

CONF 101 001
Conflict and Our World:
Introduction to Conflict Analysis and Resolution
Spring 2010
T/Th: 12:00-1:15
Science and Technology I 206
(Nancy) Cary Morrison
Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution
Office Hours: T/Th 1:30-2:30 pm, by appointment only
Robinson Hall B, Room 365
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Course Description and Objectives:

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 ongoing events in Darfur, Democratic Republic of Congo and Middle East. 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, have 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, an extended case study 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.

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

Requirements:

Participation: You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings. This means that you should have completed all the assigned readings prior to the class for which it is assigned (see schedule). Because your participation in class activities and discussions is important, your attendance in class is crucial. Participation is graded on more than just attendance! ***Class participation will be worth 15% of your final grade.*** You are expected to bring the readings to class.

Team Presentation: You will be a member of a team. Each team will prepare a

class presentation of a case study of a conflict. ***The team presentation will be worth 10% of your final grade.*** Some minimal amount of time will be provided during class meetings throughout the semester for the teams to prepare their presentations, but it is expected that groups will plan additional meeting(s) outside of class time to finalize presentations. Everyone is expected to attend all presentations and attendance of other's group presentations will be considered part of your final participation grade.

Exams: There will be three exams. Each exam will test your knowledge of course material. ***Exams I&II will be non-cumulative, and will be worth 10% each. Exam III will contain some cumulative material, and will be worth 20% of your grade.***

Reflection Paper: You will write a 3 page reflection paper which will demonstrate your ability to apply concepts learned in class. Details and rubric will be provided. ***This paper will be worth 10% of your grade.***

Research Paper: You will write a 6-8 page research paper on a topic related to the main themes we will be discussing during the course of the semester. In your research paper you will present the results of your research while incorporating the concepts we have studied in class. In analyzing your material you will draw upon ***at least one theoretical perspective*** we have studied in the course. Early in the semester I will provide you with more detailed guidelines for researching and writing this paper. It is always a good idea to start thinking about your topic early in the semester. If you have difficulties deciding what to research or would simply like to talk about your paper, I encourage you to come and discuss your ideas with me during my office hours or to schedule an appointment with me at another time. A one-paragraph typed proposal of what you plan to research is due by **Feb. 25**. I will respond to your proposal within a week with comments and suggestions (this is not a graded assignment). ***This research paper is due on Apr. 29. It will be worth 25% of your final grade.*** Late papers will be accepted only in cases of documented personal illness or emergency.

Classroom Etiquette, Honor Code, Plagiarism, Syllabus Changes, Absenteeism:

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, surfing the web, etc. Computers are to be used for note taking only – if you are caught using the computer for other ends you forfeit the right to use a computer in class. Be mindful of the sensitivities of others in your comments in class; however, open discussion and dialogue are encouraged.

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 me immediately and/or refer directly to the honor code, which can be found at: <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12>. Student writers are often confused as to what should be cited. Some think that only direct quotations need to be credited. While direct quotations do need citation, so do paraphrases and summaries of opinions or factual information formerly unknown to the writer or which the writer did not discover him/herself. As a general rule, it is always important to keep the

reader in mind and to think of citations as being “reader friendly.” In other words, writers should provide citations for all pieces of information that they think their readers may find new or interesting. Not only is this approach considerate of readers, it will almost certainly ensure that writers will never be guilty of plagiarism.

It is my intention to create a learning environment which is the best possible experience for students. In this spirit, I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus, course structure, and readings, as best suits the dynamic of the class.

Absenteeism/tardiness seriously affect your learning experience, as well as your participation grade. If you find that your personal circumstances prevent you from attending class regularly and on time, please discuss your situation with me.

Assignments, Percentages of Grade, Due Dates:

Participation	Assessed throughout the semester	15%
Exam I	Feb. 23	10%
Research Proposal	Feb. 25	N/A
Exam II	Mar. 23	10%
Reflective Paper	Apr. 6	10%
Final paper	Apr. 29	25%
Conflict Map presentation	Apr. 20-29	10%
Exam III	May 11	20%

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 through Disability Services and notify the Professor officially.

Guidelines for preparing course assignments, such as the final paper will be provided in class. For the case study presentation, students will work in teams to present a map of a conflict of their choice. Team members will all receive the same grade for the presentation. *If you are having difficulties coordinating as a team, you should seek assistance from the Professor.*

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 Professor immediately.

Required Readings:

Pruitt, D.G. & S. Kim. 2004. *Social Conflict: Escalation Stalemate, and Settlement*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Additional course readings. Contents listed below will be available on Blackboard and GMU Library

electronic reserve. Please make your readings a central part of our discussion in class. 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, among others. The news outlets you consult should adhere to high standards of relatively non-partisan journalism. Bring especially interesting examples to class for discussion.

Burton, John. 1997. Needs Theory. In: *Violence Explained*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 32-40.

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.

Hulse, Jessica. 2005. Hurricane Katrina. Inventory of Conflict and Environment (ICE) Case Studies. 160, Dec. <<http://www1.american.edu/ted/ice/katrina.htm>>. Web.

Menkhaus, Ken. 2008. The rise of a mediated state in northern Kenya: the Wajir story and its implications for state-building. *Afrika focus*, Vol. 21, Nr. 2. pp. 23-38.

Mennonite Conciliation Service (MCS). 2000. *Mediation and facilitation training manual*. 4th Ed. Akron, PA: Mennonite Conciliation Service.

Moore, Christopher W. 1996. *The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Pp. 231-243.

Morrison, Stephen J. and Alex de Wall. 2005. Can Sudan Escape its Intractability? In: *Grasping the Nettle: Analyzing Cases of Intractable Conflict*. Crocker, Chester A., Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, eds. Washington, DC: USIP Press.

Mitchell, Christopher. SPITCEROW.

Volkan, Vamik. 1997. Chosen Trauma: Unresolved Mourning. In: *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*. Boulder: Westview Press. Pp. 36-49.

Warfield, Wallace. 2002. Is This the Right Thing To Do? A Practical Framework for Ethical Decisions. In: *In the Eye of the Storm: A Handbook for International Peace Building*. John Paul Lederach and Janice Moomaw Jenner, eds. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Pp. 213-224.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

Introduction

- Jan. 19 Introduction to the Course: Syllabus, Expectations, Course Design
Jan. 21 video: NonViolence

Defining Conflict

- Jan. 26 Overview of Conflict
Pruitt Ch. 1; Burton 32-40
Jan. 28 Nature and Sources of Conflict
Pruitt Ch. 2
Feb. 2 Strategic Choice
Pruitt Ch. 3; Mennonite Conciliation Services 78-83
Feb. 4 Contentious Tactics
Pruitt Ch. 4

Analyzing Conflict

- Feb. 9 Escalation and Structural Change
Pruitt Ch. 5; Galtung 39-53
Feb. 11 Approaches to Analyzing Conflict
Pruitt Ch. 6; Mitchell SPITCEROW
Feb. 16 Guest Speaker: Maria Dolores Rodriguez
Ecuador; reading TBA
Feb. 18 cont'd
Feb. 23 ***Exam I***

Conflict in Process

- Feb. 25 Conditions of Escalation
Pruitt Ch. 7
Research Proposal Due
Mar. 2 Persistence of Escalation
Pruitt Ch. 8, Volkan 36-49.
Mar. 4 Stalemate and Settlement
Pruitt Ch. 9
Mar. 9 SPRING BREAK
Mar. 11 SPRING BREAK

Resolving Conflict

- Mar. 16 Problem Solving, Ethics
Pruitt Ch. 10, Warfield 213-224
Mar. 18 Third Party Intervention

Pruitt Ch. 11

Mar. 23 **Exam II**

Application and Integration: Case studies and Class Presentations

Mar. 25 Case Study: Wajir (Kenya)
Video: Wajir Story
Menkhaus, 23-38

Mar. 30 Case Study: Katrina (U.S.)
Video: When the Levees Broke
Inventory of Conflict and Environment: <http://www1.american.edu/ted/ice/katrina.htm>
Apr. 1 cont'd

Apr. 6 Case Study: Darfur (Sudan)
Video: All About Darfur
Morrison and de Waal 161-182.
Reflective Paper Due

Apr. 8 cont'd

Apr. 13 Case Study: Matewan (U.S.)
Video: Matewan
Moore, 231-243

Apr. 15 Course Summary and Conclusions

Apr. 20 *Class Presentations*

Apr. 22 *Class Presentations*

Apr. 27 *Class Presentations*

Apr. 29 *Class Presentations, Final Paper Due*

May 11 **Final Exam, 10:30-1:15**