

CONF 101 Section 004
Conflict and Our World:
Introduction to Conflict Analysis and Resolution
Spring 2011

Instructor: Joseph Obeng-Baah

MWF: 10:30 am - 11:20 am

Classroom: Innovation Hall Room 206

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Office Hours: After class or by appointment

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 human cloning; 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 conflict occurs in human society, and what we can do to mitigate its destructive aspects. 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, to appreciate the contextual factors that influence conflict, to know the major conflict resolution techniques, and to 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.

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 surf the net. 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 throughout the semester 10%

Group Project 30%

In-Class Exam 20%

Final Semester Exam 40%

Group Project: In addition to presenting your analysis, each group will submit a 6-8 page paper on a current or past conflict to be assigned in class. Each group will chose a conflict of their interest. Group presentation is in Week 7 (**March 7 - 11**); the paper is due on **March 11**.

One in-class exam will be given on April 15. The exam will cover the themes and topics discussed in class up to that period.

Final Exam: Each student will write a paper on a topic related to the theories and themes discussed throughout the semester. The paper will be **7-10 pages** long and must be double-spaced and **Times New Roman, Font 12**. Completed exams must be returned to **Robinson B, Room 365 latest by 4:00 pm** in an envelope marked with instructor's name and course number. If the office is closed, drop the envelope through the mail slot in the door. Only hard copies will be accepted.

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 the instructor.

Grading Scale

Points Accumulated	Grade
98-100	A+
93-97	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
74-82	B-
63-73	C
52-62	C-
41-51	D
0-40	F

Required Readings

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

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

Additional readings will be available on e-reserves, university library's databases and on the internet. The password for e-reserve will be given in class.

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. This may be achieved through reading daily – either in hard copy or online – *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, or by listening to the BBC news or National Public Radio News among others. 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, but keep in mind that real respect for the other is an ideal that is often more difficult to achieve than it is to intend.

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.

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

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). Do not hesitate to contact her with specific questions about holdings and research in these areas or whom to contact for materials still in the Fenwick Library on the Fairfax Campus.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

Week One - January 24 - 28

Introduction to course

Readings: Kriesberg (e-reserve)

Week Two - January 31 - February 4

What is Conflict?

Readings: Pruitt and Kim, chapters 1 and 2; Reychler, 3-15; Davidson and Wood, 6-13 (JSTOR)

Week Three - February 7 - 11

Strategic Choices and Contentious Tactics

Readings: Pruitt and Kim, chapters 3 and 4; Assefa and Wahrhaftig, chapters 1 and 2

Week Four - February 14 - 18

Analyzing and Resolving Conflict

Readings: Pruitt and Kim, chapter 4; Assefa and Wahrhaftig, chapters 4 and 5

Week Five - February 21 - 25

Escalation and Structural Change

Readings: Pruitt and Kim, chapters 5 and 6; Assefa and Wahrhaftig, chapter 7

Week Six - February 28 - March 4

Stalemate and Settlement

Readings: Pruitt and Kim, chapter 9

Week Seven - March 7 - March 11

Group Project: Presentation; **Paper due March 11**

Week Eight - March 14 - 18

SPRING BREAK: No Classes

Week Nine - March 21 - 25

Problem-Solving and Reconciliation

Readings: Pruitt and Kim, chapter 10; Mitchell, 301-316 (e-reserve)

Week Ten - March 28 - April 1

Conflict Transformation

Readings: Lederach, 107-127; Lederach, 1-19 (e-reserve)

Week Eleven - April 4 - 8

Third Party Intervention I

Readings: Pruitt and Kim, chapter 11; Botes, 270-279 (e-reserve); Bercovitch, 125-153 (e-reserve)

Week Twelve - April 11 - 15

Third Party Intervention II

Readings: Serwer and Thomson, 369-387 (e-reserve); Zartman and Touval, 437-454 (e-reserve)

In-class exam is on APRIL 15

Week Thirteen - April 18 - 22

Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding I

Readings: Daniel (available on the Web); Lyons, 215-235 (e-reserve)

Week Fourteen - April 25 - 29

Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding II

Readings: Spear, 141-182 (e-reserve)

Week Fifteen - May 2 - 6

Application and Integration

CASE STUDY: South Africa

Readings: Negotiation and Conflict Management, USIP Education and Training Center/International Certificate Course, http://www.usip.org/files/ETC-I/Online%20Courses/Negotiation_Conflict_Management.pdf

Wrap-up and Evaluations

FINAL PAPER DUE MAY 16

Schedule of Topics and Readings

E-Reserve/JOSTOR/Internet Sites Readings

The following readings are available on e-reserve, internet sites, or JSTOR

Lederach, John Paul. 2005. "On Touching the Moral Imagination." In *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 7-19

Mitchell, Christopher. 2008. "Problem-Solving." In *Conflict: From Analysis to Intervention*. Rev. ed. Sandra Cheldelin, Daniel Druckman, and Larissa Fast, eds. New York: Continuum, 301-316.

Lederach, John Paul. 1997. "Preparing for Peacebuilding." In *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 107-127.

Botes, Johannes M. 2008. "Informal Roles." In *Conflict: From Analysis to Intervention*. Rev. ed. Sandra Cheldelin, Daniel Druckman, and Larissa Fast, eds. New York: Continuum, 270-279.

Bercovitch, Jacob. 2008. "Mediation in International Conflict: An Overview of Theory, A Review of Practice." In *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques*. I. William Zartman and J. Lewis Rasmussen, eds. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 125-153.

Davidson, John and Christine Wood. 2004. A Conflict Resolution Model. *Theory into Practice* 43, no. 1 : 6-13 (JSTOR)

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

Serwer, Daniel and Patricia Thomson. 2007. "A Framework for Success: International Intervention in Societies Emerging from Conflict." In *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*. Chester Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, eds. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 369-387.

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

Kriesberg, Louis. 1997. "The Development of the Conflict Resolution Field." In *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques*. I. William Zartman and J. Lewis Rasmussen, eds. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 51-77.

Daniel, Donald C.F. "Wither Peace Operations?" United States Institute of Peace Report, <http://www.usip.org/files/resources/sr215.pdf>

Spear, Joanna. 2002. "Disarmament and Demobilization." In *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements*. Stephen John Stedman, Donald Rothchild, and Elizabeth M. Cousens, eds. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 141-182.

Lyons, Terrence. 2002. "The Role of Postsettlement Elections." In *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements*. Stephen John Stedman, Donald Rothchild, and Elizabeth M. Cousens, eds. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 215-235.

United States Institute of Peace. 2010. "Certificate Course in Negotiation and Conflict Management." Education and Training Center/International, 87-135.