

# Conflict Resolution Techniques & Practice

## CONF 300 Section 004 – Fall 2008

Class Time: Thursday, 1:30 – 4:15 pm

Location: Robinson A, Room 249

Instructor: Patricia Maulden, Ph.D.  
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Office Hours: Thursday, 1:00 – 2:00 pm or by appointment

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### Course Description & Objectives

Welcome! Building on what students have learned in Conf 101, this course further explores a variety of theories and frameworks for analyzing conflict. Students will then 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 environments.

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 have a set of skills and techniques to help parties in conflict have constructive conversations in order to 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.

During the course class participants will:

\* Develop an appreciation of the dynamic relationship between conflict analysis and resolution.

- \* Gain an understanding of reflective practice in both personal and professional terms.
- \* Explore specific practices and techniques practices as they build upon conflict analysis and move conflict toward resolution.
- \* Consider aspects of culture, gender, power, and ethics as they affect both conflict as well as resolution attempts.
- \* Practice various conflict resolution techniques.
- \* Increase critical thinking abilities.

## 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. All assigned readings should be completed PRIOR to class.
3. 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, instant messaging, reading e-mail, browsing websites, etc. Open discussion and dialogue are class goals but please be mindful of the sensitivities of others.
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. Class assignments that are submitted late can be penalized by one point for each day thereafter. If a student has a documented emergency, special arrangements can be made with the instructor.
5. Paper format. Papers 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). The first page of the paper should have the title. On the last page of your assignment include your name and the instructor’s name.

## Course Materials

### Required Texts

1. Mayer, Bernard, ed. 2000. *The Dynamics of Conflict Resolution*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.
2. Schrock-Shenk, Carolyn, ed. 2000. *Mediation and Facilitation Training Manual: Foundations and Skills for Constructive Conflict Transformation*. Fourth Edition. Akron, PA: Mennonite Conciliation Service.

3. Docherty, Jayne S. 2005. *The Little Book of Strategic Negotiation*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.
4. Schirch, Lisa and David Camp. 2007. *The Little Book of Dialogue for Difficult Subjects*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.
5. Kraybill, Ron and Evelyn Wright. 2006. *Cool Tools for Hot Topics: Group Tools to Facilitate Meetings When Things are Hot*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

### Electronic Material

Course materials including syllabus, Power Point slides, reflection paper questions, and other relevant documents will be available on Blackboard. Additional readings will be placed on E-Reserve and the password will be given in class.

## Academic Policies & 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 is fine for groups to divide project work among team members, the final product 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.*

## 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 ICAR library liaison is Melissa Johnson (703.993.2212). Do not hesitate to contact her with specific questions about holdings and research in these areas or whom to contact for materials still in the Fenwick Library on the Fairfax Campus.

# Assignments

## Participation

Because much of this course involves in-class, experiential learning and 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, each between 3 (complete) and 5 pages in length. These papers will correspond to the course themes throughout the semester and should draw heavily from 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 Thursday and due at the beginning of class on the following Thursday.**

## Learning Cells

Throughout the semester, students will partner with 4-5 of their peers in learning cells. Each learning cell will work together on two projects.

### *1. Practitioner Interview Class Presentation*

Each student will interview a practitioner in the field and present (with their learning cell) the information gathered. Interview questions are a key component to this exercise and should be part of the presentation. The purpose of this assignment is to give students the opportunity to explore potential career options as well as to practice managing time and information in a group project. The group will give a brief (15 minute) presentation including personal reflections about what was learned. The week after the group presentation, each group member will turn in a three (complete) to five page summary of their interview. **This summary is due Thursday, November 6.**

### *2. Videotaped Role-Play*

The group will construct a short conflict role-play that highlights a particular intervention type relating to core ideas and skills covered in the class. The group will then videotape themselves running through the role-play. Each group member will write a 3 (complete) to 4-page evaluation of the group video role-play. **This assignment is due Thursday, December 4.**

**Debrief and reflection of the role-plays will take place on Thursday, December 4.** Students who do not attend class on this day will be expected to write individual evaluation papers of the conflict resolution skills displayed by team members. **These papers should be no longer than 3 pages and will be due on December 11.**

## Final Written Exam

The written exam for this course will be an open-book, take home essay exam, distributed in class on December 4. *Each* question should be 3 (complete) to 4 pages in length. **The exam will be due via email by 7:30 p.m. December 11.**

## Evaluation

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Number of Points per Assignment</u>	<u>Total Points</u>
Participation	1.5 for participation for each day (13 days)	20
Reflection Papers	15 points each (2 papers)	30
Interview & Group Presentation	Interview summary: 15 points Group presentation: 10 points	25
Videotape Role Play	Group role play: 15 points Role-play evaluation: 10 points In-class debrief: 5 points	30
Final Exam	Two essay questions (3 to 4 pages)	15
Course Total	All Assignments	120 points

## Grading

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

## Course Agenda

Date	Topics & Readings	Room
8/28	<p><b>Class Introduction</b>  <b>Approaches to Conflict and Conceptions of Conflict</b>            Course overview, Practice as both science &amp; art – starting to think about “reflective practice”  <u>Readings:</u>            Chapter 1 &amp; 2 “The Nature of Conflict” and “How People Conflict,” in Mayer  <u>In Class:</u> <i>Conflict Styles Exercise</i></p>	RA249
9/4	<p><b>Frameworks for Analyzing Conflict</b>            Levels of analysis; SPITCEROW; positions, interests, values, worldviews, &amp; needs, conflict management, resolution, and transformation  <u>Readings:</u>            Chapter 5, “The Nature of Resolution,” in Mayer            Chapter 2, “Tools for Conflict Analysis,” in Fisher (E-reserve)            “Levels of Action” in Maiese/Lederach  <a href="http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/hierarchical_intervention_levels/?nid=1338">http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/hierarchical_intervention_levels/?nid=1338</a>  <u>In Class:</u> <i>Conflict Mapping Exercise</i></p>	RA249
9/11	<p><b>Active Listening, Mindful Speaking, Emotional Side of Conflict</b>            Listening as assessment and form of intervention  <u>Readings:</u>            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)  <u>In Class:</u> <i>Listening/Communications Exercise</i></p> <p><i>*1<sup>st</sup> reflective paper prompt</i></p>	RA249
9/18	<p><b>Culture, Gender, Power &amp; Identity</b>            Culture and the social constructions of meaning &amp; difference, types of power, &amp; Identity’s role in conflict  <u>Readings:</u>            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 Krivis (E-reserve)  <u>In Class:</u> <i>Na-Za Activity</i></p> <p><i>*1<sup>st</sup> reflective paper due</i></p>	RA249

9/25	<b>Intervening: Process designs, third-party roles and neutrality</b> Process & roles: definitions and choices <u>Readings:</u> Chapters 9, “Third-Party Intervention” in Hocker & Wilmot (E-reserve) “What Is Neutrality?” in Maiese <a href="http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/neutrality/?nid=6713">http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/neutrality/?nid=6713</a> <u>In Class:</u> <i>Brotherhood Bridge Role Play</i>	RA249
10/2	<b>Facilitation and Negotiation Introduction</b> Group dynamics and introduction to group facilitation <u>Reading:</u> Chapters 1 thru 4 & 6, “Cool Tools for Hot Topics” in Kraybill /Wright Chapters 1 & 2, “Strategic Negotiation” in Docherty <u>In Class:</u> <i>Facilitation Practice Exercise</i>	<b>SUB II</b> <b>Ballroom</b> <b>2/Middle</b>
10/9	<b>Negotiation</b> Interest-based negotiations Chapters 1 & 2, “Strategic Negotiation” in Docherty Fisher, Ury, & Patton’s “The Negotiation Paradigm” in MFTM, p. 160 <u>In Class:</u> <i>Negotiation Role-Play</i>	<b>SUB II</b> <b>Room 4</b>
10/16	<b>Mediation Approaches &amp; Models</b> <u>Readings:</u> Chapter 9, “Mediation,” in Mayer Chapter 16, “Ecuador-Peru Peace Process,” in Einaudi (E-Reserve) <u>In Class:</u> <i>Mediation Role Play</i>  <i>*2<sup>nd</sup> reflective paper prompt</i>	TBD
10/23	<b>Mediation Continued</b> <u>Readings:</u> “In Search of the Textbook Mediator,” in Martin (E-reserve) Chapter 1, “The Seasoned Power Broker,” in Martin (E-reserve) <u>In Class:</u> <i>Guest Speaker / Mediation Exercise</i> <i>Time for Learning Cell Practitioner Interviews Presentations Preparation</i>  <i>*2<sup>nd</sup> reflective paper due</i>	RA249
10/30	<b>Learning Cell Practitioner Interview Presentations</b> <u>Film:</u> <i>Fire Within</i>	RA249



11/6	<b>Dialogue and World Café</b> <u>Readings:</u> Chapters 5 “Cool Tools for Hot Topics” in Kraybill /Wright Chapters 1 thru 3, 6 & 7, in Schirch/Campt; “Dialogue vs Debate,” in MFTM, p. 206 <u>In Class:</u> <i>Dialogue Role Play</i>  Café to Go: <a href="http://www.theworldcafe.com/articles/cafetogo.pdf">http://www.theworldcafe.com/articles/cafetogo.pdf</a>  <b>* Practitioner Interview Reflection Papers Due</b>	<b>SUB II Room 1 &amp; 2</b>
11/13	<b>Problem Solving Workshops</b> <a href="http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/Anal_Prob_Solv/?nid=1330">http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/Anal_Prob_Solv/?nid=1330</a>  <u>In Class:</u> <i>Problem Solving Role Play</i>	<b>SUB II Room 1 &amp; 2</b>
11/20	<b>Class Time for Recording of Video Role-Plays</b>	<b>RA249</b>
11/27	<b>No Class - Thanksgiving Holiday</b>	
12/4	<b>Appreciative Inquiry, Restorative Justice and Ethics</b> <u>Readings:</u> “The Ethics of Intervention in Community Disputes” Laue (Blackboard) “Reconnecting Systems Maintenance with Social Justice” Schoeny, Warfield (Blackboard) <u>In Class:</u> <i>Debrief and Reflections on Video Role-Plays</i>  <b>*Videotaped Role-Plays and Evaluations Due</b>  <b>****Final Exam Essay Questions Distributed</b>	<b>RA249</b>
12/11	<b>Final written exam due via email by 7:30 p.m.</b>	<b>pmaulden@gmu.edu</b>

**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

	<b>Bibliographic Information</b>	<b>ISBN #</b>	<b>Chapter/ Title</b>	<b>Pages</b>
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.			581-598
3	Kravis, Jeffrey. "Improvisational Negotiation: A Mediators Story." San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006	978-0-7879-8038-2	8 - Memories	84-91
4	Kravis, Jeffrey. "Improvisational 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