

**CONF 795 - 004**  
**New Media, Social Networking, and Conflict Resolution**  
Spring 2010

Location: Truland Building, Rm 440R, George Mason University, Arlington Campus  
Schedule: Meets every other Friday from 3:30 – 7:00 pm, 01/22 to 04/30

Instructor: Paul Snodgrass  
Office Hours: By Appointment  
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703-993-1310

### **Course Overview**

This course explores the practical application of technology for professionals in the field of Conflict Analysis and Resolution. New Media and Social Networking have revolutionized the way people communicate and interact in all aspects of life. Conflicts are created, discussed, and resolved in virtual environments unimaginable a few years ago. The ability to work within this constantly evolving atmosphere and to take advantage of new opportunities is an increasingly important skill for new leaders and veterans in the field alike.

A large part of this course will be using new technologies to teach and discuss conflict resolution theories and practices. Students will be expected to communicate knowledge they've obtained at ICAR using blogs, video podcasts, wikis, and more. Together we will be developing modules and resources that can be used for teaching and training.

Students will become familiar with a broad swath of Internet applications and in-class discussions will explore the ways in which new technologies impact the way we organize, teach, research, connect, debate, dialogue, with one another.

Students will create and/or develop an online presence as individuals and members of groups and organizations.

### **Policies**

1. Students must use their GMU email address to communicate with the instructor. To ensure a timely response, please include "CONF 795-04" anywhere in the subject line of email messages.
2. Specific delivery instructions will be given for all assignments. Unless otherwise specified, all assignments will be submitted electronically. In the case of content on the web, assignment submissions must include a link to the content.
3. It is expected that students will be creating accounts with a wide variety of online services. In preparation, everyone should create accounts with Google (gmail) and Yahoo. These two accounts will allow users to log into a large number of services, but additional accounts may be required.
4. This course will utilize a course website that is to be announced. In addition, we will be using a variety of collaborative spaces and tools. Students are responsible for checking these sites for new information.

## Course Structure

This class will meet every other Friday from 3:30 to 7:00 pm. Each session will include both a discussion of contemporary issues connecting Conflict Resolution with technology as well as hands-on interaction with online tools and the creation of digital media.

In between each session, students will complete activities and report back on their experiences. **Three projects** will be ongoing assignments that will run the length of the semester. Grades for these projects will be based on participation, meaningful contributions and reflections as well as the quality of the final product. **A final paper** (5-7 pages in 1.5 space format) will integrate the skills developed during the course with the student's professional and academic objectives and allow students to envision ways in which they will incorporate the material into their work.

Projects:

1. Create a 6-10 minute video overview of a particular theory, practice, or concept of Conflict Analysis and Resolution. The video should feature the best resources at ICAR in terms of faculty and student experts and should incorporate rich content in the form of images, diagrams, or animations.

2. Students will edit entries on Wikipedia relating to the field of Conflict Analysis and Resolution. Acceptable entries include those on theories and concepts, methods and practice, or people and organizations, as well as particular conflicts. Particular attention should be given to filling in the gaps: 1. Students will contribute to entries that exist but lack a conflict resolution perspective and 2. Students will also create new entries for topics that are absent on Wikipedia. Students must follow the best practices of Wikipedia, engage with other editors, and report back on the experience using an internal class discussion.

3. Students will create a blog, individually or in small groups, and contribute regular blog posts. Students may select whatever theme they want for this blog, but each blog should have a clearly recognizable purpose.

## Prerequisites

CONF 501. Basic computer skills and comfort on the Internet are essential for success in this course.

## Readings

1. Shirky, Clay. *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*. Reprint. Penguin (Non-Classics), 2009. Print.

2. Short Readings and Web Resources assigned weekly: *In addition to the readings and resources included in the syllabus, additional short pieces will be added to supplement each session.* Advanced notice will be given on the course website.

3. During the semester, you will be expected to regularly visit and read entries on the following websites:

Tech President: Personal Democracy Forum  
<http://techpresident.com/>

Slashdot: News For Nerds, Stuff that Matters

<http://slashdot.org/>

Technorati

<http://technorati.com/>

## **Course Schedule**

### **Session 1 January 22, 2010**

Course Overview

What is Web 2.0, social media and networking? Why does it matter?

Personal Branding

Readings:

Suler, J. (2005, September). Media Transitions: How and Why People Change Their Cyberspace Environment. *The Psychology of Cyberspace*.

<http://www-usr.rider.edu/~suler/psycyber/mediatrans.html>

How Facebook Is Making Friending Obsolete (WSJ, 12/15/09)

[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB126084637203791583.html?mod=wsj\\_share\\_facebook](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB126084637203791583.html?mod=wsj_share_facebook)

“Survey: More Employers Use Facebook To Vet New Hires Than LinkedIn”

<http://paidcontent.org/article/419-more-employers-scanning-facebook-for-new-hires-than-linkedin/>

5 Facebook Updates in Starwars

<http://www.collegehumor.com/article:1794889>

### **Mid-Week Assignment – Due on January 29**

Personal Reflection Paper: Create an assessment of your online presence and evaluate the messages being sent. Consider the professional implications of your online life and explore ways to position yourself to support your goals. What services and tools are you already using? What purpose do they serve and are they connected to one another?

Requirements: No length requirement. This is your opportunity to reflect on where you are now and to tell me what you want get from the course.

Submission: Via email

**Assignment for week 2:** Identify the theories or concepts that you will utilize in each of the 3 projects this semester. If you are working in a group, identify who your partner is and how you plan on collaborating. Come to class with the name and concept of the blog you will develop. Explore the themes you will use in projects in Wikipedia and identify ways to contribute. Start collecting the best sources on these topics using social bookmarking and Zotero.

Submission: Students will present to the class what their topics are and what they view as promising sources.

### **Session 2 January 28, 2010 (Changed from February 5<sup>th</sup>)**

Blogging and micro-blogging

Assignment - Create a blog and contribute regularly.

In groups or as individuals, create a blog related to your interests at ICAR. Contribute a blog entry once every week and respond thoughtfully to all of your classmates' postings each week.

Blogging Resources:

Blogs in Plain English

<http://www.commoncraft.com/blogs>

"Making Sense of Social Media: Blogging" from the Social Learning Academy

<http://c4lpt.co.uk/handbook/blogging.html>

Choosing a Blogging Platform

<http://www.bloggingbasics101.com/2009/01/choosing-a-blogging-platform/>

Weblog Ethics, From the *Weblog Handbook: Practical Advice on Creating and Maintaining Your Blog* by Rebecca Blood

[http://www.rebeccablood.net/handbook/excerpts/weblog\\_ethics.html](http://www.rebeccablood.net/handbook/excerpts/weblog_ethics.html)

Twitter Resources:

"Making Sense of Social Media: Micro-blogging" from the Social Learning Academy

<http://c4lpt.co.uk/handbook/twitter.html>

Educase: 7 Things You Should Know About Twitter

<http://www.educause.edu/ELI/7ThingsYouShouldKnowAboutTwitt/161801>

### **Session 3 February 19, 2010**

Video and audio podcasting, digital storytelling

Reading:

Shriky, Chapters 1-4

Educase: 7 Things You Should Know About Digital Storytelling

<http://www.educause.edu/ELI/7ThingsYouShouldKnowAboutDigit/156824>

### **Session 4 March 5, 2010**

Wikis

<http://www.commoncraft.com/video-wikis-plain-english>

Wikipedia Assignment – Due next week

Contribute meaningfully to a Wikipedia entry on a Conflict Resolution theory or a person in the field.

Write a 1-2 page reflection on your experience.

Reading:

Shirky, Chapter 5

Educase: 7 Things You Should Know About Wikipedia

<http://www.educause.edu/ELI/7ThingsYouShouldKnowAboutWikip/161666>

**Session 5    March 19, 2010**

Teaching with Technology

Powerpoint, Blackboard, Wikis, iTunes U, Camtasia

Discussion: Web 2.0 for Social Movements and Politics

**Session 6    April 2, 2010**

Social Networking: Facebook, myspace, Ning, and more

Tools for Dialogue, Debate, and Decision-making

Presentation by Soliya

**Session 7    April 16, 2010**

Zotero and Social Bookmarking

RSS, Google Alerts, and subscriptions

[http://www.commoncraft.com/rss\\_plain\\_english](http://www.commoncraft.com/rss_plain_english)

Shirky, Complete book

**Projects Due**

**Session 8    April 30, 2010**

Showcase

**Final Papers May 7, 2010** at 5p.m (electronic submission only!)

## Honor Code and Plagiarism:

All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. You can find a copy of the Honor Code at [academicintegrity.gmu.edu](http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu). All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review. With specific regards to plagiarism, three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor.

ICAR requires that all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit a student's work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. ICAR's policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace or substitute for it.

## English Language Institute:

The English Language Institute offers free English language tutoring to non-native English speaking students who are referred by a member of the GMU faculty or staff. For more information contact 703-993-3642 or [malle2@gmu.edu](mailto:malle2@gmu.edu).

## The Writing Center:

The Writing Center is a free writing resource that offers individual, group, and online tutoring. For general questions and comments please contact us at [wcenter@gmu.edu](mailto:wcenter@gmu.edu) or call: 703-993-4491.

## ICAR's Policy

Each faculty member at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution will include standard text on the George Mason University Honor Code as part of his or her course syllabi. Faculty will require that all written work must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared to electronic databases. Faculty may at any time compare a student's written work against electronic databases/plagiarism detection software without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require work to be submitted in print and electronic form.

Faculty are encouraged to require students to submit work through Blackboards SafeAssign program. Faculty may also directly submit work using the same system.