

Theories of Conflict and Resolution

CONF 210 Section 002 – Spring 2013

Class Time: Tuesday, 10:30 to 1:15

Location: West 1004

Instructor: Patricia Maulden, Ph.D.
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Office Hours: Tuesday 3:30 to 4:00 or by appointment

Course Description & Objectives

Welcome! Building on what students have learned in Conf 101, this course further explores a variety of theories and frameworks for analyzing conflict and understanding resolution possibilities. Theories are basically generalizations about how the world works and why and how behavior occurs under certain circumstances. The understanding and application of theory are essential to glimpsing the 'big picture' of conflict and resolution. Students will also explore the role of levels and units of analysis as they increase not only theoretical awareness but also theoretical implementation.

The design of CONF 210 helps students understand and appreciate the various theoretical frameworks regarding the causes and management of conflicts at various levels – individual, community, national, and international. The multi-disciplinary focus of the course provides students with a broad approach to understanding conceptual explanations for the causes, courses, and management of conflict.

During the course class participants will:

- * Develop an appreciation of the dynamic relationship between conflict and resolution theories.
- * Gain an increased knowledge and understanding of theories of conflict and resolution.
- * Explore conceptual frameworks and theory clusters as exploratory and explanatory approaches to understanding contextual variables.
- * Increase critical thinking abilities.

Course Expectations

1. Consistent attendance. Barring exceptional circumstances, you will be expected to attend class on a regular basis.

2. **Effective preparation.** Class involves discussion and activities that depend on advance preparation. All assigned readings should be completed PRIOR to class.

3. **Classroom etiquette.** Please come to class on time and prepared. Turn off cell phones, pagers, beepers, etc. Remain in class unless you have an emergency. Allow others and yourself to learn by refraining from side conversations, passing notes, playing video games, instant messaging, reading e-mail, browsing websites, etc. Open discussion and dialogue are class goals but please be mindful of the sensitivities of others. Computers should be closed except when taking notes.

4. **Course completion.** In keeping with departmental policy, incomplete grades will be given only in cases of illness, either personal or in an immediate family member. Class assignments that are submitted late can be penalized by one point for each day thereafter. If a student has a documented emergency, special arrangements can be made with the instructor.

5. **Paper format.** Papers should be typed, double-spaced, have 1” margins, and use Times New Roman 12-point font. The pages should be numbered and stapled together. Headers should include only the course number (CONF 210), your name, and paper title.. The first page of the paper should have the title. Edit your papers carefully as spelling and grammatical errors will lower your overall score. Use section headers throughout your paper to give clarity and organization to your argument.

Course Materials

Required Text

1. Bartos, Otomar J. and Paul Wehr. 2008. *Using Conflict Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Demmers, Jolle. 2012. *Theories of Violent Conflict: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.

Required Readings (Available on Blackboard – Arranged by Week)

Boudreau, Thomas E. 2011. When the Killing Begins: An Epistemic Inquiry into Violent Human Conflict, Contested Truths, and Multiplex Methodology. In *Critical Issues in Peace and Conflict Studies: Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy*. Thomas Matyók, Jessica Senehi, and Sean Byrne editors. Lanham, Maryland: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Burton, John W. 2001. Introducing the Person into Thinking about Social Policies. In *The International Journal of Peace Studies*. Vol. 6, No. 1. <http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps>.

Burton, John W. 2001. Where Do We Go From Here? In *The International Journal of Peace Studies*. Vol. 6, No. 1. <http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps>.

- Byrne, Sean and Amos Nadan. 2011. The Social Cube Analytical Model and Protracted Ethnoterritorial Conflicts. *In Critical Issues in Peace and Conflict Studies: Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy*. Thomas Matyók, Jessica Senehi, and Sean Byrne editors. Lanham, Maryland: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Davidson, John and Christine Wood. 2004. A Conflict Resolution Model. *In Theory and Practice*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (6-13).
- Dugan, Máire. 1996. A Nested Theory of Conflict. *In Leadership Journal: Women in Leadership*, Volume 1 (9-19).
- Galtung, Johan. 1990. Cultural Violence. *In Journal of Peace Research*. Vol. 27, No. 3 (291-305).
- Goldberg, Rachel M. 2009. How Our Worldviews Shape Our Practice. *In Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (405-431).
- Hansen, Toran. 2008. Critical Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice. *In Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (403-427).
- Isaacs, William N. 1993. *Taking Flight: Dialogue, Collective Thinking, and Organizational Learning*. Center for Organizational Learning.
http://cmapspublic.ihmc.us/rid=1255442475484_1908258935_21662/Dialogue,%20Collective%20Thinking,%20and%20Org%20Learning.pdf.
- Jaccard, James and Jacob Jacoby. 2010. *Theory Construction and Model-Building Skills: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists*, Chapters 2 - 3. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Jones, Wendell and Scott H. Hughes. 2003. Complexity, Conflict Resolution, and How the Mind Works. *In Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (485-494).
- Peschl, M.F. 2007. Triple-Loop Learning as Foundation for Profound Change, Individual Cultivation, and Radical Innovation. Construction Processes Beyond Scientific and Rational Knowledge. *In Constructivist Foundations*, Vol 2, Nos. 2-3.
- Rubenstein, Richard E. Basic Human Needs: The Next Steps in Theory Development. *In The International Journal of Peace Studies*. Vol. 6, No. 1.
<http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps>.
- Stimec, Arnaud, Jean Poitras, and Jason J. Campbell. 2010. Ripeness, Readiness, and Grief in Conflict Analysis. *In Critical Issues in Peace and Conflict Studies: Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy*. Thomas Matyók, Jessica Senehi, and Sean Byrne editors. Lanham, Maryland: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Yuthas, Kristi, Jesse F. Dillard, and Rodney K. Rogers. 2004. Beyond Agency and Structure: Triple-Loop Learning. *In Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (229-243).

Academic Policies & Information

Academic Integrity

For individual class assignments, you may discuss your ideas with others or ask for feedback; however, you are responsible for making certain that there is no question that the work you hand in is your own. You may not submit papers or presentations from other courses to fulfill assignments for this class.

"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."

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>).

Library Services

The S-CAR library liaison is Sarah Sheehan (ssheehan@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.

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>).

Assignments

Participation 10%

Because much of this course involves in-class, experiential learning participation is a significant course grade. Course attendance is expected and is part of your participation grade. *Just showing up for class does not represent ‘A’ participation work.* Students are expected to complete their reading assignments on time and to participate in class discussions and exercises.

Essays 30%

Students will be responsible for the submission of 3 (10 point each) reflection papers, each between 3 (complete) and 4 pages in length. These papers will correspond to the course themes throughout the semester and should draw from course discussions, in-class exercises, and course readings. Essay prompts will be distributed. One of the formal citation styles mentioned earlier should be used for these papers.

Group Project 20%

Each group will analyze a journal article, determining metaphors, assumptions, frameworks, and theories. The group will then explore theories that could be linked to form theory clusters and alternative frameworks for analysis of the topic. Additional information on project requirements will be distributed in class.

Pop Quizzes 15%

As the name indicates, four times during the semester students will answer a question from the assigned readings. Each quiz will be worth 5 points – the lowest score will be dropped.

Final Written Exam

25%

The written exam for this course will be an open-book, take home essay exam, distributed in class. Answers to two of the essay questions should be 3 (complete) to 4 pages in length (10 points each) and the answer to the third essay will be 2 (complete) to 3 pages in length (5 points). **The final exam is due Friday, May 10 by 5:00 pm at Northeast Module II, Room 106.**

Course Agenda

Week 1: January 22 Theory & Understanding I

Course Overview

Metaphor, assumptions, conflict knowledge

Theory levels – high, mid-range, individual

Readings: 1. Jaccard & Jacoby Chapters 2 & 3

Week 2: January 29 Theory & Understanding II

Understanding theory

Basic CAR theories

Readings: 1. Burton Articles
 2. Galtung Article
 3. Rubenstein Article
 4. Bartos & Wehr Chapter 1 & 2

Week 3: February 5 Paradigms, Frameworks, Clusters

Review Lederach and Galtung triangles

Theories embedded within frameworks

Theory clusters

Readings: 1. Dugan, *A Nested Theory of Conflict*
 2. Byrne & Nadan, The Social Cube Analytical Model and
 Protracted Ethnoterritorial Conflicts, Chapter 4, *Critical Issues in
 Peace and Conflict Studies*
 3. Demmers Introduction

Essay Prompt 1 Handed Out

Week 4: February 12 Conflict Theories I

Civil conflict

Power relations and inequality

Readings: 1. Bartos & Wehr, Chapters 3 & 4
 2. Demmers Chapters 1 & 2

Essay 1 Due in Class

Week 5: February 19 Conflict Theories II

Violent conflict
Power / empowerment
Context and escalation

- Readings: 1. Boudreau, *When the Killing Begins: An Epistemic Inquiry into Violent Human Conflict, Contested Truths, & Multiplex Methodology*, Chapter 2 *Critical Issues in Peace and Conflict Studies*
 2. Bartos & Wehr, Chapters 7-8

Week 6. February 26 Conflict Theories III

Structure & agency

- Readings: Demmers Chapters 3, 4, & 6

Week 7. March 5 Conflict Theories IV

Learning theories
Change, organizational development, individual empowerment

- Readings: 1. Peschl, *Triple-loop Learning as Foundation for Profound Change*
 2. Yuthas, Dillard, & Rogers, *Beyond Agency and Structure: Triple Loop Learning*

Essay Prompt 2 Handed Out

Week 8: March 12 SPRING BREAK

Week 9: March 19 Course Review & Synthesis

Linking concepts, theories, approaches

- Readings: 1. Goldberg Article

Essay 2 Due in Class

Week 10: March 26 Resolution Frameworks I

Historical roots, assumptions, conceptualizations, communication

- Readings: 1. Jones & Hughes, *Complexity, Conflict Resolution, and How the Mind Works*
 2. Hansen, *Critical Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice*

Week 11: April 2

Resolution Frameworks II

Models for change, problem solving, resolution

- Readings:
1. Davidson & Wood, *A Conflict Resolution Model*
 2. Issacs, *Dialogue, Collective Thinking, and Organizational Learning*
 3. Stimec, Poitras, & Campbell, Ripeness, Readiness, and Grief in Conflict Analysis, Chapter 8, *Critical Issues in Peace and Conflict Studies*

Week 12: April 9

Implementing Theory I

Blending analysis, theory, and resolution approaches

- Readings:
1. Bartos & Wehr, Chapter 9 & 10

Essay Prompt 3 Handed Out

Week 13: April 16

Implementing Theory II

Case approaches to implementing theory

Essay 3 Due in Class

Week 14: April 24

Group Presentations

Week 15: May 1

Final Course Review & Synthesis

Course evaluation

Final Exam Prompts Distributed

Final Exam Due: Friday, May 10 by 5:00 pm, Northeast Module II, Room 106

Points Accumulated	Letter Grade
94-100	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
60-69	D
0-59	F