

CONF 720: ETHNIC AND CULTURAL FACTORS IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Fall, 2013 (Section 001)

Wednesday 7:20-10:00 p.m., ARLTB 666B

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(please send to both emails.)

Office hours by appointment only.

Course Description

This course explores the role of culture in the genesis, structuring, and resolution of processes of conflict within and between groups. We will pay special attention to ethnicity and other subcultural (or metacultural) markers of identity in complex social systems as both generators and outcomes of conflict. Analysis will proceed through consideration of case-studies drawn from a variety of cultural and social settings. We will also discuss some critiques of the culture concept with special reference to conflict analysis and resolution.

Course Requirements

Required Readings (available at the GMU Arlington Bookstore or through E-reserve*):

Avruch, Kevin. (2011) Context and Pretext in Conflict Resolution (Paradigm Press)

*Kevin Avruch, "Type I and Type II Errors in Culturally Sensitive Conflict Resolution Practice," Conflict Resolution Quarterly 20(3):351-371, 2003 (on E-reserve)

Said, Edward. Orientalism Reconsidered. Cultural Critique, No 1, Autumn, 1985

Said. Edward (1979) Preface to the Twenty Fifth Anniversary Edition, Orientalism: Vintage Book Edition. Pgs xv – xxx.

Said, Edward (2003, August). A window on the world. Retrieved 1/12/04 from <http://books.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,12084,1010417,00.html>

Paul Salem. "A Critique of western conflict resolution from a non-Western Perspective. In Conflict Resolution in the Arab World: Selected Essays. American University of Beirut Publications, 1997. 11-24

Roy, Beth. Some Trouble with Cows Making Sense of Social Conflict. 1994

Sen, Amartya, Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny (Issues of Our Time)

Docherty, Jayne. "Adaptive" Negotiation: Practice and Teaching.
http://www.academia.edu/2132478/_Adaptive_Negotiation_Practice_and_Teaching

Mernissi, Fatima. (1987) Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society

Stanley Barrett, Culture Meets Power

John Conley & William O'Barr, Just Words: Law, Language and Power

Harold Isaacs, Idols of the Tribe: Group Identity and Political Change

Thomas Kochman, Black and White Styles in Conflict

Liisa Malkki, Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania

The following two books, also available at the Bookstore, are optional for further :

Kevin Avruch, Culture and Conflict Resolution

Kevin Avruch, Peter W. Black & Joseph A. Scimecca, eds., Conflict Resolution: Cross-Cultural Perspectives (paperback)

The first requirement of this class is that you come prepared to discuss the readings. Also required is a term paper, on a topic of your choice, relevant to the (broad!) concerns of the class. Due: week 13. (date TBD)

You might start thinking about possible topics; and you will need to talk with me when you decide on one. .

Course Program

Part I: Culture

Week 1 : Course Orientation: What Is Culture? Why Study It?

Week 2: How Study Culture? How study culture? Roy, Start Avruch

- Week 3: Worldview theory: Docherty, Avruch (cont.)
Part 11: Ethnicity & Other identities
- Week 4: Basic Group Identity-I: Towards Understanding Ethnicity-I
Read: Isaacs, pp. 1-114
- Week 5: Basic Group Identity-II: Beyond Ethnicity
Read: Isaacs, pp. 115-219
- Week 6: Interpersonal Conflict, Culture, and “Sub-Culture”:
American “Racial Styles”
Read: Kochman, all
- Week 7: “Metacultures”: Class, Institutional, Gender, and Legal Cultures (Understanding Discourse)
Read: Conley & O’Barr, pp. 1-95, 129-140
- Week 8: Orientalism: Read & Mernissi
- Week 9: Ethnicity, the State, and Nationalism: “Making Culture” and its Costs
Read: Malkki, pp. 1-152
- Week 10: Memory, History, and Genocide: Making Conflict and its Costs
Read: Malkki, pp. 153-297
- Part III: Using the Culture Concept in Conflict Resolution
- Week 11: International Conflict Resolution and Negotiation
Read: Docherty
- Week 12: Culture and Conflict Resolution
Read: Avruch Article
- Part IV: Cautions, Critiques, and Unanswered Questions
- Week 13: Culture and the Problem of Power
Read: Barrett, pp. 1-79
- Week 14: Culture Meets Power
Read: Barrett, pp. 81-128

Misusing Culture in Conflict Resolution: Culture,
Ethnicity, and Identity Reconsidered
Read: Avruch, "Type and Type II Errors..." E-reserve