In Conflict Resolution: Cross Cultural Perspectives*. Kevin Avruch, Peter W. Black, and Joseph A. Scimecca, eds. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

Marsick, Victoria. 2000. Learning Through Reflection. *In The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*.

Schein, Edgar. 1998. Communication Processes. *In Process Consultation Volume I*. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley Publishing Company.

Class Agenda

Week 1 August 27

Introductions, review of syllabus and course requirements, explore student expectations, and begin discussion of integration. Discuss group project structure.

Assignment 1: Review program materials and organize them into theory, practice, and research, as listed below. Bring to class on September 10.

Theory 1	Conflict causes and dynamics
Theory 2	Resolution approaches and processes
Practice 1	Formalized approaches and processes
Practice 2	Reflection and practice
Research 1	Review, test theory and practice
Research 2	Apply results to theory and practice

Readings for next week:

Clement chapter, E Reserves
Review Ramsbotham et al., Chapters 1 to 4
Optional: Schellenberg, Chapters 1 to 6

Week 2 September 3 HOLIDAY

Week 3 September 10 Theory I

What is integration and why does it matter?
Discuss Assignment 1.
Examine theories and frameworks of conflict.
Explore levels and units of analysis.

Readings for next week:

Argyris & Schön (E Reserves)
Argyris & Schön (Handout)
Readings chosen from previous courses

Week 4 September 17 Theory II

Examine theories and frameworks of resolution.
Assignment 2: Essay topics or questions will be handed out.

Readings for next week:

*Assigned by facilitator.

Week 5 September 24 Theory Integration

*Student led discussion.
Group project work.

Readings for next week:

Review Ramsbotham et al., Chapters 5 to 10
Optional: Schellenberg, Chapters 7 to 12

Week 6 October 1 Practice I

Discuss readings.
Examine intervention types.
Essay paper due.

Readings for next week:

Marsick (E Reserves)
Nader (E Reserves)

Week 7 October 9 (Tuesday) Practice II

Discuss reflective practice approaches.
Group project work.
3-5 page proposal outlining final project due.

Readings for next week:

*Assigned by facilitator.

Week 8 October 15 Theory/Practice Integration

*Student led discussion.
Assignment 3: Bring list and explanation of theory / practice gaps next week.

Readings for next week:

Review Ramsbotham et al., Chapter 11 to 13

Week 9 October 22 Missing Pieces I

Discuss Assignment 3.
Group project work.

Readings for next week:
*Assigned by facilitator

Week 10 October 29 Missing Pieces II

*Student led discussion.
Explore why gaps in theory and practice.
Discuss conflict map progress.

Readings for next week:
Schein (E Reserves)
*Assigned by facilitator

Week 11 November 5 Integrating Theory/Practice/Missing Pieces

*Student led discussion.
Group project work.

Readings for next week:
Optional: Schellenberg, Chapter 2
Readings from previous courses

Week 12 November 12 Research I

Discuss purposes, practices of research.
Consider research possibilities in the 'real world.'
Group project work.

Readings for next week:
*Assigned by facilitator.

Week 13 November 19 Research II

*Student led discussion.
Continue research considerations.
Group presentations due.

Readings for next week:
Review Ramsbotham et al., Chapters 14 to 16

Week 14 November 26 Course Materials Integration

Discuss class findings, concerns, ideas for change.

Readings for next week:

*Assigned by facilitator.

Week 15: December 3

Next Steps

*Student led discussion.

Wrap up of course themes and concepts.

Student evaluations.

Final Papers Due: Monday, December 10.