



George Mason University
Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution

**INTRODUCTION TO CONFLICT
ANALYSIS AND RESOLUTION**

CONF 501

Semester: Fall 2008

Class Time: Monday, 7:20 - 10:00 PM

Location: Sec. 003, ARLTB 333A
Arlington Campus

Instructor: Ibrahim Sharqieh, Ph.D.
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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description and Objectives:

This course is an introduction to the field of conflict analysis and resolution. As an introductory course, it is intended to provide a foundation to further inquiry and application in conflict resolution. Other courses at ICAR develop one or another of the themes discussed in this course in greater depth.

This course is designed to encourage students to think academically, systematically, and analytically about conflict analysis and resolution. To achieve this goal, the course will examine important aspects in understating conflict including, but is not limited to, definitions, underlying causes and conditions, dynamics, issues, parties, and involvement of other stakeholders. Theories that relate human behavior and social systems to the origins of conflict will be of a particular interest. Importantly, this holistic analysis of conflict and its causes should help us shed light on relevant intervention strategies and diverse views of conflict resolution. Integration between theory and practice through discussion, and a case study analysis of real world events is also expected.

Course Format

The instructor will deliver some formal lectures, but there should be ample time for class questions, comments, and discussion. Participation in class discussion is essential to the success of this course. We value critical thinking and therefore, it is imperative that students read the assigned books and articles prior to class. Please make sure you express informed opinions about the subject matter. Ask questions based on the knowledge of the readings agreeing or disagreeing with points raised by the authors of assigned readings. Please remember that you will find that your contribution is normally appreciated, even if you are not used to putting forward a point or making a case in public.

Course Requirements

1- Attendance (10%): As is the case with all other classes, attendance is required and excessive absences may result in a failing grade. Please consult with the course instructor in the event that you are absent from class.

2- Conflict Scenario (15%): For this assignment, you are expected to partner with one of your peers to write a short paper (approximately 4 - 6 double space pages) that includes the following three sections:

- 1- A hypothetical conflict scenario: The conflict could be interpersonal, societal, or international. Make sure you write your conflict scenario in a way that is understandable to the reader.
- 2- Intervention strategy: You are expected to propose an intervention strategy for this conflict. Who is qualified to intervene and on what level should the intervention be made? What factors you think would help the intervener to succeed? Should an intervention be made to begin with?
- 3- Resolution insights: Not all conflicts have resolutions, so you are not expected to provide a resolution to this conflict. However, you can discuss some insights that might help the conflict parties to improve their relationship and/or make the conflict less damaging to those involved. If you have a resolution to this conflict, feel free to include in your paper.

You are welcome to discuss with the course instructor the appropriateness of your conflict scenario. Paper is due **October 20, 2008**.

Research Paper: (30%) The term paper should be between 10 to 15 pages in length; double space, approximately 4,000 words written in Times New Roman 12 with one-inch margins. The paper will take the form of analytical case study of an on-going or recent conflict. The case to be analyzed and written up will be chosen in consultation with the course instructor, who will advise on the suitability of the case. A preliminary working title for the paper must be

submitted to the instructor for approval by week 6 (**September 29, 2008**). The paper is due week 11 (**November 3, 2008**).

Your research paper should reflect graduate level research, analysis, and writing. You are expected to use sources from books, refereed journals, and news sources. Most importantly, you are expected to use conflict analysis tools, theories, and themes that will have been covered in class and in the readings up to that point. Feel free to use Chicago, MLA or APA citation style, but remember to remain consistent with one style throughout the entire paper.

Group Presentation: (25%) Depending on the size of the class, three or four “case study groups” will be established to study a particular type of conflict exemplified by a specific case. Groups are free to choose a real world conflict as their case study with consultation with the course instructor. Students are expected to form case study groups by **September 22, 2008**

The groups will present progress reports to the class approximately once every three weeks. The main purpose of the groups will be to see how concepts, ideas and theories presented in the remainder of the course help in the understanding of a real world conflict. Each group will be required to make an oral presentation of its analysis and findings at the end of the semester, and to hand in a full and final written report. The findings may represent a consensus among the group or alternative perspectives may be present. The presentation will be 25 minutes followed by a 35-minute general discussion in the class. Due: weeks 13 (**November 17, 2008**) & (**November 24, 2008**)

The students in each case group will be asked to meet (time will be provided during class hours but additional meetings or coordination by e-mail, phone, or other means may be necessary as well).

Final Exam: (20%): A take-home exam will be handed out on the last day of class (**December 1, 2008**) and will be due back no later than 11:00pm on **December 3, 2008**. This exam will cover material from throughout the class.

Please note that delays, deferrals, or a grade of “incomplete” for the course will be given only in cases of personal or immediate family crisis. Later papers will be penalized points.

Students are expected to understand their responsibilities regarding academic integrity and the university’s policies regarding academic standards of acceptable behavior. Students should read the statement of ICAR’s Academic Standards and the University’s Honor Code.

Examples of Conflict for the Research Paper and Group Presentations:

For both the research paper and the group presentation, you can choose one of the topics below to write about. You may also submit a topic of your own to the instructor for approval. You are neither required to select any of them nor will you receive extra credits if you choose any of these topics. The following are only examples:

South Africa:

Patti Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a Miracle: The End of Apartheid and the Birth of the New South Africa* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1997).

Copper Strike:

Jonathan D. Rosenblum, *Copper Crucible: How the Arizona Miners Strike of 1983 Recast Labor-Management Relations in America* 2nd ed. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998).

Students may also enjoy Barbara Kingslover, *Holding the Line: Women in the Great Arizona Mine Strike of 1983* (Ithaca, N.Y.: ILR Press, 1989).

The Arab-Israeli Conflict:

David Shipler. *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land*. (US, Times Books, 1986).

1968 Washington Riots:

Bilbert, Ben W. *Ten Blocks from the White House: Anatomy of the Washington Riots of 1968*. (New York: Paeger Press, 1968)

The Kosovo Conflict

Noel Malcolm. *Kosovo: A Short History*. (New York University Press, 1998).

- Abortion in America
<http://users.telerama.com/~jdehullu/abortion/abhist.htm>
- American Civil Rights
<http://www.ags.uci.edu/~skaufman/teaching/win2001ch4.htm>
- Cyprus Conflict <http://www.cyprus-conflict.net/intro%20page.htm>
- East Timor Independence
<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/easttimor1.html>
- Hatfield-McCoy Feud see Altima Waller, *Feud: Hatfields, McCoys and Social Change in Appalachia, 1860-1900*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988)
- Indian Removal in the USA
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2959.html>
- Northern Ireland Troubles
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/war/troubles/index.shtml>
- Quebec Independence Movement <http://english.republiquelibre.org/>

- Aum Shinrikyo 1995 Sarin Gas Attack in the Tokyo Subway
<http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/aums.html>

Grading

Assignments will be given a numeric grade according to their percentage of the total (100%) grade. At the end of the semester the cumulative percentage grade will be translated into a letter grade according to the following calculations:

A	94 - 100	C	74 - 76
A-	90 - 93	C-	70 - 73
B+	87 - 89	D+	67 - 69
B	84 - 86	D	64 - 66
B-	80 - 83	D-	60 - 63
C+	77 - 79	F	59 - below

Readings

The following books are available for purchase at the Arlington Bookstore.

Ramsbotham, O., Woodhouse, T., & Miall, H. (2005). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2nd edition. ISBN 0-7456-3213-0

Crocker, C. A., Hampson, F. O., & Aall, P. R. (Eds.). (2007). *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*. Washington DC: USIP. ISBN 192922396X

Pruitt, D. G., & Kim, S. H. (2004). *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 3rd edition. ISBN 0-0728-5535-5

Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington DC: USIP. ISBN: 1-8783-7973-9

Assefa, H., & Wahrhaftig, P. (1990). *The MOVE Crisis in Philadelphia: Extremist Groups and Conflict Resolution*. University of Pittsburgh Press

Assigned readings other than those included in the above books are available through the GMU Library e-reserves for CONF501. You can access electronic reserves: <http://oscr.gmu.edu/cgi-bin/ers/OSCRgen.cgi>

Other Readings (optional)

Kriesberg, L. (2007). *Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. ISBN: 978-0742544239

Class Schedule and Assignments

Note: Reading and assignments listed for a class should be prepared and completed *before/by* that date.

Week One (August 25, 2008): Introduction and Overview

This week will include self-introductions, discussion of the syllabus, course requirements, and expectations for the course. In addition to these administrative issues, the instructor will discuss basic definitions of conflict as well as a historical overview of the development of the field of conflict resolution.

Pruitt and Kim, ch. 1

Ramsbotham et al, ch. 2

Mitchell, "Some basic Initial Frameworks for Conflict Analysis" Handout.

Assignment: In class, begin to form small groups for case study (3-5 people per group).

Week Two (September 1, 2008): Labor Day. No class.

I. Conflict: Sources, Processes, and Dynamics

Week Three (September 8, 2008): Basic Concepts and Analytical Frameworks

Ramsbotham et al, ch. 1

Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6:3 (1969): 167-91.

Week Four (September 15, 2008): Sources of Conflict – Part I

Pruitt and Kim, ch. 2

Ramsbotham et al, ch. 3

Kevin Avruch and Peter Black. "Conflict Resolution in Intercultural Settings; Problems and Prospects," in Dennis J.D. Sandole and Hugo van der Merwe, eds., *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice: Integration and Application* (Manchester, 1993).

Nils Petter Gleditsch, "Environmental Change, Security, and Conflict," in Crocker, Hampson, and Aall, *Leashing the Dogs of War* (Washington DC, 2007)

Week Five (September 22, 2008): Sources of Conflict - Part II

Ramsbotham et al, ch. 4

John W. Burton, "Conflict Resolution as a Political Philosophy," in Dennis J.D. Sandole and Hugo van der Merwe, eds., *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice: Integration and Application* (Manchester, 1993).

Ted Robert Gurr, "Minorities, Nationalists, and Islamists: Managing Communal Conflict in the Twenty-first Century," in Crocker, Hampson, and Aall, *Leashing the Dogs of War* (Washington DC, 2007)

Mohammed Ayoob, "State Making, State Breaking, and State Failure," in Crocker, Hampson, and Aall, *Leashing the Dogs of War* (Washington DC, 2007)

Assignment: Finalize case study groups.

Week Six (September 29, 2008): Conflict Strategies and Dynamics of Escalation

Pruitt and Kim, ch. 3 - 8

Assignment: Submit individual research paper proposal to instructor for approval.

II. Conflict Management and Resolution

Week Seven (October 6, 2008): Negotiation and Third Party Intervention

Pruitt and Kim, ch. 10-11

William Zartman and Saadia Touval, "International Mediation" in Crocker, Hampson, and Aall, *Leashing the Dogs of War* (Washington DC, 2007).

Daniel Serwer and Patricia Thomson, "A Framework for Success: International Intervention in Societies Emerging from Conflict," in Crocker, Hampson, and Aall, *Leashing the Dogs of War* (Washington DC, 2007).

Week Eight (October 14, 2008): Timing, Roles, and Ethics

Monday, October 13 is Columbus day. Class will meet on Tuesday, October 14

Ramsbotham et al, ch. 13

James H. Laue and GERAL W. Cormick, "The Ethics of Intervention in Community Disputes," in *The Ethics of Social Intervention*, edited by Gordon Bermant, Herbert C. Kelman, and Donald P. Warwick (Washington: Hemisphere Publications, 1978), pp. 205-232. E-reserve.

Ronald J. Fisher and Loreleigh Keashly, "The Potential Complementarity of Mediation and Consultation within a Contingency Model of Third Party Consultation," *Journal of Peace Research* 28:1 (1991): 29-42. E-reserve, also JSTOR database.

Week Nine (October 20, 2008): Outcomes

Ramsbotham et al, ch. 7 - 8

Fen Osler Hampson and David Mendeloff, "Intervention and the Nation-Building Debate," in Crocker, Hampson, and Aall, *Leashing the Dogs of War*. (Washington DC, 2007)

Class activity: Let us learn from each other. Students will be given a chance to share their experience writing their research papers. Tell us about your conflict and the ways you used in your analysis. What are the challenges that you have faced so far and what recommendations can you give to the class. The instructor will be available for advice and guidance.

Conflict Scenario paper is due today

Week Ten (October 27, 2008): Peacemaking and Peacebuilding

Ramsbotham et al, ch. 6 & 9

Bruce Jentleson, "Yet Again: Humanitarian Intervention and the Challenges of Never Again," in Crocker, Hampson, and Aall, *Leashing the Dogs of War* (Washington DC, 2007)

III. Conflict Analysis: Case Studies

Week Eleven (November 3, 2008): The MOVE Crisis

Hizakias Assefa and Paul Wahrhaftig, *The MOVE Crisis in Philadelphia: Extremist Groups and Conflict Resolution*. (University of Pittsburgh Press 1990)

Time will be made for group meetings at the end of class

Term paper is due today

Week Twelve (November 10, 2008): The 1981 Air Traffic Controller Strike

Time will be made for group meetings at the end of class

Week Thirteen (November 17, 2008): Case Study Group Presentations

Week Fourteen (November 24, 2008): Case Study Group Presentations

Case Study Group Reports Due.

Week Fifteen (December 1, 2008): Reconciliation

Ramsbotham et al, ch. 10

John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington DC:

Review and Integration

Students receive final exam today. This take-home exam is due back no later than 11:00pm on December 3, 2008