

Conflict Resolution Techniques & Practice

CONF 300, Fall 2008

Wednesday, 4:30-7:10 PM, Robinson B 218

INSTRUCTOR

Lisa E. Shaw

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Phone: (703) 993-4165

Office Hours: Thursday 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. or by appointment

E-Reserves: Password given in class

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Course description: Advanced consideration of CONF 101 topics, introduction of the core notion of reflective practice, conflict resolution techniques practice, third party roles, and ethics.

Building on what students have learned in Conf 101, this course further explores a variety of theories and frameworks for analyzing conflict. Students will move from conflict analysis to exploring techniques, process models, and third-party roles to constructively intervene in conflict.

Because this class emphasizes building conflict resolution skills and abilities, a significant portion of the class will be experiential-based. Much of the class will involve engaging in simulated conflict scenarios and subsequent reflection. The class will also introduce students to unique forms of practice and on occasion, give students the opportunity to meet, question, and learn from professionals who are active in the work being studied.

Interpersonal, small group, organizational, community, and international conflict will all be discussed in the course, but special emphasis in practice will be placed on interpersonal and small group conflicts as the building blocks for doing conflict resolution in larger and more complex social conflicts.

At the end of the course, students will have learned theories and techniques for assessing conflicts, be able to make informed summaries of conflict intervention options, and will have a set of skills and techniques to help parties in conflict have constructive conversations and move conflicts toward resolution. While students will learn and practice several conflict resolution process models and roles, the goal is not to be fully trained as mediators or facilitators, although this course will be an excellent introduction should students decide to pursue further training or credentialing in such areas.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required texts (available in the GMU bookstore):

Docherty, Jayne Seminare. The Little Book of Strategic Negotiation. Intercourse: Good Books, 2005.

Kraybill, Ron, and Evelyn Wright. Cool Tools for Hot Topics: Group Tools to Facilitate Meetings When Things Are Hot. 1st. Intercourse: Good Books, 2007

Mayer, Bernard. The Dynamics of Conflict Resolution (Ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 2000.

Schirch, Lisa, and David Camp. The Little Book of Dialogue for Difficult Subjects. 1st. Intercourse: Good Books, 2007

Schrock-Shenk, C. (Ed.) Mediation and facilitation training manual: Foundations and Skills for Constructive Conflict Transformation (4th ed.): Mennonite Conciliation Service, 2000. (MFTM)

Electronic Material

Course materials including syllabus, Power Point slides, reflection paper questions, and other relevant material will be available on Blackboard <http://courses.gmu.edu>. Additional readings will be placed on E-reserve (password will be given in class).

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Please come to class on time and prepared. Turn off cell phones, pagers, beepers, etc. Remain in class unless you have an emergency. Allow others and yourself to learn by refraining from side conversations, passing notes, playing video games, reading e-mail, browsing websites, etc. Be mindful of the sensitivities of others in your comments in class; however, open discussion and dialogue are our goals.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Academic Honesty and Collaboration

George Mason University has an Honor Code with guidelines regarding academic integrity and which is designed, "to promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community" (www.gmu.edu/catalog/policies). The Honor Code lays out strict penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Plagiarism is a serious offense, and all written work for this course should include proper citations in a standard citation format (MLA, APA, etc.). *If you are unsure about how to cite a direct quotation or concept from course or outside readings, then ask for help.* "I wasn't sure how to cite a source, so I left out the reference," is not an acceptable defense for plagiarism. Copies of common style manuals are available at the GMU library reference desk or online at <http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/workscited/>.

For individual class assignments, you may discuss your ideas with others or ask for feedback; however, you are responsible for making certain that there is no question that the work you hand in is your own. You may not submit papers or presentations from other courses to fulfill assignments for this class.

For group class assignments, the names of all participants should appear on the work. While it's fine for groups to divide project work among team members, the final product that's submitted should represent a single, conceptually-linked piece of work. With rare exception, each student working in a group is given the same grade for an assignment. *If a group is having trouble with a member not fulfilling their work obligation, then the group needs to bring the problem to the instructor's attention immediately.*

Late Work

Class assignments that are submitted late can be penalized by one point for each day they are late. If a student has a documented emergency, special arrangements can be made with the instructor.

Paper Format

Papers for the course should be typed, double-spaced, have 1” margins, and use a common 12-point font. The pages should be numbered and stapled together. Headers should include only the course number, CONF 300. *Papers should have a title, include your name and the instructor’s name, and be placed as the last page of your assignment.* Sources should be cited and consistently follow a single standard academic citation format.

STUDENT RESOURCES

GMU Writing Center

“The Writing Center seeks to foster a writing climate on campus and beyond by offering free writing support to George Mason students, faculty, staff and alumni. No matter what your writing abilities are, writing specialists can help you develop the skills you need to become a successful writer....Free services include: One-on-one 45 minute sessions with a writing specialist; online writing lab; one-on-one sessions with an ESL specialist; workshops on such topics as documenting sources, grammar and punctuation; writing handouts on a variety of subjects; a library of handbooks and writing manuals; [and an] online chat with a tutor about papers submitted to the Online Writing Lab” (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>).

Disability Support Services

Any student with documented learning disabilities or other conditions that may affect academic performance should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with the Office of Disability Support Services (993-2474) to determine the possible accommodations you might need; and 2) contact her or his instructor to discuss reasonable accommodations.

“George Mason University is committed to providing appropriate services and accommodations that allow self-identified students with disabilities to access programs and activities at the university as stated in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

To achieve this goal, the university maintains and supports the Disability Resource Center Office which is responsible for assuring that students receive the services and accommodations to which they are entitled. The professional staff of the Disability Resource Center Office coordinate services for students with disabilities, determine reasonable services and accommodations on the basis of disability, and act as a liaison between students and faculty/administration on concerns relating to services and accommodations” (<http://www.gmu.edu/departments/advising/dss.html>).

Library Services

The CAR library liaison is Melissa Johnson (703-993-2212). Don’t hesitate to contact her with specific questions about holdings and research regarding the CAR field.

Assignments and Evaluation

Participation

Because much of this course involves in-class, experiential learning, participation is a significant course grade. Course attendance is expected and is part of your participation grade. *Just showing up for class does not represent 'A' participation work.* Students are expected to complete their reading assignments on time and to participate in class discussions and exercises.

Reflection Papers

Students will be responsible for the submission of 2 reflection papers between 4 (complete) and 6 pages in length. These papers will correspond to the course themes spread throughout the semester and should draw heavily on course discussions, in-class exercises, and course readings. One of the formal citation styles mentioned earlier should be used for these papers. Assignments will be given out on Wednesday and due at the beginning of class on the following Wednesday. *Hard copies are preferred; papers may be e-mailed by permission of instructor only.*

Learning Groups

Students will partner with 4-5 of their peers in learning groups and work on two projects together.

Practitioner Interview Class Presentation:

Interview a practitioner in the field and present the information you gather. Interview questions are a key component to this exercise and should be part of the presentation. The purpose of this is to give students the opportunity to explore potential career options. The group will give a brief (15 minute) presentation including personal reflections about what was learned. Each group member will also write up a 4 (complete) to 6 page summary of your practitioner interview after your group presentation. **This summary is due Wednesday, November 5.**

Videotaped Role-play:

The group will construct a short, conflict role-play and intervention that relates to core ideas and skills covered in the class and videotape themselves running through the role-play. Each group member will also write up a 3 (complete) to 4 page evaluation of your group's video role play. **This evaluation is due Wednesday, December 3.**

Debrief and reflection of the role-plays will take place on Wednesday, December 3.

Students who do not attend class on this day will be expected to write up individual evaluation papers of an alternate group video. These papers should be no longer than 4 pages and will be due on December 10.

Final Written Exam

The written exam for this course will be an open-book, take home essay exam. *Each* essay question should be 3 to 4 pages in length. **The exam will be distributed on December 3 and will be due by 7:30 p.m. December 10. Hard copies only; e-mail submissions will not be accepted.**

Evaluation of Participation and Assignments

| Section Evaluated | Number of Points per Assignment or Day | Total Number of Points |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Participation | 1.5 for participation for each day (13 days) | 20 |
| Reflection Papers | 15 points each (2 papers) | 30 |
| Practitioner Interviews | Interview summary: 15 points Group presentation: 10 points | 25 |
| Videotape Role Play | Group role play: 15 points Role-play evaluation: 10 points In-class role-play debrief: 5 | 30 |
| Final Exam | Two essay questions (3 to 4 pages each question) | 15 |
| | | 120 points |

Grading Scale

| Points Accumulated | Grade |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| 118 - 120 | A + |
| 114 - 117 | A |
| 110 - 113 | A - |
| 107 - 109 | B + |
| 102 - 106 | B |
| 99 - 101 | B - |
| 94 - 98 | C |
| 89 - 93 | D |
| 0 - 88 | F |

| Date | Topics & Readings | Room |
|------|--|--------|
| 8/27 | <p>Class Introduction Approaches to Conflict and Conceptions of Conflict Course overview, Practice as both science & art – starting to think about “reflective practice” <i>Readings:</i> Chapter 1 & 2 “The Nature of Conflict” and “How People Conflict,” in Mayer <i>In Class: Conflict Styles Exercise</i></p> | RB 218 |
| 9/3 | <p>Frameworks for Analyzing Conflict Levels of analysis; SPITCEROW; positions, interests, values, worldviews, & needs, conflict management, resolution, and transformation <i>Readings:</i> Chapter 5, “The Nature of Resolution,” in Mayer Chapter 2, “Tools for Conflict Analysis,” in Fisher (E-reserve) “Levels of Action” in Maiese/Lederach http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/hierarchical_intervention_levels/?nid=1338 <i>In Class: Conflict Mapping Exercise</i></p> | RB 218 |
| 9/10 | <p>Active Listening, Mindful Speaking, Emotional Side of Conflict Listening as assessment and form of intervention <i>Readings:</i> Chapter 6, “Communication,” in Mayer “Feelings in Conflict” in MFTM, p. 53 “Emotional Dynamics” in MFTM, pp. 54-55 Listening material in MFTM, pp. 74-75 “Communication Across Conflict Lines” in Anastasiou (E-reserve) “Memories,” in Krivis (E-reserve) <i>In Class: Listening/ Communications Exercise</i> *1st reflective paper prompt</p> | RB 218 |
| 9/17 | <p>Culture, Gender, Power & Identity Culture and the social constructions of meaning & difference, types of power, & identity’s role in conflict <i>Readings:</i> Chapter 3, “Power and Conflict,” in Mayer “Perspectives for Assessing and Working with Power” in MFTM, pp. 80-81 “The Military Utility of Understanding Adversary Culture” in McFate (Blackboard) “A Hat’s On Approach,” in Kivis (E-reserve) <i>In Class: Na-Za Activity</i> *1st reflective paper due</p> | RB 218 |

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| 9/24 | Intervening: Process designs, third-party roles and neutrality Process & roles: definitions and choices <i>Readings:</i> Chapters 9, “Third-Party Intervention” in Hocker & Wilmot (E-reserve) “What Is Neutrality?” in Maiese http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/neutrality/?nid=6713 <i>In Class: U.N. Peacekeepers</i> | RB 218 |
| 10/1 | Facilitation and Negotiation Introduction Group dynamics and introduction to group facilitation <i>Reading:</i> Chapters 1 thru 4 & 6, “Cool Tools for Hot Topics” in Kraybill /Wright Chapters 1 & 2, “Strategic Negotiation” in Docherty <i>In Class: Facilitation Practice Exercise</i> | SUB II Room 3 |
| 10/8 | Negotiation Interest-based negotiations Chapters 1 & 2, “Strategic Negotiation” in Docherty Fisher, Ury, & Patton’s “The Negotiation Paradigm” in MFTM, p. 160 <i>In Class: Negotiation Role-Play</i> | SUB I Room A |
| 10/15 | Mediation Approaches & Models <i>Readings</i> Chapter 9, “Mediation,” in Mayer Chapter 16, “Ecuador-Peru Peace Process,” in Einaudi (E-Reserve) <i>In Class: Mediation Role Play</i> *2nd reflective paper prompt | SUB II Room 5 & 6 |
| 10/22 | Mediation Continued “In Search of the Textbook Mediator,” in Martin (E-reserve) Chapter 1, “The Seasoned Power Broker,” in Martin (E-reserve) <i>In Class: Guest Speaker</i> <i>Time for Learning Cell Practitioner Interviews Presentations Preparation</i> *2nd reflective paper due | RB 218 |
| 10/29 | Learning Cell Practitioner Interview Presentations <i>Film: Fire Within</i> | RB 218 |
| 11/5 | Dialogue and World Café Chapters 5 “Cool Tools for Hot Topics” in Kraybill /Wright Chapters 1 thru 3, 6 & 7, “Dialogue for Difficult Subjects” in Schirch/Campt “Dialogue vs Debate,” in MFTM, p. 206 Café to Go: http://www.theworldcafe.com/articles/cafetogo.pdf <i>In Class: Dialogue Role Play</i> Practitioner Interview Reflection Papers Due | SUB II Room 4 |

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| 11/12 | Problem Solving Workshops http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/Anal_Prob_Solv/?nid=1330 <i>In Class: Problem Solving Role Play</i> | SUB II Room 1 & 2 |
| 11/19 | Class Time for Recording of Video Role-Plays | RB 218 |
| 11/26 | No Class - Thanksgiving Holiday | |
| 12/3 | *Videotaped Role-Plays and Evaluations Due Appreciative Inquiry, Restorative Justice and Ethics <i>Readings:</i> “The Ethics of Intervention in Community Disputes” Laue (Blackboard) “Reconnecting Systems Maintenance with Social Justice” Schoeny, Warfield (Blackboard) <i>In Class: Debrief and Reflections on Video Role-Plays</i> Final Exam Essay Questions Distributed | RB 218 |
| 12/10 | Final written exam due by 7:30 p.m. (Hard Copy Only) | RB 365 |

Links to find SUB I & II Rooms

Campus Map Explorer: <http://eagle.gmu.edu/map/fairfax.php>

Student Union I & II Maps (Third Floors): <http://www.gmu.edu/operations/facilities.htm - FloorMaps>

Course E-Reserve Bibliography

| | Bibliographic Information | ISBN # | Chapter/ Title | Pages |
|---|--|-------------------|--|--------------|
| 1 | Fisher, Simon et al. "Working With Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Action." New York: Zed Books, St. Martin's Press, 2000. | 1856498360 | 2 – Tools for Conflict Analysis | 17-35 |
| 2 | Anastasiou, Harry. "Communication Across Conflict Lines: The Case of Ethnically Divided Cyprus." <u>Journal of Peace Research</u> 39(2002): 581-596. | | | |
| 3 | Kravis, Jeffrey. "Improvitational Negotiation: A Mediators Story." San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006 | 978-0-7879-8038-2 | 8 - Memories | 84-91 |
| 4 | Kravis, Jeffrey. "Improvitational Negotiation: A Mediators Story." San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006 | 978-0-7879-8038-2 | 11- A Hat's On Approach | 115-123 |
| 5 | Wilmot, William W., Joyce L. Hocker. "Interpersonal Conflict." 7 ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2007 | 978-0-07-313554-0 | 9 – Third Party Intervention | 270-295 |
| 6 | Crocker, Chester A., Fen O. Hampson, and Pamela Aall. <u>Herding Cats: Multiparty Mediation in a Complex World</u> . Washington D.C.: USIP, 1999. | 1-878379-92-5 | 16 – The Ecuador-Peru Peace Process (Luigi R. Einaudi) | 405-429 |
| 7 | Martin, Harriet. "Kings of Peace, Pawns of War." New York: Continuum, 2006 | 0-8264-9057-3 | 6 – In Search of the Textbook Mediation | 159-173 |
| 8 | Martin, Harriet. "Kings of Peace, Pawns of War." New York: Continuum, 2006. | 0-8264-9057-3 | 1 – The Seasoned Power Broker | 1-27 |