

# Identity Conflicts and Their Resolution

## CONF 302 Section 001 – Fall 2009

<u>Class Time:</u>	Thursday, 4:30 pm – 7:10 pm
<u>Location:</u>	Enterprise Hall, Room 278
<u>Instructor:</u>	Patricia Maulden, Ph.D. Northeast Module II, Room 106 703.993.9804 <a href="mailto:pmaulden@gmu.edu">pmaulden@gmu.edu</a>
<u>Office Hours:</u>	Thursday 11:00 am – 12:00 pm or by appointment

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### Course Description & Objectives

This course explores the construction and determination of identity and the role that identity plays in social and international conflict and resolution. During the semester, theoretical frameworks blend with practical applications illustrating the ways individuals and groups give identity meaning and value, fueling both positive social and political change as well as violent conflict. Course materials will address individual and social identity, social dominance, respect, contextual variables, ethnicity, leadership, gender, narrative, performance, and recovery, presenting identity as a complex – and changeable – phenomenon.

CONF 302 fulfills all of the writing-intensive requirements for the Conflict Analysis and Resolution (CAR) major through the assignments listed in the syllabus. Throughout the semester, discussions will focus on improving writing skills – based in part upon the required writing-related text. In addition, each class member is strongly encouraged to attend Writing Center workshops for further instruction. See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>. Through lectures, class discussions, film, and guest lecturers students will gain a greater understanding of the complexities of identity as they relate to conflict and resolution.

#### During the course class participants will:

- \* Consider the individual, group, and contextual variables influencing identity construction and salience
- \* Increase understanding of the role of identity in analyzing conflicts and proposing resolution strategies
- \* Appreciate their own multiple identities and the roles they play in all aspects of life
- \* Develop improved writing skills and produce clear, well-developed and articulated papers
- \* Enhance critical thinking abilities

## Course Expectations

1. Consistent attendance. Barring exceptional circumstances, you will be expected to attend class. I will communicate with the class using your **GMU email address only**. You are responsible to check your GMU account regularly.
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. Use computers ONLY for class-related work. 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. **Late assignments will not be accepted for a grade unless authorized by the instructor before the due date.**
5. Paper format. Papers should be typed, double-spaced, have 1” margins, and Times New Roman 12-point font. The pages should be numbered and stapled together. Make sure that your name, course number, and paper title is on the first page. Edit your papers carefully as spelling and grammatical errors will lower your overall score.

## Course Materials

### Required Texts

1. Beah, Ishmael. 2007. *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*. New York: Sarah Crichton Books, Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
2. Hacker, Diana. 2009. *A Pocket Style Manual, Fifth Edition with 2009 MLA Update*. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's Press.
3. Hall, Julia. 2001. *Canal Town Youth: Community Organization and the Development of Adolescent Identity*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
4. Ross, Marc Howard. 2007. *Cultural Contestation in Ethnic Conflict*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
5. Volkan, Vamik. 1997. *Blood Lines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*. Boulder: Westview Press.

## Electronic Material

Course materials including syllabus, Power Point slides, assignments, and other relevant documents will be available on Blackboard. Supplemental journal readings are available through the GMU Library online journals and E-Reserves.

## Additional Journal Readings (E-journals)

1. Bird, Colin. 2004. Status, Identity, and Respect. *In Political Theory*. Volume 32, No. 2: 207–232.
2. Huddy, Leonie. 2001. From Social to Political Identity: A Critical Examination of Social Identity Theory. *In Political Psychology*. Volume 22, No. 1: 127–156.
3. Reicher, Stephen. 2004. The Context of Social identity: Domination, Resistance, and Change. *In Political Psychology*. Volume 25, No. 6: 921–945.
4. Sidanius, Jim et al. 2004. Social Dominance Theory: Its Agenda and Method. *In Political Psychology*. Volume 25, No. 6: 845 – 880.

## Additional Readings (E-Reserves)

1. Cheldelin, Sandra I. 2006. Gender and Violence: Redefining the Moral Ground, pages 278 – 299. *In Identity, Morality, and Threat: Studies in Violent Conflict*. Rothbart, Daniel and Karina V. Korostelina, eds. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
2. Jeong, Ho-Won. 2000. Peace Building in Identity Driven Ethnopolitical Conflicts, pages 115 – 124. *In Reconcilable Differences: Turning Points in Ethnopolitical Conflict*. Byrne, Sean and Cynthia L. Irvin, eds. West Hartford: Kumarian Press, Inc.
3. Kadayifci-Orellana, S. Ayse. 2006. Islamic Tradition of Nonviolence: A Hermeneutical Approach, pages 211 – 237. *In Identity, Morality, and Threat: Studies in Violent Conflict*. Rothbart, Daniel and Karina V. Korostelina, eds. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

## 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. Please review [www.gmu.edu/catalog/policies](http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/policies) for complete details as 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. Review the Hacker text (course requirement) and review online resources, for example, <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 from other courses to fulfill assignments for this class.

## 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 10%

You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Active participation based on thoughtful consideration of the reading materials is expected. If you do not attend you cannot participate.

Assignment 1. Your Self: A Reflective Personal Essay 10%

This paper examines your own social identity system. Consider the groups to which you belong. Then list and describe your social identities. Determine what are your most salient identities NOW and explore the reasons why these choices were made. Also explore contextual factors at play. Bring in applicable course materials covered to this point as you analyze the processes at work in your own consideration of personal and social identity. The paper should be 2 – 3 pages in length, double spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font, **Due date is September 24.**

Assignment 2. Writing an Op-Ed 10%

Write a short opinion piece or letter to the editor (750 words or less). Chose a timely issue/article that lends itself to critique and further exploration. Extra points if your Op-Ed is published. Submit both your Op-Ed and the related article. **Due date is October 22.**

Assignment 3. Expository Paper: Analysis and Argument 20%

Write a short paper analyzing a theory or theory cluster as found in the readings and class discussions as they apply to a particular aspect of identity. Your paper should present a clear argument of why / how / when / if the theory / theories work to increase / decrease understanding of the aspect of identity chosen. The idea of a theory is to increase the analysts ability, using the theory, to make sense of a conflict phenomenon and to develop strategies to address resolution. The paper should be 4 – 5 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font. **Due date is November 19.**

Assignment 4. Research Paper 40%

As your final project, you will write a 10-page paper analyzing an identity conflict based on course theories. From your analysis, you will then propose at least 2 potential resolution strategies. **Paper topics are due November 5.** The final paper must be dropped off in Robinson B365 by **5:00 pm Monday, December 14. Papers submitted earlier can be sent via email.**

Assignment 5. Revision of Previous Assignment

Rewrite one assignment (1 – 3 only) in a timely manner, **no later than December 10.**

# Course Agenda

Week 1      September 3      Introduction to Course Themes

Class Introductions  
Course Overview

Week 2      September 10      Social Identity

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Readings:    Huddy Article  
                 Reicher Article

Week 3      September 17      Dominance & Respect

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Readings:    Bird Article  
                 Sidanius et al. Article

Week 4      September 24      Subjective & Objective

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Readings    Volkan Chapters 1 – 4

\*\*\*\*\* **Assignment 1 Due**

Week 5      October 1              Identification & Distinction

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Readings:    Volkan Chapters 5 & 6  
                 Ross Chapters 1 & 2

Week 6      October 8              Leadership

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Readings:    Volkan Chapters 9 – 12

Week 7      October 15             Gender

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Readings    Cheldelin Chapter (E-Reserves)  
                 Hall Chapters 1 – 4

Week 8      October 22             Identity Production

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Readings:    Hall Chapters 5 – 7

\*\*\*\*\* **Assignment 2 Due**

Week 9      October 29             Narrative & Performance

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Readings:    Ross Chapters 3 & 4

Week 10     November 5            Resolution / Memorialization

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Readings:    Kadayifci-Orellana Chapter (E-Reserves)  
                 Ross Chapters 8 & 10

Week 11    November 12    Resolution / Narrating the Self

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Readings:    Beah pages 5 – 125

**\*\*\*\*\*Research Paper Topic Due**

Week 12    November 19    Resolution / Recovering the Self

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Readings:    Beah pages 126 – 218

**\*\*\*\*\*Assignment 3 Due**

Week 13    November 26    THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

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Week 14    December 3    Resolution / Reconsideration

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Readings:    Volkan Chapter 13  
                  Ross Chapter 11

Week 15    December 10    Resolution / Peacebuilding

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Readings:    Jeong Chapter (E-Reserves)  
Integration of course readings and concepts  
Class evaluations

**\*\*\*\*\*Assignment 5 Due**

**\*\*\*\*\*Assignment 4 – Final Research Paper Due Monday, December 14, 5:00 pm.**

**Drop your paper off in Robinson B365.**

### Grading Scale

Points Accumulated	Letter Grade
94-100	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
60-69	D
0-59	F