

**CONF 101, Section 003**  
**Conflict and Our World:**  
**Introduction to Conflict Analysis and Resolution**  
**Spring 2011**

Instructor: Terrence Lyons  
Tuesdays, 10:30 -1:15  
Classroom: Krug Hall 253

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 9:30 - 10:20, or  
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Across all human societies, conflict is part of daily life. Sometimes it may be an annoyance, such as arguing with a sibling over the last cookie; sometimes it is more serious, such as the debate over gun control or immigration; and sometimes it is tragic, as in recent events in Darfur and Afghanistan. Conflict can be destructive, for example, when it damages relationships among neighbors or relatives or destroys homes and livelihoods. Conflict can also be constructive, as shown by the effects of civil rights demonstrations in the U.S. in the 1950s and 1960s or the Solidarity movement in Poland in the 1980s. Our increased interconnection as a global society has heightened the need for more attention to determining how humanity can deal with conflict productively.

This course introduces the interdisciplinary study of conflict analysis and resolution. We will examine how and why conflicts occur in human society, and what we can do to mitigate their destructive aspects while reinforcing their constructive potential. The course includes an overview of the field including the central approaches to analyzing conflict, an extended case study of a conflict, an examination of several forms of intervention, and finally a consideration of reconciliation and sustainable peacebuilding. We will highlight the societal, structural, and cultural factors that play a part in conflict and its resolution. At the end of the course, you should be able to analyze a conflict, appreciate the contextual factors that influence conflict, know the major conflict resolution techniques, and understand the complexity of the most pressing contemporary conflicts.

Attendance in class is not only mandatory but also crucial if you would like to succeed in this course. Some of the material will be discussed only in class and not in the readings. You should plan to complete the assigned readings prior to each class. Be sure to look up words that are unfamiliar to you but realize that some terms have specialized meanings in the field of conflict resolution. Ask in class if you have not understood a term or idea.

We will have two experiential learning exercises in class on February 24 and April 19. These are essential for the course and you will have graded assignments based on each.

We will attend three brown bag seminars organized by the Conflict Analysis and Resolution program. Students are required to write brief, one-page reflection papers on two out of the three talks and may write on the third for extra credit.

All brown bag seminars are from 12:00 to 1:30 and the schedule for Spring 2011 is:

February 8, Sub II, Room 5  
March 8, Johnson Center, Gold Room  
April 5, Mason Hall, Room 3A and B

We will take our break those days at 11:45 to allow us time to move from our classroom to the seminar rooms listed above.

Classroom etiquette: Come to class on time and prepared. Turn off your cell phones, pagers, beepers, etc. Do not leave the room during class unless you have an emergency. Do not disturb others by talking, passing notes, playing video games, etc. Do not check email or surf the web. Be mindful of the sensitivities of others in your comments in class; however, open discussion and dialogue are our goal.

Conflict 101 fulfills the University General Education requirement for Social and Behavioral Sciences.

### **Assignments, Percentages of Grade, Due Dates**

Attendance and Participation Assessed during experiential exercise and throughout the semester	10%
2 Reflection Papers on Experiential Learning Exercise Due on March 8 and May 3	5%
2 Reflection Papers on Brown Bag Seminars Due on February 15, March 22, April 12 (third paper optional)	5%
2 Short Papers (3 pages) February 22 and March 29	30%
One In-Class Midterm Exam March 8	20%
Final Exam May 3	30%

Make-up exams and extensions of time for assignments will be arranged ONLY for documented personal illness or family emergency. Students with documented disabilities should make arrangements early in the term by contacting Professor Lyons.

Guidelines for preparing the short essays will be provided in class. The first short essay will focus on real conflicts that you have analyzed on your own. The second will focus on the video that will be shown in class following the midterm exam on March 1.

You are expected to abide by George Mason University's Honor Code in preparing all work for this class. If you have any questions about Honor Code issues (e.g., whether you are permitted to discuss an assignment with a fellow student) or are uncertain about how to cite a source, or if you have observed Honor Code violations, please contact Professor Lyons.

### **Required Readings:**

These two books have been ordered at the University Bookstore.

Feargal Cochrane. *Ending Wars*. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2008.

Dean G. Pruitt and Sung Hee Kim. *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement*. 3rd Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill 2004.

It is highly recommended for this course, and for your undergraduate career, that you seek out information about current events in your community and in the world generally. Please make your readings a central part of our discussions in class and do not be afraid to bring in views that stir up conversation.

In particular, we will be referring to Liberia periodically throughout the semester and it will be the focus of our two simulations. You should follow events relating to that case and to conflict in West Africa. In addition to the main media sites (CNN, Washington Post) the BBC ([www.bbc.co.uk/news/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/)) and AllAfrica.com are good starting points for news about Africa.

### **Student Resources**

#### GMU Writing Center

"The Writing Center seeks to foster a writing climate on campus and beyond by offering free writing support to George Mason students, faculty, staff and alumni. No matter what your writing abilities are, writing specialists can help you develop the skills you need to become a successful writer.

Free services include: One-on-one 45 minute sessions with a writing specialist; online writing lab; one-on-one sessions with an ESL specialist; workshops on such topics as documenting sources, grammar and punctuation; writing handouts on a variety of subjects; a library of handbooks and writing manuals; [and an] online chat with a tutor about papers submitted to the Online Writing Lab” (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>).

### Disability Support Services

Any student with documented learning disabilities or other conditions that may affect academic performance should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with the Office of Disability Support Services (993-2474) to determine the possible accommodations you might need; and 2) contact her or his instructor to discuss reasonable accommodations.

“George Mason University is committed to providing appropriate services and accommodations that allow self-identified students with disabilities to access programs and activities at the university as stated in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. To achieve this goal, the university maintains and supports the Disability Resource Center Office, which is responsible for assuring that students receive the services and accommodations to which they are entitled. The professional staff of the Disability Resource Center Office coordinate services for students with disabilities, determine reasonable services and accommodations on the basis of disability, and act as a liaison between students and faculty/administration on concerns relating to services and accommodations” (<http://www.gmu.edu/departments/advising/dss.html>).

### Library Services

The ICAR library liaison is Gretchen Reynolds ([greynol3@gmu.edu](mailto:greynol3@gmu.edu)). Do not hesitate to contact her with specific questions about holdings and research in these areas or whom to contact for materials in the Fenwick Library on the Fairfax Campus.

### **Schedule of Topics and Readings**

January 25 - Introduction

February 1 - What is Conflict?

Readings: Pruitt and Kim, pp. 3-36; 56-62; Cochrane, 12-38.

February 8 - Nature and Sources of Conflict I

Readings: Burton, 32-40; Galtung 39-53 (available through e-reserves).

**First Brown Bag Seminar, 12:00 to 1:30, SUB II, Room 5**

February 15 – Nature and Sources of Conflict II

Readings: Collier, 197-216; Volkan, 19-28, 36-49; Boas, 211-214  
(available through e-reserves).

February 22 - Approaches to Analyzing Conflict

**FIRST SHORT PAPER DUE**

Readings: Pruitt and Kim, pp. 37-56; 63-84; Kriesberg, 455-476 (available  
through e-reserves).

March 1 – Case Study: Liberia Conflict Mapping

Readings: To be distributed

March 8 – **MID-TERM EXAM** – In class exam will be held during the first 75  
minutes of the class (10:30 – 11:45).

**Second Brown Bag Seminar, 12:00 to 1:30, Johnson Center Gold  
Room**

March 15 – No Class – Spring Break

March 22 – Mediation and Interactive Problem Solving

Readings: Pruitt and Kim, 189-225; Zartman and Touval, 437-454.  
(available through e-reserves)

March 29 – Alternatives to Violence

**SECOND SHORT PAPER DUE**

Readings: Ackerman and Duvall, 305-333 (available through e-reserves).

## April 5 – War and Peacebuilding

Readings: Cochrane – 70-100, 150-183; Reychler, 3-15 (available through e-reserves).

### **Third Brown Bag Seminar, Mason Hall Room 3A and B**

## April 12 – Reconciliation and Peacebuilding

Readings: Lederach – 23-35 (available through e-reserves).

## April 19 – Experiential Learning Module – Third Party Roles

## April 26 - Integration

## May 3 – **FINAL EXAM**

This will be an in-class exam held in our regular classroom at the regular time (May 3, 10:30 -1:15, Krug Hall 253)

### **E-Reserve/E-Journal Reading List**

The following readings are available on e-reserves or e-journals:

Burton, John. 1997. "Needs Theory." In *Violence Explained*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 32-40.

Galtung, Johan. 1969. "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6:3 (1969): 167-191.

Collier, Paul, 2007. "Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and Their Implications for Policy." In *Leashing the Dogs of War*. Chester Crocker, Fen Olser Hampson, and Pamela Aall, eds. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 197-216.

Volkan, Vamik. 1997. "Ethnic Tents: Descriptions of Large-Group Identities," and "Chosen Trauma: Unresolved Mourning." In *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 19-28, 36-49.

Boas, Morten, "Africa's Young Guerrillas: Rebels with a Cause?" *Current History* May 2004, pp. 211-214.

Kriesberg, Louis. 2001. "Contemporary Conflict Resolution," In, *Leashing the Dogs of War*. Chester Crocker, Fen Olser Hampson, and Pamela Aall, eds. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 455-476.

Zartman, I. William, and Touval, Saadia. 2007. "International Mediation." In *Leashing the Dogs of War*. Chester Crocker, Fen Olser Hampson, and Pamela Aall, eds. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 437-454.

Ackerman, Peter and Jack Duvall. 2000. "The American South: Campaign for Civil Rights." In *A Force More Powerful*. New York: Palgrave, 305-333.

Lederach, John Paul. 1997. "Reconciliation: the Building of Relationship." In *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 23-35.

Reychler, Luc. 2001. "From Conflict to Sustainable Peacebuilding." In *Peacebuilding: A Field Guide*. Luc Reychler and Thania Paffenholz, eds. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 3-15.