

CONF 713

Reflective Practice in Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Monday: 7:20-10pm; 500 Truland Bldg

Arlington Founders Hall Room 207

Rabbi Bruce Aft

baft@gmu.edu

703-407-7690

Office hours: by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

Conflict is an inescapable part of our lives—in our personal relationships, at work, in community and in society. Sometimes it is a process in which we struggle over scarce resources, sometimes over misunderstandings or differences in meaning-making, and sometimes because of the positions we find ourselves in through narratives or stories that we have created or been victim of others' creations. To make it even more complex, conflict is always embedded in culture, history, identity and values systems.

Reflective practice is the process interveners engage that consists of exploring a pattern of action, making adjustments during the action, or thinking about past action. Most of us perform some form of reflective practice virtually every day, whether in simple acts or more complicated interactions.

Conflict resolution is frequently a process that involves emotional intensity and relational complexity. This can be a factor in all kinds of disputes, is significantly present in deep-rooted multiparty conflicts, and influences each of us profoundly in the way we personally look at the world. Because of this, it is critical that as practitioners we become skilled at integrating theory and experiential learning into practice at four stages of an intervention: 1) Our own personal way of assessing a situation based upon the experiences we bring 2) in analyzing or assessing the conflict in preparation for intervention; 3) during the intervention itself; and 4) in post intervention reflection. In this way, reflective practice is a form of "meaning making"—attempting to make sense of phenomena occurring around us through an interdependence of theory, experience and practice. It may also be a process of altering meaning-making systems designed toward transformation of the relationships for the parties in conflict and us.

Utilizing instruments, simulation exercises, discussions, personal and professional experiences, speakers, and reflective logs, you will have the opportunity to engage aspects of reflective practice as noted above. The objective is to build an understanding of integrative practices—negotiation, facilitation, mediation and dialogue—that can be utilized in a variety of conflict settings. Hopefully this class will enrich your life also and help you with your own personal challenging moments of conflict!

Course Requirements

Along with class attendance (required), you are expected to participate fully in all exercises and complete all weekly, required readings in preparation for class discussion. Throughout the course there will be various learning experiences. Mediums will include videos, guest speakers, impromptu vignettes, lectures, simulations and role-plays, journaling, structured observation, in- and outside-class activities and discussions. Specifically, you will be graded on the following course requirements:

A. Class Discussion and Exercises (simulations, role-plays, in- and outside-class assignments, readings, debriefs, etc.): 30%

Over the semester, you will engage in brief exercises and discussions to assess the application of reflective practice at various points of a conflict cycle and with different methodologies. During simulations you will assume various roles—parties in conflict or violence, interveners and observers—designed to give you practices opportunities to assess your own reflective practice skills.

B. Reflective Practice Log and Paper: 40%

Each week you will keep a *reflective practice log* recording reflections on class assignments, readings, discussions and exercises. The log is meant to help you develop your own skills as reflective practitioners as you learn conflict resolution practices. It is one medium to link theory and research to practice as your reflections will culminate in a research paper on a topic of your choice (approved by me) integrating readings, class exercises, feedback and your reflections. A short log summary (3-5 pp) is due on **Oct. 11** (week 6), and the final paper (15-20 pp) is due on **Dec.5** (week 14). (Log summary 10% & Paper 30%)

C. Group Reflective Practice Theory Presentation: 30%

Building on all class requirements and activities, you may join a team of no more than four students and develop your own theory of reflective practice. The team will present it as a **capstone product** that integrates classroom exercises and discussions, and simulation/ role-plays. Creativity is encouraged. Presentations will take place on Nov. 7 and 14. These will be 30-45 minutes. Please submit names of group members, topic, and date preferences for presentation no later than **Oct. 24** (30%)

Important Dates to Remember:

Reflective Practice Log (10%)	Oct. 11, 2011
Submit Topic and Group Member Names	Oct. 24, 2011
Group Presentations (30%)	Nov. 7, 14, 2011
Reflective Practice Final Paper (30%)	Dec. 5, 2011

Class Policies and Procedures

You are responsible for completing individual and group assignments on time. Incomplete grades will not be granted except in cases of personal or immediate family illness or emergency.

. Honor Code and Plagiarism

A reminder: Plagiarism or other violations of the **honor code** are not acceptable in this or any other GMU class. In addition to the following, please see the ICAR handbook: http://www.gmu.edu/departments/ICAR/newstudent/Appendix_L.pdf.)

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's Policy: Faculty require all written work be available in electronic form so that it can be compared to electronic databases. Faculty may at any time compare your written work against electronic databases/plagiarism detection software without prior permission from you. Individual instructors may require work to be submitted in print and electronic form. You are encouraged to submit your work through Blackboards SafeAssign program. The professor may also directly submit work using the same system.

University Resources and Assistance

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.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center provides tutors who can help you develop ideas and revise papers at no charge. It can sometimes accommodate walk-ins, but generally it is best to call for an appointment. The services of the Writing Center are also available online. **Contact:** 703.993.4491 or <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>. It is a free writing resource that offers individual, group, and online tutoring.

Disability Resource Center

The Disability Resource Center assists students with learning or physical conditions affecting learning. Students with learning differences that require special conditions for exams or other writing assignments should provide documentation provided by the Disability Resource Center. Please see your professor the first week of classes. **Location:** SUB I, Room 222 **Contact:** 703.993.2474 www.gmu.edu/student/drc/

Required Book: *Bridges Not Walls: A Book About Interpersonal Communication, John Stewart, 11th edition*

We will read this book in order to get to know ourselves better. We will discuss Parts I and II in weeks one, two and three, Part III in weeks four and five, and Part IV in weeks six, seven, and eight

Required Readings Available on E-Reserve (ER) or 2-hour Print Reserve (PR) at the Arlington Campus Library

Adobe Acrobat must be installed on your computer to view and print some E-Reserves Readings. E-Reserves permits students to access Course Readings remotely from home or office, and allows students to view and print materials using Adobe Acrobat Reader. All users of the E-Reserves must comply with the University Policy and Copy Right Law (Title 17, United States Code)

Accessing E-Reserves:

1. Go to <http://oscr.gmu.edu>
2. Click on the magnifying glass (Search electronic reserves)
3. Using the drop-down boxes, select the course [CONF 713] and instructor [Conf 713-Aft] Be sure it says "Fall, 2011"
4. Enter in the password (**shalom**) and click "submit" to view the item. It is case sensitive.
5. To view and print an article click on the small PDF button or the Link button if available

If you experience problems with an electronic reserve item or need additional help please contact the E-Reserves Coordinator at 993.9043. If you need additional assistance please e-mail ereserves@gmu.edu.

The following e-reserve articles are now available and required reading for Conf 713 Fall 2011:

Argyis, Chris and Donald A. Schön. 1992. *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness*. Chapter 1: "Theories of Action", Chapter 2: "Evaluating Theories of Action", pp. 3-34. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. ISBN: 1 55542 446 5. Week 3

Avruch, Kevin and Peter W. Black (1993). "Conflict Resolution in Intercultural Settings: Problems and Prospects," in D. Sandole and H. van der Merwe, eds., *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice Integration and Application*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. pp. 131-145. Week 11

Bush, Baruch and Joseph Folger. 1994. *The Promise of Mediation: Responding to Conflict Through Empowerment and Recognition*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. Week 6

Cheldelin, Sandra I., Wallace Warfield with January Makamba. 2004. Reflections on Reflective Practice, pp. 64-78. *In Research Frontiers in Conflict Analysis and Resolution*. Fairfax: Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University. Week 3

Driver, Michael J. et al. 1993. *The Dynamic Decision Maker: Five Decision Styles for Executive and Business Success*. Chapter 1, pp. 1-17; & Chapter 2, pp. 18-37. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. ISBN: 1 55542 593 3. Week 3

Dugan, Máire A. 1996. A Nested Theory of Conflict. *In A Leadership Journal: Women in Leadership – Sharing the Vision*. Volume 1, pp. 9-19. Week 3

Dukes, E. Franklin. 1996. Facilitation of Dialogue, Chapter 5, pp. 62-75. *In Resolving public conflict: Transforming community and governance*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. ISBN: 0 7190 4514 4. Week 4

LeBaron, Michelle. 2003. *Bridging Cultural Conflicts: A New Approach for a Changing World*. Chapter 1, pp. 3-31; & Chapter 10, pp. 271-289. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. ISBN: 0 7879 6431 X. Week 7

Lederach, John Paul. 1995. *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation across Cultures*. Chapter 6, pp. 55-62. New York: Syracuse University Press. ISBN: 0 8156 2725. Week 7

Lederach, John Paul. 2009. *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice manual: Foundations and Skills for Mediation and Facilitations*, 5th edition, Mennonite Central Committee, Office of Justice and Peacebuilding, ISBN: 0 9642 0030 9 Akron, PA, Chapter 2, pp. 25-27. Week 7

Marsick, Victoria J., and Alfonso Sauquet. 2000. Learning through Reflection, Chapter 19, pp. 382-399. *In The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*. Deutsch, Morton and Peter T. Coleman, Eds. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. ISBN: 0 7879 4822 5. Week 2

- Maurik, John van. 1994. "Facilitating Excellence: Styles and Processes of Facilitation", *Leadership and Organizational Development Journal*, Vol 15, Issue 8, pp 30-34. Week 3
- Moore, Christopher. 1996. "How Mediation Works" chapter 2 In *The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict*, Jossey Bass, San Francisco. Week 4
- Permanand, Shadell. 2009. *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice Manual: Foundations and Skills for Mediation and Facilitations*, 5th edition, Chapter 2, Section 4, pp. 59-62, "'Culture' and the Mediator's Baggage", Mennonite Central Committee, Office of Justice and Peacebuilding, ISBN: 0 9542 0030 9, Akron, PA. Week 5
- Roy, Beth. 2009. *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice Manual: Foundations and Skills for Mediation and Facilitations*, 5th edition, Chapter 2, pp. 25-27, "Thinking about Power", Mennonite Central Committee, Office of Justice and Peacebuilding, ISBN: 0 9642 0030 9, Akron, PA. Week 9
- Schirch, Lisa. 2009. *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice manual: foundations and Skills for Mediation and Facilitations*, 5th edition, Chapter 2, Section 1, pp. 32-33, "Ten principles of Identity for Peacebuilders", Mennonite Central Committee, Office of Justice and Peacebuilding, ISBN: 0 9642 0030 9, Akron, PA. Week 7
- Schirch, Lisa. 2009. *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice manual: foundations and Skills for Mediation and Facilitations*, 5th edition, Chapter 2, Section 4, pp. 66-67, "Theories of Gender, Conflict and Peacebuilding", Mennonite Central Committee, Office of Justice and Peacebuilding, ISBN: 0 9642 0030 9, Akron, PA. Week 5
- Schwarz, Roger M. 1994. *The Skilled Facilitator: Practical Wisdom for Developing Effective Groups*, Chapter 1, "Group Facilitation and the Role of the Facilitator", pp. 3-18, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. ISBN: 1 55542 638 7 Week 4
- Schwarz, Roger M. 1994. *The Skilled Facilitator: Practical Wisdom for Developing Effective Groups*, Chapter 6, "How to Intervene", pp. 122-145. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. ISBN: 1 55542 638 7. Week 4
- Schwarz, Roger M. 2002. *The Skilled Facilitator: Practical Wisdom for Developing Effective Groups*, 2nd edition, Chapter 6, "Diagnosing Behaviors that Enhance or Hinder Group Effectiveness", pp. 136-157, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, ISBN 0 7879 4723 7. Week 4
- Schwarz, Roger M. 2002. *The Skilled Facilitator: Practical Wisdom for Developing Effective Groups*, 2nd edition, Chapter 12, "Dealing with Emotions", pp. 247-267, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, ISBN 0 7879 4723 7. Week 4
- Schön, Donald, 1983. *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. Chapter 2, "From Technical Rationality to Reflection-in-Action" (p 21-69) New York: Basic Books. Week 2

Vasquez, John A. 2005. Ethics, Foreign Policy, and Liberal Wars: The Role of Restraint in Moral Decision Making. *In International Studies Perspectives*. Volume 6, Issue 3, pp. 307-315. ISBN: 1528 3577. Week 13

Warfield, Wallace. 2002. Is This the Right Thing to Do? A Practical Framework for Ethical Decisions, Chapter 19, pp. 213-223. *In A Handbook of International Peacebuilding: Into the Eye of the Storm*. Lederach, John Paul, and Janice Moomaw Jenner, Eds. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. ISBN: 0 7879 5879 4. Week 13

Watkins, Jane Magruder and Bernard J. Mohr. 2001. *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer. Chapter 2 “Appreciative Inquiry : History, Theory and Research.” Week 13

Watkins, Watkins, Jane Magruder and Bernard J. Mohr (2001) *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer. Chapter 3 “Appreciative Inquiry as a Process.” Week 13

Our Plan: (always subject to revision based upon our discussions, availability of speakers, etc.)

We will begin each session with a discussion of the theory assigned and then will deal with the particular subject listed for that session. My hope is to have a blend of theoretical background and practical application to relevant subjects. Student suggestions for practical areas of application will be integral to our discussions together. There will be handouts in addition to the readings listed for many of the sessions.

Please note which readings are assigned for which weeks as listed above.

Week One, August 29

Introduction to Reflective Practice and Getting to Know Others and Ourselves

Sept. 5, Labor Day... take the day off!!!

Week Two, Sept. 12

How to Handle a Mosque at Ground Zero?

Week Three, Sept. 19

Can NCAA Division One Football be fixed?

Can the NBA Lockout be ended?

How Did the NFL Lockout End?

Does Rabbi Aft overemphasize sports? :-)

Week Four, Sept. 26

How to handle a bully? What do we bring to the table?

Week Five, Oct. 3

So, let's talk about my gay partner, Mom... .dealing with relationships

Week Six, Oct. 11

I was on my way to the abortion clinic...contemporary issues

Week Seven, Oct. 17

Shalom, Salaam: Let's discuss this Palestinian state....

Week Eight, Oct. 24

Never Again: Do I Have a Responsibility to Prevent Genocide?

Week Nine, Oct. 31

So Mr. President... about that war in Afghanistan....

Weeks 10 and 11, Nov. 7, 14 Student Presentations

Week 12, Nov. 21

Does Religion matter to me in my work?

Weeks 13 and 14, Nov. 28, Dec. 5

Reflecting on Reflective Practice: Student Choice of Topics: TBA

As my mom and dad would say when I went to school, I hope that you "Learn something!!!"

