

Intensive Introduction to Conflict Analysis and Resolution
CONF 502 Section 001 Fall 2011

Class Time: 10:00-5:00
Saturday, August 27th Saturday, September 24th
Saturday, September 10th Saturday, October 1st
Saturday, September 17th Saturday, October 15th

Location: Founders Hall 312
Online: courses.gmu.edu

Instructor: Mara Schoeny, Ph.D.
(703) 993-9191, mschoeny@gmu.edu

Office hours: Thursdays—5:00 to 7:00 and by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

Welcome to the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution and the course, an introduction to the field of conflict analysis and resolution. Our focus is the study of human social conflict, including the practices and strategies for responding to conflict and frameworks for understanding and explaining conflict dynamics. It is designed to introduce you to the history and current developments in conflict resolution and to help you to think systematically and analytically about conflicts and conflict interventions.

This course will be run as a learning community—discussions, written assignments and in-class activities will facilitate the exchange of thinking and experience. Please read the assigned books and articles prior to class. Active participation is expected, both in-class and online. The compressed course format means that the online component is a key element of your course learning and experience. Participants will work together in small groups and individually to analyze and suggest responses to cases of small group, community, inter-group or international conflict.

The five weekends will address the following objectives:

- ◆ Class participants will be asked to critically examine the worldviews, values, and assumptions underlying the conceptual frameworks people use when analyzing and responding to conflict.
- ◆ Conflict resolution practices reflect the assumptions used to understand conflict and conflict behavior. Class participants will study the relationship between analyzing conflict and attempting to resolve it.
- ◆ Students will become more proficient in identifying conflict dynamics that are both specific to context and type of conflict and those that are more generally identified as elements of conflict.

Course Expectations

Consistent attendance. Barring exceptional circumstances, you are expected to attend all weekends for the full time scheduled.

Effective preparation. The quality of class discussions and activities depends on your preparation.

Active participation. Engage actively in the course in whichever of the formats you are most comfortable with: large group discussions, small group work, class exercises, etc.

Course completion. In keeping with departmental policy, incomplete grades will be given only in cases of personal or immediate family illness.

Course Requirements

1. *Participation, in-class exercises, journaling and online discussions* **20 percent**
In addition to in-class exercises and participation, there will be several discussion topics and a journal space posted to the course online discussion board. Your postings or responses are due by the due date specified. These short assignments should not take more than a half hour and are opportunities for you to reflect on course concepts between classes. These are graded only as completed or not and contribute to your participation grade. I hope you will also learn from reading the insights of your colleagues and the developing discussions.
2. *Short essay assignment* **20 percent**
In place of a midterm, you will have a short essay assignment, handed out in class and due by the date specified. Your answers to the short questions should be typed and returned via email. Due: Monday, September 26th
3. *Group project—in-depth study of conflict resolution intervention* **25 percent**
Groups of 4 to 5 students will be formed during the first two weekends and will work throughout the course to examine a particular form of conflict intervention (chosen in consultation with the course instructor.) The groups will work together to apply the concepts, theories, and ideas presented in the course to analyze the underlying assumptions, appropriate applications and distinguishing features of your type of intervention. Your project should include an example of your intervention type applied to a conflict. There will be some time for groups to meet during class time, but outside meetings will also be necessary. Each group will give a 20 minute presentation to the class with supporting materials made available online. Further guidelines available online. Due: Sat., October 15th (Focus statement due September 24th)
4. *Individual analysis/assessment of a conflict* **35 percent**
In consultation with the instructor you will choose a conflict (either from your experience or one supported by researchable and credible documents) for an analytical conflict assessment and recommendations for next steps. The paper should be 12-15 pages and is a synthesis and application of the conflict concepts covered in the course. The topics will be agreed upon by October 1st. Further guidelines available online. Final paper due: Monday, October 24th

Readings

Texts

The required texts are available at the GMU Arlington Bookstore or from online booksellers:

Hizkias Assefa and Paul Wahrhaftig, *The MOVE Crisis in Philadelphia: Extremist Groups and Conflict Resolution* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990).

Sandra Cheldelin, Daniel Druckman and Larissa Fast, eds. *Conflict, 2nd Edition*. (New York, Continuum, 2008).

Morton Deutsch, Peter T. Coleman and Eric C. Marcus, eds. *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice, 2nd Edition*. (San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 2006).

John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997).

Other readings

You will be directed to additional assigned readings and resources online, see full list at end of the syllabus and the daily agendas for specific readings. Many of these readings are PDF files and can be read using an Adobe reader, available for download on the library webpage or the course homepage. Please let me know if you need assistance with this technology.

Library Research Orientation

An optional library research orientation will be scheduled for the class, outside of regular class time. An overview of current research resources and support will be provided, as well as hands-on assistance with initial searches on your topics of choice. Day and time to be announced.

Class Agenda

WEEKEND ONE: SATURDAY

Introduction

Class members: introductions, interests
Course overview and organization
Introduction to the field: Conflict, Conflict Analysis, and Conflict Resolution
Current issues, challenges and opportunities

Frameworks for Analysis

Analytical concepts and frameworks
Analytical frameworks' assumptions of human nature and social structures

Reading for Weekend One:

Burton, Conflict Resolution as a Political Philosophy (webpage)
Dugan, A Nested Theory of Conflict (webpage)
Burgess & Burgess, Intractability and the Frontier of the Field (webpage)
Kriesberg, The Conflict Resolution Field: Origins, Growth and Differentiation (webpage)

Assignments:

1. Online assignment and journal reflection, due by September 7th.

WEEKEND TWO: SATURDAY

Analyzing Community Conflict

MOVE in Philadelphia
Mapping a conflict and frameworks for understanding

Conflict Dynamics and Responses to Conflict

Understanding responses to conflict
Dynamics and sources of conflict
Contrasts: Dual concern model, Narratives
Diagnoses and intervention

Reading for Weekend Two:

Deutsch, Coleman & Marcus, Introduction and Chapter 2 (Justice and Conflict)
Cheldelin, et al., Part I (all); Part II, Chapter 6 and 7
Optional Audio:http://www.beyondintractability.org/audio/sarah_cobb/?nid=2423
Assefa & Wahrhaftig, all
Mitchell, "How much do I need to know?" (webpage)

Assignments:

1. Form groups for forms of intervention study (in-class and brainstorming online)
2. Online reflection

WEEKEND THREE: SATURDAY

Conflict Context and Structure

Identity

Power

Structure

Culture

Violence

Reading for Class:

Deutsch, Coleman & Marcus, Chapters 1, 5, 23 and 24

(Cooperation & Competition, Power, Aggression & Violence, Intractable Conflict)

Cheldelin, et al., Chapters 8-11.

Erickson. “Ethnic Identity, National Identity, and the Significance of Personal Experiences” (webpage)

Gross Stein, “Image, Identity, and Conflict Resolution” (webpage)

Assignments:

1. Short essay due: by Monday, September 26th. Email as attachment to instructor.

WEEKEND FOUR: SATURDAY

Change: Conflict De-escalation and Rebuilding Relationships

Dynamics of de-escalation and change

Third party roles and interventions

Role play

Reading for Class:

Cheldelin, et al., Part III, Chapters 13, 14,15

Deutsch, et al., Chap. 4 and 20 (Trust, Trust Development...and Change and Conflict)

Laue & Cormick, Ethics of Community Intervention (webpage)

Assignments:

1. Online assignment, due by October 6th. Post to class discussion board
2. Group focus statement due in class.

WEEKEND FIVE: SATURDAY

Connecting analysis to intervention, third party roles continued

Variety of roles, platforms, possible practices

Complementarity and coordination
Leadership roles

Issues in Conflict Resolution Practice

Defining success
Social justice

Reading for Class:

Track specific readings, TBA (online and in Deutsch, et al)
Lederach, Chapters 3-7
Saunders, “Prenegotiation and Circumnegotiation...” (webpage)
Schoeny & Warfield, “Reconnecting systems maintenance to social justice” (webpage)

Assignments:

1. TBA

WEEKEND SIX: SATURDAY

Group Presentations on Interventions

Forms of intervention
Applications

Summary and Integration

Problem Solving, Settlement, Management and Conflict Transformation
Mapping the field—concept maps and metaphors

Course Evaluations

Reading for Class:

Appropriate reading for group projects. See Cheldelin and Deutsch class texts for initial resources leading to library research.

Assignments:

1. Group project presentation—forms of conflict resolution intervention (*in-class*).
Supporting materials posted to course webpage.
2. Individual analysis/assessment of a conflict due: Monday, October 24th

University Resources and Assistance

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

The Writing Center is available to all Mason students and offers online and individual consultations as well as workshops and mini-courses. Writers at all levels can benefit. Each Mason campus has a location. You can find them on the Arlington Campus in the Original Building, Room 334C, by phone at 703 993-4491, by email at wcenter@gmu.edu, or online at: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>

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.

Academic integrity:

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. 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.

S-CAR 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. S-CAR's policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace or substitute for it.

Readings not from Texts:

John W. Burton, "Conflict Resolution as a Political Philosophy," in Dennis J.D. Sandole and Hugo van der Merwe, eds., *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice: Integration and Application* (Manchester, 1993).

Guy & Heidi Burgess, "Intractability and the Frontier of the Field." *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, Vol. 24, no: 2, Winter 2006.

Louis Kriesberg, "The Conflict Resolution Field: Origins, Growth and Differentiation," *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques*, ed. I. William Zartman, Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007, pp. 25-60.

Gerald Cormick & James Laue. The ethics of intervention in community disputes. *The ethics of social intervention*. G. Bermant, H. C. Kelman & D. Warwick. Washington, DC, Halstead Press: 1978. 205-232.

Maire Dugan, "A Nested Theory of Conflict." *A Leadership Journal: Women in Leadership*. V.1 1996. pp. 9-19.

Thomas Hylland Erickson, "Ethnic Identity, National Identity, and Intergroup Conflict: The Significance of Personal Experiences" in Ashmore, Jussim & Wilder, eds. *Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict, and Conflict Reduction*, (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 42-68.

C.R. Mitchell, "How Much Do I Need to Know?" in *A Handbook of International Peacebuilding: Into the Eye of the Storm*. John Paul Lederach & Janice Moomaw Jenner, eds. Jossey-Bass, 2002.

Janice Gross Stein, "Image, Identity, and Conflict Resolution," in Crocker, Hampson & Aall, eds., *Managing Global Chaos*. (USIP, 1997), pp. 93-111.

Harold Saunders, "Prenegotiation and Circumnegotiation: Arenas of the Peace Process," *Managing Global Chaos*. Crocker, Osler, Aall, eds. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace. 1996. pp. 419-432.

Mara Schoeny & Wallace Warfield, "Reconnecting Systems Maintenance with Social Justice: A Critical Role for Conflict Resolution." *Negotiation Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 3, July 2000, pp. 253-268.

(Track specific readings to be determined)