

Conflict Resolution Techniques and Practice
CONF 300- 01, Spring 2013

Instructor: Molly Tepper

Class: Tues/Thurs – 9:00am- 10:15am

Email: mtepper@gmu.edu

Classroom: Thompson Hall, Rm. L004 (in basement)

Office: Northeast Module II, Room 117

Prerequisites: CONF 101 and 60 credits

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursdays after class or by appointment

Introduction-

Building on what students have learned in CONF 101, this course explores a variety of theories, ethical considerations, and frameworks for analyzing conflict and conflict resolution processes. The emphasis of the course will be on enhancing the ability to engage in reflective practice and think critically in the midst of conflict dynamics and conflict resolution systems. As such, this class emphasizes building conflict resolution skills and abilities, with a significant portion of the class being experientially-based. Interpersonal, small group, community, and international conflict will be discussed in the course, but special emphasis in practice will be placed on interpersonal and small group conflicts as the building blocks for doing conflict resolution in larger and more complex social conflicts.

At the end of the course, students will have learned theories and techniques for assessing conflicts, be able to make informed, theory grounded summaries of conflict intervention options, and will have a set of skills and techniques to help parties in conflict have constructive conversations and move conflicts toward resolution. While students will learn and practice several conflict resolution process models and roles, the goal is not to be fully trained as mediators or facilitators, although this course will be an excellent introduction should students decide to pursue further training or credentialing in such areas.

Assignments and Dates-

This course will be evaluated in the following way:

Assignment:

Due:

15% - Class participation

Ongoing

25% - Reflective Practice papers

Feb. 12th, 26th, March 19th, April 2nd, 16th, 30th.

45% - Portfolios and final team presentations:

20%- Portfolios (individual)

Feb. 19th, March 5, 26th, April 23rd, May 9th

20%- Team presentations

April 18th- May 2nd

5% - Client, peer and self evals.

May 6nd

15% - Take home final exam

May 9th (by midnight)

15%- Participation

While attendance is taken at the beginning of each class, the participation mark is based upon several other aspects including the actual participation in each class. Please come prepared to speak about the readings at the beginning of class and support your own and fellow colleagues learning by attending class and group meetings regularly and attend to any distractions that may affect your learning.

Class discussions and respectful debates are welcomed. Please be aware of and considerate of others' perspectives and sensitivities on various issues and know that it is acceptable to agree to disagree. You also have the right to "pass" on topics or questions that may be of a sensitive or uncomfortable nature if you are called upon in class to talk about it.

At times there will be experiential exercises which may include mobility or other issues that may be of concern to the student. Please advise the Professor of any concerns you may have about participating in a given exercise. Similarly, if there is unfamiliar language or terminology, especially as some terms have specialized meanings in the field of conflict resolution, please do not hesitate to ask.

25%- Critical Reflective Practice Papers-

Drawing on the course readings, and the class lessons, these short critical reflection practice exercises are interspersed through the semester, with approximately two weeks between each paper. Each paper should be a minimum of three (3) pages with a maximum of four (4) pages, and the highest five grades out of the six assignments will be recorded. **The Due Dates for the Reflective Papers are: Feb. 12th, Feb 26th, March 19th, April 2nd, April 16th, and April 30th.**

Standard paper format including double spaced, 12pt, Times New Roman font is required, as are FOOTNOTES AND PROPER BIBLIOGRAPHY (Chicago Manual of Style). Writing capacities, including thesis statements, and paper organization, are also graded. Let the Professor know as soon as possible if you feel you have issues with writing.

45% Portfolios and Team Presentations

Early in the semester, you will be divided into groups of five (5) to work on a team presentation about a University- based or local conflict of each team's choice. The team will work together through the steps and stages necessary to complete a conflict assessment and at least propose a conflict intervention with the parties they have contacted. At the end of the semester, each team will write up a role-play based upon their conflict, tape it and present to the class what they consider to be key points in the role-play. As the intervention process is underway, each student in the team is responsible for writing up their own individual portfolio reports that is then shared among the team (and where appropriate, with their "clients"). At the end of the semester, each student will hand in their portfolio showcasing their understanding and acumen of each stage of the process. More details are provided on the assignments page on Blackboard (please refer there for the actual details). *Please speak with the Professor as early as possible if the team is experiencing any difficulties.*

15% - Final Take-Home Exam-

This “open book” take home exam will be handed out on April 30th to be returned by Midnight May 9th. The exam should be no shorter than 5 pages and no longer than 10pg. It should include a proper thesis statement, bibliographic references, footnotes, and title page (the latter three items do not count in the page total). More information about the exam will be provided in class.

Grading:

The course will be graded according to the following:

Points Accumulated	Grade	Points Accumulated	Grade
95-100	A+	67-69	C+
87-94	A	64-66	C
80-86	A-	60-63	C-
77-79	B+	50- 59	D
74-76	B	0-49	F
70- 73	B-		

Opportunities to obtain additional bonus points will be made available throughout the semester. See below.

Plagiarism and Honor Codes:

You are expected to abide by George Mason University’s Honor Code while 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), are uncertain about how to cite a source, or if you have observed Honor Code violations, please contact the Professor immediately.

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. There is a plagiarism checker available to you via Blackboard.

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.

IF YOU DO NOT KNOW HOW TO CITE/ AVOID PLAGIARISM, PLEASE COME SEE ME.

Student Services:

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>).

Other Student Services:

Counseling and Psychological Services : GMU students have access to free counseling and psychological services. See- caps.gmu.edu

Student Health Services: GMU students have access to free health services. See: shs.gmu.edu

Sexual Assault Services: Available for both genders. See: sas.gmu.edu

Office for Academic Integrity: See: oai.gmu.edu

Financial Aid Services: See- financialaid.gmu.edu

Research Resources:

Your research librarian at Fenwick Library is Sarah Sheehan (703- 993-3709, ssheehan@gmu.edu). Do not hesitate to contact her with specific questions about Library holdings and more general research methods. I also highly recommend using Zotero for your research, citations, and bibliographies. (See zotero.org).

library.gmu.edu - GMU Library (for e-reserves, databases, catalogs, assignment calculator, etc)
catalog.wrlc.org- Washington Research Library Consortium- Get any book in the Consortium
infoguides.gmu.edu/conflict101- good research portal for tools and research access.
zotero.org – Free citation software.

Required Texts and Readings-

The following books are available to purchase at the University Bookstore.

- ❖ Mayer, Bernard. The Dynamics of Conflict. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Pub.) 2012. (e-version also available)
- ❖ Rosenberg, Marshall B. Nonviolent Communication: A language of life. (Encinitas, CA: Puddledancer Press). 2003.
- ❖ Picard, Cheryl. Mediating Interpersonal and Small Group Conflict. 2nd eds. (Ottawa, CAN: Golden Dog Press). 2002.
- ❖ Kraybill, Ron and Wright, Evelyn. The Little Book of Cool Tools for Hot Topics. (Intercourse, PA: Good Books Pub.). 2006.

Other readings:

Each class has two readings, one that is usually theory or CAR dynamic focused, with the other more practice or skills focused. These readings are found either on Blackboard on the course content page, or on the GMU Libraries' e-reserve page.

The e-reserves password for this class is "theory" (all lower case).

Additional recommended readings and reading selections will be made available throughout the semester. It is also advised to keep abreast of world and local news in order to apply the course theory to current events.

Recommended Texts and Readings:

Either -

- Diana Hacker (2010). *A Pocket Style Manual with 2009 MLA and 2010 APA Updates*. 5th Edition. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's. (this is a shorter version of the next recommended text)

Or

- Diana Hacker (2010). *A Writers Reference with 2009 MLA and 2010 APA Updates*. 6th Edition. New York: Bedford/St. Martins's.

Late policies and additional bonus opportunities

Overdue papers are docked 2 points a day, unless evidence is provided showing an illness or family crisis. Students can gain additional bonus points on top of their overall course mark by writing blogs on Blackboard or attending one of the events below or participating in some other practice-related project and writing up a 2-3 page paper showing how it relates to the course.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1- Introduction to course, What is Practice?

- January 22- Welcome/ overview
- January 24- What is practice and the practitioner
 - o (*Mayer*, Preface, and Chapter 6; *Druckman*, Chapter 12, “Research for Action and Consulting”)

Week 2- The Reflective Practitioner

- January 29- The essential skill- reflective practice
 - o (*Lang*, “The Hallmarks of Artistry”, and *Lang*, “Putting Reflection into Practice”)
- January 31- Nature of Ethics and power in practice
 - o (*Mayer*, Chapter 12 and Chapter 3; *Stratchan*, “Core Facilitation Values”)

Bonus Opportunities: January 29th -S-CAR Conference Information Session, (Georges’ 7-8:30pm)

Week 3- Foundations of Conflict Analysis Practice

- February 5- What is conflict
 - o (*Mayer*, Chapter 1 and 2)
- February 7- Approaching conflicts- Culture, gender and identity
 - o (*Mayer*, Chapter 4; *Tannen*, “Different Words, Different Worlds”)

Bonus Opportunities: February 5th -Brown Bag Presentation, (The Hub, Rm. 3., 12-1:15pm)

Week 4- Conflict Analysis Practice

(Paper 1 due)

- February 12- Conflict Mapping
 - o (*Kreisberg and Dayton*, “Analyzing Social Conflict”; *Carpenter and Kennedy*, “Dealing with Conflict Productively” (read only pgs. 18-29), and *Carpenter and Kennedy* “Developing an Effective Program of Conflict, [with continuation into] “Analyzing the Conflict” (read only pgs. 52-69).
- February 14- Applying conflict models ELA
 - o (Selected readings, TBA)

Week 5- Introduction to Conflict Resolution Practice

(Portfolio 1 Due)

- February 19- Introduction to Conflict Resolution practice
 - o (*Mayer*, Chapter 5; *Picard*, Chapter 1; *Rosenberg*, pg 1-24)
- February 21- The dynamics of practice
 - o (*Mayer*, Chapter 7; *Rosenberg*, pgs. 25-66)

Bonus Opportunities: February 21st - Dialogue and Difference, (Research I, Rm 163., 7-9pm)

Week 6- Foundations of Conflict Resolution- Communication

(Paper 2 due)

- February 26 – Listening for language
 - o (*Picard*, Chapter 4 (read only pgs. 68- 78); *Rosenberg*, pgs. 67-129 and pgs. 141-159)
- February 28- Questioning Frameworks
 - o (*Strachan*, “Questions that work”; *Picard*, Chapter 4, (read pgs.79-96)

Week 7 – Engaging in the Conflict Resolution Process

(Portfolio 2 Due)

- March 5 – Introduction to conflict resolution processes –Facilitation processes
 - o (Langenhove and Harre, “Introducing Positioning Theory”; *Kraybill and Wright- Cool Tools for Hot Topics-* read whole book)
- March 7- Selves, Systems and Society- conflict resolution theory in practice
 - o (Selected readings, TBA)

Bonus Opportunities: March 5th - Brown Bag Presentation (J. Shedd), (The Hub, Rm. 3., 12-1:15pm)

Week 8- March Break (March 11- 17th) NO CLASS

Week 9- Introduction to Mediation

(Paper 3 due)

- March 19 – Introduction to mediation,
 - o (*Mayer*, Chapter 10; *Picard*, Chapter 2)
- March 21 – Mediation Theories
 - o (Selected Readings, TBA)

Bonus Opportunities: March 20th - Dialogue and Difference, (Research I, Rm 163., 7-9pm)

Week 10- Mediation Practice

(Portfolio 3 Due- Portfolio Meetings During this week)

SATURDAY MARCH 23- MEDIATION SKILLS TRAINING INTENSIVE – 9AM- 4PM

Joint workshop with the other CONF 300 classes, Location TBA.

OR

- March 26- Mediation practice
- March 28 – Mediation practice

Week 11- Negotiation

(Paper 4 due)

- April 2 - Introduction to negotiation, (*Mayer*, Chapter 8; Selected readings, TBA)
- April 4 – Negotiation practice

Week 12- The Conflict Resolution Toolbox

- April 9- Diversity in practices
 - o (Mayer, Chapter 11, selected readings, TBA)
- April 11- Evaluation, and the toolbox
 - o (Mayer, Chapter 9, Druckman, “ Evaluation Research”,)

Bonus Opportunities: April 9th -Brown Bag Presentation (R. Rubenstein), (The Hub, Rm. 3., 12-1:15pm)

Week 13- Final presentations**(Paper 5 due)**

- April 16- Forward focus- conflict resolution and the Field,
- April 18- Presentations

Bonus Opportunities: April 17th – Senator Mitchell Lecture on N. Ireland. (Arl., Founders Hall, Rm. 125., 7pm)

Week 14- Presentations**(Portfolio 5 Due)**

- April 23- Presentations
- April 25- Presentations

Bonus Opportunities: April 23rd - Dialogue and Difference, (Research I, Rm 163., 7-9pm)

Week 15- Presentations**(Paper 6 due)**

- April 30- Presentations
- May 2- Presentations / Closing

Bonus Opportunities: April 29th - S-CAR Undergraduate Conference, (Research I, 10am- 4:30pm)

Week 16- Exam Week**(Portfolio 6/ All Remaining Portfolio Pieces Due)**

Final take home exam Due May 9th, by midnight