

CONF 802: Theories of the Person
School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution
George Mason University
Fall 2011
Tuesdays, 7:20-10:00 pm
Founders Hall 324

Instructor: Professor Leslie Dwyer
Office hours by appointment
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Course Description:

This is a graduate theory course designed primarily for S-CAR Ph.D. students. Students should have already taken, or currently be enrolled in, CONF 801 prior to enrollment.

Over the semester, we will be considering an interdisciplinary range of theories of personhood, culture and political subjectivity and their relationship to conflict and its transformation. Some of the key questions we will address include: how can we understand the operation of power and its relationship to subjectivity? How does identity become produced, reified or challenged through conflict? What kinds of social worlds emerge during and after conflict, and how do narratives, memories and culture become both challenges and resource for peace-building and reconciliation? How might we approach post-conflict trauma, and how do local lived realities intersect with globalizing discourses of post-conflict justice and psychosocial repair? We will be engaging the works of influential social theorists, and thinking about their application in particular international conflict contexts.

This course is not a lecture course. Rather, it is an intensive graduate seminar designed to promote collaborative, critical dialogue. Participants are expected to arrive in class having thoroughly read and reflected on the week's readings, prepared to actively engage in discussion.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

Grading for the course will be determined as follows:

Participation: 15%
Class facilitation: 15%
Short reading essays (6 total): 30%
Final paper: 40%

Participation:

Your grade for participation will be based upon the quality and consistency of your contributions to our class discussions. Each week, you should be prepared not only to summarize what you have read and to discuss the authors' main points, but to provide a critical perspective on our

texts and their relation to other social theories and to issues of conflict analysis and resolution, both broadly and in particular settings. The questions you should be asking yourself as you read for class include: What are the authors' main concerns? How are they framing key theoretical concepts? Are their arguments logically compelling? How can we relate their arguments to the field of conflict analysis and resolution? How might they help us to better understand particular conflicts and evaluate conflict resolution strategies? What might be left out of a particular analysis that it would be important to explore? A superlative evaluation for participation will require you to regularly contribute your ideas to our discussion, as well as to serve as a generous interlocutor for your seminar colleagues. In other words, it is not the quantity of your contributions but the quality that matters most, as well as your ability to raise issues that spark collaborative consideration and to listen openly to others' perspectives.

Short Reading Essays:

Six short (approximately 3-4 double-spaced pages) essays will be required over the semester. These essays should critically analyze the readings assigned for the week in which they are being submitted, and discuss their potential relationship to the field of conflict analysis and/or resolution. Essays should briefly lay out the main concerns of the readings, considering their theoretical assumptions and claims. You should be thinking critically about the logic and perspective underlying the readings, as well as how they relate to other theories we are discussing and to our understanding of conflict and post-conflict dynamics more generally. You may choose which weeks you wish to submit essays. Please submit them by hard copy during the class when the particular readings are being discussed.

Class Facilitation:

Each student will be responsible for choosing one class session and acting as a facilitator for an hour of our discussion. You are encouraged to approach this task creatively! In addition to helping us draw out key themes of the readings for that week, you may want to help us draw connections to practices of conflict resolution/transformation or to other important questions for our field.

Final Paper:

A final paper of 15-20 pages will be due at the conclusion of the semester, on Monday, December 19. Course participants will choose their own topics, drawing upon the readings for the course as well as outside sources as relevant. Topics may include a theoretical question/issue that compels you, or a form or case of conflict. We will be discussing details and possibilities for this assignment in much greater detail in class.

Course Policies:

Late assignments or "incomplete" grades will be given only in exceptional cases of personal or immediate family crisis. You **MUST** discuss the possibility of such arrangements with me beforehand rather than waiting until an assignment is due. Failure to complete an assignment on time without prior discussion will result in a failing grade for that particular assignment.

Given the importance of your active, thoughtful participation to the success of the class and your own S-CAR career, attendance at all course meetings is expected. If you must miss a class, please let me know beforehand by email. Missing more than one class over the course of the semester will inevitably result in a lowered “participation” grade.

I will be setting up a class Ning site on the S-CAR network (<http://icarcommunity.ning.com>) where course materials, announcements and discussions will be posted, so please make sure you are registered on the site. I will also be communicating with you outside of class by email. Please make sure your GMU email account is activated and that you check it regularly. Should you have questions, concerns or ideas you would like to discuss, feel free to communicate via email to set up an in-person meeting (or phone conversations as needed to accommodate our respective schedules). Course readings will be available on Blackboard.

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. 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.

As the instructor for the course, I will regularly use GMU’s electronic plagiarism check software to scan students’ work for plagiarism. In accordance with GMU’s regulations, I will refer all cases of suspected plagiarism directly to GMU’s Honor Committee. Please note the seriousness of this issue, and if you have ANY QUESTIONS AT ALL about what might constitute plagiarism please discuss them with me.

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 is a free writing resource that offers individual, group, and online tutoring. For general questions and comments please contact them at wcenter@gmu.edu or call: 703-9934491.

Course Materials:

The following books have been ordered from the Arlington Campus Bookstore. They are also available through the S-CAR or GMU libraries.

Bourgois, Philippe and Jeffrey Schonberg 2009. *Righteous Dopefiend*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Butalia, Urvashi 2000. *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Butler, Judith 2006. *Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence*. New York: Verso.

Das, Veena 2006. *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fassin, Didier and Richard Rechtman 2009. *The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ghosh, Amitav 2005. *The Shadow Lines*. New York: Mariner Books.

Shaw, Rosalind and Lars Waldorf, eds. 2010. *Localizing Transitional Justice*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy and Philippe Bourgois, 2003. *Violence in War and Peace: A Reader*. NY: Wiley-Blackwell. [This is marked “VWP” on the syllabus.]

All other readings will be available on Blackboard.

Course Schedule:

Week 1, Tuesday, August 30: Introduction

Introduction to course aims, processes and expectations.

Week 2, Tuesday, September 6: Conflict and Theories of “Human Nature”

Thomas Hobbes. “Of the Natural Condition of Mankind as Concerning their Felicity, and Misery,” in *The English Philosophers from Bacon to Mill*, ed. E.A. Burt. (1939) 1967. NY: Modern Library, pp. 159-162.

Sigmund Freud, "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death."

Karl Marx, "Preface" to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* and "Human Requirements and Division of Labour Under the Rule of Private Property," from *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*.

Elaine Scarry. "The Difficulty of Imagining Other Persons," In *The Handbook of Interethnic Coexistence*, ed. E. Weiner. 1998. New York: Continuum, pp. 40-62.

Carolyn Nordstrom, "Deadly Myths of Aggression." *Aggressive Behavior* 24(2):147-159.

Autesserre, Severine. 2009. "Hobbes and the Congo — Frames, Local Violence, and International Intervention (2003-2006)." *International Organization*.

Week 3, Tuesday, September 13: Cultural Perspectives on Conflict

Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," *The Interpretation of Cultures*, NY: Basic Books, 1973.

Alexander Hinton, "Why Did You Kill? The Cambodian Genocide and the Dark Side of Face and Honor," VWP pp. 157-168.

Merry, Sally 2003. "Human Rights Law and the Demonization of Culture (And Anthropology Along the Way)." *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 26:1: 55-77

Avruch, Kevin and Peter Black 1991. "The Culture Question in Conflict Resolution." *Peace and Change* 16(1):22-45.

Francis, Diana 2001. "Culture, Power Asymmetries and Gender in Conflict Transformation." *The Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation*. www.berghof-handbook.net

Tervalon, Melanie and Jann Murray-Garcia 1998. "Cultural Humility Versus Cultural Competence: A Critical Distinction in Defining Physician Training Outcomes in Multicultural Education." *Journal of Healthcare for the Poor and Underserved* 9(2).

Recommended Background Reading:

Burton, John 1990. *Conflict: Basic Human Needs*. New York: St. Martins Press.

Richard Rubenstein, 2001. "Basic Human Needs: The Next Steps in Theory Development." *The International Journal of Peace Studies*. 6(1).

Week 4, Tuesday, September 20: Personhood and Identity in Conflict

“Identity Conflicts” at
http://www.beyondintractability.org/user_guides/identity_conflicts/?nid=5306

Kriesberg, Louis, 2003. “Us versus Them.” at
http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/identity_issues/

Gardner, Robert 2003. “Identity Frames.” At
http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/identity_frames/

Michael Taussig, “Culture of Terror – Space of Death: Roger Casement’s Putumayo Report and the Explanation of Torture,” VWP pp. 39-53.

Julie Peteet, “Male gender and rituals of resistance in the Palestinian Intifada: a cultural politics of violence,” in *Violence: A Reader*, C. Besteman, ed., 2002, New York University Press, pp. 244-272.

Begona Aretxaga, “Dirty Protest: Symbolic Overdetermination and Gender in Northern Ireland Ethnic Violence,” in VWP pgs. 244-252.

Week 5, Tuesday, October 4: Narrative in Conflict and Conflict Resolution

Paul Ricoeur, "The Narrative Function." In Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics & the Human Sciences*.

Sara Cobb, 2004. “Fostering Coexistence in Identity-Based Conflicts: Towards a Narrative Approach.” In A. Chayes and M. Minow, eds., *Imagine Coexistence*. Jossey Bass: San Francisco: pp. 294-310.

John Winslade and Gerald Monk, 2000, *Narrative Mediation: A New Approach to Conflict Resolution*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Read Chapter 1, “Narrative Mediation: What is It?” and Chapter 2, “Theoretical and Philosophical Issues in Narrative Mediation.”

Dwyer, Leslie 2009. “A politics of silences: violence, memory and treacherous speech in post-1965 Bali.” In Alex Hinton and Kevin O’Neill, eds., *Genocide, Truth, Memory and Representation: Anthropological Approaches*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Grayman, Jessie n.d. “Master and Counter Narratives of Recovery in Post-MOU Aceh.” Draft ms.

Week 6, Tuesday, October 18 [NOTE: THERE ARE NO GMU CLASSES TUESDAY OCTOBER 11 DUE TO COLUMBUS DAY RECESS] Memory and Conflict

Vamik Volkan, 2001. “Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of Large-Group Identity.” *Group Analysis* 34(1):79-97.

Liisa Malkki, *From Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*, VWP pp. 129-135.

Rosalind Shaw, "Memory Frictions: Localizing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Sierra Leone." *International Journal of Transitional Justice*. 2007; 1: 183-207.

Tint, Barbara 2010. "History, Memory and Intractable Conflict." *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 27(3):239-256.

Tint, Barbara 2010. "History, Memory, and Conflict Resolution: Research and Application." *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 27(4):369-399.

Week 7, Tuesday, October 25: Case Study: India-Pakistan

Butalia, Urvashi 2000. *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*. Durham: Duke University Press.

-OR-

Ghosh, Amitav 2005. *The Shadow Lines*. New York: Mariner Books.

Week 8, Tuesday, November 1: Power and the Production of the Self

Michel Foucault, "Two Lectures," From *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings, 1972-1977*. 1981, New York: Random House, pp. 78-108.

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Excerpts.

Mitchell, Christopher R. 2005. *Conflict, Social Change and Conflict Resolution. An Enquiry*. Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management/ Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation (online). http://www.berghofhandbook.net/uploads/download/mitchell_handbook.pdf.

Vivienne Jabri, 2005. *Revisiting Change and Conflict: On Underlying Assumptions and the Depoliticisation of Conflict Resolution*. Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management/ Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation (online). Available at: http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/dialogue5_jabri_comm.pdf

Mitchell, Christopher R. 2005. "Conflict Analysis, Conflict Resolution and "Politics": A Reflection Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management/ Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation (online). Available at: http://www.berghofhandbook.net/documents/publications/dialogue5_mitchell_resp.pdf

Week 9, Tuesday, November 8: Structural/Symbolic Violence and Social Inequality

Galtung, Johan. "Cultural Violence," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Aug., 1990), pp. 291-305.

Pierre Bourdieu, "Gender and Symbolic Violence," in VWP pp. 339-342.

Paul Farmer, "On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below," in VWP pp. 281-289.

Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg, *Righteous Dopefiend* (as much as possible).

Recommended Background Reading:

Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 6, No. 3. (1969), pp. 167–191.

Week 10, Monday, November 8: Social and Political Life in the Aftermath of Conflict

Shaw and Waldorf, eds. Chaps. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12.

Week 11, Tuesday, November 15: Theorizing Social Landscapes of Violence

Das, Veena 2006. *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*.

Week 12, Monday, November 22: Post-Conflict Trauma and the Social Self

Leslie Dwyer and Degung Santikarma, "Posttraumatic Politics: Violence, Memory and Biomedical Discourse in Bali," in *Understanding Trauma* (2006: Cambridge University Press.)

Fassin, Didier and Richard Rechtman 2009. *The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood*.

Week 13, Tuesday, November 29: Representing Conflict and Suffering

Arthur Kleinman and Joan Kleinman, "The Appeal of Experience; The Dismay of Images: Cultural Appropriations of Suffering in Our Times," From *Social Suffering*, eds. A. Kleinman, V. Das and M. Lock (1997: University of California Press).

Philip Gourevitch, "Among the Dead," In *Disturbing Remains: Memory, History and Crisis in the Twentieth Century*, Michael Roth and Charles Salas, eds. (2001, Getty Research Institute Publications).

Mark Pedelty, "From 'War Stories: The Culture of Foreign Correspondents,'" in VWP, pp. 402-409.

Review the images and materials at: <http://www.imaging-famine.org/> and <http://www.crin.org/resources/infodetail.asp?id=20123#im>

Week 14, Friday, December 2: Final Dinner Meeting @ 7:20 p.m.: Power, Mourning and Hope

Judith Butler, *Prekarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence*

Monday, Dec. 19: Final papers due by close of business via email to ldwver2@gmu.edu. Please keep a backup copy in case of any problems.