

**CONF 210-001**  
**THEORIES OF CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND RESOLUTION**

Spring 2013

Monday & Wednesday 5:55 pm - 7:10 pm

Instructor: Mohammed Cherkaoui, PhD

Location: Robinson B-122

Email: [mcherkao@gmu.edu](mailto:mcherkao@gmu.edu)

Office Hours: by appointment

**Objectives:**

The multi- and inter-disciplinary nature of Conflict Resolution entails the need for a nuanced knowledge of the works of the parents of the field as well as other theories derived from Psychology, Sociology, International Relations, Political Science and other social sciences. Before considering the objective of resolving or at least transforming social conflict, the imperative of analyzing issues, motives, positions, and trajectories, either among individuals, groups, states, or other stakeholders, requires a minimum familiarity with leading conceptual frameworks which offer various interpretations of how the world works.

Accordingly, the objectives of this course include:

1. Examining and critiquing social theories that may prove useful in analyzing various types of social conflict;
2. Exploring the ways of systematizing theories before applying them on particular cases and problems.
3. Evaluating the usefulness of these social theories by applying them to specific conflict situations; and

**The Course Format:**

The course will be run as a combined lecture and seminar with an emphasis on discussion of the readings and students' reflections. It is therefore imperative that students read the assigned material prior to class. Active participation based on *thoughtful consideration* of the literature will be expected. In evaluating class participation, the instructor will look for evidence that you have done the readings with sufficient attention that you can contribute to the discussion. Missing more than one or two classes will inevitably reduce your overall participation and hence result in a lower participation grade.

There are two categories of reading materials: required reading and recommended reading. Required reading materials are mandatory. Recommended reading materials are optional but useful for students to deepen their understanding of the particular theory under study. The course will also include selected segments of video presentations of several theorists and critics to help reinforce the readings and enrich the class discussion. In addition, students are encouraged to follow and critically examine daily news reports on current events related to social conflict, and read relevant articles in *Journal of Conflictology*, *American Sociological Review*, *World Politics*, *Foreign Policy*, *Foreign Affairs*, and other leading journals.

## Course Requirements and Evaluation:

In addition to regular attendance, 1) a short written comment on one (or more) of the readings for each session, 2) a group presentation of a case study, and 3) final paper are required.

1. **Participation (15%)** grade will be based upon the quality and consistency of your contributions to our class discussions and group exercises. 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 or prepare a group exercise include: What are the authors' main concerns? 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 their transformation? 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 colleagues. In other words, it is not the quantity of your contributions but the quality that matters, as well as your ability to raise issues that spark collaborative consideration, and to listen openly to others' perspectives.
2. **Short Written Comment on Readings (25%):** You will write short comments, thoughts, and reflections before coming to class (up to 3 paragraphs). You will be assigned to one of the three groups (which will rotate):
  - a. *Group A* will explore positive points about a theory/theories presented in readings.
  - b. *Group B* will critique and explore deficiencies of the theory/theories.
  - c. *Group C* will be expected to reflect on appropriate applications of a certain theory in different conflict situations.

These comments need not be a comprehensive coverage of the entire readings for the class, nor should they be summaries of the readings. Rather, this is an exercise to elicit your critical reactions to the readings. The comments therefore should reflect your intellectual engagement with the questions, theories, or cases provided by the readings.

3. **Group presentation (25%)** will be based on your final paper. This would be an opportunity for you to present and get feedback on your arguments and ideas before submitting the final paper.
4. **Final paper (35%)** will be a group assignment (you will be assigned to groups of four). It will be based on a book of students' choice (see list below) and it will include 4 different sections: 1) in the first section, you will be exploring advantages of a theory/ies and concepts discussed in the book, 2) in the second section, you will be writing about weaknesses of the given theory/ies, and 3) in the third section, you will link the theories from the book to other authors and theories from the readings in order to compare

them and identify gaps, 4) in the fourth section, you will explore applicability and usefulness of a theory on particular cases or conflict situations. Each group member will be assigned one section. All submissions should be made both in paper to the instructor and by e-mail. Due: May 10

1. **Avruch, Kevin.** (2011) *Context and Pretext in Conflict Resolution: Culture, Identity, Power, and Practice*. Paradigm Publishers.
2. **Trujillo, Mary. et al.** (2008) *Re-centering Culture and Knowledge in Conflict Resolution*, (Eds), Syracuse University Press.
3. **Sobek, David.** (2009) *The Causes of War*, Polity Press
4. **Volkan, Vamik.** (2006) *Killing In The Name of Identity: a Study of Bloody Conflicts*, Pitchstone Publishing.
5. **Lindner, Evelyn.** (2006) *Making enemies: Humiliation and International Conflict*, Praeger Security.
6. **Melchin, Kenneth, and Cheryl Picard.** (2008) *Transforming Conflict through Insight*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

### **Honor Code Policy:**

I expect you to understand and abide by the University's policy regarding the Honor Code, which may be found at <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode> In short, the University's policy regarding the Honor Code prohibits any form of cheating on exams or written assignments. It also prohibits plagiarism, so be certain to properly cite all information that you use in your papers.

### **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](mailto: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 us at [wcenter@gmu.edu](mailto:wcenter@gmu.edu) or call: 703-993-4491.

### **Course Materials:**

The following book is required and will be available for purchase at the bookstore:

- ✓ **Demmers, Jolle.** 2012. *Theories of Violent Conflict: An Introduction*. Taylor & Francis.

The rest of the reading material will be emailed.

## Schedule of Classes

### **Week 1: Jan. 23**

### **Introduction**

- ✓ No readings assigned

### **Week 2: Jan. 28 - 30**

### **Theorizing conflict: Causality, Transformation, and Resolution**

- ✓ **Demmers, Jolle.** Theories of Violent Conflict, Introduction pp. 1-17
- ✓ **Burton, John.** "Conflict Resolution as a Political System", *The International Journal of Peace Studies*, [http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol6\\_1/Burton2.htm](http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol6_1/Burton2.htm)

### **Week 3: Feb. 4 – 6**

### **Basic Human Needs**

- ✓ **Burton, John.** (1979) "Institutional Values & Human Needs" in *Deviance, Terrorism, and War: The Process of Solving Unresolved Social and Political Problems*, pp. 55-84
- ✓ **Galtung, Johan.** (1991) "International Development in Human Perspective", in *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*. Ed. John Burton, pp. 301-335
- ✓ **Rubenstein, Richard E.** (1996) "Basic Human Needs: Steps Toward Further Theory Development" [www.gmu.edu/academic/ijps/vol6\\_1/Rubenstein.htm](http://www.gmu.edu/academic/ijps/vol6_1/Rubenstein.htm)

### **Week 4: Feb. 11 – 13**

### **Psychoanalysis**

- ✓ **Freud, Sigmund.** (1955) *Psychoanalysis: The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychoanalytical Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. XVIII, pp. 235-254
- ✓ **Freud, Sigmund.** (1932-36) "Why War: The Freud-Einstein Correspondence"
- ✓ **Volkan, Vamik.** (1997) "Chosen Trauma", pp-36-49, "We-ness", pp. 81-100, in *Bloodlines: from Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux

### **Week 5: Feb. 18 – 20**

### **Social Identity**

- ✓ **Demmers, Jolle.** Theories of Violent Conflict, Ch. 1, 2 pp. 18-53
- ✓ **Tajfel, Henri. & Turner, John.** (1979) "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict", in WG Austin & S. Worchel *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, pp. 33-47
- ✓ **Brubaker, Rogers. & Cooper, Frederick.** (2000) "Beyond Identity", *Theory and Society* Vol. 29, No. 1 pp. 1-47

## **Week 6: Feb. 25 – 27            Cultural Theory**

- ✓ **Myers, Linda.** (2008) "Toward Fuller Knowledge in Peace management and Conflict Resolution: The Importance of Cultural Worldview", in *Re-centering Culture and Knowledge in Conflict Resolution*, Trujillo, Mary. et al. (Eds), Syracuse University Press, ch. 2, pp. 20-31
- ✓ **Avruch, Kevin.** (2012) "Culture Theory, Culture Clash, and the Practice of Conflict Resolution", in *Context and Pretext in Conflict Resolution: Culture, Identity, Power, and Practice*, Paradigm publishers, Ch. 6, pp. 81-95
- ✓ **Huntington, Samuel P.** (1993) "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*. Summer, vol. 72

## **Week 7: March 4 - 6            Protracted Social Conflict Theory**

- ✓ **Azar, Edward E. Jureidini, Paul. and McLaurin, Ronald.** "Protracted Social Conflict; Theory and Practice in the Middle East", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1. (Autumn, 1978), pp. 41-60
- ✓ **Ramsbotham, Oliver.** "The Analysis of Protracted Social Conflict: A Tribute to Edward Azar", *Review of International Studies* (2005), 31, 109–126

## **Week 8: March 11 – 13        Spring Break**

## **Week 9: March 18 – 20        Conflict and Structures**

- ✓ **Demmers, Jolle.** *Theories of Violent Conflict*, Ch. 3 pp. 53-76 and Ch. 5 pp. 100-115

## **Week 10: March 25 – 27      Dilemma of Power**

- ✓ **Roy, Beth.** (2008) "Power, Culture, Conflict", in *Re-centering Culture and Knowledge in Conflict Resolution*, Trujillo, Mary. et al. (Eds), Syracuse University Press, ch. 14, pp. 179-194
- ✓ **Avruch, Kevin.** (2012) "Conflict Resolution and the Dilemma of Power", in *Context and Pretext in Conflict Resolution: Culture, Identity, Power, and Practice*, Paradigm publishers, Ch. 9, pp. 141-175

## **Week 11: April 1 – 3            Discursive Approaches & Positioning Theory**

- ✓ **Demmers, Jolle.** *Theories of Violent Conflict*, ch 6, 116-138
- ✓ **Sabat, Steven. R. Harré, Rom. Moghaddam, Fathali M. Cairnie, Tracey P. Rothbart, Daniel.** "Recent Advances in Positioning Theory", *Theory Psychology* 2009; 19; 5

**Week 12: April 8 – 10**

**Contentious Politics and Social Mobilization**

- ✓ **Demmers, Jolle.** Theories of Violent Conflict, Ch. 4 pp. 77-99
- ✓ **Boulding, Elise.** (1986) *The Changing Nature of Peace Movements: Interview with Elise Boulding*
- ✓ **Tarrow, Sidney** (1998) *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (2nd ed.), Cambridge University Press, pp. 10-25 and 71-90

**Week 13: April 15 – 17**

**Non-Western Perspectives of Conflict Resolution**

- ✓ **Salem, Paul.** "In Theory: A Critique of Western Conflict Resolution from a Non-Western Perspective", *Negotiation Journal*, 9:4 (1993) 361-9
- ✓ **Abu-Nimer, Mohammed.** (2010) "An Islamic Model of Conflict Resolution", in *Crescent and Dove: Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam*, Qamar Ulhuda (Ed.), USIP, ch. 4, pp. 73-92
- ✓ **Masina, Nomonde** (2000) Xhosa Practices of Ubuntu for South Africa. *Traditional Cures for Modern Conflicts*. Edited by I.W. Zartman. pp. 169-181

**Week 14: April 22 – 24**

**Group Presentations I**

**Week 15: April 29 – May 1**

**Group Presentations II**

**Wrap-up discussion: Toward Conflict theory**

Final paper due May 10th at 6 pm.

