

**Syllabus Conf 642 002– Distance Learning Course
Integration of Theory and Practice
Fall 2011**

Meeting place: Blackboard 9.1

Weekly schedule: Each week runs Monday-Sunday starting on August 29, 2011

Instructor: Rob Ericson, PhD

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Office Hours: by appointment

Primary Texts

Cheldelin, Sandra, Daniel Druckman and Larissa Fast, eds. (2008), *Conflict: From Analysis to Intervention*. 2nd ed. London: Continuum.

Jeong, Ho-Won (2008), *Understanding Conflict and Conflict Analysis*. Los Angeles: SAGE

Lederach, John Paul (2005), *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*, Oxford University Press

Recommended Reading

McDonald, John W. with Noa Zanolli (2009), *The Shifting Grounds of Conflict and Peacebuilding: Stories and Lessons*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Prerequisites or Corequisites

CONF 501, 601, 610, 713

Course Overview

Taken in the last semester of master's students course work, this course assists students in developing their own "generic" theory of conflict by reviewing and integrating their prior course work. Students are expected to demonstrate a holistic comprehension of the field by writing a major essay of publishable quality about the causes, events, and resolution of a particular conflict of their own choosing.

- There are readings and activities due each week.
 - We start with *Lederach*; as you read *Lederach*, think in terms of the theory of *practice*. Each of you will have a unique practice, so you should derive the applications for yourself.
 - Next, we will read *Joeng*; as you read *Joeng*, think of it as a review of *theory* in a very compact book. Though most of the theory will be familiar to you, please

- derive your own applications related to your chosen practice.
- Finally, we will read *Cheldelin*; the top people from our school share with you their approaches to integrating theory and practice. I encourage you to communicate with professors, whose work resonates with yours, as your schedule and theirs permit.
 - In addition, there are 2 weeks where you will read material of your own choosing related to your selected practice.
- This course has two major assignments: 1) a final paper and 2) a portfolio, but the assignments are divided into components, each to be completed over a 2 week period according to the schedule
 - It is important to complete all work within the week assigned, but if there are extenuating circumstances; such as sickness, family issues, or religious observances that conflict with our schedule, please let me know as soon as possible—I will try to accommodate your needs.

Course Logistics

This course will use a distance learning format; the primary meeting space will be on Blackboard 9.1; and we will use other means of keeping in touch such as: email, telephone, and Skype. In a typical week:

- you will read about 100 pages and discuss the material with your classmates
- accomplish on-line activities and respond to weekly requirements
- work on an assignments to be submitted in the Blackboard assignment drop box according to the assignment schedule.

Though the delivery method is different, it should take you the same amount to time as a typical graduate course. Expect to spend 8 to 10 hours on coursework each week (this includes the time you would have spent in a classroom). It is critical to keep up with weekly requirements. A weekly folder will be available by clicking on ‘Course Contents’ on the course menu in Blackboard that will specify all required activities and assignments.

Blackboard

Blackboard 9.1 will be used or the course. Additional guidance on individual assignments and discussion questions will be posted there. Use the Blackboard assignment drop box to submit your work for grading. Please visit our Blackboard site regularly.

Access Blackboard 9.1 by following these steps:

1. Go to <http://mymason.gmu.edu>.
2. Login using your NETID and password,
3. Click on the ‘Courses’ tab.
4. Double-click on “201170.79738: CONF-642-002 (Fall 2011)” under the “Blackboard 9.1

Course' heading.

Student Responsibilities

- MasonLive/Email:

Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. For accessibility and privacy, the university, school, and program will send communications to students solely through their Mason email account—students should respond accordingly (See <https://thanatos.gmu.edu/masonlive/login>).

- Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester (See <http://ods.gmu.edu>).

- Honor Code:

Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code (See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode>).

- Virtual Classroom Conduct:

We value critical thinking and therefore, it is imperative that students read the assigned books and articles prior to the class with a critical eye. Active thought, quality of inputs, and a conflict resolution attitude should be your guiding principles.

- University Libraries:

University Libraries provides resources for distance students. (See <http://library.gmu.edu/distance>).

- Work Ethic:

CONF642 is designed as a collaborative learning experience. It is important that students participate in every class and that they contribute actively to groups and class discussions. Please participate enthusiastically in group activities while respecting the opinions and valuing the work of other group members. You will be disappointed in this class if you focus on individual effort alone. However, any individual work should be strictly your own. Presenting another's work as your own (plagiarism) will result in a zero grade for the assignment. Also, please let me know how your final paper relates to your previous academic work—it is a problem if you just recycle a previously-written paper. While a powerful tool, please use the internet with caution. Reference your sources, resist the temptation to cut and paste material into your own work, and use independent validation of the information where appropriate.

*To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: **Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.***

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate how personal strengths, experiences, and skills match with a specific practice of choice (current or future).
2. Evaluate and apply selected analysis tools.
3. Integrate relevant theories into your preferred practice.
4. Reinterpret or combine theories to improve utility.
5. Critically analyze conflict theories for validity and applicability.
6. Analyze an issue related to conflict and create an executive summary.
7. Predict conflict phases using conflict cycles.
8. Analyze and apply intervention strategies.

Weekly Schedule

	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
		The participation score will be based on the timeliness and quality of weekly discussions and activities.	
Week 1 Aug 29 – Sep 4 Integration	Identity	Synthesize <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About yourself • Elevator speech • Getting started videos • Quiz on syllabus • Assignment guide 	
Week 2 Sep 5 – 11 Integration	Conflict Experiences	Evaluate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Mind-mapping • Explanation of current or future practice • Reading guide • Conflict style inventory 	
Week 3 Sep 12 – 18 Practice	Conflict Practice	Evaluate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Short biography • Ambassador McDonalds video • Letter of recommendation • Learning philosophy 	

<p>Week 4 Sep 19 – 25</p> <p>Practice</p>	<p>Conflict Analysis</p>	<p>Evaluate and Apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Ambassador McDonalds <i>Water for Life Parts I and II</i> • Gather artifacts of conflict work and learning • Evaluate and apply selected analysis tools. • Job interview practice. 	
<p>Week 5 Sep 26 – Oct 2</p> <p>Theory</p>	<p>Conflict Theory Taxonomy</p>	<p>Analyze</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Dual Concern model • Group affinity exercise • Categorization of theories • Assess a list of theories for validity and applicability • Summary of 3-5 theories. 	
<p>Week 6 Oct 3 – 9</p> <p>Theory</p>	<p>Critical Assessment and Integrating of Theories</p>	<p>Synthesize</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Creative theory examples • Determine assumptions and limitations selected theories • Identify sources of selected theories and read background material. 	
<p>Week 7 Oct 10 – 16</p> <p>Theory</p>	<p>Conflict Resolution Process</p>	<p>Evaluate and Apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Martin Luther King speech • Identify and analyze imagery • Consider and apply a theory to the narrative • Group recommendations 	
<p>Week 8 Oct 17 -23</p> <p>Practice</p>	<p>Conflict Cycles</p>	<p>Analyze</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Strategy presentation • Analyze selected conflicts using conflict cycles • Identify the editorial guide for your targeted publication • Explain your publication strategy 	
<p>Week 9 Oct 24 – 30</p> <p>Practice</p>	<p>Creating a Plan for Practice</p>	<p>Synthesize</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambassador McDonald <i>Peace Corridor</i> • Analyze conflict and simulate an intervention • Submit a four-panel executive summary • Peer review of papers 	

<p>Week 10</p> <p>Oct 31 – Nov 6</p> <p><i>Integration</i></p>	<p>Exploring Schemas</p>	<p>Evaluate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion• Ambassador McDonald <i>Empire and Nation State</i>• Explore schemas from readings• Evaluate and comment on papers written by peers• Produce effective feedback to peers and teachers.	
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<p>Week 11 Nov 7 – 13</p> <p>Integration</p>	<p>Exploring Context</p>	<p>Evaluate and Apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Tank Man video • Explore and explain context • Incorporate feedback into written documents. 	
<p>Week 12 Nov 14 – 20</p> <p>Integration</p>	<p>Exploring Intervention</p>	<p>Synthesize</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Ambassador McDonald <i>Divided Cyprus</i> • Identify effective and ineffective presentation techniques • Produce a presentation on your final paper • Execute a remote presentation 	
<p>Week 13 Nov 28 – Dec 4</p> <p>Practice</p>	<p>Conflict Code of Ethics</p>	<p>Evaluate and Apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Habermas and the Theory of Communicative Action • Review http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml • Create a code of ethics as a group on a wiki application • Develop a personal code of ethics. 	
<p>Week 14 Dec 5 - 11</p> <p>Practice</p>	<p>Imagining the Future</p>	<p>Evaluate</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Wheel • Identify a specific limited-time volunteer opportunity • What could you do to give something back? • On-line course evaluation • Informal feedback 	

Grading Criteria

Integral Assignments	Weighting	Major Assignments	Weighting	Follow-on Assignments	Weighting	Total
			10 points			10 points
	5 points each		10 points			20 points
	5 points each		20 points		10 points	40 points
						30 points
Total						100 Points

Grading Scale (points)

- A+ 97- 100
- A 93 - 96
- A- 90 - 92
- B + 87- 89
- B 83- 86
- B - 79- 82
- C+ 75 – 78
- C 72 – 74
- C- 69 - 71
- D 61 - 68
- F < 60