

CONF 495
Organizations and Actors in the Conflict Field
Syllabus
Spring 2009
George Mason University

Class Meetings:

Mondays, 10:30 am – 1:15 pm
Enterprise Hall, Room 173

Instructor:

Dr. Susan Allen Nan
Office Hours: Mondays, 1:30-2:30 in Robinson Hall B365
Or by appointment.
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INTRODUCTION:

This course is meant to give advanced students in conflict analysis and resolution studies the ability to learn in more detail about how what they have studied can be applied within a range of real organizations, from international conflict resolution organizations to major domestic health care institutions, and to reflect on the possibilities and constraints that shape professional engagement in real world conflict. The focus will be on a practical and critical engagement each week with different organizations and their representatives. This course emphasizes learning from practice, with course participants together building insights on organizations and actors in the conflict resolution field based on engagement with practitioners.

As this is a small seminar-style course, participants will be encouraged to share their specific individual interests in the first week of class. These interests can be explored through the three-part writing project required in this course. And, to the extent possible, individual interests shared during the early weeks of class will help shape the evolving plans for the later weeks of class.

Please note that some of the guest speakers have not yet confirmed for the dates that they are listed. Some substitutions and re-ordering will no doubt be required. Please stay in touch between classes on the class Ning community forum.

To join the class Ning community forum, check your GMU e-mail box for an invitation, or go to: <http://icarcommunity.ning.com/group/conf495001spring2009>

GOALS:

- To gather detailed information about at least two organizations or actors that are of interest to each student, performing an analysis of the conflict roles played by individuals in that organization or by those actors.
- To conduct a critical analysis of the organizations and actors in the conflict field, considering the factors that shape each organization and actor's definition of and engagement with conflict and conflict resolution, and the context of multiple actors in complex dynamic conflict in which these actors engage.
- To learn about the many ways in which a degree in CAR can be used in practical organizational settings
- To support students in considering how they might apply their degrees after graduating.
- To meet actors from different organizations that are receptive to a CAR degree in order to begin making linkages.

COURSE MATERIALS:

Because this course is focused on practical learning each week from a variety of actors and organizations in the field, there will be substantial additional readings assigned in consultation with each guest speaker. A major portion of the course preparation will require completing readings assigned in consultation with the guest presenters, most of which will be available online. The core assigned books, from which relevant chapters will be drawn throughout the semester, are:

Recentering Culture and Knowledge in Conflict Resolution Practice

Edited by Mary Adams Trujillo, et al. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008.

Guide to IGOs, NGOs, and the Military in Peace and Relief Operations.

By Pamela Aal, Daniel Miltenberger, and Thomas Weiss. Washington, D.C.: USIP Press, 2001.

Skills, Networks, and Knowledge: Developing a Career in International Conflict Resolution

By Craig Zelizer and Linda Johnston

http://api.ning.com/files/7rCITXGMSQlig--3xYllp*9GajBM7iqthRWdZ*kYcnI_/Webreport.pdf

COURSE FORMAT:

Most weeks will feature a guest presenter. Some of these will be GMU faculty members speaking on their areas of expertise, and other guests will be practitioners engaged professionally in conflict analysis or resolution. Because there will be so many guests, there is a chance the ordering of presentations might change. PLEASE STAY IN TOUCH VIA THE NING FORUM FOR OUR CLASS.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

All participants are required to participate in class discussions, and to complete assigned reading prior to the relevant class session.

In addition, participants are required to engage with the material in reflection of their own current and future potential roles in conflict resolution. This reflection on roles will be kept in a personal journal. The contents of the personal journal will not be graded, but a reflection paper integrating insights from the journaling will be graded.

Time will be allocated during some class periods for work on the journal entries, but the completion of a journal entry for each class period remains an individual responsibility which may require out-of-class time. These entries will never be read by anyone, including the instructor, unless you wish to share one. However, at the end of the semester, a reflection paper on the journal entries will be collected and graded. The journal assignment is to stimulate reflection on the course material.

Beyond the journaling and journal reflection paper, there is one set of three major written assignments for the course.

The set of major written assignments focuses on comparing and contrasting two different approaches to conflict by two organizations or actors in the conflict field. The first paper requires an analysis of the work of one organization. The second paper requires an analysis of the work of another organization. And, the third paper requires a comparison of the work of both organizations. Finally, the conclusions of the third paper will be presented in class. More guidance will be provided for these papers separately from the syllabus.

EVALUATION:

- 15% Participation
due each class
- 20% First Paper (Single Actor Analysis) (6-7 pages)
Due March 16
- 20% Second Paper (Single Actor Analysis) (6-7 pages)
Due April 7
- 25% Third Paper (Comparative Analysis of Two Actors) (15-20 pages)
Due April 27
- 20% Journal reflection paper (6-7 pages)
due May 4, building on journal entries each class

PLEASE REMEMBER MASON'S HONOR CODE. IT APPLIES IN FULL TO THIS CLASS.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Introduction to course and course participants

Monday, January 26

- Detailed introduction to course, assignments, expectations, participants.
- Introductory lecture overviewing varieties of actors and organizations;
- Brainstorming on organizations; plan of action for individual research projects.

No Preparation.

Approaches to Varieties of Actors and Organizations; Key Concepts for Comparison

Monday, February 2

- Presentation of semester framework for analyzing actors and organizations
- Consideration of framework in light of case study options for individual research projects

Preparation:

- Read "The Process and Stages of Mediation." In *Making War and Waging Peace*, edited by David Smock, 139-59. Washington, DC: USIP Press, 1993. See Course Reserves.
- Select two individual research case study possibilities. Do online or other background research.
- Journal entry.

Governmental and Inter-Governmental Actors and Organizations

Monday, February 9 The U.S. Government and International Governmental Organizations

- Guest Speaker: Ambassador William Hill
10:30-11:45 Class session with Ambassador Hill
 - The U.S. State Department and Inter-Governmental Organizations in Conflict Resolution
- 11:45-12:00 Break, move to lecture space
- 12:00-1:00 Open lecture and Q and A with Ambassador Hill
 - "The OSCE and Moldovan-Transdnistrian Conflict Resolution"

Preparation: Read IGOs section of:

Guide to IGOs, NGOs, and the Military in Peace and Relief Operations.

By Pamela Aal, Daniel Miltenberger, and Thomas Weiss. Washington, D.C.: USIP Press, 2001.

- Journal entry.
- Review available information, request additional information for individual research case studies.

Monday, February 16 When Government and Civil Society Meet

- Guest Speaker: Ambassador John McDonald (TO BE CONFIRMED)
 - From Governmental Diplomacy to the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy
- Guest Speaker: Ethan Finley
 - From the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy to Engaging Local Communities and Government to Address Immigration Conflict

Preparation: Read NGOs section of:

Guide to IGOs, NGOs, and the Military in Peace and Relief Operations.

By Pamela Aal, Daniel Miltenberger, and Thomas Weiss. Washington, D.C.: USIP Press, 2001.

- Journal entry.
- Review available information, request additional information for individual research case studies.

Monday, February 23 Money and Conflict

- Guest Speaker: Kaz Itaya, World Bank Post-Conflict Unit (TO BE CONFIRMED)
 - The World Bank and International Financial Institutions in Conflict Prevention and Resolution

Preparation: See World Bank Conflict Unit website. Read selected materials TBD

- Turn in research plan for individual research project.
- Journal entry.

Platforms, Roles, Resources, Constraints, Culture, and Power in Organizations and Actors in Conflict Resolution

Monday, March 2 Analytical Framework Re-visited

Re-visit class framework for analyzing actors and organizations in conflict resolution.

Critically assess the possibilities for and constraints on governmental and inter-governmental actors and organizations in conflict resolution.

Speaker (half class): NGOs in International Conflict Resolution

Zoe Coopridier, Alliance for Peacebuilding (TO BE CONFIRMED)

Preparation:

- Journal entry.
- Work on individual research case studies.

March 9 SPRING BREAK

Monday, March 16 Culture in Organizations and Actors in Conflict Resolution

Speaker TBD

Preparation: Read chapters 2, 3, and 4 in Re-centering.

TURN IN FIRST CASE STUDY PAPER.

- Journal entry.

Monday, March 23 Power in Organizations and Actors in Conflict Resolution

Speaker TBD

Preparation: Read chapters 14 and 15 in Re-centering.

- Journal entry.

Monday, March 30 Practitioner's Experiences in Conflict Resolution

Speaker TBD

Preparation: Read chapters 17, 18, and 19 in Re-centering.

- Journal entry.

Monday, April 6 Soldiers in War and Peace: The Military and Conflict Resolution

Speaker TBD

TURN IN SECOND CASE STUDY PAPER.

Preparation:

- Journal entry.
- Second case study paper
- Read Military section of "IGOS, NGOs and Military"

Monday, April 13 Development and Conflict
Speaker TBD

Preparation:

- Journal entry.

Monday, April 20 Comparative Approaches

Guest Speaker: Andrea Bartoli

Peacemaking and Genocide Prevention: Comparative Approaches in Conflict Resolution

Monday, April 27
Class Presentations

Preparation: Complete final paper to turn in at the beginning of class April 27.

- Journal entry.
- TURN IN COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS PAPER.

Monday, May 4
LAST CLASS
Careers and Course Conclusions

Preparation: Read Skills, Networks, and Knowledge: Developing a Career in
International Conflict Resolution

By Craig Zelizer and Linda Johnston

http://api.ning.com/files/7rCITXGMSQlig--3xYllp*9GajBM7iqthRWdZ*kYcnI /Webreport.pdf

- TURN IN JOURNAL ANALYSIS PAPER.