

**CONF 101**  
**Conflict and Our World:**  
**Introduction to Conflict Analysis and Resolution**  
**Spring 2008**

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Office hours: M & W. 1:00- 3:00

Across all human societies, conflict is part of daily life. Sometimes it may be an annoyance, such as arguing with a sibling over the last cookie; sometimes it is more serious, such as the debate over human cloning; and sometimes it is tragic, as in the events in the Middle East in recent months. Conflict can be destructive, for example, when it damages relationships among neighbors or relatives or destroys homes and livelihoods. Conflict can also be constructive, as shown by the effects of civil rights demonstrations in the U.S. in the 1950s and 1960s. Our increased interconnection as a global society, as well as the upsurge in certain forms of violence, has heightened the need for more attention to determining how humanity can deal with conflict productively.

This course introduces the interdisciplinary study of conflict analysis and resolution. We will examine how and why conflict occurs in human society, and what we can do to mitigate its destructive aspects. The course includes an overview of the field including the central approaches to analyzing conflict, two extended case studies of a conflict, an examination of several forms of intervention, and finally a consideration of new directions in conflict studies. We will highlight the societal, structural, and cultural factors that play a part in conflict and its resolution. At the end of the course, you should be able to analyze a conflict, to appreciate the contextual factors that influence conflict, to know the major conflict resolution techniques, and to understand the complexities of the most pressing contemporary conflicts.

Attendance in class is not only mandatory but also crucial if you would like to succeed in this course. Some of the material will be discussed only in class and not in the readings. You should plan to complete the assigned readings prior to each class. Be sure to look up words that are unfamiliar to you but realize that some terms have specialized meanings in the field of conflict resolution. Ask in class if you have not understood a term or idea.

Classroom etiquette: Come to class on time and prepared. Turn off cell phones, pagers, beepers, etc. Do not leave the room during class unless you have an emergency. Do not disturb others by talking, passing notes, playing video games, etc. Be mindful of the sensitivities of others in your comments in class; however, open discussion and dialogue are our goals.

Conflict 101 fulfills the University General Education requirement for Social and Behavioral Sciences.

## Assignments, Percentages of Grade, Due Dates

In Class participation	Assessed throughout the semester	15%
Short essay (4 pages)	Due April 14	20%
Two tests	Held in class	40%
Final take-home exam	Due May 12 by the Oral Exam time	25%

Make-up exams and extensions of time for assignments will be arranged ONLY for documented personal illness or family emergency. Students with documented disabilities should make arrangements early in the term by contacting the instructor.

Guidelines for preparing the short essay and the final paper will be provided in class. The short essay will focus on the analysis of the Baraka School case. The final take-home exam will include mapping a specific conflict, either interpersonal, organizational/community, or international.

Students are required to participate in class by demonstrating their understanding of the readings through active involvement in class discussions. There will be unannounced quizzes during class that will count towards your participation grade.

You are expected to abide by George Mason University's Honor Code in preparing all work for this class. If you have any questions about Honor Code issues (e.g., whether you are permitted to discuss an assignment with a fellow student) or are uncertain about how to cite a source, or if you have observed Honor Code violations, please contact the instructor immediately.

## Required Readings

- (1) Pruitt, D.G. & S. Kim. 2004. *Social Conflict: Escalation Stalemate, and Settlement*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- (2) Assefa, H. and P. Wahrhaftig. 1990. *The MOVE Crisis in Philadelphia: Extremist Groups and Conflict Resolution*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- (3) Lederach, John Paul. 2003. *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*. Intercourse – PA: Good Books.
- (4) Introductory Reader in Conflict Analysis and Resolution. Contents listed below and available on GMU Library electronic reserve.

It is highly recommended for this course, and for your undergraduate career, that you seek out information about current events in your community and in the world generally. This may be achieved by reading daily--either in hard copy or online--*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, or by listening to the BBC news or National Public Radio News. The news outlets you consult should adhere to high standards of journalism. Bring especially interesting examples to class for discussion.

## **Schedule of Topics and Readings**

Jan. 23 Introduction to the course

### **Defining Conflict**

Jan. 28 What is conflict?  
Pruitt 3-14

Jan. 30 Nature and Sources of Conflict I  
Pruitt 15-36; Barna 322-330

Feb. 4 Nature and Sources of Conflict II  
Pruitt 56-62; Avruch 1-13

Feb. 6 Nature and Sources of Conflict III  
Burton 32-40; Mennonite Conciliation Services 78-83

### **Analyzing Conflict**

Feb. 11 Structural Conflict  
Galtung 39 -53

Feb. 13 Strategies and Tactics I  
Pruitt 37 – 56

Feb. 18 Strategies and Tactics II.  
Pruitt 63-84

Feb. 20 **Exam One**

### **Conflict in Process**

Feb. 25 Pruitt 87-100

Feb. 27 Pruitt 121 -168; Assefa and Wahrhaftig 3-44

Mar. 3 Pruitt 171-188; Assefa and Wahrhaftig 45-62

Mar. 5 Assefa and Wahrhaftig 62-152  
Video: *The Bombing of West Philly*

Marc 10 &12 **Spring Break – No class**

March 17 Alternatives to Violence: Historical Perspectives  
Ackerman and Duvall 305-333

## **Resolving Conflict**

- Mar. 19      **EXAM TWO**
- Mar. 24      Approaches to analyzing and resolving conflict  
Kriesberg 51-77
- Mar. 26      Interpersonal Conflict - Mediation  
Pruitt 189-225
- Mar. 31      Third Party Roles  
Pruitt 226-258
- April 2      Group, organizational and public conflict Part I  
Documentary: "*The Boys of Baraka*"  
Dugan 9-19
- April 7      Group, organizational and public conflict Part II  
Documentary: "*The Boys of Baraka*"  
Goldstain
- April 9      International Conflict I  
Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall 106-131
- April 14     International Conflict II  
Colombia

## **The Future of Conflict**

- April 16     Transitional Justice  
Guest Speaker: Nancy Beiter  
**SHORT ESSAY DUE IN CLASS**
- April 21     Conflict Transformation  
Lederach 3-71
- April 23     Local Peace Building Initiatives. Zones of Peace  
Guest Speaker Dr. Christopher Mitchell  
Hancock & Mitchell 189-223
- April 28     Peace and Reconciliation  
Lederach 841 - 854
- April 30     Global Problems/Global Solutions. Part I  
"*Wetback: The Undocumented Documentary*"

May 5            Global Problems/Global Solutions. Part II  
                    "Webback: The Undocumented Documentary"

**FINAL TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE DATE: Monday, May 12 by 5:00 at Robinson Hall B635**

### **Introductory Reader**

1. Barna, LaRay. N. 1988. "Stumbling Blocks in Intercultural Communication." In: *Intercultural Communication: A Reader*. L. Samovar and R. Porter. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. 322-30.
2. Avruch, Kevin. 2002. Cross-Cultural Conflict." In *The Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS)*, Oxford, UK: UNESCO, Eolss Publishers. Access at: [Http://www.eolss.net](http://www.eolss.net)
3. Burton, John. 1997. Needs Theory. In: *Violence Explained*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 32-40.
4. Galtung, Johan. 1999. Cultural Violence. In: *Violence and its Alternatives: An Interdisciplinary Reader*. Steger and Lind, ed. New York: St. Martin's. Pp. 39-53.
5. Mennonite Conciliation Service (MCS). 2000. *Mediation and facilitation training manual*. 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. Akron, PA: Mennonite Conciliation Service.
6. Kriesberg, Louis. 1997. The Development of the Conflict Resolution Field. In: *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques*. I. William Zartman and J Rasmussen, eds. Washington, DC: USIP Press. Pp. 51-77.
7. Ackerman, Peter and Jack Duvall. 2000. The American South: Campaign for Civil Rights. In: *A Force More Powerful*. New York: Palgrave. Pp. 305-333.
8. Dugan, Maire A. 1996. A Nested Theory of Conflict. In *A Leadership Journal: Women in Leadership*. Volume 1: 9-19
9. Goldstein, Andrew. 2000. Baraka School: An African Experiment. In *Time Magazine*, October 1, 2000. Access at: <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,56364,00.html>
10. Ramsbotham, Oliver; Woodhouse, Tom & Miall, Hugh. 2005 106-131
11. Lederach, John Paul. 2001. Civil Society and Reconciliation. In *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*. Crocker, Hampson, and Aall, ed. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press. Pp. 841-854.
12. Hancock, Landon and Mitchell, Christopher. Local Zones of Peace and a Theory of Sanctuary. In: *Zones of Peace*. Bloomfield: Kumarian Press. Pp. 189-223